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TRAVEL LITERATURE AND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOVEL IN
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Travel Literature and the Development of the Novel in Eighteenth-Century France

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“Travel Literature and the Development of the Novel in Eighteenth-Century France” follows the evolution of the French novel throughout the eighteenth century by examining the epistemological, aesthetic, and literary exchanges between historiography, travel literature, and the novel, three separate yet intertwined modes of representation that were in the process of creating or recreating their modern identities through a systematization of coherent literary rules. I argue that essential changes in the conceptualization and writing of history led to similar developments in the way travel accounts were written, organized, and consumed. As travel literature strengthened its own generic distinctiveness, novelists depicting foreign characters and/or landscapes selectively appropriated the legitimating discourse of travel literature to create an autonomous literary space for the novel. As these novels emulate travel literature, they critically incorporate the problematic questions of legitimacy of travel accounts, and force the novel’s claims of truth to take place within a historical methodology discourse which in turn legitimizes it, delineating distinct profiles for history and fiction alike.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Yoshio Tanaka, who pointed the way, and to my husband, Hernando Cortina, who saw me through it.

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Introduction

In 1732, Alain-René Lesage published his novel Les Aventures M. Robert Chevalier, dit Beauchêne, capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle France (Beauchêne), claiming its contents were the true memoirs of a French-Canadian pirate. In 1806, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre published the final, deluxe edition of his tropical pastoral Paul et Virginie and cheerfully called it “a novel”. In the seventy-odd year span between these two publications the French novel amassed significant literary and political power. From a bastard genre pretending to be a historical manuscript, it transformed itself into the all-encompassing, omnivorous, nation-building storytelling genre that would ultimately dominate literature. The present work follows this remarkable evolution of the French novel throughout the eighteenth century by examining the epistemological, aesthetic, and literary exchanges between historiography, travel literature, and the novel, three separate yet intertwined modes of representation that were in the process of creating or recreating their modern identities through a systematization of coherent literary rules. I argue that essential changes in the conceptualization and writing of history led to similar developments in the way travel accounts were written, organized, and consumed. As travel literature strengthened its own generic distinctiveness, novelists depicting foreign characters and/or landscapes selectively appropriated the legitimating discourse of travel literature to create an autonomous literary space for the novel.

Starting in the seventeenth century, Cartesian skepticism’s influence on philosophy and the emergence of the modern self-consciousness generated widespread debate amongst historians concerning the philosophy and methodology of history, which in turn led to intrinsic reforms in eighteenth-century historiography. As Daniel Roche explains, “[t]he

change in historical method came about somewhat before the turn of the eighteenth century. It was undoubtedly connected with the religious schism that tore Europe apart and with the “crisis of consciousness”¹ (1998, 102). The emergence of modern historiography at the end of the seventeenth century may be best illustrated by the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns. It started as a historical debate following Charles Perrault’s Le siècle de Louis le Grand (1687), where the author argued for the superiority of modern over ancient history (“La docte Antiquité dans toute sa durée / A l’égal de nos jours ne fut point éclairée”), revealing the contemporary trust in the progress of humankind, as well as in the power of reason.

In practical terms, the emergence of more metaphysical speculations into the task of historical studies and the duties of historians may be translated, as Nathan Uglov explains, as “the will to distinguish between rhetorical and scientific versions of historical work” (3). As a result, historians were divided into two distinct camps at the turn of the eighteenth century. On one hand, “old-school” historians followed a more traditional, pedagogical, moralist historiography that emphasized rhetoric and the exemplarity of history. These Classical historians sought to ennoble history by equating it to the Aristotelian higher ideal of poetry²; they idealized historical figures, representing them as they should be, not what they were, and thereby constructing models of conduct.

On the other hand, Modern, skeptical, empirical historians emphasized a methodological practice based on probabilities and the quest for truth. By the end of the

¹ In his 1935 La Crise de la conscience européenne Paul Hazard analyzes the transition from Classical theological order to Enlightenment reason and its effects on historiography.

² Aristotle claims in Poetics that

It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen, -- what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. [...] The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular (27).

eighteenth century, argues Astrid Witschi-Bernz, the Modern position had won over the Classic, exemplary tradition of history (88-9). Yet Modern historians did not lose sight of the pedagogical impetus of the discipline, and still sought to teach lessons. Although they rejected the exemplarity premise of Classical history – the idea of history as poetry, as what *should be*, they still maintained a more essential aesthetic principle that motivated all poetry for Aristotle – the universal pleasure men find in imitation and learning³. Accuracy is thus the primary source of Modern pleasure: the Modern historian was concerned with the representation of truth, of *things as they are*, so that it may be recognizable as a faithful imitation of reality, which in turn incites the pleasure of learning.

This desire for accurate representation is however only part of Modern historiography; because we cannot always compare the representation to the actual event, historians were also concerned with *style*, much as Aristotle prescribed: “For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the colouring, or some such other cause” (9). These Aristotelian concerns with faithful representation and exquisite rendering indeed motivate the precept that underscores much of the eighteenth-century’s historical and literary practice: Horace’s *utile dulci*, or the idea that learning is optimized when it incites pleasure⁴.

Modern historiographers were challenged to a double task: they were not only poised to reinterpret history in time, but also faced with an expanding geographic frontier of the known world that forced new epistemological questions to the foreground. The European

³ “First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. [...] to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, ‘Ah, that is he.’” (Aristotle 9)

⁴ “Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, lectorem delectando pariterque monendo”, or “He gets every vote who combines the useful with the pleasant, and who, at the same time he pleases the reader, also instructs him” (Horace, *Ars poetica*, v 343-4)

discovery of the new continent made the limits of Classical history explicit. The Ancients did not know about, and thus could not account for, the existence of men across the Atlantic.

Figure 1 shows the Ptolemaic vision of the world in the fifteenth century, limited to Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa⁵.



Figure 1: Ptolemaic map of the world, 1482.

Unlike the difficulties associated with studying the ancient world, the challenge of representing the New World's entirely different mode of existence was rather one of geographical distance: if the ancient world was accessible by decoding ancient texts, the history of the New World had to be collected on the bodies and rituals of the indigenous peoples of newfound lands. Sea voyages were dangerous enterprises, and this unwritten history had to be translated and collected into travel accounts by the few who were skilled

⁵ It is only toward the end of the fifteenth century that the coast of Africa and the Americas are sighted by Europeans. Bartolomeu Dias rounds the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, and Vasco da Gama rounds Cape of Good Hope and reaches India via the Cape in 1497. Christopher Columbus lands in Hispaniola in 1492, and Ferdinand Magellan finds a passage to the South Seas only in 1520.

and lucky enough to make it to the other side of the Atlantic, and back to Europe to tell their stories. Primary sources for New World history were thus scarce in the early modern period, and fraught with epistemological uncertainties generated by the encounter with the inusitate; as Stephen Greenblatt aptly writes, “wonder is [...] the central figure in the initial European response to the New World, the decisive emotional and intellectual experience in the presence of radical difference” (14). Ortelius’ projection of the world in 1570 (Figure 2) demonstrates the significant expansion of the European conception of the world after the discovery of the Americas.



Figure 2: Abraham Ortelius, “World Map”, 1570.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this expansion of the European world view came with a corresponding and often confusing proliferation of information about the

new lands. By the eighteenth century an overflowing databank of New World images both attenuated the marvel associated with the “new”, and begged for greater organization. The abundance of texts concerning the voyages of European discovery led Jean-Jacques Rousseau to “complain” in his 1754 Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes (Discours sur l’inégalité): “Depuis trois ou quatre cent ans que les habitants de l’Europe inondent les autres parties du monde et publient sans cesse de nouveaux recueils de voyages et de relations, je suis persuadé que nous ne connaissons d’hommes que les seuls Européens” (footnote X, 180). Michèle Duchet points to the sheer heterogeneity of materials: “journaux inédits, mémoires, correspondances, articles de journaux, copies manuscrites sont des ‘sources’ au même titre que les ‘relations’ et les recueils imprimés” (1995, 66). The considerable amount and variety of travel literature available became an object of scrutiny for historians desirous of writing “cette histoire en marge de l’histoire” (92), or perhaps, this history at the *frontier* of history that revealed the essential questions about modern historiography: how to collect, evaluate, and represent foreign data? How to write the history of the New World?

Much like history itself, travel literature was in the process of solidifying under a new set of rules necessitated by the abundance of materials and guided by the same principles of pleasurable instruction. Wendelin A. Guentner’s analysis of how travel accounts became literature in the eighteenth century shows the impact of historical method debates on the writing of travel experiences. Guentner’s argument is based on the premise that a literary experience is characterized by pleasure, and pleasure is derived from style. In the early modern world, as Michel de Montaigne famously argued in “Des Cannibales”⁶, simple style

⁶ In his essay “Des Cannibales” (1581) Michel de Montaigne argues that the man from whom he had learned details about the Brazilian cannibals was “simple et grossier, qui est une condition propre à rendre veritable tesmoignage” (205). Montaigne continues:

is the requirement for the aesthetic pleasure in reading travel accounts. The words of Montaigne's ideal "homme simple et grossier," (205) convey the wonder of the new without the amplifying interference of style or science; the optimal representation of the New World cannibal, possessor of a "nayvété pure et simple" (206) but not much else⁷, requires likewise a man "qui n'a rien épousé".

In the eighteenth century, "[c]e n'est plus ce qui signifie le style simple – l'authenticité du récit – qui est la source du plaisir: c'est le style lui même" (Guentner 1992, 60). Authenticity and style became two separate issues that represented different steps of the historiographical process – collection of reliable data and the compilation of this data into texts pleasing to the reader, respectively. Thus, on one hand, simple, plain style was no longer the natural style of simple sailors; it became the studied un-rhetorical style of learned scientists preoccupied with the purity of language to represent their observations. In sea travel accounts, authenticity became identified with the use of a "patois marin" that denoted the author's familiarity with the latest seafaring procedures, bestowing upon the travel account its scientific profile and boring the common reader to tears⁸. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's 1771 account of France's first official circumnavigation of the globe between 1766 and 1769, Voyage autour du monde (Voyage) exemplifies the very challenges of writing authentic *and* aesthetically pleasing travel accounts. In concrete terms, Bougainville's voyage

Ou il faut un homme tres-fidelle, ou si simple, qu'il n'ait pas dequoy bastir et donner de la vray-semblance à des inventions fauces; et qui n'ait rien espousé. Le mien estoit tel: et outre cela il m'a faict voir à diverses fois plusieurs matelots et marchans, qu'il avoit cogneuz en ce voyage. Ainsi je me contente de cette information, sans m'enquerir de ce que les Cosmographes en disent. (205)

⁷ Montaigne describes the cannibals as devoid of many of the marks of civilization:

C'est une nation, diroy-je à Platon, en laquelle il n'y a aucune espece de trafique; nulle cognoissance de lettres; nulle science de nombres; nul nom de magistrat, ny de superiorité politique; nul usage de service, de richesse, ou de pauvreté; nuls contrats; nulles successions; nuls partages; nulles occupations, qu'oysives; nul respect de parenté, que commun; nuls vestemens; nulle agriculture; nul metal; nul usage de vin ou de bled. Les paroles mesmes, qui signifient la mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie, la detraction, le pardon, inouyes. (206)

⁸ Such unflattering opinion of travel accounts may be exemplified by Mangogul's comments in Diderot's Les Bijoux indiscrets: "De fréquents voyages! [...] Il n'en faut qu'un pour m'endormir jusqu'à demain" (265).

is the result of important technical developments in long-term sea voyages that took place throughout the eighteenth century, the two most notable being the cure for scurvy and the measurement of longitude. In 1753 James Lind proved that a diet of citrus fruit on board of long term voyages would prevent the crew and passengers from developing scurvy, the “plague of the seas”⁹. And in 1761, John Harrison perfected the chronometer, solving the problem of determining longitude, which had puzzled scientists for centuries and caused the loss of uncountable lives at sea. Harrison’s chronometer provided precise time-keeping, and therefore a way for sailors to calculate their distance from Greenwich¹⁰.

The steady improvement in safety conditions of sea voyages allowed for a different sort of traveler to take to the high seas, previously the domain of risk-taking sailors, soldiers and merchants, and of ideology-driven missionaries¹¹. Thus, in 1766, Bougainville, former student of d’Alembert, author of a treaty on integral calculus, and member of the Royal Society, headed the first French circumnavigation of the world, with the official purpose of observing the transit of Venus from the South Seas in 1769. Bougainville and his voyage represent not only the outcome of scientific improvements in navigation, but also the rise of the scientific voyage banner under which many nations stocked ships with their best men of science to measure the world and the skies. In political terms, this new, official, scientific

⁹ “Scurvy was responsible for more deaths at sea than storms, shipwreck, combat, and all other diseases combined” (Bown 3). Only in 1740, Admiral George Anson’s famous voyage around the world lost two-thirds of its 2,000-strong crew, most of them to scurvy. In 1771, James Cook’s voyage around the world, following Lind’s diet, lost not a single soul to scurvy.

¹⁰ It seems unlikely that Bougainville had a chronometer on board during his circumnavigation; his journal indeed shows indeed that he used a sextant to measure celestial distances. The sextant itself was a great innovation at the time, and survived well into the nineteenth century as the preferred navigation method, as it was much cheaper than the chronometer.

¹¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously states in his *Discours sur l’inégalité* that:

[...] il n’y a guère que quatre sortes d’hommes qui fassent des voyages de long cours; les marins, les marchands, les soldats et les missionnaires. Or, on ne doit guère s’attendre que les trois premières classes fournissent de bons observateurs et quant à ceux de la quatrième, occupés de la vocation sublime qui les appelle, quand ils ne seraient pas sujets à des préjugés d’état comme tous les autres, on doit croire qu’ils ne se livreraient pas volontiers à des recherches qui paraissent de pure curiosité et qui les détourneraient des travaux plus importants auxquels ils se destinent (Footnote X, 181).

profile for sea voyages masked the more pressing desire to ascertain the precise locations of previous and any new “discoveries” with newly minted measuring devices. The imperial powers’ desire for official, uncontestable possession now counted with the perceived inerrability of science, which in turn was substantiated by a particular scientific style. Yet the same exactitude provided by the scientific discourse Bougainville deployed in his text made it insufferable for the common reader. Diderot commented in his *compte-rendu* of the Voyage that “j’avertis qu’on ne profitera guère [de la lecture du Voyage] sans être familier avec la langue des marins, auxquels il me paraît que l’auteur l’a spécialement destiné, à en juger par le peu de soins que [Bougainville] a pris d’en rendre la lecture facile aux autres” (451).

“[E]crit sans emphase, avec le seul intérêt de la chose, de la vérité et de la simplicité,” (448) Bougainville’s Voyage illustrates the end of wonder that characterized the text of early modern voyages¹² and displays a new pattern of recognition of the new, where wonder is tamed by science. The navigator’s commitment to empirical observation illustrates the double precept of the Cartesian-Newtonian framework of Modern epistemology: rationalism and empiricism. Tarnas observes that the order of the modern cosmos was comprehensible in principle by man’s rational and empirical faculties alone, while other aspects of human nature – emotional, aesthetic, ethical, volitional, relational, imaginative, epiphanic – were generally regarded as irrelevant or distortional for an objective understanding of the world (287). And thus, throughout his text, Bougainville seems to long for the marvelous¹³, but can

¹² Stephen Greenblatt attributes the “end-point of the mental world of the early modern voyagers and the inception of a different and more familiar world” to Cartesian philosophy in the seventeenth century (19)

¹³ Likewise, Tahiti, whose “discovery” made Bougainville’s voyage famous, is only marvelous for a few pages. The navigator starts off by describing the island as a mythical garden of Eden where free love reigned, but in final account he concedes, “Je me trompais” (236). Tahitian society, he found out, was supported by a cruel hierarchy, and Bougainville is only glad to leave, characterizing the island as “un ami que nous aimions avec ses défauts” (241). Later, Bougainville’s failure to overcome the Great Barrier Reef in Australia shows reality incontestably beating imagination. Since Bougainville could not find passage through the reef, he resorts to imagination in his text, engaging in conjectures of what lay beyond the treacherous coral. Two years later, in 1771, as Bougainville is preparing to publish the Voyage, James Cook finds a passage through the reef and sails

only commit to the measured reality of his own observations: “je ne cite ni contredis personne; je prétends encore moins établir ou combattre aucune hypothèse” (57). Or as Diderot explains in the Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville, “[Bougainville] n’explique rien; il atteste le fait” (143).

Bougainville’s voyage coincides with France’s last and lost chance for the new in the New World, as the last of the known continents at the time, Australia, was finally mapped by James Cook in his first voyage (1768-71)¹⁴. Without the new or the wonder resulting from the new, Bougainville’s text evidences the navigator’s pervasive sense of disillusion in face of sights that by then had been incorporated in the European “image bank” of the New World. In Europe, Dom Pernetty and Corneille de Pauw were raging an inflamed debate regarding the height of the legendary Patagons, but Bougainville’s Patagons are no taller than five feet ten inches. “Ces hommes sont d’une belle taille,” the navigator comments; “parmi ceux que nous avons vus, aucun n’était au-dessous de cinq pieds à six pouces, ni au-dessus de cinq pieds neuf à dix pouces; les gens de *L’Etoile* en avaient vu dans le précédent voyage plusieurs de six pieds” (156).

Bougainville’s Voyage reveals the effects of eighteenth-century empirical philosophy and a much more palpable reality crushing a somewhat lingering desire for the wonder featured in the early modern tradition of travel accounts. Rigobert Bonne’s map of the old and new worlds (Figure 3) represents a largely tamed world in 1780, a *terra cognita*, not dissimilar to our current view of the globe. For all its disillusion, Bougainville’s account’s scientific style underscores the new, material approach to the cognitive process of the world

down the Western coast of Australia, completing the contour of the last continent, and rendering Bougainville’s conjectures about Australia obsolete.

¹⁴ Only the Western coast of Australia had been mapped until then. James Cook also crossed the Antarctic circle in two of his voyages, but it was not until 1820 that Antarctica was sighted.

– a belief in the accurate and individual representation that would underscore the authenticity of his account.

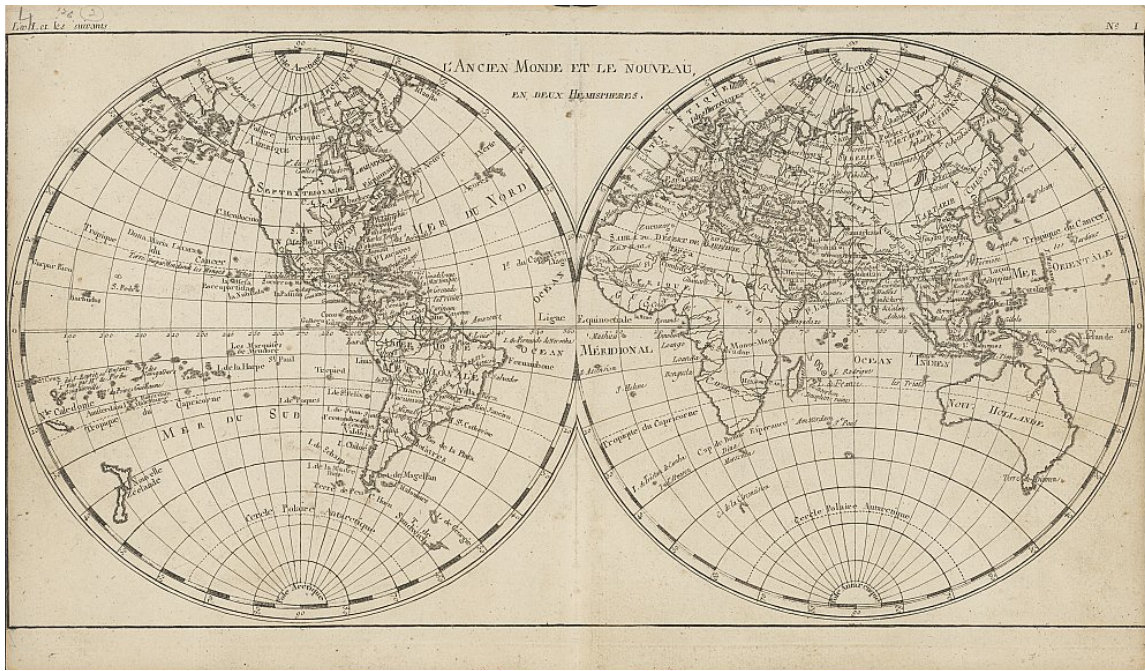


Figure 3: Rigobert Bonne, *L’Ancien Monde et le nouveau en deux hemisphères*, 1773.

Despite the increased scientificity of travel accounts, the principal means for disseminating information were not travel accounts themselves, but their historical compilations. Michèle Duchet explains that “[a]u premier rang il faut faire figurer les *Recueils* ou *Collections*, qui dispensent de bien des recherches. La plupart des renvois à des relations peu répandues renvoient en fait à ces ‘manuels’ fort commodes. Le plus célèbre est l’*Histoire des voyages* de Prévost” (1995, 75). Thus if on one hand the pleasure of the new is close to depletion, and the wonder so magically represented in the earlier travel accounts has been substituted for dry scientific debates, proofs, and treaties, on the other hand the Abbé Prévost’s *Histoire générale des voyages* (HGV), published between 1746 and 1759, exemplifies the eighteenth-century historian’s preoccupation with pleasing the reader

through form – “le style lui-même” in the words of Guentner. Indeed, Modern historiography counted with a great proliferation of style manuals by well-established institutions¹⁵. Prévost himself, a historian of Benedictine training¹⁶, laments in the preface to his Histoire de M. de Thou: “Que de réflexions n’a t’on pas faites sur la manière d’écrire qui convient à l’histoire! Que de dissertations! Que de méthodes!” (300).

Prévost started as a translator of Thomas Astley’s compendium of travelogues, A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels, which sought to transcribe each and every travel account on every part of the world. Soon enough, Prévost’s skills as a writer spoke louder and instead of translating, Prévost decided to adapt the text to the necessities of French style, eliminating the English version’s editor’s “excès de pesanteur et prolixité, [...] leurs répétitions sans fin, [...] leurs excursions déplacées” (“Avertissement”, Tome VIII, 2, np). More than translating and reducing the originals in name of good style, Prévost’s involvement in the text shows how travel accounts are turned into history. In justifying his increasingly interventionist role in the text, Prévost defines history not as facts but as the connection between facts: “D’ailleurs à quel titre cet Ouvrage mériterait-il le nom d’Histoire, si les récits n’ont pas entr’eux une force de rapport constant, qui leur donne le caractère historique?” (3, np).

Prévost completes his transition from translator to historian of travel in tome XII of the HGV (containing the voyages to the Americas) where he faces a primary source problem. He explains in the “Avant-Propos” of tome XII that he had no access to the original journals of the first *conquistadores* because only historian’s versions of them had been

¹⁵ The debates regarding this new emphasis on empirical methodology for historiography took place in established institutions such as “the religious congregations especially the Benedictine order; second, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres; third, the king’s servants, employed either as historiographers or by the Cabinet des Chartes; and finally, provincial learned societies and academies” (Roche 1998, 102).

¹⁶ The Benedictine order was notorious for its fastidious historical methodology (Roche 1998, 103)

published¹⁷. Prévost, who had been complaining about the English structure of the English text for eleven tomes now, seizes the opportunity to turn the repetitive, disjointed secondary accounts into a coherent historical narrative. He opts to divide and then integrate the available texts into three parts, “exposition historique,” “journaux des voyageurs,” and “descriptions”. In the “exposition historique” Prévost would finally tell a unified history of the discovery and conquest of the American continent by integrating the texts of several historians. The “journal des voyageurs” would in turn be stripped of any geographical, religious, moral, or custom observations, as well as of any repetition; “chaque journal, réduit aux aventures personnelles du Voïageur, à ses observations particulières, & aux simples recherches de sa curiosité, ne sera jamais d’une longueur étendue, ou du moins qu’il ne contiendra rien que d’agréable ou d’utile” (“Avant-Propos” Tome XII, xvi). Finally, the “descriptions” would contain the precise scientific observations that had been eliminated from the “journaux des voyageurs”. In other words, the HGV shows how historiography organizes the immense and heterogeneous corpus of travel literature into history. Prévost transforms the original English version of the HGV, aimed at “rien que de sérieux & d’utile,” (I, i) into an instructional yet pleasant experience by keeping the “utile” but substituting “agréable” for the “sérieux”.

Prévost’s experience with the HGV is exemplary of one of the ways in which various writers were dealing with the immense collection of New World accounts and organizing them into historical narratives of science and pleasure. Prévost’s work illustrates, even if idiosyncratically, the duties of a historiographer: he critically chooses his sources, edits superfluities, and links the facts to compose a narrative. The HGV, in both its original

¹⁷ “On n’a jamais publié les véritables Journaux de Columbus, [et al]. C’est à divers Historiens, dont quelques uns n’avoient jamais quitté leur Patrie, qu’on est redevable d’avoir rassemblé des Memoires particuliers, sur lesquels ils ont formé des corps d’Histoire” (“Avant-propos” v).

English version and Prévost's translation, should be counted among the many publications that, following the encyclopedic impetus of the Enlightenment, embraced the task of inventorying and organizing human experience into volumes of *histoire générale*. Naturalists, in turn, did the same with the information collected in travels into various volumes of *histoire naturelle*, covering animals, plants, and minerals. Buffon's Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière (1749-78) is perhaps the eighteenth-century's most famous testament to the naturalists' efforts to compile and organize science into historical narratives. In the view of his contemporaries, Buffon combined depth and breadth through style¹⁸; like Prévost's, Buffon's efforts reveal an Aristotelian preoccupation with maximizing the impact of the aesthetic value of their works via the structure of the composition.

Some of the most ubiquitous consumers of travel literature were the *philosophes*. Many used the information to write philosophical treatises: Rousseau's Discours sur l'inégalité, for instance, demonstrates the author was quite familiar with both Prévost's HGV and Buffon's Histoire naturelle. More popular yet was the use of the information for a genre of fiction that purports to see European customs from the point of view of a foreigner. Such is the case of Montesquieu's Lettres persanes, Denis Diderot's Bijoux indiscrets, Françoise de Graffigny's Lettres d'une Péruvienne, to mention only a few of the most famous texts where French authors create foreign characters to observe and analyze French society. Similarly, other authors used foreign landscapes as the territory of the fantastic and the utopian; the Eldorado and the *pays de Gangarides* in Voltaire's Candide and Princesse de Babylone, respectively, and Marivaux' Ile des esclaves are all examples of incursions into the utopian, where the way other peoples live matter principally insofar as they provide a stark contrast to

¹⁸ Buffon chose to deliver a discourse on style ("Discours sur le style") at the Académie Française on the day of his induction in 1753. Style, for Buffon, was the result of the author's intimate knowledge of his subject; the force and eloquence of his writing would come naturally if the author believes in the argument he is making.

the way Europeans live. Many of these blatantly satirical, fantastic, utopian texts were not concerned with realistic representation of the foreign; while they assume intimate knowledge of the foreign character or landscape they portray, they also deal on received knowledge, where generalizations and idealizations often suffice; the point is not to present the foreign, but to criticize the self – the French/European.

As such, eighteenth-century fiction that includes travel and foreigners includes, to different extents but almost invariably, this historical relativism scheme where the ultimate interest still is the analysis of the European self. Yet some authors, rather than constructing philosophical polarizations between the allegorical European and foreign types, invested in depicting the experience of the individual in the face of the foreign by sending European characters abroad to face the “unknown”, and come back to tell their stories. These novelists adopted travel literature’s newly found concern with empiricism and narrative realism and with a truthful representation of foreign landscapes and peoples, and were thus at the very least nominally interested in the origin of their sources, the selection of evidence, and the presentation of the facts. As Michael McKeon explains, “the claim to historicity appears committed, at least momentarily, to the truth-value not of things but of words, so that if a narrative observes the proper conventions, it demonstrates its own veracity” (110).

This interest in realism went beyond the applications of aesthetically pleasing concepts of content or form; the novel went on and adopted the epistemological discourse of history and travel literature to justify its use of foreign elements in its text. Percy G. Adams, who in the 1960s launched a more systematic evaluation of the precise relationship between travel literature and the novel in the eighteenth century, argues that the novel adopts the empirical rhetoric of the scientific travel account to validate its own legitimacy, making it difficult for the reader to differentiate a real from a fictitious travel account.

Yet at the same time that novelists mimicked the newly found rigor of travel literature's historical method, they also saw its shortcomings, and turned them into fiction's essential paradigm. In general terms, the traveling character still bore the long-standing stigma associated with travelers and their stories. In the thirteen century, Marco Polo's "Book of Wonders" was dubbed "Book of Lies" as the author was suspected of grossly exaggerating his account of the kingdom of Kublai Khan. Five hundred years later, in 1771, de Pauw quantifies this lingering prejudice: "[a]u reste, on peut établir comme une règle générale, que sur 100 Voyageurs, il y en a 60 qui mentent sans intérêt, & comme par imbécillité; 30 qui mentent par intérêt, ou si l'on veut par malice; et enfin 10 qui disent la vérité & qui sont des hommes" (III, 181). This longstanding view of travelers as liars shows that travel accounts, despite its reformed discourse, remained tainted by the doubt stemming from their own fundamental subjectivity – and so did the novel.

More precisely then, in this dissertation, the four works of fiction I examine simultaneously reveal a belief in the modern aesthetic value of history, a respect for historiography's methodology, but ultimately, a critique of the limitations of the representational value of history in face of the subjectivity of travel and the novel. I argue that these novels draw upon travel literature for the opportunity to engage into an established debate concerning the truth-seeking methods of history and travel. By incorporating rules into their paratexts, they embody the very paradigms that will substantiate their own claims for truth; by revealing the shortcomings of the rules in their texts, they point to the novel's legitimate direction.

Scholarship on the eighteenth-century French novel is still heavily informed by three seminal studies published in the 1950s and 60s. The first one is Ian Watt's 1957 The Rise of

the Novel. Although Watt's arguments pertain to the early English novel, it is customary to refer to his notion that the rise of the novel coincided with the rise of the middle class, and that this middle class wanted to read realist depictions of their own lives, not those of aristocrats: the eighteenth-century novel "paid greater attention to the individual than had been common before" (18). In France we can see a similar emergence of the common person as the protagonist of novels; some of the best-known fictional characters of the century, such as Lesage's Gil Blas, Marivaux's Marianne, Rousseau's Saint-Preux, Diderot's Simone Simonin, are members of the lower classes or bourgeoisie¹⁹. After Watt, two major works considering the broader scope of the development of the novel in France were published: Georges May's Dilemme du roman (1963) and Vivienne Mylne's The Eighteenth-Century French Novel: Techniques of Illusion (1965). May's Dilemme argues that the novel developed as authors tried to respond to both their eager audiences and their moralist critics by making their novels more realistic. Mylne's Techniques of Illusion established in turn the standard for more formal studies of the memoir and epistolary techniques used by authors to produce an illusion of reality²⁰.

Since then critics pay homage to these authors' political, philosophical, and formal paradigms. Much of the subsequent analysis of the novel sought to nuance these basic ideas: critics elaborated the broad historical connections between novel and capitalism Watt had put forth, May's elegantly proposed reality-morality premise, or the overarching classification of the novel between memoir- or epistolary that Mylne had established. In sum, the eighteenth-century novel is still seen as the pedagogical manifestation of the history of the

¹⁹ Gil Blas and Marianne, in particular, could be seen as picaresque characters, essentially lower-class, and on the move.

²⁰ Following these two seminal works of criticism, Philip Stewart published Imitation and Illusion in the French Memoir-Novel (1969) and Showalter himself published the Evolution of the French Novel (1972). Across the Atlantic, Henri Coulet published Le Roman jusqu'à la Revolution (1968).

individual through his or her memoirs and letters. By examining how the novel emulates another very popular eighteenth-century form, the travel account, I seek not only to add a third formal approach to the analysis of the novel genre, but also to determine if and how this approach impacts the larger political and philosophical paradigms that currently underscore our understanding of the eighteenth-century French novel.

According to Mylne, novelists seeking to produce an illusion of formal historicity did not simply claim that the stories were true; they represented them as the primary source of history: “instead of pretending to be history itself, [novelists] have turned to writing what might be considered as the raw material of history, the private sourcebooks rather than the official compilations” (27). As such, “[the novel] adopted two of the forms in which authentic records of private lives appear: memoirs and letters.” (32) Indeed the novel’s capacity to mimic the formal structure of private primary documents seemed to have gone a long way in masking the obvious unrealistic peripeties in the plots. As Prévost claims in the preface to Cleveland that the private memoirs he is about to present to the public are true; and if the adventures seem to be farfetched, Prévost advances to his reader that “la vraisemblance n’est pas un caractère nécessaire de la vérité” (v).

The novel’s illusion of reality was thus supported by the easily recognizable formal aspects of the texts: “The memoir-novel cannot be distinguished, in its manner of representation, from an authentic autobiography; the letter-novel looks exactly like a collection of genuine letters” (Mylne 32). Travel accounts share likewise letters’ and memoirs’ documentary status, and as a form, they also reveal a standardized structure that lends itself to narratological historicity. They start with a departure and end with an arrival, and are otherwise filled with tribulations, encounters and adventures in the middle. Travel accounts also count on the intertwinement of temporal and spatial references to underscore

the historicity of the events being related. Gordon Sayre cogently explains how travel accounts employ temporal, spatial, and perspectival tools to formalize their truth value. First, “a *chronologically linear narrative* connects real time with the diegesis and suggests that if every consecutive day is accounted for, the narrative must be truthful. It also ensures that a reader shares the suspense of adventure into the unknown by preventing unfamiliar phenomena from being explained through the benefit of hindsight or learned references” (84). This convention is most evident in the voyage’s journal or log, although the repetitive and limited scope of the ship’s log required embellishing before publication. Second, “a *spatially linear and continuous narrative* induces an isomorphic relation between traveler and landscape. If the continuity of the route is preserved in its description, later travelers and mapmakers will have no difficulty fitting the explorer’s account into the previous images of the world, and there will be no gaps where the narrator might jump into an imaginary or utopian setting”. Finally, Sayre explains, “the *traveler is the narrator is the author* of the account, and this focus ensures the independence of his subjectivity and protects against challenges to his veracity or to his freedom of movement and interpretation of phenomena”.

Unlike letters and memoirs, which often portray the intimate and the secret, travel accounts portrayed events intrinsically public in nature, and sights that were hardly new anymore, and thus subject to refutation in a way that letters and memoirs are not. Throughout the eighteenth century, travel accounts, the traditional vehicle for the marvelous, imaginary, and the hardly believable tales of elsewhere, were subjected to systematic scrutiny; they were forced to prove themselves true by adopting a standardized formal appearance based on scientific benchmarks, much as Bougainville’s account illustrates, and as Sayre’s description explains. Despite the travel accounts’ manifest formal uniqueness, and its popularity as a genre in the eighteenth century, to my knowledge no critic

of the French novel or literary historian has attempted a distinct examination of the novel's formal relationship to travel accounts. Michael McKeon comes close to it in the context of the English novel; in his own words, he pays "disproportionate amount of attention" to the epistemology of travel accounts in his Origins of the English Novel, because in his view, travel narratives "provide a remarkable instance of how critical and theoretical discourse develops alongside, and in relation to, the development of literary discourse" (101).

Still, current novel theory usually treats travel as a *theme* emerging in the context of the memoir- or epistolary novels – and to be sure, travel is often reported through letters, or retrospectively as a memoir. However, when it is approached thematically, travel is often seized as an opportunity for discussing cultural relativism. As discussed earlier, the focus is on European culture, and these novels are not particularly critical of the finer points of representation of foreign realities; they rather largely deal in stereotypes of both French and foreign cultures, where the use of foreigners is prized not for their intrinsic, but for the comparative value. Yet every time travel appears in a novel whose author is actually seeking to give an illusion of reality, the eighteenth-century novelist, who most likely never traveled outside Europe, must invariably make incursions into travel literature to gather material to represent images of elsewhere. Novels that include travel, and are still concerned with representing reality, are thus intertextual and critical in nature.

The intertextual relationship between travel literature and the novel may be understood, as some critics do, through "literary archeology" research, aimed at finding the literary or manuscript sources for these images of elsewhere in particular texts. In the first chapter of this dissertation we will see, for example, how critics spent considerable paper and ink debating the historical sources of Lesage's Beauchêne. Others yet, having the sources at hand, take the extra step to juxtapose travel account and novel, and describe how

a particular author appropriates the first into the second. Such is the case of Alain Guyot, for example, who shows how Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Chateaubriand appropriate their own travel accounts into the texts of their novels. These types of literary analysis illuminate the study of particular authors' compositional strategies, but say little about the larger issues concerning the relationship between novel and travel literature. Roman et récit de voyage, a recent compilation by Antoine and Gomez-Géraud of several articles on particular authors' uses of travel literature, is an example of this approach to the question, in both its text-by-text analyses and its staunch refusal to make overarching statements about either genre.

My analysis is both anchored to the long-standing paradigms presented by Watt, May, Mylne, and McKeon, and to a lesser extent, to the fragmentary evidence of the novel's connections to travel literature found elsewhere. In addition, this dissertation follows in Percy G. Adams' footsteps in its assertion that the novel, in its efforts to represent reality, emulates formal aspects of travel literature. However, my principal contention is that this emulation was rather a *critical* process. While on the formal surface the novel simulated travel literature's formal appearance, rhetoric, and structure, within its body the novel challenged travel literature's hard-earned historicism and turned its limitations into spaces where fiction develops its own self-conscious discourse. To evoke McKeon's idea of empirical double reversal, imitation and criticism are not necessarily at odds; and the end result of this dialectical interplay is a "far more radical conclusion, the unavailability of narrative truth as such" (119). Ultimately then, this dissertation shows that the notion of realism acquires its own particular profile in the new aesthetic concept of the novel, by recapturing Aristotelian notions of verisimilitude that transcend empiricism, and by focusing on the legitimacy of the literary form as art.

Each of the four chapters of this dissertation shows novelists tackling one or more different aspects of historical methodology issues such as the legitimacy and reliability of (foreign) sources, the capacity to observe and represent the foreign object, the compositional strategies for optimal representation, and the chronological premise of history. These writers' questions are theoretically developed in the paratext of their works – in the marginal texts such as the prefaces, title pages, footnotes, translations, and supplements. Then, the paratextual discourse of criticism of the historical method is allegorized within the auspices of the main text – resulting in the novel. On the surface, the novel acquires a more rigorous historiographic discourse justifying its claims to realism; yet in its critique of the method, and in the practice of this critique, fiction also finds its own role in the narrative imperative of historical discourse. Questioning at once the validity of the historical method and the novel's prerogative of imitating the historical process, the eighteenth-century novel does not just imitate; it critically emulates travel accounts devices, borrowing their newly developed discursive legitimacy, but essentially pointing at their loopholes and weaknesses so as to carve a legitimate place for fiction and the novel.

As such, the first chapter, “Lesage’s Love-Child: Questioning Origins in Beauchêne,” examines the question, and the questioning, of origins, and sets up the general discussion on the novel’s relationship to history. Beauchêne is comprised of three largely independent, nested stories, each preceded by an introductory text. In this chapter, I discuss the importance and uses of prefaces for eighteenth-century novels as represented by the first, formal preface of Beauchêne, as well as its progressive demise as a legitimizing device for the novel. In the subsequent prefatory texts Lesage criticizes the novel’s dependent status on history as he develops a self-conscious commentary of the text’s documentary anxieties, particularly when it comes to the New World. Novelists can swear to the text’s documentary

evidence in the preface, but what happens when there is no preface? Lesage further indicates that such dependence is a function of geographical distance: the farther away each of the narrators move from their origins, the more latitude they have in creating fiction.

In the second chapter, “Unleashing the novel in the Grecque moderne” I show how the Abbé Prévost’s 1740 Histoire d’une Grecque moderne (Grecque moderne) is a critical commentary of modern historiography. I argue that there are two competing narratives in the text – the attempted history by the French diplomat narrator, and the impenetrable stories told by the Greek concubine Théophé, whom he rescued from a Turkish harem. The diplomat tries to enforce a narrative based on historical method onto the story of his failed love affair with the Greek woman so as to establish his innocence in regard to her ultimate death. Yet at every corner he is challenged by Théophé’s counter-stories, stemming from the Oriental tradition and following a received logic that the diplomat is incapable of penetrating and incorporating into his own history. Unable, or unwilling, to seize the truth, the diplomat turns his history into a memoir, pointing at the hopeless subjectivity shared by the historical predicament and the novel. Théophé’s Oriental tale, treated as an ornament to history, emblemizes nevertheless the digressive power of fiction threatening and denying historical discourse.

The third chapter, “Diderot’s Supplément and the Failed Novel,” looks at the famous dialogue by Denis Diderot Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville (1773-4) as an experiment of fiction. I argue that far from being a political commentary on the travel account it nominally stems from –Bougainville’s Voyage, Diderot’s dialogue illustrates the debates regarding fictional texts that use foreign images to illustrate their points. In the dialogue surrounding the *Supplément* – the fictional tome Diderot has his interlocutors A and B read and comment on the Supplément’s dialogue – Diderot responds to the criticism he

suffered from the publication of the Bijoux indiscrets (1748), and applies the model of writing and reading novels as expounded in his “Eloge de Richardson”. The ultimate failure of the fictional *Supplément* to harness A’s interest shows that despite Bougainville’s best, enlightened representational efforts, knowledge of the Other is neither possible nor sufficient to derive European moral lessons.

In the last chapter I argue Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s 1788 pastoral Paul et Virginie constantly fights off the threat of the potential novel germinating in the text. The text starts as a tropical, utopian pastoral, emphasizing the temporal and geographical isolation/circularity and self-sufficiency of the idyllic enclosure where the characters live. However, this pastoral starts to disintegrate when a voyage – Virginie’s voyage to France – is introduced in the text, forcing the characters to acknowledge linear time and physical space outside of the island. This encounter with the outside world must happen mostly through novels and letters, which leads them to acquire a new (written) language as well as a sense of narrative history that threatens the pastoral’s ideal immobility. Paul et Virginie shows the ultimate triumph of the moving, traveling premise of modern history (as represented by the novel) over the ideal, exemplary ideal of ancient history (as represented by the pastoral). Although Paul et Virginie’s pastoral tries to reconcile itself with the need to place itself within a larger, historical framework, Virginie’s voyage ultimately shows the limits of the pastoral, pushing it into a metaphysical sphere, and Paul et Virginie into novel territory.

Thus, although most critics will argue that the eighteenth-century French novel developed as it tried to live up to expectations of realism and verisimilitude, these four chapters show that novelists were quite aware of the representational limits of their texts. Lesage questions foreign sources, Prévost unsuccessfully avoids exotic detours, Diderot shows the unbridgeable distance between Europe and Tahiti, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre

fights the inevitable changes that come with the passage of time. Realism, despite its new scientific profile, is fraught with its own intrinsic failures in displaying the foreign. Yet as novelists show the cracks in the seemingly homogenous surface of historical representation of the foreign, they also gain access to the very essence of novels that travel – the individual modern experience in face of the new, told in a way that solicits the reader's emotions. If modern travel has largely conquered feelings of wonder, it is not devoid of excitement, expectations, uncertainty, and perhaps, a hope for the new.

Chapter 1

Lesage's Love-Child: Questioning Origins in Beauchêne

Alain-René Lesage's 1732 novel Les Aventures de Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchêne, capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle France (Beauchêne²¹) strikes critics as an anomaly. Accustomed to the author's Spanish-themed picaresque novels such as L'Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane (1715-35), they consider this Canadian pirate's adventures a departure from Lesage's signature body of work²². Beauchêne's singular structure is also noteworthy: the text contains three connected, yet quite independent, intercalated stories, and Beauchêne's own individual story and narrative is contained in only half of six chapters that make up the book – chapters I, II and VI. These chapters tell the story of Robert Chevalier, a pirate born in Canada to French parents. From early age Chevalier's irascible temperament and taste for violence leads him to abandon his own family and succeed in being adopted and raised by an Iroquois tribe in Canada. As a young adult, he led the Algonquins against the English in Acadia. He ends up being imprisoned and released, to finally take up a life at sea as a filibuster and under the name Beauchêne. The rest of the story deals with his adventures as a pirate in a myriad of Atlantic settings.

During one of these adventures at the end of chapter II Beauchêne captures an English vessel. Aboard the vessel, he encounters two French prisoners, and recognizes one of them as a French Army captain who had saved him once from death in Canada. This man was then called Legendre, but now he is known as the Count of Monneville. Chapters III, IV and V are dedicated to Monneville's first-person account of his own life and adventures –

²¹ All quotations are taken from the 1991 Phébus edition, Les Aventures de "Beauchesne", Capitaine de flibustiers: roman.

²² In addition to Gil Blas, Lesage also found great success with Le Diable boiteux (1707), Le Bachelier de Salamanque (1734), La Valise trouvée (1740), and the play Turcaret (1709), all of which take place in Spain.

how he found out he was the illegitimate child of two unmarried aristocrats, his struggles to be recognized as such, his own turbulent love story, and his voyages to the French colonies in North America. Monneville's account of how he ended up a prisoner for two years in an English ship at the end of Chapter III in turn comprises the story of Marguerite Duclos, which makes up most of Chapter IV.

Monneville relates that Duclos left France for the American colonies as an unfairly accused outlaw like himself, boarding the same ship he was scheduled to take. During the passage they pretend to be married to protect Duclos from being married off to a random colonist and dispersed into the wild in the new continent. When they arrive in Canada, however, they are granted a post as keepers of a remote outpost in the frontier. Once there, Duclos' life takes an improbable turn: she becomes the *sakgame* (chief) of a Huron tribe and establishes a curious type of feminist government among them. Monneville thus describes Duclos' philosophy and work in the tribe, and how he left Canada for France alone. In chapter V, he returns to Canada, to find that Duclos had died. It is on the way back to France that Monneville is captured by the English.

A third distinctive characteristic of Beauchêne is that unlike many eighteenth-century novels that make false claims to the veracity of the facts portrayed in their texts, Beauchêne's story seems to be at least partly based on real events. Robert Chevalier, captain of a privateer in New France, is most likely "Beauchêne, Robert Chevalier, dit", listed in the Canadian Encyclopedia as an adventurer and privateer, born in Montreal in 1686 and dead in Tours, 1731. His memoirs, "with many exaggerations and inaccuracies," were adapted and published by Lesage as Beauchêne, as the encyclopedia puts it. In contrast, neither Monneville's nor Duclos' stories possess any sort of historical backing; stylistically, they fall

respectively within the picaresque and utopian conventions and are considered to be purely fictional.

Beauchêne's publication history and scholarship follows this dichotomy between history (Chevalier's story) and fiction (Monneville's and Duclos' stories) in the text, especially in the past century. Beauchêne was first published in Paris in 1732, and reprinted in 1733, in Paris and Amsterdam. A second edition was not published until 1780 and 1783 in Maastricht and Amsterdam. In the meanwhile, an English translation appeared in 1745 in London. In 1824, a two-volume stand alone edition of the book was published in Paris. Between 1783 and 1828, Beauchêne was republished five times as part of collections of Lesage's complete or selected works by five different editors. After 1828, Beauchêne only re-emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, and it is then that editors' choices started to clearly separate fact from fiction.

Namely, in 1901, Charles de la Roncière, historian of the French Navy, includes Robert Chevalier in his history of the French colonization of Canada, deriving most of his information from Beauchêne (Henriot 6). In turn, Emile Henriot, editor of the 1933 edition of Beauchêne, entirely eliminates chapters III, IV and V – the Monneville/Duclos chapters. Henriot considers the Monneville chapters were “inspired” by Lahontan and Prévost, and therefore “seconde main, et si manifestement hors du sujet des Aventures de Beauchesne, que nous croyons pouvoir le supprimer, pour ne réimprimer ici que les trois seuls livres qui ont trait à notre aventurier.” (20). The Librairie Commerciale et Artistique published the entire text of Beauchêne as part of a general history of great adventurers (1968) and as a stand-alone book (1969). The first edition differs from the second in that the first includes Lesage's text within a collection of actual travel accounts, but both minimize the appearance of Lesage's name in the title page, insinuating again that Beauchêne's account is veridical.

Finally, the most recent editions from 1980 (Verdier) and 1991 (Phébus) are both faithful to the first edition text. The 1991 Phébus edition unmistakably characterizes *Beauchêne* as a novel – the word “roman” clearly appears on the cover of the book. Table 1 at the end of the chapter lists all *Beauchêne*’s editions²³.

Likewise, scholarship dedicated to *Beauchêne* reinforces the notion that the text doubles as both history and fiction. Early in the twentieth century, much was made out of the actual existence of Robert Chevalier and possibly of his manuscript, which Lesage would have used as a basis for *Beauchêne*, as it is indeed clearly explained in the preface. This issue is largely although somewhat unsatisfactorily resolved: records show that a Robert Chevalier lived more or less at the time and places indicated in *Beauchêne*, but no manuscript has ever surfaced. The argument put forth by many scholars is that if you can prove that Robert Chevalier existed, and that the facts reported in *Beauchêne* are true, then he could have well left some kind of record that ultimately made its way to Lesage’s hand. *Ergo*, critics conclude, Robert Chevalier and his manuscript most likely existed, and that is generally accepted by current critics as well.

With this controversy settled, more recent scholars have shown interest in *Beauchêne*’s “other story,” that of the count of Monneville and Duclos. More precisely, it is Monneville’s telling of Duclos utopian experiment among Canadian indigenous peoples that has grabbed the attention of literary critics since the 1980s. Scholarship on the Duclos’ utopian experiment became particularly rich within *Beauchêne*’s critical bibliography in the 1980s and 1990s. Assaf (1986) and Campbell published their views on this singular episode of *Beauchêne*, while many other critics have noted parallels between Monneville’s episode and Prévost’s *Manon Lescaut* and *Cleveland*, as well as Labat’s and Lahontan’s writing

²³ A new edition of *Beauchêne* appeared in January 2008 by La Découverte.

(Chinard 1913, Cazenobe, Marouby, Runte 1994, Fougère), thus pointing to the text's larger intertextual network. These critics all seek to explain the construction and ultimate destruction of the utopian experiment created by Lesage, inserting the text and its author within a philosophical context that speaks to cultural relativism, feminism, or socio-political criticism of the French monarchy.

In general terms thus, scholarship is mostly split between these two seemingly parallel "camps", the "Chevalier" camp and the "Monneville/Duclos" camp. Early critics such as Gilbert Chinard, Emile Henriot, and Roger Laufer tend to point to Beauchêne's "lack of coherence" as the reason behind the novel's relative lack of success. Later, the text's very obscurity became the attraction: Beauchêne has been variously described with adjectives that suggest at once marginality and appeal – Beauchêne is a "roman éclipsé" according to Francis Assaf, "roman maudit" in the words of François Bessire, "roman mineur" in Claude Filteau's opinion. Yet few attempts have been made to reconcile Chevalier and Monneville/Duclos' stories; the exceptions are Francis Assaf (1997) and Claude Filteau, who see internal, complementary parallels between Beauchêne's and Monneville's stories. Both critics attempt to understand Beauchêne's heterogeneity as strengths rather than as weaknesses, as traditional scholarship on the text has imposed.

Still, accepting heterogeneity obfuscates the fact that history and fiction not only coexist in Beauchêne but live inside one another and interact. Indeed, the relationship between history and fiction underlies much of the literary theory explaining the novel's development in the eighteenth century, and even more specifically in the 1730s as Goubier-Robert argues. As noted earlier, however, critics choose to follow one track or another – to pursue the manuscript leads and ignore Duclos' utopia, or to discuss the utopia in light of other utopias but not in light of the text that encases it. To be sure, Beauchêne is resistant to

a combination of theoretical approaches: the text seems to only acquiesce to interpretation from one angle at a time, revealing that the theories that suggest a supposedly tight connection between history and the novel may not explain Beauchêne's essential heterogeneity. Thus, in this chapter, I have chosen to study where Beauchêne's stories converge – the prefatory texts that precede each of them, the places of intersection between genres and forms where transition and *critical* interaction are present – so as to understand the novel's relationship with history and travel literature principally through the intratextual connections in this particular work of Lesage's.

Why prefaces? According to the principal early eighteenth-century novel theory scholars, the eighteenth-century novel's most defining characteristic is its endeavor to pass for an original, historical manuscript. Jan Herman elaborates such established view as,

Condamné pour des raisons tant esthétiques que morales, le roman cherche à s'expatrier, à s'extraire du champ poétique où ses normes esthétiques et morales sont en vigueur, en s'associant à des formes discursives non fictionnelles: mémoires, correspondances... En se couvrant des signes de la non-littéralité, le roman échappe aux condamnations esthétiques et morales, qu'il n'est plus censé respecter en tant que texte *authentique*. (Angelet and Herman 13)

Such attempt is principally developed in the formal aspect of the text, and the most popularly imitated forms are letters and memoirs. In both cases, it is the text's formal resemblance to a collection of letters or a private memoir that creates the appearance of truth. A letter, for example, may be easily recognizable as one because it usually contains a place, a date, a salutation to the recipient, a valediction from the sender, and a signature. Several scholars have explained the development of the novel in the eighteenth century

through the novel's relationship to the memoir and epistolary genres²⁴. Yet as Lesage's Beauchêne shows, some novelists also used the travel account structure as a formal proof of historical veracity of the text. A travel account's formal veracity is in turn based most often on the logic of its time-space organization, in addition to the support lent materials that corroborate it: maps, itineraries, glossaries of foreign words are a few examples.

Novelists' attempts to have their texts read as original documents are thus based primarily on giving them the overall appearance of a historical primary document, and this illusion is often substantiated by the use of paratextual materials²⁵. According to Gérard Genette's Palimpsestes, paratextuality is one of the many possible forms of transtextual relationships – in this case, the relationship between a main text and the subsidiary texts that together with it compose a literary work. Paratext is the term used by the author to designate these subsidiary texts – examples of paratext are titles, title pages, prefaces, postfaces, supplements, etc. In Seuils, Genette concentrates on each of the paratextual instruments' roles in the context of a literary work. Although the preface is one of the many possible documents that serve as support of the main text, within Seuils it seems to occupy a privileged position²⁶, as the author dedicates more space to the analysis of the preface than to any of the other paratextual instruments²⁷. Genette is specially preoccupied with the idea

²⁴ Vivienne Mylne and Philip Stewart, notably, followed in Georges May's footsteps and sought to examine the technical aspects of the relationship between these genres and the development of the novel.

²⁵ Hamilton Beck looks at several paratextual devices used by novelists to imitate historical writings: title pages, prefaces, postscripts are a few of the supporting materials that helped underscore the historical "truth" of the novel.

²⁶ Genette is ambiguous about the importance of the antecedent position of the paratext in relation to the main text. He is quick to consider a postface "une variété de préface" (165) whose unique characteristics are not enough to merit a special categorization outside of preface. The notion of threshold, however, implies a middle position (mediation) between the text and its reader, and thus the position of the paratext in internal structure of a literary work seems to be of utmost importance. Accordingly, Genette does not include appendixes or supplements as paratexts in Seuils.

²⁷ Indeed, Genette seems to fully cover the entire spectrum of prefatory functions, although most of them refer to the "préface auctoriale assumptive originale" (200) – to the preface an author writes about his own text. According to the parameters established by Genette, Beauchêne's is a "préface allographe assumptive

of “threshold”, as he aptly puts it: “plus que d’une limite ou d’une frontière étanche, il s’agit ici d’un *seuil*, ou – mot de Borges à propos d’une préface – d’un ‘vestibule’ qui offre à tout un chacun la possibilité d’entrer, ou de rebrousser chemin” (8). For Genette, a preface is a “discours de valorisation”: the preface welcomes the reader and guides him on how to read the text – as Genette puts it, it serves to “obtenir une lecture,” and “que cette lecture soit bonne” (200). It is the first commentary on the main text, and encapsulates its vices and virtues; it tells the reader why he or she should (or sometimes should *not*²⁸) be reading the subsequent main text – either way enticing the reader.

In the eighteenth century, the preface’s function thus goes beyond an aesthetic aid to the novel’s aspirations to a formal historical document appearance: it is the place where the author often offers a personal endorsement of the historical truth of the document the reader is about to start. Moreover, in addition to serving a paratextual function, the preface is also the space where *metatextual* relationships develop. Metatextuality is also a Genettian term to define “la relation, on dit plus couramment de ‘commentaire’, qui unit un texte à un autre texte dont il parle, sans nécessairement le citer (le convoquer), voire, à la limite, sans le nommer. [...] C’est, par excellence, la relation critique” (Genette 1982, 11). In other words, the metatext (commentary) encompasses the apparent or hidden relationship of a text with its critical environment. As Herman explains, the preface contributes to building a “poétique,” as it defends the text against possible criticism and comments before the text is even read; it shows the preoccupations of the authors as to how his text will be accepted (1999, 15). The preface thus not only speaks to the reader and about the main text, it also

apocryphe”, but because I am mostly interested in the intertextual (commentary) function of the preface, I will not dissect the nature of Beauchêne’s preface in this chapter.

²⁸ As Rousseau would famously put in the preface to Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse, “Jamais fille chaste n’a lu des romans [...] Celle que, malgré ce titre, en osera lire une seule page est une fille perdue; mais qu’elle n’impute point sa perte à ce livre, le mal était fait d’avance. Puisqu’elle a commencé, qu’elle achève de lire: elle n’a plus à risquer” (4).

creates a space for the text's ideological relationships with an external body of criticism. As the novel tries to pass for a historical document, so does its preface; as the preface mimics other genres' prefaces, the eighteenth-century novel preface establishes the discussion of the novel within historiographical conventions, adopting history's jargon, and inserting itself in historiography debates.

Beauchêne's mimicry of history passes through travel and travel literature. Like novels, travel accounts used history and historiography as the benchmarks for the acquisition of standards that would result in greater legitimization of the genre. Travel accounts' prefaces elaborated on two particular *topoi* found in historical prefaces: they discuss the pleasure and instruction one gets from reading it (the *utile dulci* precept²⁹) and explain the origins of the original manuscript (usually a *found manuscript* story). In principle, Beauchêne's first preface does precisely that. However, I argue that Beauchêne's prefaces also question and ultimately challenge the novel's need to claim authenticity by mimicking historical documents such as travel accounts. In the next sections my examination of each of the three prefatory texts found in Beauchêne will show a progressive deconstruction of the historical prefatory standards that regulated novels' publications in the early eighteenth century.

The first preface's heading, "Du Libraire au lecteur," points to Etienne Ganeau as its author, since Ganeau's name appears on the title page of Beauchêne's first edition as its publisher. On the same page, Lesage appears as the *rédacteur* of the text (Figure 4).

²⁹ Wendelin Guentner's research on travel literature prefaces (1992) shows that the Horatian precept of *utile dulci*, as well as the emphasis on simple style, have been common *topoi* in the genre's prefatory texts since the Renaissance. Guentner argues that the French travel account becomes "literary" in the eighteenth century as it starts to accept the development of a rhetorical vein. Guentner points to the appearance of the *écrivain-voyageur* in the eighteenth-century (as opposed to the former *voyageur-écrivain*) as a possible explanation for the change. Unfortunately, Guentner does not discriminate much between real and fictitious travel accounts, which may add noise to her data. I believe that the eighteenth century saw the rise of the scientific travel account, which led to a much sharper distinction between "serious" and "frivolous" texts, or "objective" and "subjective" accounts. In the context of such dichotomy, the century may have thus seen the rise of both literary and scientific travel accounts.



Figure 4: Title page of Beauchêne's first edition, 1732.

Although some critics attribute this preface to Lesage himself, there is no hard evidence proving that. Because it is not clear who the author of the preface is, I will call the first, official preface to Beauchêne the *editorial* preface. The editorial preface to Beauchêne largely follows the conventional standards for eighteenth-century prefaces, while beginning to hint at the preface's intrinsic instability that sows the seeds for a more full-fledged criticism of the prefatory conventions in the body of Beauchêne's text. The stories that

follow, however, are introduced by prefatory texts that directly confront the first preface's historical standards.

These subsequent prefatory texts are, to be sure, not prefaces in the strict sense of the word. They only remain prefaces insofar as they precede the text that is about to begin; they introduce and guide the reader into the story that is about to follow, and thus we could assume they were written by Lesage, the *rédacteur* – in an effort to conjoin the three disparate stories. But as they are an integral part of the main text, they are not paratextual in the Genettian sense. And as they belong in the main text, they observe a different set of rules that are dictated by the literary text itself. In other words, the prefatory texts that precede the story of Monneville and Duclos belong in the preface tradition of introducing a text, but also to a story line as well.

The second prefatory text, for example, rather than being a static threshold through which the reader must pass, is dynamic and reflect the process of reading, accepting, and judging a text. Beauchêne introduces Monneville, who starts telling his stories; Beauchêne and his pirates all listen intently to Monneville, commenting, approving, yet ultimately disavowing the story's value. This becomes particularly important if we take Chevalier's narrative as historical and Monneville as possibly fictional; the relationship between the two should then reflect the relationship between historical and fictional texts from the vantage point of the former. The second prefatory text also sheds light on the economics of the *utile dulci* precept that is particular to the novel by showing how the pedagogical premise of fiction is quickly sidelined in favor of an economically profitable entertainment profile.

In the third prefatory text, in turn, Monneville introduces Duclos' character through the story of another deportee to the French colonies in the Americas. This young man story is principally one of challenging paternal authority; most significantly, the father in question

is a bookseller. The young man's telling of his last challenge to his father's rule – he pointedly destroys his father's books' prefaces – should be read as an allegory of the possibility of a complete rupture between history and novel, this time as though it is the novel's turn to reflect upon its relationship with history. As an introduction to Duclos' utopian tale, the young man's anecdote points to the novel's independence from historiography standards by placing the narrative in the new world, where both author and text may find new grounds.

Du libraire au lecteur: The Editorial Preface

Horace's precept of the *utile dulci* – the idea that edification is best achieved within a context of the reader's amusement – is present in practically every novel and travel account preface of the eighteenth century. The dual claim that the text the reader is about to read is both informative and amusing appears in one of many variations combining the *utile/instructif/informatif/exemplaire/édifiant*, with the *agréable/amusant/deléctable*, to mention a few of the most popular adjectives used to characterize both the *utile* and the *dulci*.

In satisfying the eighteenth-century reader's *curiosité* – la “passion, désir, empressement, de voir, d'apprendre, de posséder des choses rares, singulières, nouvelles &c.” (“curiosité,” Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française 1694) -- alone, travel accounts fulfill their *utile dulci* premise. Travel was dangerous and not accessible to most people; travel accounts satisfied the curiosities about the outside world from the comfort of their homes. These texts are purveyors of original information useful to gratify the desire for aesthetics, knowledge, and possession, much as Stephen Greenblatt argues in Marvelous Possessions. In the early modern age, the *utile dulci* of travel accounts rested on the novelty of the new

world. Novelty – la curiosité, la singularité – encompasses in turn both the useful, as it is new information, and the amusing, as it strikes the imagination of the reader.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, we are still at the height of European overseas expansion; the world still has not been entirely mapped, and thus travel accounts can still mine unknown lands for novelty. The elaboration of the *utile dulci* in travel accounts' prefaces is thus widespread. Lahontan points out on the preface to "Il n'est pas nécessaire d'avertir combien cet ouvrage peut remplir une louable curiosité [...] Le nombre & la diversité des faits surprendra l'attention, & la doit tenir agréablement en haleine" (Lahontan 1723 "Préface," np). In turn, Père Labat comments that "[e]nfin, on peut dire que ces Mémoires fournissent abondamment des instructions aux Voyageurs, aux Commerçans, aux Consuls & aux Ministres des Princes Chrétiens. Ils sont si agréablement diversifiez, qu'on ne s'ennuiera jamais de les lire, parce qu'on y trouvera un mélange continuel de l'utile, de l'instructif & du délectable" (Labat 1735, xvi).

Similarly, an elaboration of the *utile dulci* precept could be found in the preface of practically every novel published in the eighteenth century. Clearly, if the novel were trying to pass as a historical manuscript, and history was concerned with its pedagogical vocation (see discussion in the introduction), the *utile dulci* precept emphasized in novels' prefaces was one way the novel imitated history's conventions. This persistent incidence of the *utile dulci* precept in prefaces can also be explained as a hedge against mounting censorship by the government³⁰. Moralists concerns informed the censors' choice of what received the "approbation et privilège du Roy" – and could be published therefore in France³¹, and the preface underscored the usefulness of the book as a true example of virtue – or not. Some

³⁰ See Françoise Weil, *L'Interdiction du roman et la librairie (1725-1750)*, for an analysis of the impact of the government's censorship of the novel in the early eighteenth-century.

³¹ F. Weil argues that production and publishing of novels continued largely unabated despite the 1737 prohibition.

authors used the preface to warn the reader that the story they were about to tell was *not* a model of virtuous conduct, or an example to be avoided³².

If for travel literature the novelty of the new world combined the instructional and the entertaining to catch the readers, for novels, then, it was perhaps the novelty of a view into ordinary people's lives that attracted them. No longer were readers exposed to the exemplary lives of saints, martyrs, knights, or kings, the usual subjects of historical romance. According to Mylne, the nature of fictional prose writing takes a turn in the second half of the seventeenth century. She argues that, unable to compete with historical texts for well known historical subjects, writers turned to private lives as fodder for their fictionalized histories. The ordinary, and sometimes not so ordinary, lives of people offered less virtue and more vice, and depicting bad examples to the eyes of the public (women in particular) was akin to inciting bad behavior. In sum, the fascination of travel accounts and novels rested primarily on the newly afforded perspectives into the world and into the lives of individuals, respectively. A text such as Beauchêne's actually combines windows into both spaces – the outside world and the private life of a pirate.

In explaining the *utile dulci* of Beauchêne, the editor seems however not entirely convinced of the text's moral usefulness in the travel account or novel traditions. Rather, the preface suggests a different definition of the *utile dulci*, one that revolves around the monetary value of the text's entertainment potential. Money is thus the first issue discussed in the preface:

³² Abbé Prévost's Manon Lescaut's *Avis de l'auteur* (1732) is one of the most famous contemporaneous examples of such warnings:

[le lecteur] verra, dans la conduite de M. des Grieux, un exemple terrible de la force des passions. J'ai à peindre un jeune aveugle, qui refuse d'être heureux, pour se précipiter volontairement dans les dernières infortunes; qui, avec toutes les qualités dont se forme le plus brillant mérite, préfère, par choix, une vie obscure et vagabonde à tous les avantages de la fortune et de la nature; qui prévoit ses malheurs, sans vouloir les éviter; qui les sent et qui en est accablé, sans profiter des remèdes qu'on lui offre sans cesse et qui peuvent à tous moments les finir; enfin un caractère ambigu, un mélange de vertus et de vices, un contraste perpétuel de bons sentiments et d'actions mauvaises. (35-6)

Le chevalier de Beauchesne, auteur de ces Mémoires, après avoir passé près de cinquante ans au service du roi, tant sur terre que sur mer, vint en France avec une fortune considérable; mais la passion qu'il avait pour le jeu la dérangea bientôt, sans parler de quelques affaires d'honneur que son esprit brusque et violent lui suscita, et qu'il ne peut accommoder qu'aux dépens de sa bourse. Il perdit plus des deux tiers de son bien à Brest, à San Malo, à Nantes, et alla s'établir à Tours avec le reste. (15)

In this first paragraph of the preface, thus, the editor explains how Chevalier ("chevalier de Beauchesne") made a fortune, and then lost two thirds of it by gambling. Immediately thereafter, the editor explains that Chevalier's second best pleasure was to write: "Dans les heures que sa fureur pour le jeu lui permettait d'employer à d'autres amusements, il s'occupait volontiers à mettre par écrit les événements de sa vie, à se rappeler tous les coups de main qu'il avait faits, tous les dangers qu'il avait courus: c'était, après le *tôpe et tingué*³³, le plus grand de ses plaisirs" (15).

For Philip Stewart the hierarchization of gambling and writing, underscores the idea that Chevalier was a real person, and not a professional writer, which in turn sustains the illusion that Beauchêne was a real memoir, and not one invented by Lesage (85). Yet as Assaf points out, this illusion is challenged in the next paragraph where the editor exposes Chevalier's assessment of his own memoir as a didactic document:

Un autre motif l'excitait encore à ce travail, qu'il regardait comme utile à la société; il s'imaginait qu'on lui saurait un gré infini des moindres détails qu'il ferait des rencontres où il avait commandé; puisque, selon lui, un capitaine de vaisseau et un simple patron de barque devaient avoir autant de prudence,

³³ Card game popular in the eighteenth century.

d'adresse et de courage dans leur conduite qu'un amiral dans la sienne. (1997, 15-6)

In Assaf's opinion, "cette remarque est d'autant plus ironique qu'on se rend compte à la lecture du texte que Chevalier ne saurait passer pour soucieux d'utilité sociale ou morale" (198). Assaf contends that such contradiction points to the presence of Lesage as author of the memoirs, and to evidence that the text is fiction. To be sure, Assaf's analysis seems to point to the possibility that the editor added this paragraph to fulfill the *utile* premise of the preface; the disconnection between this paragraph and Chevalier's own amoral behavior throughout Beauchêne does makes this intervention look entirely out of place.

Indeed, if this last paragraph is an editor's intervention to invest some *utile* in the preface of a text that is lacking in pedagogical content, the elimination of this portion of the text allows us to read the preface in a way that shows an essential feature of literary production that is often missing from eighteenth-century novel theory: the financial incentive that lies behind writing a popular book. Lesage has been famously recognized by Gustave Lanson as the first French novelist to earn a living by his writing:

[...] il apporte dans la vie littéraire un fait nouveau, considérable en ses conséquences. Jusqu'ici du moins, ce n'étaient que de pauvres diables d'écrivains, sans talent et sans gloire, qui avaient vécu aux gages des libraires. Lesage, par indépendance, par dignité d'homme, n'attend ni les pensions ni les cadeaux ni les sinécures, que procure la faveur des grands. Il entend vivre de son travail. (669)

Lesage's quest for financial independence is further underscored by Assaf's comment of letter 31 of another of Lesage's less-known books, La valise trouvée (1740). Assaf reminds us that Lesage was conscious of the earning potential of the writing

profession: “il est clair qu’il considère à ce stade de sa vie tout engagement littéraire [...] comme une garantie d’impécuniosité” (1999, 113). The fact that after retiring from a life of plundering ships in the Atlantic, Chevalier’s two main “retirement” activities were gambling and writing suggest a parallel between the pirating, gambling and writing that in turn point to the intrinsic risks of the writing profession. Yet the implied *hierarchization* between the three activities may well also point to the alternative financial sourcing that Chevalier’s widow is led to pursue after his death. The last paragraph of the preface indicates how the manuscript arrived in the editor’s hands:

Peu de temps après la mort de M. de Beauchesne, un des amis de sa veuve et des miens m’écrivit de Tours, et me manda qu’il avait déterminé cette dame à faire imprimer les Mémoires que son mari lui avait laissés. Effectivement, elle me les envoya, en me priant de les mettre au jour, s’ils ne me paraissaient pas indignes de la curiosité du public. Je les ai lus, mon cher lecteur, et j’ai jugé qu’ils contenaient des choses qui pourraient vous être agréables; au reste, si dans quelques endroits vous trouvez le style un peu trop marin, souvenez-vous que c’est celui d’un flibustier. (16)

In other words, if we read the editorial preface without the “misplaced” paragraph about the usefulness of Chevalier’s teachings for all commanders of vessels, the preface tells a very straightforward story: Chevalier made a fortune as a pirate and then lost most of it gambling; he had also written a manuscript about his adventures. When he dies, his widow is thus left impoverished and with his manuscript, which she submits to an editor for publication. In such progression of events presented in the preface, the manuscript seems to become the option of last resort for the Chevaliers’ financial woes – the implication being that the widow will receive some compensation for the manuscript. At the very end of the

preface, the editor's somewhat disinclined final decision is that the book contained things that could be interesting to the reader.

Thus in the editorial preface, the traditional *utile dulci* premise of eighteenth-century literary texts is presented to the reader but ultimately undermined by the editor's misrepresentation and hesitation. The *utile* is summarized as an ironic reference to an inexistent feature of the text – the moral lesson for commanders of all kinds of vessels. In turn, the editor does not seem to fully underwrite the amusement value of the text. His comment “j’ai jugé qu’ils contenaient des choses qui pourraient vous être agréables” is far from being a strong endorsement about the text's *dulci* value. Still, the editor indicates that the text is published because of its *potential* for entertainment and thus profit, as suggested by the widow, the intermediary friend, and finally his own opinion that some things contained in the text could potentially amuse the reader. In other words, by using the *utile dulci* in the preface and then subtly undermining it, and by pointing to the text's tenuous potential for amusement, the editor reveals the fundamental financial premise that guides the publication process.

The second preface convention explored in Beauchêne's first preface is that of the existence of an original manuscript at the base of the text. To begin with, Robert Chevalier is identified as the author, and his original manuscript is identified as a memoir: “[l]e chevalier de Beauchêne, auteur de ces Mémoires [...]” (15). The text's self-defined status as *Mémoires* immediately subjects it to History, as defined by the 1694 Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française: “*Mémoires*, au pluriel signifient Relations de faits, ou d'événements particuliers pour servir à l'Histoire”. Memoirs are “private sourcebooks,” as Vivienne Mylne explains, “the raw material of history,” (27) or “authentic records of private lives” (32) that historians use to write historical compilations.

For some scholars of the novel, the very appearance of the term *mémoire* in a title page or a preface is enough to raise suspicions. For Gilbert Chinard, for example, the preface's insistence in explaining the origin of the manuscript raised doubts as to its existence: "Cette histoire [the manuscript in the widow's hands] est déjà très suspecte, pour qui a lu les beaux avertissements mis en tête des *Sévéranches*, de *Jacques Sadeur*, et de *Jean Massé*" (1913a, 271). The found manuscript claims became such a widespread practice in works of fiction since the Renaissance— see Rabelais' *Gargantua* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* — that critics learned to read "this text is based on a found manuscript" as "this is a work of fiction." Fernand Halryn argues that "en tant que *topos*, la *fiction* du manuscrit trouvé se présente comme un discours qui n'existe que sous forme rapportée. [...] Le manuscrit *trouvé* redouble, à l'intérieur du texte de fiction, le statut de celui-ci: il a été *trouvé*, c'est-à-dire *inventé*" (494).

Yet *Beauchêne* is not precisely a *found* manuscript. Indeed, as explained earlier, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the possibility of the existence of an original manuscript for *Beauchêne* was at the center of scholarly debate that involved, Gilbert Chinard, Harry Kurz and Aegidius Fauteux. Chinard claimed that "[i]l faudrait alors admettre que le capitaine Beauchêne est un abominable plagiaire, ce qui est fort possible, ou que Lesage a fabriqué de toutes pièces ces prétendus mémoires en se servant de relations de voyages et des romans d'aventures qu'il avait sous la main, ce qui paraît au moins aussi probable" (1913a, 271-2). Kurz proved through historical research the existence of a Robert Chevalier, very much around the time and place indicated by Lesage, and Fauteux takes it upon himself to show that it is not improbable that he could have written a memoir. Historical research further proves that Chevalier was likely an eyewitness to many of the events described in *Beauchêne*, although the chronology, as presented in the text, may be questionable. As

Fauteux concludes, perhaps Chevalier “ne fut jamais beaucoup plus qu’un matelot et que tous ces commandements dont il nous parle ne sont que fictifs” (32). As mentioned earlier, Chevalier’s historical existence has been further underscored by his inclusion in La Roncière’s Histoire de la Marine française³⁴. Ultimately, there are two conclusions to be taken from this literary history detective story: first, Robert Chevalier in all likelihood existed; second, he may well have written the manuscript, but it has not been found, and may well never be. The material absence of the original manuscript does not allow us to vouch for the text’s integrity. If there ever was a Chevalier manuscript, we will never know *how* Lesage used it to write Beauchêne. Beauchêne’s example shows that perhaps not all claims of found manuscripts signify the exact opposite.

More appropriately perhaps, we should look at the original manuscript question as it is developed in the travel literature tradition. From Mandeville³⁵ on, it is not uncommon for writers to “borrow” from travel accounts so as to compose their own, regardless of whether they traveled to the place they are describing or not. Michel de Montaigne, in “Des Cannibales,” uses oral accounts and cosmographers’ reports to construct his own account of the heroic lifestyle of the Tupinambá indians of Brazil. The process of re-writing an original manuscript is an integral part of travel literature, as a travel account is often an organized, narrated version of travel journals or notes. In the eighteenth century, the popularity and commercial profitability of travel accounts probably gave travelers incentive to write their own travel accounts. Likewise, a good original travel manuscript could be handsomely used

³⁴ Charles de la Roncière uses Lesage’s Beauchêne as his main source. In the words of Emile Henriot, “M. de la Roncière [...] n’hésite pas à enlever [Beauchêne] au roman pour le restituer à l’histoire” (6).

³⁵ “Jehan de Mandeville”, translated as “Sir John Mandeville”, is the name claimed by the compiler of a singular book of supposed travels, written in French, and published between 1357 and 1371. By aid of translations into many other languages it acquired extraordinary popularity. Despite the extremely unreliable and often fantastical nature of the travels it describes, it was used as a work of reference - Christopher Columbus had a copy on his ship when he sailed to the Americas.

by an experienced writer and turned into a successful book. Père Jean-Baptiste Labat, for instance, successfully wrote his own travel accounts but also “edited” others’ manuscripts. He did not, however, “find” any manuscripts; he explained very openly who the author of the manuscript was, and how it came to his hands.

Beauchêne, by virtue of being not just a memoir, but a travel account as well, challenges the *topos* of the “found manuscript”. While in memoir and epistolary novels we have been trained to believe that claiming a “found manuscript” is part of the apparatus that hid the text’s fictionality, behind every travel account there is one or more original manuscripts of some sort. The found manuscript may be a *topos* in the novel genre, but when it appears in travel literature, it is usually an honest claim. The likely existence of an original manuscript challenges the notion of Beauchêne as a novel, or at least a novel that hides behind another genre’s conventions.

The editor’s underhanded elaboration of the *utile dulci* and the fact that an original manuscript of some sort likely existed both distance the editor and Lesage from Beauchêne. Ultimately, the hesitation to claim corroborate the text’s value or origin illustrates an anxiety to claim authorial duties over a creation that may not be well received by the audience. In a modified version of the Freudian family romance situation where the child imagines that he is not the son of his father, the father (the novelist) imagines that this is not his son (the novel), and in doing so, he actually frees his work from the weight of its origins. These initial suggestions of the novel’s “bastardization” are further deployed in the subsequent prefatory texts.

Beauchêne’s Preface to Monneville’s Adventures

Chapters III, IV and V of Beauchêne are almost entirely occupied by the “histoire”

of the count of Monneville, which in turn encapsulates the story of Duclos. Monneville had actually been briefly introduced in Chapter I of Beauchêne, where Beauchêne is recounting a story about being captured as a teenager by the Canadian army. He explains that he was released when he spoke in “good French,” revealing that he was not an Indian, but a Canadian³⁶. He writes that

L’officier qui commandait la troupe de Canadiens que nous avions attaqué si mal à propos s’appelait alors M. Legendre. Je dis alors parce que je l’ai connu depuis sous le nom de comte de Monneville. J’ai couru bien des aventures avec lui, comme on le verra dans l’histoire de ma vie. Nous conçûmes dès ce temps-là l’un pour l’autre une amitié qui dure encore aujourd’hui. (28)

In the few pages that follow, Beauchêne tells us how he in turn saved Legendre’s life by thwarting a poisoning plot against him. In “reward,” Legendre returns the young man to his parents, which is the last thing Beauchêne, who had ran away from home, wanted. After this episode, the two did not see each other again until a few years later, when Beauchêne, by then a successful pirate, captures an English boat where Monneville was being held prisoner.

The paragraphs that follow this initial re-encounter between Beauchêne and Monneville are the last ones of chapter two, and they introduce us to the character (Monneville) who will be almost entirely narrating the next three chapters of Beauchêne. While these pages function as a preface to Monneville’s narrative, Beauchêne’s occasional interventions throughout the account turn him into a sort of editor as well. His impressions in the first paragraphs are pre-textual and will be tested as Monneville tells his story. Beauchêne and his fellow pirates will play the role of the editor as the text goes along, trying

³⁶ “Indian” is my own translation of the term “sauvage,” the narrator’s preferred term for the indigenous peoples of Canada; accordingly, “Canadian” is a literal translation of “Canadien” – term used by the narrator to refer to himself when appropriate, and which denotes those born in Canada of French descent.

to shape the account according to the audience's expectations. Ultimately, Beauchêne's commentary becomes a postface – where the editorial critical judgment is achieved, and Monneville is re-incorporated into the weave of Beauchêne's story.

Beauchêne's reencounter with Monneville is the result of his plundering activities at sea. He and his crew take over an English vessel, and Beauchêne explains that "Il y avait à bord de ce bâtiment deux prisonniers Français qui nous dirent qu'il y avait plusieurs années qu'on les traînait de mers en mers, pour les forcer à se racheter par une rançon exorbitante qu'on leur demandait, et qu'ils étaient hors d'état de payer" (113). In other words, Monneville is re-introduced to us as a slave, and it is Beauchêne who now delivers him from captivity. He is assigned by the English a high monetary value that he is incapable of summoning: his perceived value is (much) higher than his actual value.

After the initial reencounter and recognition, Beauchêne and Monneville develop an intensely emotional relationship: "L'amitié que nous prîmes dès ce moment-là l'un pour l'autre devint en peu de jours si forte que nous commençâmes à vivre ensemble comme deux frères qui s'aiment tendrement" (114). Because of this mutual affection Beauchêne extends uncommon privileges to Monneville as he incorporates him into his vessel's crew: "nous le reçûmes flibustier, de même que le gentilhomme qui était avec lui; et sans avoir égard à la date de leur réception, nous partageâmes avec eux le butin, quoiqu'ils en fussent une partie" (114). When the pirates receive him as one of their own, they are elevating his status from inferior (slave) to equal (pirate). Yet when the pirates share the booty with Monneville, they are reducing their own allocations, which effectively means that they are paying for Monneville's freedom by foregoing a fraction of their own reward.

Why would a band of pirates accept such price? "Monneville avait l'esprit vif, plein de saillies, ce qui le rendait fort brillant dans la conversation," (114) writes Beauchêne.

Beauchêne also comments that freedom had rendered Monneville happy, and hopeful that he would be home soon. Indeed, Monneville “disait avoir un beau château d’un revenu assez considérable.” (114) The use of the *imparfait* (disait) here indicates a hint of doubt, and this doubt is immediately reinforced by Beauchêne’s comment that “Il nous amusait si agréablement tous les jours par les histoires qu’il nous racontait, que nous étions continuellement autour de lui, aussi attentifs à l’écouter qu’une populace qui prête l’oreille aux discours d’un charlatan.” (114). Clearly, Monneville’s value is related to a very high entertainment quota. Entertainment, in turn, is not measured by the truth value of his stories – compared to a conman’s discourse – but by the vivacity and wittiness with which Monneville delivered them. In sum, Monneville is entertaining because he tells implausible stories in an amusing manner.

However, Monneville misses his wife and mother and the happiness of his life in France, and wants to go back home. Beauchêne recounts that:

Un jour qu’il était triste et rêveur, contre son ordinaire, je lui dis:

- Monsieur le comte, vous n’êtes plus avec nous; vous songez sans cesse à votre retour en France; vous comptez tous les moments qui le retardent.

- Ne m’en faites pas un crime, me répondit-il en soupirant; j’ai fait dans ma patrie un établissement dont j’avois à peine goûté la douceur, lorsqu’un ordre absolu m’a fait repasser en Canada, et de là je suis tombé dans les fers que vous avez brisés. Vous devez me pardonner l’impatience que j’ai d’aller essuyer les larmes d’une mère et d’une épouse qui me sont infiniment chères. (114-5)

At the same time, the pirates are all curious to hear his stories, and the minute he recovers his good moods, he is solicited to tell them. “De peur de les irriter [ses peines], nous le laissâmes s'occuper à loisir du souvenir de sa famille. Cependant nous étions tous curieux d'entendre le récit de ses aventures” (115). After all, Monneville’s *raison d’être* on the boat is related to the entertainment he provides for his audience – as we shall see later in this chapter, Monneville has no ability other than storytelling. Monneville tries to get away from the task at hand: “vous me demandez un détail qui ne peut être que fort long,” warns Monneville; “vous vous repentiriez sans doute de votre curiosité si j’avais l’indiscrétion de la satisfaire” (115). On one hand, Monneville owes the pirates some entertainment; on the other hand, if he tells his long story to the pirates, he will delay his much desired return to France. He is caught in a modified Scheherazade predicament, where his existence is predicated on storytelling, yet each story delays his return. For Scheherazade each new story means survival for another day; for Monneville, they mean a delay in the ability to fulfilling his wish to go back.

The pirates, once affectionate and fearful of hurting Monneville’s sentiments, become relentless: “Plus Monneville se défendait de contenter notre envie, plus nous le pressions de ne nous pas refuser ce plaisir” (115). Monneville finally concedes – “il se rendit à la fin à nos vives instances. Les flibustiers firent autour de lui un cercle sur notre vaisseau” (115). Thus Monneville’s audience is defined as a group of affectionate yet obstinate pirates; the circle they form around Monneville on the deck of their boat may be either comforting or threatening. Surrounding Monneville in a circle of pirates is akin to enclosing his story within Beauchêne’s; whether the audience continues to coax or threat him to continue it defines the relationship between the two narratives in the next chapters. Although the “prefatory text” *per se* ends with the second chapter, Beauchêne and his pirates continue to

intervene in and evaluate Monneville's narration throughout the following three chapters. These interventions show that the audience is largely unconcerned with the conventional claims of the novel and its preface – they undervalue both Monneville's preoccupation with origins, and the moral lesson of his narrative.

Monneville's extraordinary story begins in the third chapter with the account of his own illegitimate origins: he is the love-child of the count of Monneville and a young marquise. The first interruption of Monneville's narrative occurs as soon as he finishes telling the story of his birth:

Monneville fut interrompu dans cet endroit de son histoire par tous les flibustiers, qui s'empressèrent à lui faire compliment sur la tendresse furtive dont il était le digne fruit. Nous l'embrassâmes tour à tour, lui protestant que nous regardions comme une des plus grandes faveurs de la fortune le bonheur de posséder sur notre vaisseau un fils de l'amour. Il enchérit lui-même sur nos plaisanteries; après quoi il reprit ainsi son discours. (125)

Although these comments may be jocular ("plaisanteries") they nevertheless encourage Monneville to continue telling his story – the pirates seem to respond favorably to his account and the ambiance is still one of gentle coaxing. Most interestingly, this first interruption deals directly with the question of origins of Monneville, and the audience's response is to pay little heed to Monneville's illegitimacy.

As he continues to tell his story, his status is about to become even less traceable as his mother enters a convent and leaves him with a nurse. This nurse, instead of returning him to his father, raises him as a girl. The father is assassinated as he is about to find out about his son. Beauchêne and his pirates interfere in the narration again:

Nous interrompîmes encore tous Monneville dans cet endroit pour déplorer le sort de son père. Ce qui fournit à quelques flibustiers sérieux une occasion de moraliser sur l'instabilité du bonheur de l'homme; mais les autres, prenant peu de goût aux réflexions morales, comme gens préparés à tous les événements de la vie, pressèrent Monneville de continuer son histoire. (134)

This second interruption by Beauchêne shows that the audience is split between the “serious pirates,” who want to stop the story in order to moralize over the fleeting nature of happiness; and the others who are prepared to face life’s adversities, and press Monneville to continue telling his story, as they have little taste for moral considerations. Clearly, Monneville story incites discussion about morals, but the story itself is not told in a moralizing manner, as it is the serious pirates who wanted to add the commentary, not Monneville himself. In addition, the other pirates who had no taste for moral considerations still wanted to hear Monneville’s narrative, implying that Monneville’s story was not moralistic. Indeed, Beauchêne implies that moral considerations could derail the narrative, and the prerogative is to continue telling it.

These first two interruptions are exemplary of Beauchêne’s role as a guide to Monneville’s story and points to the question of origins that envelop the entire text. First, the audience applauds the illegitimate birth of Monneville. Second, the death of the father should bear no moral weight in itself or in the telling of the story: the narrative must continue without much philosophizing. Beauchêne himself is a runaway; he is always playing his origins, official or invented, by adopting the background which will best suit him in each environment. In these interruptions, Beauchêne and his crew guide Monneville toward greater freedom of expression, by liberating him from the weight of familial ties, just as he had done with his own story. Beauchêne’s intermission and guidance of Monneville’s

narrative mimic his own life experiences, which illustrate a willful desire to free himself from any commitment to the past.

The second point to be made with relation to Beauchêne's commentary on Monneville's narrative is that of perceived versus actual value, which also reflects an examination of origins – as though Beauchêne compares the narration to the narrator and finds a disparity between the two. This disparity is further underscored in Beauchêne's last intervention in Monneville's story, where he seizes the narrative voice for a moment when Monneville is about to describe their first meeting in Canada. This brief intervention seems to be most innocuous, except that it points again to the erroneous perception of value that Monneville imparts on people. Monneville points out that Beauchêne and his Iroquois tribe were not able to judge Monneville's true threat, saying that "S'ils eussent su que je n'avais là que soixante et quelques hommes, ils ne se seraient pas retirés comme ils firent après m'en avoir tué quelques-uns" (210).

Monneville finally ends his narration at the end of chapter V, explaining how the English took him prisoner because of his relationship to Louis XIV. Because of his supposedly aristocratic background, the English demanded a large ransom that Monneville would not be able to pay. Because he could not pay, he was forced to "travailler aux ouvrages les plus pénibles" (262). He was then sold to another English pirate, "comme on achète des esclaves, pour gagner sans doute sur le prix que nous lui coûtâmes" (262). Monneville thinks at the end of his narration that his travaux are over: "grâce à Dieu, voilà notre rançon gagnée, car je ne crois pas que vous mettiez à prix la liberté que nous vous devons. Nous en avons toute la reconnaissance dont nous sommes capables; et c'est tout ce qu'exigent les cœurs généreux" (262).

This last pledge finalizes Monneville's narration by putting back on the table the initial unspoken bargain: without material means to pay for his freedom, and taking advantage of an environment receptive of his storytelling skills, Monneville tried to pay for his passage to France with his story. At stake then, is the value of his narration: is it enough to take him back to France? The value of Monneville's story cannot be measured in monetary terms; rather, the only objective Monneville could have had in telling his story was to soften the pirates' hearts so they would leave lucrative waters and go back to France. The first interruption seemed to indicate that they were a receptive audience, and that their sentiments were being touched. The second interruption showed the audience splitting. Monneville made a strategic mistake in turning his story into Duclos' story – the utopian theme being probably too philosophical for practical, life-savvy pirates. As Assaf explains, by including Duclos' utopia in *Beauchêne*, Lesage "sought to include in his novel a tale with both human interest and a moral content" (1986, 85); we could imagine that Monneville's inclusion of a moral, utopian tale in his account to an audience that is uninterested in moral considerations was perhaps a bad decision. The third interruption addressed *Beauchêne* directly, bringing him into the narrative, and then making him into a character himself in Monneville's story, albeit not in favorable terms; he also draws attention again to the disparity between appearance and reality that had been a common thread in his account.

At the end of Monneville's account *Beauchêne* and his pirates consider Monneville's pledge, and initially respond favorably to it : "[t]ous mes flibustiers furent si charmés de l'histoire de Monneville qu'ils l'assurèrent qu'ils consentaient volontiers que nous retournassions sur-le-champ au Sénégal, et même aux Canaries, d'où il lui serait facile de se rendre en France par l'Espagne" (263-4), writes *Beauchêne*. However,

[...] après ce premier mouvement de bonne volonté, on tint conseil à ce sujet, et l'on jugea qu'il était plus à propos de continuer à croiser sur les côtes d'Afrique encore quelque temps, afin de faire quelque autre prise, et d'aller vendre le tout à Saint Domingue, où on ne manque jamais d'occasion pour la France, ou bien à Cadix, supposé que nous fissions quelque capture considérable. (264)

Monneville's story touched the pirates' sentiments but its effect dissipated quickly in light of the possibility of substantial material gains; its conclusion – Monneville's return to France – is deferred as Beauchêne takes back the narration. No longer a narrator, Monneville falls back to being a character in Beauchêne's story. Until the end of the book, Monneville will still be caught in Beauchêne's adventures, captured by the English again, regaining freedom from them, sailing the coasts of Africa, the isles of the West Indies and down to South America, but not to France.

Beauchêne's comment on Monneville story ultimately shows that it is the entertainment side of the story that interests the audience. Indeed, the instructive part of it – the morals that can be extracted through more philosophical discussions about the themes raised by the narrative – is discouraged, as we see in the second narrative interruption. We could envisage the *utile dulci* of Monneville's narrative as a corollary of the first preface's editor's suggestion that amusement is what sells novels. Monneville, however, miscalculates the effect of his entertainment talents on the audience, thinking it would be so effective that it would reach the emotional side of the pirates, raising thereby a response that would be of extreme use for Monneville himself: his passage back to France. Indeed, the miscalculation is double: Monneville goes on to include Duclos utopia in his account, which raises absolutely no response from the audience. Beauchêne seems to be skeptical about Monneville's story all

along, either by discrediting his crew's emotional responses, or by discouraging moral discussions. As editor and prefacer to Monneville's story, Beauchêne mimics and strengthens the first preface's hesitations in regard to the *utile* while emphasizing the *dulci* – by de-emphasizing the instructive side of Monneville's story and placing more importance on its entertainment value.

Beauchêne's initial infatuation with Monneville, which underscored the opportunity afforded to Monneville to tell his story, declines remarkably after Monneville's narrative is over. In Chapter VI, as Monneville is forced to join Beauchêne in his adventures, he becomes a whiny, sentimental, doomsayer, cowardly dead-weight: “un désespoir si marqué me mit véritablement en colère contre Monneville,” (277) writes Beauchêne. Interestingly, another character, Roland, is introduced toward the middle of the last chapter. In contrast to Monneville, Beauchêne introduces Roland as a “Parisien vigoureux” (276) and characterizes him as “aussi courageux que moi, [qui] au lieu de succomber à sa tristesse, songeait à la conservation de sa vie” (278). Otherwise put, Monneville may be entertaining as a storyteller when the winds are not favorable, but when action is required, he is not only useless, but a liability to the ship. Monneville's substitution ultimately shows that entertainment is a disposable, nonessential service that may easily be put aside.

Roland comes to fulfill a role Monneville had failed to incorporate, and the transition was clear. When Beauchêne and his companions were stranded in Juda, in the coast of Africa, both Beauchêne and Roland were drafted to become army officers; Monneville, on the other hand, was not considered (290). Although Roland will not follow Beauchêne very much further after this episode in Juda, Beauchêne is clearly not interested in Monneville anymore. As Beauchêne finds a position in another pirate ship and is about to abandon Monneville, the latter proposes to give half of his assets if Beauchêne stays with

him and takes him to France. But Beauchêne is not yet tired of life at sea. “Tout ce que je pus faire pour lui fut de prier de Gennes de lui chercher occasion de repasser en France et de me rendre caution de tout ce que mon ami lui pourrait devoir” (293).

To the end, Monneville’s character and narrative are evaluated in value terms.

Beauchêne thinks that half of Monneville’s assets is not worth his life in the sea because Monneville’s actual assets are never certain. He is so uncertain about it that he offers to cover the expenses of Monneville’s passage to France. Monneville’s status has always been questionable. A bastard child to start with, he had no official claims to his father’s property or title. Monneville is also a cross-dresser until early adulthood, living credibly as a female until an impending marriage to an older man unveils his secret. He enters a fake marriage with Duclos during his passage to Canada to bolster his chance of survival. He is practically a slave in different ships, although he claims to have a handsome estate and revenues in France. In short, Monneville depended on his ability to pass as something that he was not. His narrative, in turn, in the eyes of Beauchêne, suffers from its narrator’s lack of credibility – or, conversely, on his extreme ability to seem so credible to his audience.

If Beauchêne’s own narrative is taken at face value, we can consider his text as historical, which then puts Beauchêne and his narrative in an interesting position to judge Monneville’s own narrative’s value. First, when the pirates disregard the question of origins of lineage, the implication is that the legitimizing importance of documentation is not a consideration in face of the entertainment promise of Monneville’s story. Second, philosophical and moral lessons are also put aside by those most connected to the realities of life – they are considered unnecessary detours – again emphasizing that Monneville’s narrative should essentially be considered as entertainment, not instruction.

Yet even the entertainment value of Monneville's narrative is questionable. On one hand, we could measure the entertainment value of Monneville's story as the difference between his fabulous narrative and the uncertain reality of his own person. In other words, Monneville is entertaining because his narrative seems to be fictional: how to match his many incredible adventures to a man specialized in passing as someone else? On the other hand, the fact that his fiction fails to earn him what he wants – to go back to France – is indicative of the fleeting nature of fiction's value. The more fictional the narrative seems to be, the higher the entertainment, but the lower economic value it is ultimately assigned. Beauchêne's prefatory duties in Monneville's story illustrate the process of assessing the exchange value of the novel in face of history and show the immediate yet ephemeral impact of entertainment that characterizes fiction.

Monneville's Preface to Duclos's Story

This chapter has thus far examined the editor's preface to Beauchêne, which largely follows the conventional formulas found in the prefaces of novels and travel accounts of the time. Because Beauchêne is a hybrid of novel and travel literature, the conventions play to double standards that mirror the idiosyncrasies of the text, and the preface remains unconvincing either way. I then argued that Monneville's story is prefaced by Beauchêne within his own text, and this second prefatory text, as part of the text itself, followed different rules. Most significantly, Beauchêne's preface to Monneville's story reflects an editorial process already suggested by the editor's preface that favors entertainment yet undercuts its value. Rather than serve as a static threshold between the reader and the text, it introduces the account, and continues to accompany the text with commentary, guiding not only the reader, but also the storyteller. In both prefatory texts, Lesage devises a view of the

novel that challenges the traditional anxiety related to the origins of the text and questions the value of fiction.

Marguerite Duclos' story, the innermost in Beauchêne, is prefaced by Monneville, and this prefatory text follows yet another set of rules that are particularly illuminating for the understanding of the status of the novel in the early part of the eighteenth century. As with Beauchêne's introduction to Monneville's story, Monneville's introduction to Duclos is interwoven in the fabric of his own life account. However, in contrast to Beauchêne, Monneville narrates Duclos' story, and he is never interrupted by Beauchêne or his filibusters as he is telling it. Duclos' story is mostly contained within chapter IV and ends in the beginning of chapter V of Beauchêne.

Duclos is introduced to the reader in the beginning of chapter IV, when Monneville describes his passage to Canada. Duclos is part of the group of outlaws (which includes Monneville) being deported to the colonies. There are fourteen women and two men bound together by chains on the cart taking the deportees to La Rochelle, the French port of departure for the Canadian colonies, and each one of them is telling her or his life story to the other. One of the men is Monneville, and the other man is the only son of a bookseller in Paris. Notably, the latter is laughing loudly while everyone else is melancholy and worried about their dismal fates awaiting them overseas. The young man explains that he is laughing because of the latest and last trick he played on his honorable father:

Je suis fils d'un riche libraire de la rue Saint-Jacques, qui m'a si bien gâté dans mon enfance qu'à l'âge de cinq ans je lui riais au nez lorsqu'il se donnait les airs de me réprimander; et toutes les fois que, dans sa colère, il en venait avec moi aux voies de fait, je ne manquais pas de jeter dans les puits autant de volumes que j'avais reçu de coups. Je vous ennuierais si je vous racontais

toutes les malices que je lui ai faites. Jugez-en par le parti qu'il prend aujourd'hui de sacrifier au ressentiment qu'il en a, un fils unique; car je n'ai ni frère ni sœur, ni n'en aurai, selon toutes les apparences, puisque mon père et ma mère sont trop vieux pour se venger ainsi de moi. (168-9)

Several points stand out in this initial paragraph. The young man is the only son of a rich publisher in Paris. His father's care is met with condescension by the child from early on, and the situation creates an escalating series of commensurate revenges between the two. For every slap the boy receives from the father, he throws one of his father's books in a well, as though the father's library were the body of the father receiving punishment from the son. Eventually, the extent of the son's condescension and malice are measured by the final punishment accorded: the father is ready to sacrifice his only child by sending him to the colonies. To the young man, his father chooses his books over his troubled son, even though, as he points out, he is irreplaceable, because his parents are too old to bear another child – while books are intrinsically a commodity for a bookseller. The young man continues his story, saying that his father had kept him locked in the house for the past three days, fearing that he would escape.

Je me suis bien douté qu'il avait quelque mauvaise intention, et qu'il voulait m'envoyer dans quelque endroit faire pénitence; mais je ne m'attendais pas à aller faire si loin. Pour rendre célèbre le jour de mon départ, et en graver la date en grec, en latin et en français, tandis qu'on me croyait couché, je me suis glissé dans la bibliothèque, où m'étant indistinctement saisi des livres que j'ai trouvés sous ma main, j'en ai arraché de chacun les dix ou douze premiers feuillets. (169)

Although a number of critics have found similarities between this passage and Prévost's description of Manon Lescaut's and Des Grieux's deportation to New Orleans, Lesage references and builds upon two important scenes from Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote (1605). The cart scene parallels Don Quixote's and Sancho's encounter with the convicts who, chained by their ankles, are being sent to the galleys on chapter XXII. In this chapter, Don Quixote stops the chain gang on their way to the port, and after talking each one of the convicts, including Ginés de Pasamonte, who had written the story of his life, *La vida de Ginés de Pasamonte*, Don Quixote decides to free them all. In return for freeing them, Don Quixote asks that they all go see Dulcinea del Toboso to tell her of his valliant act. Ginés reminds Don Quixote that they can't go together, that they must all now fend for themselves alone, in order to run away from the police. This chapter of Don Quixote can be interpreted as an allegory for the liberation of an outlaw genre such as the novel from the picaresque's episodic, binding structures. Ginés' direct reference to one of the most famous examples of the genre, Lazarillo de Tormes³⁷, makes clear the contrast between his own work (which "deals with facts") and the picaresque. In turn, freeing the convicts from the chain gang is akin to freeing each life story to be told on its own.

The bookseller's library is a reference to Don Quixote's library as well. In chapter VI of Don Quixote, as he lays recovering on his bed from his first outing, his friends, niece, and servant decide that his so-called madness was caused by reading too many chivalry books, and proceed to select and throw away the dangerous ones. In Beauchêne, the young man also associates books with his father's madness – his inability to relate to his only son.

However, while Don Quixote's friends triage the books they are defenestrating, the young

³⁷ " 'Is it as good as all that?' said Don Quixote," asking Ginés about his book, *Vida de Ginés de Pasamonte*. " 'It's so good,' replied Gines, 'that I wouldn't give a fig about the *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and all the others of that kind that have been or ever will be written. What I can tell you is that it deals with facts, and they are such fine and funny facts no lies could ever match them' " (182).

man in Beauchêne is indiscriminate, although his discourse may betray an interesting hierarchy of genres: “Je n’ai rien épargné, théologie, médecine, histoire, poésie, romans, tout a passé par mes mains” (169).

Most importantly, the young man’s strategy of tearing out the first dozen pages of each book is not an act of annihilation like in Don Quixote (where the books end up ultimately burned), but a mutilation that marks his presence in his absence. As the father prepares to set his son loose in the wilderness of Canada, the son liberates the books that competed with him for his father’s attention by erasing their origins. The parallel between the young man and a defaced book is made clear: “[p]our ceux qui avaient de longues préfaces, ils n’en seraient pas moins bons, si du moins sur la première page je leur avais laissé leur nom, leur âge, et le lieu de leur naissance. Il est vrai que, faute de cela, ces malheureux vont passer comme moi pour des aventuriers qui n’ont ni feu ni lieu, et ne sont réclamés de personne” (169).

In other words, a long preface may survive and still somewhat protect the main text, but without its title page (where the book’s “vital information” appears), the book becomes a bastard. In tearing out the title page, the document that provided his father with guardianship over what he perceives as his competing siblings (books), the young man turns them into bastards just as his father is about to turn him into one too. Because *pater semper incertus*: given that novelists often published anonymously, or under aliases, and usually distanced themselves from their writing by claiming to have found someone else’s manuscripts, the publisher’s name becomes the only certainty on the title page of a book. The fact that a father is willing to send his only son away to likely death in Canada can be paralleled with the bookseller’s unwillingness to take responsibility over the story that is about to be told.

Likewise, the young man in Canada, as a book without a preface, is free of his origins, unclaimed; *unchecked*, in one word. This suggests that stories would be free of the conventional lineage claims in a new environment, in a new country. This idea illustrates another intersecting point between travel literature and the development of the novel at the time; travel literature afforded, to the writer who does not yet travel, literary material where fiction can be set in an unchecked environment.

Lesage's take on the preface as illustrated by the publisher's young son's anecdote points to the use of ambiguity in relating the origins of the novel in the eighteenth century, pointing to the liberation from structures and documentation. This ambiguity is further developed later in chapter IV of *Beauchêne*, just as we are introduced to Duclos by Monneville. Duclos also hides her background. Although Monneville suspected she had had a good upbringing, she carefully concealed her provenance³⁸ (175, 176). Duclos and Monneville meet because their naturally distinctive ways set them apart from the riff-raff aboard the boat, and some priests take both of them under their wing. The priests tell them that men and women are more or less randomly assigned to each other as they arrive in Canada to forcibly become husband and wife and be sent away to colonize the frontiers. Duclos reacts to this news with disgust, and "la crainte qu'elle avait de tomber entre les mains d'un homme de la plus basse condition excita ma pitié, et me fit songer aux moyens de lui mettre sur cela l'esprit en repos" (176). Monneville comes up with an ingenious, paradoxical solution to her problem: "Je lui demandai si, pour conserver tous deux notre liberté, elle ne trouverait pas à propos que, dans l'occasion, nous nous disions mariés ensemble" (176). Duclos accepts to enter a fake marriage that would keep her free.

³⁸ Indeed, Marguerite Duclos is the name she adopted upon arrival in Canada, and we never learn her real name. To be sure, when Monneville "marries" her on the boat, she is yet unnamed, and referred to only as "la demoiselle" or "la dame".

Furthermore, the priest had promised to help Monneville find work in the city, rather than being sent to the frontier, where life is much more dangerous.

Most importantly, Duclos asks Monneville to provide her with a background story for them: Monneville “n’avai[t] qu’à composer une fable de notre prétendu mariage, et la lui donner; qu’elle l’apprendrait si bien par cœur qu’elle ne se couperait point dans ses réponses quand on viendrait à l’interroger” (176). In other words, Duclos is asking Monneville to fabricate a *fable* to explain their lives together prior to going to Canada; in this story, he is charged with describing the origins of their fake marriage, which in turn she vows to incorporate thoroughly so as to avoid slipping under questioning. Monneville takes up the task with enthusiasm: “Cet expédient me parut bon, et même nécessaire. Je travaillai donc sur-le-champ au roman de nos amours, de notre mariage et de notre exil” (176). Monneville thus takes the opportunity to turn the *fable* into a *roman*, showing that the question of origins may easily be invented. While this seems to be a comment on the novel at first, it sheds light on the *roman des origines* developed in eighteenth-century prefaces. To be sure, Monneville’s *roman* is nothing but a preface that explains and legitimizes the origin of their fake marriage. Lesage further debases the status of this “preface” as it is not even needed:

J’en gardai une copie, et lui en glissai finement une autre dans la main; mais sa mémoire n’eut pas besoin de retenir tous ces mensonges, car sitôt que j’eus fait accroire au révérend père gardien que cette demoiselle et moi nous étions deux époux persécutés par la fortune, ce bon religieux, me croyant sur ma parole, nous accorda généreusement sa protection, et promit de nous rendre service. (176-7)

It is thus a religious authority that frees Monneville’s and Duclos’ lives in Canada from the weight of their (fabricated) origins. The priest’s quick acquiescence is proof of the

irrelevance of explanations when the story that is about to begin will be largely unchecked anyway. The priest will also fail to protect the “married” couple as he had promised by sending them to the frontier anyway. Furthermore, this latest quote also challenges the importance of the materiality of the manuscript. Monneville writes down a lie (“ces mensonges”) to underscore another lie (“prétendu mariage”), so that it is more easily assimilated by Duclos – Monneville follows her own instructions to do so. On a basic level, it shows that an existing manuscript, the all powerful source of truth for so many memoir-novels, could very well be entirely fictitious. On a more complex level, Duclos’ necessary incorporation of lies through the manuscript novel of their invented love story points to the importance of the reading process. As she commits the text to memory, she turns the lies into truths; at the same time, she dispenses with the need for a material document that would question the authenticity of her account³⁹.

Lesage’s Critique of the Novel

Alain-René Lesage’s name appears only once throughout the entire text of Beauchêne: on the title page, where we learn that the adventures of “Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchêne” were “rédigées par M. Le Sage”. The frontispiece also indicates that the book was printed by Etienne Ganeau in Paris. In turn, Robert Chevalier is identified right away in the preface as *auteur* of the text. The responsibility over Beauchêne’s text is thus already somewhat split between a number of people (Ganeau, Ganeau’s friend, Beauchêne’s widow, Robert Chevalier and Lesage), reflecting the authorial uncertainty that will be

³⁹ Alternatively, we could see the manuscript as their *de facto* marriage certificate, one that establishes the history of their relationship. The irrelevance of the manuscript supporting the “marriage” between Monneville and Duclos could point to a criticism of marriage itself. However, since marriages did not require a civil procedure, we could infer that Monneville and Duclos are effectively married in the eyes of the church, as the priest so considers. Of course, consummation through sexual relations between the two never occurs, which in turn annuls the marriage altogether.

developed not only on the subsequent prefatory texts but also in many aspects of the text of Beauchêne as well. Like an illegitimate child, it exists as proof of literary production, and its existence is but the entry point of a series of hesitant authorial attitudes toward the text that are in turn mimicked by the character's ambiguous stances toward their own origins.

The formal preface to Beauchêne scatters responsibility for the text between many pairs of hands. From the optic of the father-son relationship in Sigmund Freud's family romance situation, this points to the question of legitimacy of the father's authority over the offspring. Indeed, family romance is present throughout the text of Beauchêne as it seems as the father's legitimacy is constantly at stake. The son of the publisher reneges his father authority since early age, and deprives his father's books from their authors' names. Monneville himself is a bastard, and Duclos conceals her family name. Robert Chevalier's story is plagued by such parental dissociations. From early age, he repeatedly ran away from his family. To be sure, reneging origins is often a matter of erasing the name of the father. Moreover, Chevalier plays his multicultural identity as a French-Canadian-Indian, disregarding his true origins and siding with the most advantageous profile at any given time.

In addition, according to Freud, the infant questions his legitimacy and his father's as a means of "getting free from the parents of whom he now has such a low opinion and of replacing them by others, occupying, as a rule, a higher social station" (Freud 157). Thus Chevalier not only adopts Beauchêne as a nom-de-guerre, eliminating his family name entirely, but also adopts Chevalier as a title, becoming Chevalier de Beauchêne. Indeed, as with Lesage's name, "Robert Chevalier" only exists on the title page. Throughout the entire text he is referred to as Monsieur de Beauchêne, or Chevalier de Beauchêne. This subtle social ascension may originate in Chevalier's manuscript, perhaps, but it also marks Robert

Chevalier's passage from historical to fictional character⁴⁰. This insistence in parental dissociation is present not only in the plot of the three stories but also as a leitmotif throughout the prefaces. Taken together, Beauchêne's three prefaces spell a tale of mutual and necessary rejection between father/author and son/novel that depicts Lesage's view on the status of the novel and the novelist in the early eighteenth century.

The editor's preface mimics a formal eighteenth-century preface. It deftly uses the conventions that are expected to be found in novel and/or travel literature prefaces. Upon close inspection, each of these conventions is tinkered with, turning Beauchêne's preface into a mish-mash of the two genre's prefaces that does not entirely convince the reader either way. Such indecision points to a couple of conclusions. First, Beauchêne's preface is not an enthusiastic invitation to come into the text, as it destabilizes rather than reassure the reader. In destabilizing the reader, the editor's preface, be it authentic or apocryphal, shows the uselessness of the formal preface in either genre. Perhaps even more than destabilizing, the formal preface's use of the found manuscript *topos* creates an entirely new mystery plot that may deviate, rather than welcome, the reader into the text. Second, the editor's preface shows the hesitant relationship between Lesage and the text: how much responsibility to undertake? Clearly, Chevalier's manuscript is an orphan in search of a father, but neither Ganeau nor Lesage is entirely convinced they want to take full responsibility for it. The editor relies on the widow's and his friend's opinion to come to the conclusion that Chevalier's manuscripts has a few interesting things for the reader; Lesage is exempted from authorial responsibility as he is only a transcriber – not even responsible for the “style un peu trop marin”.

⁴⁰ Monneville also undergoes ascension to aristocratic rank, going from Legendre to Count of Monneville in the course of his story.

Beauchêne's critical preface to Monneville's story illustrates the process of conforming a text to public, critical, and publishing standards. Beauchêne introduces Monneville and his story, and then proceeds to guide its narration according to the audience's tastes at the expense of openly moral considerations. Meanwhile, Beauchêne is also playing the role of the publisher by applying a distinct method of evaluation on Monneville's narrative. Pirate as he is, expert on booty, Beauchêne is well qualified eye to judge value. Monneville's extraordinary account does not match Monneville's persona. Time and again in the narrative, Monneville enters situations where he is valued, often monetarily, above his true value; in other words, he appears to be more valuable than he actually is – he trades his story at premium that cannot be redeemed for cash. Such premium – the disparity between the actual value and the value added to himself and therefore to his story – amounts to the value of fiction. Ultimately, the value of Monneville's fiction is derisory, because it does not buy him his desired passage to France.

Lesage is one of the first modern authors to earn a living by the pen. Some of his critics do point to the fact that because of that, his writing is less than original and too focused on the sale prospect of it. In this light, Monneville appears, as Lesage, as a merchant of stories, submitted to the audience's demands, but suffering from the necessity to back up his work of fiction with historical similitude or moralistic teaching that is uncorrelated to the very purpose of entertainment. Monneville represents the author's struggles to legitimize his work by attributing value to fiction.

The two stories Monneville tells his audience as he is introducing the character of Duclos make direct references to literary production. The anecdote involving the publisher's son contains a commentary of the generic classification of literature and its dependence on the paratext for formal recognition. The young man did not discriminate amongst his

father's books, tearing the pages of theology, medicine, history, poetry books, and novels. Without the title page and preface, these books are defaced cripples in a hospital, undistinguishable among themselves – thus a medicine book could pass as poetry, as well as history as novel. The publisher's son's story is also an allegory for the unknown destiny of the novel. Without the title page and preface to establish the origins of the text, books become orphans just as the young man. As with the repudiated young man, his father's books are now all free of their authors' paternity claims. As with the young man in Canada, the books' destiny is uncertain in a library. Equally telling is the story of Monneville's marriage to Duclos. It is commissioned as a fable, then written as a novel, but ultimately serves as a preface to the fictional marriage between the two characters and to Duclos' utopia. Duclos uses it to legitimize the marriage, reading it closely and memorizing it so well that it can actually protect them from likely death in the colonies. As Lesage equates the preface to the novel, he underscores the fictionality of both texts, while stressing their necessary (vital) predicament to pass as true history.

The fact that this preface-novel ultimately becomes completely unnecessary turns us to a feature of the relationship between the novel and travel literature. Monneville's preface-novel – which could be entitled “*Histoire du Conte de Monneville et de Marguerite Duclos*” – was written so as to convince an established power, the church, to protect them. The priest's rejection of the story demonstrates that in a new environment, traditional rules may be disregarded. The preface-novel created by Monneville to establish his background is not worth anything in Canada, because Monneville's and Duclos' origins are not important ever since they were stripped of their rights as convicts sentenced to work in the colonies. Although we do not learn what the Monneville preface-novel says, we do learn about Duclos' story because of the implicit contract between the two characters that was drawn in

this preface-novel, a story that would not be possible if it were set anywhere else but in the new continent, free of traditional novel conventions. Although utopia such as Duclos' is not entirely original, utopia is fiction by definition. Thus Canada represents how to escape the weight of the preoccupation with origins; because of this lack of concern with origins, narratives flow unchecked by the conventions that tie the novel to historical documentation.

Beauchêne's prefatory texts thus tell us the conflictual story of the relationship between the novelist and his novel. Weighed by audience demands of historical veracity and moralist teachings, the author is forced to appeal to conventional attitudes that mean little. These demands require the mediation of manuscripts, prefaces, frontispieces and publishers which in fact separate the author from its text. By moving Beauchêne's plot back to Canada along with Monneville and Duclos, Lesage is free of Chevalier's manuscript, and suggests that the origin of the text is less important in a new land.

Table 1. Beauchêne's editions

Year	Complete Title	Publisher
1732	<u>Les Aventures de Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchêne, capitaine de flibustiers dans la nouvelle France.</u>	Paris: Etienne Ganeau
1733	<u>Les aventures de Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit De Beauchêne: capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle-France / rédigées par Le Sage.</u>	Paris: Etienne Ganeau
1733	<u>Les aventures de Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit De Beauchêne: capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle-France / rédigées par Le Sage.</u>	Amsterdam: Aux depens de la Compagnie
1745	<u>The adventures of Robert Chevalier, call'd De Beauchene, captain of a privateer in New-France / by Monsieur Le Sage</u>	London: Printed and sold by T. Gardner, R. Dodsley, and M. Cooper
1780	<u>Les Aventures de M. Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchene, capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle France, rédigées par M. Le Sage...</u>	Maestricht: J-E Dufour et P. Roux
1783	<u>Les Aventures de M. Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchêne</u>	Amsterdam; Paris: hôtel Serpente
1783	<u>Les aventures de Monsieur Robert Chevalier, dit de Beauchene, capitaine de flibustiers dans la Nouvelle-France.</u>	Maestricht: J-E Dufour et P. Roux
1810	<u>Aventures du chevalier de Beauchêne</u>	Paris: Impr. De Leblanc
1821	<u>Aventures du chevalier de Beauchêne</u>	Paris: A.-A. Renouard
1823	<u>Aventures du chevalier Beauchêne</u>	Paris: Boulland-Tardieu
1824	<u>Aventures du chevalier de Beauchêne, par Le Sage</u>	Paris: Vve Dabo
1828	<u>Aventures de Beauchêne</u>	Paris: E. Ledoux.
1924(?)	<u>Les Aventures du flibustier Beauchêne, par Le Sage.</u>	Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie.
1926	<u>Les aventures du flibustier Beauchêne</u>	New York: Century
1933	<u>Les Aventures du chevalier de Beauchesne</u>	Paris: Éditions Excelsior
1968	<u>Aventures de Monsieur de Beauchêne, canadien français élevé chez les Iroquois et qui devint capitaine de flibustiers</u>	Paris: Librairie commerciale et artistique
1969	<u>Aventures du chevalier de Beauchêne, Canadien français élevé chez les Iroquois et qui devint capitaine de flibustiers... Texte authentique définitivement établi et rédigé par M. Le Sage.</u>	Paris: Librairie commerciale et artistique
1980	<u>Aventures du chevalier de Beauchêne</u>	Lagrasse: Verdier
1991	<u>Les Aventures de "Beauchesne", Capitaine de flibustiers: roman</u>	Paris: Phébus
2008	<u>Aventures de Beauchêne: Capitaine de Flibustiers</u>	Paris: La Découverte

Sources: Bibliothèque nationale de France's and British Library's catalogues; Henri Cordier's 1910 bibliography of Lesage's work.

Chapter 2

Unleashing the novel in Prévost's Grecque moderne

From beginning to end, the text of Abbé Prévost's Histoire d'une Grecque moderne (1740) (Grecque moderne) bears the imprint of a trial. The narrator opens his account with a question laden with juridical terms: "Ne me rendrai-je point suspect par l'aveu qui va faire mon exorde?" (55). The narrator's use of "suspect" and "aveu" suggests a crime has been committed. Although we do not yet know the nature of the crime, in this very first sentence the narrator identifies himself as a suspect trying to excuse himself from guilt. The very last sentence of the text similarly undercores the trial theme in the text: "C'est immédiatement après la première nouvelle qu'on m'en a donnée [sur la mort de Théophé] que j'ai formé le dessein de recueillir par écrit tout ce que j'ai eu de commun avec cette aimable étrangère, et de mettre le public en état de juger si j'avais mal placé mon estime et ma tendresse" (292). The crime is finally revealed – a woman, Théophé, is dead; the suspect is testifying about his entire relationship with the victim immediately after learning about it; he appeals directly to the reader, openly asking for sympathetic judgment for a crime he classifies as being only one of "estime et tendresse".

Between the exordium and the conclusion of his testimony, the narrator relates a series of situations where he is incapable of judging Théophé's actions. It all starts when he, a French diplomat in Turkey, meets a young woman in the harem of one of his Turkish friends, Chériber. A few words are exchanged between them, and a few days later a message arrives in his hands with a plea from the young woman, asking him to liberate her from the harem. The diplomat frees her, asking in return only that she tell him her story. Théophé tells him of her vague Greek origins and of how she was brought up by a suspicious father-

character to please men, so he could sell her into a harem. She is indeed sold to the harem of the governor of Patras, but is kidnapped by his son. They are soon caught and she returns to her father. The two of them go to Constantinople, where her father is arrested and executed for a past crime. Alone in the world, Théopbé resorts to selling herself into slavery at a slave market, where she is bought by an employee of Chéribér. When the diplomat appears, Théopbé had spent about six months in Chéribér's harem.

After telling the diplomat her story, Théopbé decides to leave, but he retains her. While in the beginning he asserted that he had no desire for her, the situation begins to change, and the diplomat starts to consider the possibility of her becoming his mistress. Théopbé repeatedly refuses the diplomat's advances, claiming that she wants to lead a virtuous life. The diplomat decides that if he is not to possess her, no one will; and they strike a pact of platonic co-habitation, which is constantly threatened by Théopbé's putative amorous adventures and the diplomat's jealous rages. Théopbé gets involved in dubious situations that could be interpreted as infidelity, but she always has a reasonable explanation for them that the diplomat can never entirely refute. Such situations recur not only in Turkey but also in Italy and France, where they move together. The diplomat grows increasingly jealous and paranoid, to a point where incapable of proving Théopbé's infidelities he gives up on her and falls gravely ill for a long period. Théopbé herself dies shortly thereafter. The text of Grecque moderne is thus the diplomat's retrospective account of their relationship.

References to a trial are present both in the greater structure of Grecque moderne (as represented by the narrator's testimony to the reader) and in the narrator's relationship with Théopbé¹. The narrator repeatedly confronts the evidence of her infidelities, weighs it

¹ Alan Singerman provides a detailed analysis of the trial structure of the text in his article "Quand le Récit devient procès: le cas de la Grecque moderne" (1997), and suggests that rather than judging Théopbé or the diplomat, Prévost ultimately wants the reader to decide whether moral rehabilitation is possible (426-7).

against Théophraste's countering testimony, and inconclusively judges her moral character. Thus Grecque moderne is structured as a series of trials of Théophraste within the trial of the narrator, and the reader is asked to judge the judge of Théophraste. Still, to understand the narrator's decisions, we have to look into how he handles the evidence, and we are thus forced to judge Théophraste as well; the reader is constantly prompted to deliver a verdict of guilty or innocent.

And thus we judge; as the narrator shifts the focus from his trial to the many trials of Théophraste, readers fall into the temptation of solving the mystery of the Grecque moderne. We are warned by author and critics alike that such an attempt is ill-fated. As the narrator plainly puts it, "tout ce qui la regardoit [Théophraste] depuis que je l'avois vue pour la première fois avoit été pour moi une énigme perpétuelle, que son discours même me rendoit encore plus difficile à pénétrer" (142). Despite the clear caveat, we still experience the narrator's anxiety to discover the truth, and become lost in the ambiguities of Théophraste's actions as reported by the narrator. Francis Pruner's original question, "[m]ais cette jeune femme est-elle incompréhensible parce qu'elle est étrangère, parce que le cœur féminin est impénétrable à la raison, ou parce que son juge reste aveuglé par la passion?" (140) barely summarizes the multiple and unsolvable questions raised in the text, the "no-win hermeneutics" of the Grecque moderne in the words of Nancy Miller. Most of the Grecque moderne criticism suffers indeed from this desire to know, or at least understand why we do not know. This compulsion to solve the mystery, to discern truth from fiction, coupled with the repeated trial-like situations in the text, forces many of the critical approaches to this novel to adopt a binary configuration – to distinguish right from wrong, guilty from innocent, male from female, east from west.

The text's potential "binarism" has allowed the Grecque moderne to be seized by each of the major literary criticism trends of the past forty years. Critics have interpreted the text in feminist and post-colonial frameworks that attempt to solve the text's unbridgeable ambiguity by arguing for one side or the other of the dialectical framework. Early on, Hill (1969) and Singerman (1973) felt the need to defend Théophraste against "persistent slurs against Théophraste's character" (Singerman 938) from critics such as Jean Sgard who, for example, classifies Théophraste's behavior as an "almost aggressive, hypocritical virtue" (1968, 429). Théophraste has also become a feminist hero: in the words of Gilroy, Prévost's "novel of maturity" is about "a woman's attempt to transcend the roles which have been assigned to her by society and fellow human beings" (311).

Alternatively, Théophraste has also been seized as the ultimate *Other*, a woman and a foreigner, unknowable and desirable, unconquerable but destructible, an example of Edward Said's Orientalism *avant la lettre* (Calder 2003, 210). For Julia Douthwaite, the relationship between the diplomat and Théophraste text reflects "an example of *ancien régime* cultural politics," and Prévost "indicts the imperialist politics and misogyny of French attitude toward the Orient" (87). For Nancy Miller Grecque moderne is everything, and everything adds to nothing: "in *L'Histoire d'une Grecque moderne*, femininity (as the bar of difference), even doubled by orientalism, is not the answer to the enigma of desire but the way in which the possibility of truth is forever evaded" (120). Thus while she affirms the feminist and post-colonialist frameworks in which the text may be placed, she also seems to acknowledge their failure to provide any other exit than the ambiguity the text had already explicitly offered us.

Alan Singerman's semiotic analysis of Grecque moderne in 1990 represents a turning point in the criticism of the text, as it made the difference between narrator and author

starkly explicit and revealed the obvious but overlooked vertical layering of the text.

Singerman distinguishes the multiple communicative layers, separating the narrator from the character of the diplomat, and Prévost from the narrator, to find multiple meanings that deny the text's intrinsic ambiguity. Singerman forcefully argues that Théophé is not *such* an enigma, and that readers who accept that (such as Miller) are bound

to identify with the acquiescent ideal reader, that is, to fall victim to the narrator's strategy of emphasizing the potentially ambiguous in order to block any conclusive judgment, whereas the author's rhetorical interventions not only encourage a favourable judgment of Théophé, but indicate that it is the *narrator's* motives and behaviour that is on trial – and solicit a decidedly negative judgment from the real reader. (37)

Singerman and Miller argue over hermeneutics; rather than wondering “how do we know?” they ask “can we know?”. Miller argues that we cannot know, and thus we cannot judge. Singerman argues that we can know, and we should find the diplomat guilty. The trap in Grecque moderne's text is to lead readers to judge without knowing – and even knowing that they cannot know. The only stable concept in the text of Grecque moderne seems to be ambiguity itself; and ambiguity does not comport the radical polarization of concepts intrinsic to binary systems. One clear example of this theoretical trap is illustrated by Peter Tremewan's 2003 article. Following Singerman's footsteps, Tremewan questions the binary East-West structure of the text through the plurality of narrative voices, and concludes, against Singerman's hypothesis that we *can know*, that Grecque moderne is “l'histoire d'une aspiration à une certitude impossible dans un monde contingent” (125). By applying Singerman's argument to the discrete theme of orientalism in the text, Tremewan shows that

binary constructions that led to self-evident conclusions do not hold steady in the text's multi-level narrative structure.

Amongst the many ambiguities of the Grecque moderne, the question of genre remains largely unstudied, although most critics mention it tangentially. The text is uniformly characterized by critics as a novel, and as a novel that thinly veils the real-life story of the Count of Ferriol, French ambassador in Constantinople from 1699 to 1710, and his protégée Mlle Aïssé. Ferriol bought Aïssé as a four year-old girl in a slave market, and sent her back to France to be brought up by his sister-in-law. When he returned to France in 1711, at age sixty-four, rumors had it that he wanted to claim his paternal *and* sexual "rights" over her². Jean Sgard comes closer to questioning genres in his 1994 article analyzing the title of the book, "Le titre comme programme: Histoire d'une Grecque moderne," in which he analyses each of the novel's title's terms to launch discussions about Prévost's own relationship with the text he attributed to a fictional (or not so fictional) narrator. Most importantly, he draws our attention to the choice of "histoire" in the title, as opposed to "mémoires," and reminds us that "Prévost a souvent hésité entre les deux termes" (233).

Sgard's comment on Prévost's title choice is significant because Prévost was acutely aware of such categories, as his authorship of the Manuel Lexique³, a dictionary of literary terms, evinces. Prévost defines "Mémoires" as a "écrit pour rappeler ou pour conserver quelque chose. On appelle particulièrement *Mémoires* un Recueil de faits & de circonstances, dans lequel on s'attache moins à l'ordre & à l'ornement qu'à la vérité, pour servir à l'histoire générale ou particulière" (439). In contrast, he defines history in his entry for

² Singerman's preface to the Flammarion edition of Grecque moderne has a detailed discussion of Ferriol and Aïssé.

³ The complete title of the Manuel Lexique is self-explanatory: Manuel Lexique, ou Dictionnaire portatif des mots françois dont la signification n'est pas familière à tout le monde. Ouvrage fort utile à ceux qui ne sont pas versés dans les Langues anciennes et modernes, et dans toutes les connoissances qui s'acquierent par l'étude et le travail; Pour donner aux Mots leurs sens juste et exact, dans la lecture, dans le langage, & dans le style: Recueilli des Explications de divers Auteurs (1750).

“Historiographe” as “le récit des événemens publics & particuliers qui arrivent dans la Société humaine ou dans quelques-unes de ses parties. Le principal but de l’histoire est d’instruire les hommes par l’exemple” (357). Thus *mémoires* contain the truth that feeds into a *histoire*; and *histoire* in turn teaches by example; *mémoires* is a simple collection (*recueil*) of facts and circumstances, whereas *histoire* is an account (*récit*), which implies an order and ornament that is lacking in the *mémoires*.

Yet if Prévost was aware of categories, what Sgard deemed “hesitation” may instead be a symptom of Prévost’s acute sense of borders between genres and the effect of transgressing them. Soon after publishing Histoire d’une Grecque moderne Prévost published two other novels with convoluted titles: Mémoires pour servir à l’Histoire de Malte, ou Histoire de la jeunesse du Commandeur de... (1741) (Histoire de Malte) and Campagnes Philosophiques, ou Mémoires de M. de Montcal, aide de camp de M. le Maréchal de Schomberg, contenant l’Histoire de la guerre d’Irlande (1741) (Campagnes Philosophiques). Rather than hesitation, this cascade of subtitles illustrates Prévost’s firm grasp – and critical positioning – of the historical method and the implicit hierarchy among historical categories. In Histoire de Malte, we see the original relationship between memoir and history as explained in the Manuel Lexique: the memoir serves the purposes of history. Immediately thereafter in the subtitle, however, Prévost equates memoir with history, as the memoir may also be called “Histoire de la jeunesse du Commandeur de ...” Memoir, thus, is subjugated to *histoire générale* (Histoire de Malte), but is similar to a *histoire particulière* (Histoire de la jeunesse du Commandeur de...). In Campagnes Philosophiques, the hierarchy seems to be inverted, with the personal memoir containing the *histoire générale* (“Histoire de la guerre d’Irlande”). Yet there is no history of the Irish wars *per se* in the text,

which could lead us to conclude that history, in Campagnes Philosophiques, is entirely submitted to the memoir form.

These conjectures on the meaning of Prévost's titles only underscore the author's questioning of the methodological separation between history and memoir, most significantly in the context of novelistic productions. Prévost was most likely too literate in the process of writing history to have "hesitated" between terms: he was a Benedictine de Saint-Maur, in Saint Germain-des-Près, the mother house of the order in France, and the Benedictines were, at the turn of the eighteenth century, precisely at their most brilliant period of production of exceptionally erudite works of history that were envied by lay historians. Witschi-Bernz explains that "[a] certain jealousy on the part of the Enlightenment historians may in part have accounted for their continued scorn of those such as the Benedictines investigating the Middle Ages. The latter's erudition was beyond the capabilities of the gens de lettres, and they were well aware of it" (56). Prévost knew well the order's penchant for historiographical categories, methods, rules, as well as the smothering effect they might have: he courted the "easier" Jesuits, and sought transference to the "laxer" Benedictines of Cluny because he resented Saint-Maur's strictness. Prévost ended up leaving Saint Germain-des-Près without permission, which earned him banishment from the order and a *lettre de cachet*, and propelled him to exile in Holland and then England. These novels' titles show Prévost's knowledge of history's workings as well as his own stance in face of its structured methods.

Similarly this, "hesitation" was unlikely in the titles of his two contemporary volumes of *histoires particulières*, which are generally viewed as a parallel line of work by Prévost. The first, Histoire de Marguerite d'Anjou, reine d'Angleterre (Marguerite d'Anjou) was published immediately before Grecque moderne in 1740. The second, Histoire de Guillaume le

Conquérant, duc de Normandie, et roi d'Angleterre (Guillaume le Conquérant) was published last, in 1742. Critics traditionally group Grecque moderne with Histoire de Malte and Campagnes Philosophiques, and together the three texts form what is commonly referred to by Prévostian scholarship as the “1740s triad”. Yet Grecque moderne may be alternatively aligned with Prévost’s *histoires particulières* by more than one characteristic. Similar to Marguerite d’Anjou and Guillaume le Conquérant, Grecque moderne has a straight-forward title – they are all simply *Histoires*. Furthermore, Marguerite d’Anjou, Grecque moderne, and Guillaume le Conquérant all bear Prévost’s own name on their title pages – as in “par M. l’Abbé Prévost, Aumônier de Son Altesse Sérénissime Monseigneur le Prince de Conty”⁴. Histoire de Malte and Campagnes philosophiques, on the other hand, were written by Prévost as “l’auteur des Mémoires d’un Homme de Qualité”⁵. This distinction has been entirely overlooked, and although it may constitute a circumstantial technicality in Prévost’s publishing pattern, in the very least it begs the question as to why Prévost reveals himself so explicitly as the author of a novel when he had never done it before and would never do again later. By drawing Grecque moderne closer to Prévost’s historical texts, particularly that of Marguerite d’Anjou, which was published practically concurrently, we can start to understand Prévost’s new approach to the novel, one that is informed by his work as a historian.

Leborgne and Sermain’s collection of articles, Les Expériences romanesques de Prévost après 1740 (2003) fully delineate the singularity of Prévost’s later output as opposed

⁴ To be precise, it is only the third printing of the Grecque moderne (1741) that will bear Prévost’s name on the title page.

⁵ The *auteur* of Mémoires d’un homme de qualité (MHQ) was Prévost’s long time pen name that referred to his first great success as a novelist published between 1728 and 1731, and which encompassed, as the seventh and last tome, his chef d’oeuvre Manon Lescaut. Le Philosophe Anglois, ou Histoire de Monsieur Cleveland (1731-39) (Cleveland) also indicated the *auteur* on its title page, as did Le Doyen de Killerine (1735-39). During the 1730s Prévost would also “sign” his periodicals Le pour et le contre and Journal étranger with this pseudonym. The *auteur* did not particularly hide Prévost’s identity so much as it built upon his first novel’s success.

to his earlier one. However, as Sermain puts it in his postface, they are only concerned with two main hypotheses: “que les trois romans de 1740-41 marquent bien un tournant, du moins se distinguent de façon marquée de la trilogie précédente [...], et que la distance prise à l’égard de ce premier moment caractérise également les deux derniers romans”⁶ (330).

Sermain clearly states that their method is to examine each of the 1740s novels individually in the expectation that each of the analyses would result in arguments supporting their initial hypotheses. They are not concerned with history, literary or otherwise: “L’interrogation sur l’originalité et la cohérence de cet ensemble n’a pas été étayée sur des hypothèses historiques touchant l’évolution de Prévost, ni par l’examen des interactions suscitées par ses nouvelles activités d’écrivain, difficiles à saisir” (330). In other words, Leborgne and Sermain look at each of the latter novels of Prévost and find their common characteristics; they then compare them to the earlier novels⁷, and pertinently point out the striking differences between the two sets. Yet they refrain from offering an explanation as to why or how such change took place⁸.

Rather than show how Prévost’s personal history affects his evolution as a novelist (Jean Sgard’s well-covered territory), I argue that his training and evolution as a historian influences his approach to the novel (the very influence of the “interactions suscitées par ses nouvelles activités d’écrivain” that Leborgne and Sermain shy away from). By doing so, I show how the novel’s relationship with history in Prévost’s oeuvre evolves too. Prévost’s seminal experience as a historian provides him with a studied critical view of the historical method and style that blossom in the 1740s, not only in his historical writings but also in his

⁶ The “trilogie précédente” is composed of *MHQ*, *Cleveland*, and *DK*, and the “deux derniers romans” are *Le monde moral* (1750-4) and *Mémoires d’un honnête homme* (1745).

⁷ Although Leborgne and Sermain claim to look exclusively at Prévost’s 1740-1 trilogy, they are forced to draw conclusions about the first trilogy in order to provide a basis of comparison to the second.

⁸ Sermain refers to Jean Sgard, Michèle Duchet and to articles in Francis and Mainil’s *L’Abbé Prévost au tournant du siècle* for more systematic inquiries into Prévost’s career development, none of them referring directly to the relationship between novel and history as genres.

novels. The Grecque moderne serves as an allegory of Prévost's own theories of history and the novel. In this text, Prévost confronts one genre against another, revealing their weaknesses and strengths, and then reconfigures the relationship between the two discourses, trying out different covenants between the genres, and ultimately delineating the territory of the novel as a superfluous, self-contained detail at the margins of the nobility of history with the potential to overtake it.

But why a new approach to the novel? Prévost's first novel, Mémoires d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du monde (MHQ), enjoyed great popularity. Despite the fact that Prévost's name has been ever since intrinsically linked to Histoire du Chevalier de Grieux et de Manon Lescaut (Manon Lescaut, the seventh and last tome of the MHQ), during his lifetime, the MHQ saw more reprints than any other of Prévost's works. The MHQ was indeed so successful that for years Prévost banked on its fame and signed many of his novels and other works as the "auteur des Mémoires d'un homme de qualité". Prévost's confidence as a writer probably stemmed from this early success in his career. In Prévost romancier, Jean Sgard argues that following MHQ, Prévost's desire to continue writing freely provided an important psychological support in his decision to quit monastic life and take exile in Holland and England in the early 1730s.

However, in the last half of the 1730s Prévost's career as a novelist plunged into crisis, beginning with the heavy criticism suffered by Le Philosophe Anglois, ou Histoire de Monsieur Cleveland, fils naturel de Cromwell (Cleveland) (1731-9). The preface of Le Doyen de Killerine (DK) (1735-40), which Prévost uses to defend Cleveland, shows that Prévost's career had encountered serious obstacles, the first of which were none but financial. Despite Prévost's prodigious output in the mid-1730s, he ran into financial problems that he unreservedly reveals:

L'état de ma fortune ne me permettant point de choisir pour sujet de travail tout ce qui me demande du temps et de la tranquillité, je me réduis à ce qui se présente à ma plume de plus simple, de plus honnête et de plus agréable. Ces trois caractères s'accroissent fort bien à ma situation; le premier, parce qu'il abrège mes peines, le second, parce qu'il convient à ma profession et à mes principes, et le dernier parce que facilitant le débit de l'ouvrage, il répond à la principale vue qui me le fait entreprendre. (9)

Prévost's work ethic is made perfectly clear – he was reduced (“je me réduis”) to writing DK because his financial situation so required; to minimize the frustration of this inferior job, he undertook it in the most efficient manner. This passage points to Prévost's acknowledgment of the need to adopt a more streamlined approach to his writing – he wants a simpler, shorter task that reduces his suffering. Clearly, other types of writing interest him but are not as financially rewarding, so he resigns himself to writing novels.

In addition to his financial struggles, Prévost's had been hounded by critics. In the course of the three or so years that separated the publication of Cleveland's first tomes and DK's first preface, critics maliciously attacked Cleveland. They saw the repeated tragic convolutions of Cleveland's adventures as a throwback to seventeenth-century romance formulas that bordered on the fantastic. For example, when Prévost's alludes to “les uns [qui] ne plaisent que par le misérable agrément de la médisance et de la satire” in the preface to DK, he may well be referencing Père Bougeant, whose satirical novel Voyage merveilleux du prince Fan-Férédin dans la Romancie overtly mocks Cleveland's exaggerated adventures. Prévost was also accused of lengthening the story with these far-fetched situations to produce more volumes and increase his financial returns. Perhaps most importantly for Prévost, who was trying to reconcile with the church after being defrocked a few years

earlier, critics of Cleveland claimed that its first tomes had no clear moral purpose⁹, and questioned the main character's moral values as un-Christian. Prévost's defense was that Cleveland's initial deism would eventually and naturally lead him to Christianity.

DK's preface, as such, is already a most unusual one; Prévost uses it to defend another book, Cleveland, whose last part will not be published until 1738, and he also announces his distaste for the novel genre, which he admits to writing for financial reasons. Prévost further adds two new characteristics to the preface that signal a turning point in his relationship to the novel. First, he glosses over the origins of the manuscript underlying DK. In Cleveland's preface, Prévost (as the *auteur des Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*) had built an elaborate account of how the manuscript had fallen into his hands. In the DK, the allusion to the found manuscript is still there but is conspicuously underdeveloped:

[...] je ne puis trop m'applaudir du hasard qui m'en a fait tomber les matériaux entre les mains. Le compte que j'en pourrais rendre à mes lecteurs n'aurait rien de fort intéressant pour eux. Il suffit de leur apprendre que l'indulgence avec laquelle on a reçu de moi quelques ouvrages de la même espèce, a fait croire aux héritiers des illustres frères dont on va lire les aventures, que je pouvais retoucher avantageusement leur manuscrit. (9)

Although the mention of original manuscripts still figured in Prévost's later prefaces, starting with the DK he seemed to care little for the history of their provenance. As explained in the previous chapter, the found manuscript *topos* had established itself among novelists as the principal way in which the novel ambited to imitate history's concern with documentation. The ability to trace a text's origin to an original document underscored

⁹ This is a lesson Prévost seems to have learned well, as he makes sure that the moral purpose of the DK is unequivocal: "j'ai conçu que le doyen de Killerine s'était proposé de réunir dans l'histoire de sa famille toutes les règles de religion qui peuvent s'accorder avec l'usage et les maximes du monde, pour faire connaître jusqu'à quel point un chrétien peut se livrer au monde, et à quelles bornes il doit s'arrêter" (10).

its truthful character and thus its moral value as an exemplary reading. Prévost's decreasing reliance on the found manuscript *topos* shows Prévost's questioning the need for a historiographic apparatus for the legitimization of the novel.

Secondly, thus, Prévost adds a semi-historical *avant-propos* right after DK's preface. This *avant-propos* dissects the reasons why one would undertake the writing of general or individual histories: to acquire fame as a writer ("pour se faire un nom"); for their own benefit (so that "[...] certains faits obscurs ou équivoques [...] soient expliqués dans un sens honorable pour eux-mêmes"); or to satisfy feelings of hatred. According to Prévost, we cannot expect fidelity or disinterest from the two latter motives, and the first one, although honorable, is laden with reasons to embellish the text in detriment of truthfulness. He thus proposes a fourth reason (his reason) to write history: "le désir de se rendre utile". This *avant-propos*, as exemplified by the passage below, suggests that Prévost is aware of the potential of writing history (as opposed to writing novels) as a vehicle for his moral redemption.

Si [l'envie de me rendre utile] ne me communique point la beauté de l'imagination, qui est un présent de la nature, et les grâces du style, qui sont ordinairement des effets de l'art, il me rendra sincère dans mon récit, modeste dans mes expressions, et non seulement sage et raisonnable, mais solidement Chrétien dans les principes de ma morale; il m'empêchera d'approuver ou de flatter le vice, dans les personnes même qui m'ont été les plus chères; et il me fera tourner les événements les plus profanes à l'instruction de la jeunesse, à l'édification de tous les âges et de toutes les conditions, et par conséquent, à l'honneur du Ciel et à l'avantage de la société humaine. (14)

Prévost's clear distaste for the novelist *métier* at the end of the 1730s is further exemplified by a letter he wrote to Dom Guillaume le Sueur in 1738, asking for a position in the team writing a history of the house of Rohan.

Vous m'avez donné, mon Révérend Père, des espérances que j'entretiens avec plaisir, et je me crois intéressé à vous rappeler le souvenir. [...] Outre l'honneur de m'employer pour la Maison de Rohan, je considère de quel avantage il serait pour ma tranquillité et ma réputation de pouvoir sortir de ce labyrinthe de bagatelles où l'état de ma fortune me tient renfermé malgré moi. Les études dont me je suis occupé toute ma vie ne devaient pas me conduire à faire des *Clevelands*. Quelle obligation ne vous aurais-je pas, mon Révérend Père, si vous pouviez contribuer par vos soins m'ouvrir une autre carrière. (550)

Clearly, Prévost had had enough of the novel, “des *Clevelands*” as he puts it; he wants a new career, one that employs his entire training, and he sees an opportunity to write history under the auspices of a reputable institution. This letter further establishes the notion of historical work as his salvation from a “labyrinthe de bagatelles”, and of history as the new locus for moral guidance. Indeed, Prévost's desire to return to history parallels his plea to be reconciled with the Benedictine order after years of erratic life across Europe. Prévost's plea to Dom le Sueur was unsuccessful; but Prévost's exhaustion with Cleveland and DK seems to have led to substantial changes in his approach to the novel, as exemplified by the Grecque moderne.

History and Reason, Novel and Emotion

One way to understand the evolution of the novel genre in Prévost's oeuvre is to

examine the significant changes that took place between the novels of the 1730s and those of the 1740s, as Erik Leborgne did in the preface to Les Expériences romanesques de Prévost après 1740 (2003). Among many pertinent observations¹⁰, Leborgne notes that in terms of novelistic strategies Prévost minimizes the traditional multi-level complexity of his earlier novels in favor of telling the story of one character in a precise time-frame. In sum, Leborgne writes, “Prévost systématise la formule du récit court qui était Manon Lescaut” (8). Prévost’s decision to shorten his texts may have been the result of the criticism he suffered for Cleveland, as discussed above, but the systematization of the formula is intrinsically linked to Prévost’s experiences with the historical method.

Although Prévost never wrote a treatise of the novel, he did dissert upon his idea of history in the preface to Marguerite d’Anjou, which in turn builds upon the earlier preface to Histoire de M. de Thou (1733)¹¹. In this earlier preface, Prévost demonstrates his methodical approach to his work, not unlikely the result of his years as a Benedictine monk in Saint Germain-des-Près: “Avant que de m’engager dans aucune explication de ce qui regarde le fond de cette Histoire, je dois rendre compte au lecteur du plan que je me suis formé dans mon entreprise, et de la méthode que j’ai suivie en l’exécutant. Ainsi, pour traiter ces trois points avec ordre, j’en ferai trois articles différents, dont je composerai cette préface” (298).

¹⁰ Leborgne notes several changes in the “imaginaire Prévostien” between the earlier novels and the 1740-1 triad. First, Prévost’s heroes were no longer burdened by family expectations; they are rather voluntary exiles who live independently of their original milieu. Second, his heroes no longer dream of distant lands, they have come back from them disenchanted. Third, the women portrayed in the novels are “plus féroces”; finally, Leborgne suggests that Prévostian heroes substituted skepticism for their traditional melancholy.

¹¹ The Histoire de M. de Thou (*Historia sui temporis*) was Jacques-Auguste de Thou’s *magnum opus*, a collection of national histories combined into an “universal” history of Europe between 1545 and 1602. Despite his best vows to keep his historical writing unbiased and scientific, Thou’s work was controversial, and Thou himself was accused of being sympathetic to the protestants. Interestingly, Thou was against any translations of his work, since he was afraid it would be misinterpreted by translators. Prévost’s translation was never entirely published because Prévost had to flee France right after the publication of tome I in January of 1733, and the work fell largely into oblivion.

Plan, method, and substance: Prévost's careful approach reveals his awareness of the Classic vs. Modern debates surrounding the writing of history in the early eighteenth century. There were two separate (and often intermingled) approaches to historiography – a pedagogical approach derived from classical rhetoric, and a newer critical approach derived from humanistic and Cartesian philosophy. Prévost seems to long for the poetic licence allowed in the Classic tradition while displaying a certain skepticism about Modern historiography method as well: “S’il suffisait de connaître les règles d’un art pour les pratiquer avec succès, il n’y aurait point de style qui pût être porté si facilement à sa perfection que le style historique. Que de réflexions n’a-t-on pas faites sur la manière d’écrire qui convient à l’histoire! Que de dissertations! Que de méthodes!” (300). For Prévost, mere knowledge of the rules is insufficient: “toutes les règles ne suffisent pas pour former seules un bon écrivain [...] Ainsi, secouant en quelque sort le joug servile des préceptes, je me suis moins proposé de les suivre, que de ne pas m’en écarter” (300). Thus, taking history's rules more as a guideline than as a rule, he proposes greater variety in styles of writing:

[...] le style historique demande une variété presque infinie, [...] chaque fait, si j’ose parler ainsi, a son caractère qui veut être exprimé d’une manière qui lui soit propre; que le tour d’expression vif et animé qui convient au récit d’une bataille, conviendrait mal au détail des affaires d’une Diète ou d’un intrigue de cabinet. [...] Sans m’attacher donc à un genre particulier de style, je n’ai pensé qu’à m’exprimer de la manière qui m’a paru convenir à chaque circonstance. (300)

Prévost ultimately concedes that “la seule règle que j’ai taché d’observer constamment, est celle qui défend à un historien d’être jamais rampant et obscur.” (300) To avoid being *rampant et obscur*, Prévost adds a myriad of notes and explanations to the original

text wherever his great erudition allows him to: “[c]’est donc en partie sur l’avantage que j’ai d’avoir appris plusieurs langues, et d’avoir lu avec quelque soin les meilleurs écrivains de plusieurs pays, que je me suis fondé pour entreprendre de joindre des remarques et des éclaircissements à ma traduction” (302). Thus Prévost’s particular idea of himself as a historian, as spelled by his preface to Histoire de M. de Thou, is less about the method dictated by Modern historiography and more about adequate style and clarity.

In the preface to Marguerite d’Anjou Prévost further develops his stance as a historian. Prévost builds upon the notions of historiography he had put forth in Histoire de M. de Thou, and details his method for writing a *histoire particulière*, which should be seen as a variation of a *histoire générale*. Prévost distinguishes between the two genres by defining their separate subjects:

[...] le but d’une histoire particulière n’étant que de faire connaître les actions, les qualités, les inclinations et les mœurs d’un personnage de l’un ou de l’autre sexe, tous les événements publics, qui sont la matière de l’histoire générale, n’y doivent entrer qu’autant qu’ils se trouvent mêlés avec ceux qu’on entreprend de raconter. Qu’un autre fait se soit passé dans le même temps quelque intéressant, quelque agréable qu’il puisse être, ce n’est point une raison pour en orner son récit, s’il ne s’y trouve lié naturellement par des circonstances communes. (9)

Taking it one step further, Prévost builds the definition of *histoire particulière* not just by comparing it to *histoire générale* but also by adding a third component to his definitions – the novel. Prévost approaches the question of order of events in a *histoire particulière* in the same way one would in a novel:

Quoique l'ordre des faits dans une histoire particulière soit déterminé par le cours de la vie du héros, et qu'à parler proprement il n'y ait point d'autre méthode à suivre que celle des annales, je crois avoir éprouvé que sans faire la moindre violence à la vérité, et par le seul art de disposer assez heureusement les circonstances pour leur faire emprunter plus de force et d'éclat les unes des autres, on peut augmenter extrêmement l'intérêt. [...] si cet ouvrage obtient quelque succès, je suis sûr qu'il le devra au soin que j'ai eu d'accorder tous les droits de la vérité avec cette douce illusion qui naît de la surprise, ou de l'incertitude, ou de l'impatience, et qui fera mettre peu de différence pour l'agrément, entre cette histoire et les ouvrages d'imagination les plus amusants. (10)

Prévost clearly has no misgivings about altering the order of events to build up his *histoire particulière*'s amusement value – to make it more like a novel. This is consistent with the pedagogical view of history that Prévost espoused – that history teaches by example, and that such teachings are best imparted when the reader is entertained. Even though Prévost comes extremely close to proposing the interchangeability between novel and *histoire particulière* in the passage above, soon enough he distinguishes each genre by their particular contents:

Ce qui est propre à l'histoire particulière, c'est qu'elle admet des détails qui paraîtraient quelquefois puérils dans l'histoire générale, et qu'à la noblesse de celle-ci elle peut joindre l'agrément des mémoires les plus circonstanciés. Rien n'y est petit ni méprisable, lorsqu'il peut servir à la conscience du caractère principal. Ce serait abuser néanmoins de cette règle, que de se croire autorisé à s'étendre beaucoup sur les sentiments et sur la peinture des

passions. Cette sorte d'ornements, dont l'unique but est d'émouvoir, est propre aux romans; et c'est ainsi que chaque genre a ses règles et ses bornes.

(10-11)

Prévost thus establishes a form of hierarchy among genres: add personal details to a *histoire générale* and you get a *histoire particulière*; add ornaments to a *histoire particulière*, and you get the novel. This scheme asserts the novel's lineage as originating from the "noble" genre of history, and also as being progressively diluted by details and ornaments: the novel is defined here as an overly extended *histoire particulière* characterized by "too much detail".

These ornamental details, however, are not inconsequential for the writing of history, as they represent a constant temptation to take detours from the subject of history. Prévost's main rule for the writing of *histoires particulières* is the Aristotelian unity of subject – in this case, an exemplary historical figure. The principle is that, as opposed to a *histoire générale*, a *histoire particulière* must be unconcerned with parallel events not related to the character in question. Regardless of how interesting this event may be, if it is not pertinent to the history of the person, it must be eliminated from the text. Similarly, when writing a *histoire générale*, one should avoid adding personal details to it. Yet Prévost indicates the difficulty of keeping this unity of subject: "[q]uelle fécondité ne trouvais-je pas continuellement dans les révolutions du quinzième siècle, et de combien d'ornements étrangers ne pouvais-je pas embellir ma narration? Je les ai sacrifiés à la justesse. A la vérité mon sujet était toujours assez riche pour m'empêcher de regretter ce que je laissais derrière moi" (9).

Prévost thus characterizes two types of detours to be avoided while writing a *histoire particulière*: revolutions and foreign ornaments that could embellish the text. Had he taken advantage of the fecundity of fifteenth-century revolutions (an intrinsically public event), his text would have turned into *histoire générale*. Had he embellished his text with ornaments,

Marguerite d'Anjou could have become a novel¹². In a *histoire particulière*, ornaments, feelings and the depiction of passions, “dont l'unique but est d'émouvoir” are foreign elements: foreign to the *histoire particulière* genre and foreign to the national subject of Queen Margaret; and they are also expendable, as they are purely decorative. This expendability, this sacrifice of the ornament, characterizes Prévost's attitude toward his text: writing history means having the strength to stay within his limits, to ignore temptation, and to be detached from outside *stimuli*; writing a novel, in turn, means falling into detours of feelings and emotions, being in too close a contact with reality. Paradoxically then, as compared to history, the novel is the literary form where realism, in all its distortional emotional force, emerges.

Thus, although Prévost allows himself to alter the order of events to build a novel-like suspense in his *histoires particulières*, he is very wary of the detours he calls ornaments. Novel and history may share rhetorical strategies to keep the reader's interest, but the novel's content is distinguished from that of history by the sheer expendability of its appended embellishments. Prévost acknowledges all too clearly the novel's aesthetic attraction, as he sacrifices beauty for fear of straying from a minimum of historical accuracy, and his persistent use of a vocabulary of seduction underscores the novel's lure: “J'avoue que la tentation de la violer [the unity of subject] ayant été le principal écueil dont j'ai eu sans cesse à me défendre, il n'y a que la force du bon sens, source naturelle de toutes les règles, qui ait été capable de me retenir dans mes bornes” (9). Prévost accentuates the separate territories of the novel (emotion) and history (reason) when he attributes his restraint to “la force du bon sens, source naturelle de toutes les règles”. Prévost had already used the terms “règles” and “bornes” to set limits between genres in a previously quoted passage; here, he reinforces

¹² Although the difference between ornaments (which characterize a novel) and *détails puérils* (which characterize a *histoire particulière*) is not entirely explicit in the preface to Marguerite d'Anjou, the ornament will become better defined in the Grecque moderne.

the characterization of the novel as being outside the rules and limits of history's rationality, and indeed, outside of Aristotelian concerns with unity. Furthermore, in using "écueils" and "bornes" Prévost represents the novel as a foreign country, treacherous and dangerous, yet violently desirable, as "tentation de la violer" implies.

Although in hierarchizing *histoire générale*, *histoire particulière*, and novel Prévost seems to exalt the first two and depreciate the last, he is also turning the the novel into an all-encompassing entity that may stem from history but might as well now devour it. At the same time that he limits the scope of the novel to sentiments and passions, he knows the novel may make "unauthorized" incursions into history without penalty to its integrity. If in real life Prévost was wary of the novel and willing to commit to history, in his literary production this wariness reveals itself as simultaneous attraction, fear, and repulsion for the novel's immense potential. He describes it as genre below his capability ("des bagatelles"), superfluous ("des ornements", "des embellissements"), and dangerous ("une tentation", "des écueils") whose "unique but est d'émouvoir"; it is seduction lurking outside the borders of reason. And he is indeed moved by the novel, immensely attracted, although he is restrained too. Marguerite d'Anjou's preface is a warning against the perils of this new, exciting genre: better to stay within the boundaries of history.

We can read the Grecque moderne as an allegory of Prévost's strained relations with the novel as well as a continuation of this meditation upon genres as set up by Marguerite d'Anjou. In this view, we may interpret the diplomat's struggle to write a *histoire* as being constantly sidetracked by the seductive powers of an unknowable foreign ornament embodied by Théophraste. This pattern of attraction and repulsion, seduction and frustration as a representation of the writing process is found on multiple levels of the text – not only in the representation of the diplomat's relationship with Théophraste but also in the diplomat's

narratological relationship with his reader, and ultimately in Prévost's own address to the reader in the preface. Prévost's conceptions of genres, as identified in texts such as Marguerite d'Anjou and the Manuel Lexique, are all at work and struggling with each other in the text of the Grecque moderne.

Histoire d'une Grecque moderne and the making of the new Prévostian novel

From histoire to mémoires

Before examining the confrontation between novel and history in the Grecque moderne, it is important to notice that in the larger framework of the text an important battle has already been lost, as the text slides from *histoire* to *mémoires*. The narrator announces immediately at the head of his exordium to his text (not to be confused with Prévost's "avertissement" to the Grecque moderne) that "[j]e suis l'amant de la belle Grecque dont j'entreprends l'histoire" (55). The rest of the paragraph is spent establishing the truthfulness of his testimony about their relationship. He acknowledges that, being Théophrast's lover, his testimony should be tainted by the emotional attachment he feels toward the subject: "Qui me croira sincère dans le récit de mes plaisirs et mes peines? Qui ne se défiera point de mes descriptions et de mes éloges? [...] quelle fidélité attendra-t-on d'une plume conduite par l'amour?" (55). Because of his feelings for Théophrast, the diplomat is aware that he may be deemed incapable of objectivity.

The narrator then attempts to neutralize this suspicion of bias with another confession ("Mais s'il est éclairé, [le lecteur] jugera tout d'un coup qu'en les déclarant avec cette franchise [les raisons pour lesquelles on ne doit pas le croire] j'étois sûr d'en effacer bientôt l'impression par un autre aveu"). The diplomat is also a jilted lover: "Je suis un amant rebuté, trahi même". The logic here would be that the lack of reciprocity in this relationship

– and consummation, as we will see in the text – should effectively prevent his sentimental heart to add embellishments to his text: “Et dans l’amertume qui m’en reste encore, est-ce des louanges trop flatteuses ou des exagérations de sentiments qu’on doit attendre de moi pour une ingrate qui a fait le tourment continuel de ma vie?” (55-6). The narrator thus wagers that his bitterness would eliminate his love-induced positive bias in depicting Théophraste in this history.

This seeming proclamation of balance between love and bitterness obscures a more careful reading of this passage that shows that it is the “rejected lover” that will actually write this history. The distinction between diplomat (the main protagonist of his own story) and narrator (the diplomat as writer of history) is crucial for the understanding of the multiple communicative levels of the text. The narrator, chronologically and physically removed from the action, is not quite the same as Théophraste’s lover, the diplomat, too close to the subject to be able to see clearly. The diplomat is a character who is in love with Théophraste and interacts with her; the narrator is the jilted lover who interacts with the reader and tells, in retrospective, the story of the relationship between the diplomat and Théophraste. It is this narrator, who dwells in the bitterness of unreciprocated love, who is able to stay within the realm of verisimilitude and away from “louanges trop flatteuses” and “exagérations des sentiments”.

As the text starts coming to a close in the second part of Grecque moderne the narrator comments to the reader, “à l’âge où je suis en écrivant ces mémoires, je dois l’avouer avec confusion, ce ne fut pas du côté favorable à la vertu que j’ai pris d’abord tant de réflexions sensées” (205). The narrator accentuates the distance between himself and the diplomat further, acquiring for himself wisdom of old age he repeatedly denies the diplomat, who is “à la fleur de [son] âge” (94) when he meets Théophraste. More importantly, the

narrator's own characterization of his relationship with the text goes from "j'entreprends l'histoire de la Grecque" to "j'écris ces mémoires". Going back to Prévost's definitions of the two terms in the Manuel Lexique, we see that *mémoires*, much like a memorandum, serve as a written reminder of events, to support a historian in writing a *histoire*; *histoire*, in turn, is a text that teaches by example. What is lost between the narrator's initial intent to write history and his increasing realization that he is writing a memoir is the lack of an exemplary profile in his account. Toward the end of his text, Théophraste's virtue is still an unsolved enigma to the narrator's eyes, as the following passage implies.

Si l'idée que j'ai à donner d'elle dans la suite de ces mémoires ne répond pas à celle qu'on en a dû prendre jusqu'ici sur des épreuves si glorieuses pour sa vertu, n'ai-je point à craindre que ce ne soit de mon témoignage qu'on se défie, et qu'on n'aime mieux me soupçonner de quelque noir sentiment de jalousie qui auroit été capable d'altérer mes propres dispositions, que de s'imaginer qu'une fille si confirmée dans la vertu ait pu perdre quelque chose de cette sagesse que j'ai pris plaisir jusqu'à présent à faire admirer? Quelque opinion qu'on puisse prendre, je ne fais cette question que pour avoir occasion de répondre qu'on me trouvera aussi sincère dans mes doutes et dans mes soupçons que je l'ai été dans mes éloges, et qu'après avoir rapporté ingénument des faits qui m'ont jeté moi-même dans les dernières incertitudes, c'est au lecteur que j'en veux laisser le jugement. (235-6)

This passage, in which the diplomat's account is again referred to as *mémoires* (as well as a "témoignage") reflects a turning point in the text. The use of past and present tenses in the verb choices reveal a change in the narrator's approach: up until now, the narrator claimed to be defending Théophraste's virtue ("j'ai été [sincère] dans mes éloges"); from now

on, he pledges to equally expose his misgivings (“on me trouvera aussi sincère dans mes doutes et dans mes soupçons”). Yet no matter how clearly and sincerely he reports the facts to the reader, the narrator recognizes the discontinuity between these true facts and the ability to provide judgment, as the facts themselves generate uncertainty. The narrator reclassifies his account as a memoir rather than history: it may not be exemplary, but in all its ambiguities, it is at least true.

The narrator also realizes that Théophré’s history cannot be told because there may be other accounts to complete the picture. In the preface of Marguerite d’Anjou Prévost writes:

En faisant attention que l’histoire n’est formée que des témoignages d’une infinité de personnes qui ont eu part aux événements, ou qui ont eu l’occasion de les connaître, on ne sera pas surpris que la différence des inclinaisons et des intérêts rende quelquefois les relations d’un même fait fort opposées. [...] L’incertitude qui doit naître de cette confusion n’est pas fort à l’avantage de l’histoire; mais, en qualité d’hommes, il faut nous consoler de tout ce qui est l’effet nécessaire du désordre de nos passions ou de la faiblesse. (11)

This passage helps us characterize the narrator’s account as a *témoignage*, one of many possible, as the narrator himself points out at the end of the Grecque moderne: “[s]i elle s’est livrée à d’autres foiblesses, c’est de ses amans que le public en doit attendre l’histoire” (291). The account of the diplomat’s uncertainties illustrates the conflict between the narrator’s intent of writing an objective history free of “des inclinaisons et des intérêts”, and the constant temptation to let his text be sidetracked by sentimental attachments (“l’effet nécessaire du désordre de nos passions ou de la faiblesse”) or exotic ornaments, both

embodied by Théophé. The text thus slides from *histoire* to *mémoires* as the diplomat, sentimentally attached to Théophé, cannot help but allow her to express and defend her dissenting voice inside his own narrative.

Past history, potential stories

Théophé's story *per se* is short; it could have ended at about the first third of the first part of the Grecque moderne. And at first, both Théophé and her story do not seem very interesting to the narrator. The diplomat meets Théophé at the seraglio of his friend Chéribér. To his eyes, she is entirely indiscernible from the other women. He describes his first impression as "[j]e les considérai successivement, leur âge me parut inégal; mais si je n'en remarquai aucune qui me parût au dessus de trente-ans, je n'en vis pas non plus d'aussi jeunes que je me l'étais figuré" (59). Théophé (Zara at that point) makes no impression on the narrator; it is Chéribér that leads him to talk to her individually. They engage in a short conversation, and a few days later, the diplomat receives a message from her pleading him to free her from the harem. The diplomat obtains her freedom, and Théophé is overwhelmingly thankful. The diplomat, however, is unmoved by the situation and by Théophé's expressions of gratitude: "Et ne pensant qu'à détourner des transports que je voyois prêts à se renouveler, je lui demandai pour unique faveur de m'apprendre depuis quel tems et par quelle infortune elle avoit perdu sa liberté" (72). At that point, Théophé still makes no sentimental impact on the diplomat: "malgré les charmes de sa figure, et ce désordre touchant où je l'avais vue à mes pieds et dans mes bras, il ne s'était encore élevé dans mon cœur aucun sentiment qui fut différent de la compassion" (72).

Théophé's tale also fails to impress the diplomat. He comments that "ses aventures n'eurent rien de révoltant pour moi, parce que depuis quelques mois que j'étais à

Constantinople, il m'arrivait tous les jours d'apprendre les plus étranges événements par rapport aux esclaves de son sexe" (93). To the diplomat, her story is as undistinguishable as Théophré herself was in the middle of the harem – just another Oriental tale, cheap and fabulous as a trinket in a bazaar. But if the nature of Théophré's story does not strike the diplomat as original, he is charmed by other virtues:

J'admirai même que sans autre maître que la nature, elle eut arrangé ses aventures avec tant d'ordre, et qu'en m'expliquant ses rêveries ou ses méditations, elle eut donné un tour philosophique à la plupart de ses idées. Le développement en étoit sensible, et je ne pouvois la soupçonner de les avoir empruntées d'autrui, dans un pays où l'esprit ne se tourne pas communément à cette sorte d'exercice. (93)

Rather than the exotic nature of her story, it is rather the order, and the "tour philosophique" that Théophré was able to add to the story that caught the diplomat's attention. They make her at once a foreigner among the Turks, and closer to the diplomat's intellectual territory¹³. This emphasis on form – order and explanations – reminds us of Prévost's own approach to historical texts which allows for straying from chronological order to add to amusement value, and which adds explanations for obscure events. Théophré storytelling dexterity thus champions Prévost's own historical method views, and builds a link between herself and the diplomat. Moreover, the truthfulness of Théophré's story is underscored by her lack of sentimental attachments, much as Prévost also prescribes: "D'ailleurs ce que j'avais trouvé de plus vraisemblable dans son histoire était l'ignorance où elle était encore de l'amour" (96).

¹³ This "meeting of minds" had already been noted by Théophré herself as she characterizes diplomat's conversation with her in the harem as "je ne me souviens de rien qui se fût jamais si bien accordé avec l'ordre de mes propres idées" (87).

Despite his admiration for her storytelling abilities, the diplomat deems them insufficiently dignifying to make her his lover: “[d]e toutes les réflexions dont j’avais fait une partie pendant son discours, la conclusion que je tirais, fut que j’avais rendu à une jolie femme un service dont je ne devais pas me repentir, mais auquel toutes les belles esclaves auraient le même droit” (95). Although her naturally sophisticated account sets her above the Turkish harem society she had been forced into, the diplomat cannot overcome the idea that she has had lovers:

et quoiqu’en considérant sa figure avec admiration, je fusse flatté sans doute du désir que je lui supposais de me plaire, la seule pensée qu’elle sortait des bras de Chéribér après avoir été dans ceux d’un autre Turc, et peut-être d’une multitude d’amants qu’elle m’avait déguisés, me servit de préservatif contre les tentations auxquelles la chaleur de mon âge aurait pu m’exposer. (95)

Indeed, not only had she engaged in sex with the son of the governor of Patras and Chéribér, she may also have had other lovers she had omitted from her account. Her very ability to construct a compelling account may also have led her to eliminate the less attractive details. To the diplomat, Théophraste’s account may be extraordinary in its form, but this very remarkable order also makes it unreliable, not in what it tells, but in what it may hide. The possibility of omission represents a subtle but important criticism of the historical method in Prévost’s new novel, where the narrator seems to be at once admiring and skeptical of the narrative power of history and its claim to truth. The pattern of doubt is thus established in the text, not because of its embedded exotic themes, but because of Théophraste’s ability to emulate European thought. He makes her tale irrelevant by placing his doubts not in the exotic content of her story but in the extraordinary nature of her perfect rhetoric.

Histoire d'une Grecque moderne could have ended here. The deal between the diplomat and Théophé had been fulfilled – he liberated her, and she paid him back by assenting to the “unique faveur” he demanded of her, which was telling him her story. The day after their conversation, the diplomat seems to grow tentatively interested in her charms, but not enough to overcome his reservations: “Je ne me sentois point rappelé à elle par un penchant qui me causât de l'inquiétude; mais aiant l'imagination remplie de ses charmes, et ne doutant point qu'ils ne fussent à ma disposition, j'avoue que je consultai ma délicatesse sur les premières répugnances que je m'étois senties à lier un commerce de plaisir avec elle” (96).

The decisive turning point in the diplomat's interest in Théophé arrives after Chéribert raises the question of Théophé's origin in response to the diplomat's praise of her uncommon abilities: “Si elle n'est pas née pour l'esclavage, me dit-il, il faut qu'elle soit d'une condition fort supérieure aux apparences” (99). After some speculation and investigation, the diplomat finds out that she may be the long-lost daughter of a noble Greek family. When the diplomat confronts Théophé with the possibility, she responds enigmatically that she had contemplated the thought, but that this idea “ne peut servir qu'à augmenter ma honte et mes malheurs” (103). Moreover, Théophé's putative real father, named Condoidi, refuses to recognize her. The diplomat is unfazed in his conviction of having found Théophé's origins, and this certainty serves to help him overcome his initial repugnance and *délicatesse*, which would finally make Théophé suitable to becoming his *femme entretenue* (104).

Je le passai [le temps] avec plus de tranquillité, parce que m'étant fixé enfin à mes résolutions, la naissance de Théophé qui passait pour certaine à mes yeux avait achevé d'effacer les idées importunes qui revenaient toujours blesser ma délicatesse. Avec tant de belles qualités et la noblesse de son

origine, en aurais-je voulu faire ma maitresse si elle n'eut rien eu à se reprocher du côté de l'honneur? (111)

Théophé becomes appealing to the diplomat because of her possible lineage. He at last wants her to be his lover because now she can be connected to a “proper” history that explains the source of the order and *tour philosophique* embedded in her story and compensates for her harem past. If at the end of her account the diplomat had decided that Théophé “*sortait des bras de Chériber après avoir été dans ceux d'un autre Turc*”, now, he has provided her with an alternative origin, a “seigneur Grec d'ancienne noblesse”. The diplomat thus “offers” Théophé the possibility of *history* in European (Greek) terms, giving her a noble birth, and rejecting her own *story*.

Théophé, in turn, makes her own radical decision soon after the episode where her putative father rejects her: “elle avait pris le parti de quitter secrettement Constantinople et de se rendre dans quelque ville d'Europe où elle pût trouver un asyle dans la générosité de quelque famille chrétienne” (113). The diplomat is determined to find her, as he is determined to make her his lover: “pourquoi me laisser enlever par un autre les douceurs que je m'étois proposé de goûter avec elle?” (114). He finds her at a hostel close to the port, waiting for the ship's departure, and she was not alone. Her companion was none other but her own putative brother, Synèse, the youngest son of Condoidi. The diplomat seems relieved in finding her with her “brother;” yet the possibility of incest here is the first of many blows Théophé deals on the diplomat's insistence on her lineage (and therefore his idea of history).

At this point we start to clearly distinguish the two sides on this confrontation of stories. On the one hand, we have the diplomat's attempt to anchor Théophé's story within a proper historical framework. Finding Théophé's familial connections, endowing her with

history, especially one that underscores Greek (European) and Christian¹⁴, rather than Turkish and Muslim lineage, makes Théophé knowable and desirable, not in the Turkish way of the harem¹⁵, but in an European idea of a *libertinage éclairé* (134). To be sure, the diplomat's interest in her derives from her ability to put together her story in an European fashion, with order and with clarity. But his interest only becomes a real desire to sexually possess her when he discovers her potential European origin. Théophé, in other words, has to be Greek for the diplomat to be able to fold her into the sort of relationship he wants to have with her – and for the narrator to be able to write history.

On the other hand, we have Théophé's own narration of her story, and the rejection of her family ties. Whether they are real or not, she denies them because they would only bring her pain and shame. Her possible incestuous involvement with Synèse is also a denial of her Greek family. Indeed, Théophé has little interest in her own provenance:

Je ne serai point affligée [...] de demeurer incertaine de ma naissance; et quand je serois sûre de la devoir à votre seigneur grec, je ne me plaindrois pas qu'il fit difficulté de me reconnoître. Mais je remercie le Ciel du droit qu'il me donne desormais de refuser le nom de père à l'homme du monde à qui je devois le plus de haine et de mépris. (108)

In this passage, Théophé refers to both Condoidi and the man who raised her as her father, and displays relief in not being tied to either, for the uncertainty regarding Théophé's

¹⁴ Théophé herself is not entirely sure she is Greek: "J'ai commencé à me connoître [...] dans une ville de la Morée, où mon père passoit pour étranger, et ce n'est que sur son témoignage que je me crois grecque, quoiqu'il m'ait toujours caché le lieu de ma naissance" (73). Greece was under the Ottoman Empire's rule from the 14th to the 19th century, but Greeks were not forced to convert to Islam, and continued the Greek Orthodox Church traditions. Théophé's "Greekness" thus makes her a Christian too, and these two characteristics explain much of her psychology, her order and *tour philosophique*, her innate sense of morals, her shame at her condition, and even her identification of the diplomat as a father – in the religious sense.

¹⁵ "Je lui ai représenté l'infamie de l'amour tel qu'on l'exerce en Turquie, cette facilité des femmes à se livrer aux désirs des hommes, cette grossièreté dans l'usage des plaisirs, cette ignorance de tout ce qu'on appelle gout et sentiment" (205).

paternity allows her to start anew. Indeed, a new life is what she wants, as the diplomat reports: “Elle me repeta vingt fois que c’étoit à moi qu’elle croyoit devoir la naissance, puisque c’étoit lui en donner une seconde que de la délivrer de l’infamie de la première” (108). Théopbé relates to the diplomat here also as a father, as someone who can make her “born-again”. Pruner makes the convincing argument that Théopbé’s insistence in seeing the diplomat as a father has religious connotations that cannot be disregarded. In this view, Théopbé’s story is a confession, and the diplomat figures as a priest-like figure who can redeem her, and Théopbé “souhaite une absolution, non une complicité” (141). Thus rather than someone who will settle her history, she envisions the diplomat – and his power to free her from her past – as an enabler of her own story. In order for Théopbé to start a new life she needs her own story, in which she is entirely free of family ties, to hold together. She also needs the diplomat to accept it as is; the confession is made, regrets are expressed, and absolution is expected, yet never quite granted, for the diplomat wants to make her his lover.

Along with her sexual appeal, Théopbé’s story and her storytelling ability have been a profitable medium of exchange with men in the world at large. “Paying” the diplomat back with her story is not the first time she uses a story as a medium of exchange: when she sold herself into slavery, she had also accomplished that by telling Chéribert’s envoy “une histoire qui n’étoit pas sans vraisemblance, mais où ma naïveté se trahissoit assez” (84). Most importantly, when the diplomat rejected her initial sexual advances and asked her to tell her story instead, Théopbé realizes that she can tell a story in lieu of having sex. Much like Scheherazade in *Mille et une nuits*¹⁶, and much like Prévost himself in *Cleveland* and *DK*,

¹⁶ Antoine Gallant’s translation of *Les Mille et une nuits* made a *debut* in the French literary scene in the beginning of the eighteenth-century (1704-17), and became a hugely influential “invisible masterpiece” in the words of Georges May; Walter Rex argues that the work’s “supreme importance [...] lay in their establishing an alternative, non-classical mythology that seemed to free, or at least loosen, authors from their literary past” (401).

Théophé survives by telling stories; as convoluted or incredible as they may be, they have exchange value to buy her freedom. Théophé seems to embody Prévost's admonishment in Le Doyen de Killerine: "Heureux sans doute l'écrivain qui plaît! Mais c'est lorsqu'il n'a point à rougir de la voie qu'il choisit pour plaire. Autrement j'ose le comparer aux ministres des honteux plaisirs: ceux qui les emploient et qui aiment leurs services, ne les regardent pas moins comme des infâmes" (9). Sex and words, prostitute and writer, all become interchangeable as they all provide pleasure for profit.

The confrontation between the diplomat's and Théophé's stories is thus also a confrontation of genres. The diplomat wants to impose a noble history on Théophé, but by refusing to clear up the details of her own past, she sticks to her own exotic tale of the harem, slavery, the market, and dead parents, a story that earned her freedom. By the end of the first part of the Grecque moderne the impasse between the two competing narratives is fully set up and also developed into a sexual stalemate. While in the beginning Théophé seemed to be willing to have sex with the diplomat (although it may have been the diplomat's own imagination), by the time he discovers her supposed lineage, she is no longer available, thanks, according to her own explanations, to the blossoming European "virtues" he had imparted on her. Sexual consummation would signify the ultimate triumph of one genre over the other. Had the diplomat given in to her supposed initial advances, he would have succumbed to the novel (to Théophé's exotic account); had Théophé not resisted his later attempts, she would have accepted his history (to the idea that she belongs to a noble Greek family).

This confrontation of genres is characterized as much by the debate regarding origins as it is by the question of destination. Traveling entails not only freedom from origins but also closure of an episode, and the opportunity to start a new one. For Théophé it is clear

that her freedom will only be obtained through distance from Turkey and from the diplomat himself: ‘J’ai tenté néanmoins de quitter cette nation corrompue’, says Théophraste; ‘J’ai voulu fuir et ceux qui ont perdu mon innocente jeunesse, et vous, qui m’avez appris à connoître ma perte’ (142). She further complains that ‘après avoir conçu qu’un voyage entrepris au hasard étoit une imprudence, je me suis flattée, sur vos promesses, que vous m’ouvririez des voies plus sûres pour m’éloigner’ (143). Théophraste had hoped for an “amicable separation,” counting again with the diplomat as an enabler. Devoid of any attachments to Turkey, she can easily travel, which would in turn have enabled her to conclude her story, to start a new one.

The diplomat discourages her travel plans (“[a]bandonnez vos projets de voyage; jeune et sans expérience du monde, vous n’en devez rien attendre d’heureux”) and proposes a rather different plan of “platonic cohabitation”: “Ma maison sera un sanctuaire; mon exemple portera tous mes domestiques à vous respecter [...] Cette maison [...] sera votre demeure, et vous y établirez l’ordre que vous conviendra le mieux” (145-6). The spatial structure of their living arrangements provides an insightful metaphor for the relationship between novel and history. As Théophraste sets up residence in the diplomat’s house, the novel is enclosed and protected by the sanctuary of history, which shows the novel’s continued dependence upon history’s outer structures. History, in love with the novel, allows it to set itself up at its very core but is incapable of assimilating it. This arrangement makes the borders between the two genres become starkly clear, for the diplomat pledges to respect Théophraste’s virtue – that is, they do not engage in a sexual relationship: history is unable to penetrate the novel’s intimacy.

This lack of intimacy between the two characters is underpinned by a moral premise generated by the diplomat and upheld by Théophraste; and while it keeps Théophraste’s story free

from the diplomat's influence, it also denies the diplomat ultimate access to the object of his account. But if Théophé secures her own story's integrity by holding the diplomat up to his own European moral standards, her presence inside his account allows her to subtly sow romanesque seeds into the diplomat's history, destabilizing what is already a precarious balance. By bringing Théophé inside his house and his account, she ceases to represent the detachable ornament that so troubles the writing of history; she is now the still foreign, but now interior substance of his text. What transforms the *Grecque moderne* from history to memoir is the uncertainty regarding the facts; what prevents the narrator's account from sliding all the way into full-fledged novelistic writing is his skillful negotiation of Théophé's presence inside his narrative. He is at once tempted by what Théophé brings into the scene, and restrained by his own initial premise of writing truthful history.

The temptation of the novel

The contention between novel and history culminates in the second part of the *Grecque moderne* with Maria Rezati's story. Rezati, *la belle Sicilienne*, is a slave in the harem of the *sélictar*; like Théophé she is a foreigner in Turkey, stranded in a situation against her will. Upon learning Rezati's story, Théophé is eager to tell it to the diplomat. She prefaces her account of the story by some enigmatic comments: "Quelle variété dans les événements de la vie! [...] Quel enchaînement de choses qui ne se ressemblent point, et qui ne paraissent pas faites pour se suivre! Je viens de faire une découverte dont vous me voyez pénétrée et qui m'a fait naître des idées que je veux vous communiquer. Mais il faut que je vous attendrisse auparavant par mon récit" (187).

The diplomat is not impressed by Rezati's story. Exactly as he had concluded at the end of Théophé's own story, he comments that "j'étais si accoutumé à ces sortes

d'événements par les récits que j'entendais tous les jours, que je n'avais pas écouté le sien avec toutes les marques de pitié auxquelles elle s'était attendue" (192). Yet Théophé is touched, even *pénétérée*; for Théophé, Rezati's story is unique and worthy, because she can relate to the suffering of another Christian woman kept against their will and values in a Turkish harem. She then asks the diplomat to obtain Rezati's freedom as he had obtained hers. Despite his nonchalance, the diplomat assents to Théophé's request and once again "buys" Théophé's story, asking the *sélictar* for Rezati's freedom, which is promptly given.

While in the follow-up to Rezati's rescue from the harem she and her lover become part of the narrative (and occupy the first two-thirds of the second part of *Grecque moderne*), her story itself, as richly told by Théophé while Rezati was still captive in the harem, has no consequence to the narrator's objective of writing Théophé's history. It adds nothing but color to the narrative, and it barely introduces the events that will take place later; like a tale, and like Théophé's story, it is self-contained. Rezati's story has such little connection with what happens next that it could have been an invention of Théophé's.

Despite the minimal effect on the events that later take place, the narrator includes Rezati's story because it is a token in an exchange of emotions between the diplomat and Théophé. Rezati's adventures up until she is rescued from the *sélictar*'s harem are included because Théophé thinks the story is unique and that the diplomat should be sensitized (*attendri*) by it – even if it is more by Théophé's telling of it than by the account itself (much like he had been when he heard Théophé tell her story in the beginning of the book). So not only does the diplomat obtain Rezati's freedom, he finds out she has a lover, and frees him as well, hoping that Théophé would warm toward him by the sight of the two lovers: "je ne doutai point que cette tendre part qu'elle prenoit au bonheur de deux amants ne fût encore une marque que son coeur étoit devenu sensible, et j'en tirai pour moi des augures [...]"

(194). And thus Rezati's account makes its way into the narrator's own: it is twice an ornament, "dont l'unique but est d'émouvoir," the detour that would turn the diplomat's account into a novel.

But this is a costly detour that makes its way into the diplomat's story. Maria Rezati's and her friends' presence in the account threaten the diplomat's history, for they constantly try to remove Théopbé from it, forming an entire set of adventures that is separate from Rezati's story itself. The diplomat spends most of the second part of the Grecque moderne trying to send Rezati, her knight of Malta young lover, and Théopbé's putative brother Synèse (who associates with the adventurous couple), back to their families or to other countries – to their origins, and to the histories where they belong – while trying to prevent them from taking Théopbé away from him. He pays for their voyages back to Italy, writes letters to the Order of Malta on behalf of the renegade knight, and pleads with Condoidi to send his son away. The diplomat is anxious to let go of the characters: upon receiving a letter from Maria Rezati saying that she had settled in Italy, the diplomat comments that "nous étions crus délivrés tous deux de cette aventure" (237). When she resurfaces again with her knight of Malta and Synèse, they try to kidnap Théopbé in the middle of a party in the diplomat's residence. The diplomat thwarts the effort – not insignificantly by slashing the knight with a sword – and the characters disappear: "j'ai ignoré leur fortune depuis notre séparation" (247).

This unequivocal end to the Rezati episode reinforces the internal unity of her ornamental story; it is an adventure with a beginning and an end, but one that may be eliminated because its ties to the overarching narrative of the diplomat, in that it is related to Théopbé, have also been severed. Théopbé's attachment to Rezati, which had been strong in the beginning, had faded with time: "Théopbé même, qui s'étoit beaucoup refroidie pour elle

depuis différentes marques qu'elle avoit eues de son indiscretion, la vit partir avec peu de regret" (223). Likewise, Théophé's relationship with her supposed brother Synèse had also turned into an inconvenience. The diplomat writes that Théophé "me supplioit de ne pas l'exposer à l'embarras perpétuel de ne savoir quelles manières elle devoit prendre avec un jeune-homme qui avoit pour elle des sentiments trop passionnés, s'il n'étoit pas son frère" (246). Théophé's attitude toward Rezati (and Synèse) explains her initial comment about her story as an "enchaînement de choses qui ne se ressemblent point, et qui ne paraissent pas faites pour se suivre" – Rezati and Synèse's stories were linked to hers, but they were not made to follow it.

The Rezati episode – its very presence in the text and its termination – illustrates the role of side adventures (ornaments) for the writing of history and novel alike. Both the diplomat and Théophé are anxious to "liberate" the story from them. The diplomat allows it into his own narrative to earn a favorable impression from Théophé, and in doing so, he gives her the chance to express her storytelling ability again. Yet soon enough he needs to eliminate it because the characters' presence threatens the already precarious balance of his relationship with Théophé. In sacrificing the characters, the narrator seizes control of his text again, although by the end of it he is no longer calling his *histoire*, but *des mémoires*. Théophé tells the story because it reflects her own story¹⁷; her emotional understanding of Rezati's experience allows it to exist, but the moment their connection ceases, she is ready to let go. Severing emotional connections from the text (as Prévost recommends in Marguerite d'Anjou) is not only a technique for the writing of history; it also provides closure to the novel. In this context, travel, rather than the more radical instrument of death, provides an important (and reversible) technique for the novelist not only to start, but also to end, his

¹⁷ Sermain (1984) and Singerman (1973) note the importance of Maria Rezati's story for the construction of Théophé's character; she is a double, a foil, a counter-example to Théophé.

texts or episodes in his text. Having unsuccessfully tried to eliminate Rezati and friends from his account by sending them away, this time around, it is Théophé's and the diplomat's turn to move to France.

Sacrificing the foreign ornament

The question of including or excluding ornaments in/from the text unfolds itself again in the one paragraph between the end of Maria Rezati's episode and the diplomat's departure to France with Théophé. The narrator writes that "[q]uelques semaines qui s'écoulèrent entre l'ordre du roi et mon départ, furent employées par Théophé à des occupations qui me fourniroient la matière d'un volume si je cherchois à grossir ces mémoires" (247). Théophé had "découvert plusieurs filles malheureuses, grecques ou étrangères, qui se trouvaient engagées malgré elles dans cette triste condition [l'esclavage], et son espérance avait toujours été de faire jouer quelque ressort pour les en délivrer". Théophé is not only repeating what she had done with Rezati, she is multiplying it: "Je vis bientôt chez moi plusieurs filles extrêmement aimables," writes the diplomat.

The diplomat is again a financial backer of Théophé's enterprise. "[Théophé] me pressa par les plus tendres motifs de la charité d'y joindre quelque partie de mon superflu. Je me dérobai dix-mille francs que j'avois eu dessein de faire servir à l'achat de diverses curiosités du Levant" (247). The diplomat's characterization of the purchase of these women shows not only their monetary value to him (ten thousand francs), but their exchange value as well (the sum was reallocated from the planned purchase of a variety of Oriental curiosities). Yet charity is an overstatement, for the diplomat seems to have learned the value of these stories. He knows he could write an entire extra volume with them; this extra volume would have been financed by his surplus funds, his "superflu", which he realizes was

but a fraction of what Théophé had invested herself. He notes, furthermore, that “Je me fis pendant quelques jours un amusement fort agréable d’écouter les aventures de cette troupe charmante, et j’ai eu le soin de les écrire presque aussitôt, pour n’avoir rien à craindre de l’infidélité de ma mémoire” (248). The diplomat’s precaution of writing down the stories immediately after they are told further underscores his awareness of their value.

Unlike the diplomat, Théophé invests heavily in this expensive venture: she converts all her jewelry and expensive gifts into cash. The diplomat comments that “[Théophé] n’avoit pu rompre les chaines pour des sommes médiocres, et si l’on joint la dépense qu’elle fut obligée de faire pour les renvoyer dans leur patrie, on ne doutera point que ses libéralités n’eussent beaucoup surpassé les miennes” (247-8). As with Rezati’s story, Théophé is aware of the “enchaînement des choses qui ne se ressemblent point,” so she not only breaks them free from slavery (“rompre les chaines”) but also from each other. Here, Théophé departs from the “Scheherazade model” of storytelling, which chains one tale to the next to keep the interest of the Sultan, setting each of the stories free, for they were not made to follow one another (“ne paraissent pas faites pour se suivre”). Théophé’s dream of freedom for these tales is underscored by her belief in their autonomy, not just from history, but from each other as well, as though each of them had the potential to take a life of their own, and become novels themselves.

Yet each of these slaves’ voyages home may well mean a voyage into obscurity, which is where the diplomat steps in, for he has already recorded all the stories. In recording them, the diplomat somewhat captures them into what could have been a supplement to his own memoir, *if* he had chosen to lengthen his text. The diplomat goes to great lengths to characterize this volume as superfluous. Not only is it a separate volume; the slaves were bought with surplus funds, and the volume itself is a substitute, as this fund reallocation

replaced his originally planned purchase of “curiosités du Levant”. The volume thus may be seen as a foreign ornament itself – one that has no place inside history. If thematically Rezati’s story’s insertion seems to mark the inevitable slide of the text from history to memoir, this time around, the narrator skillfully negotiates the presence of such ornaments inside the text. He recognizes their relative value as a book of Oriental curiosities, but consciously chooses not to include them in the text, keeping them stored away in a separate volume. This shows the narrator seizing control of his text again before it slides all the way into *Mille et une nuits*¹⁸.

This denial of oriental exoticism is further evidenced by the diplomat’s refusal to describe the seraglios. As he did with the slaves’ accounts, the diplomat dangles the descriptions in front of the readers’ eyes, and refuses to share them. These repeated denials convey the temptation of slipping into the alluring, extraneous detours that characterize the novel but also demonstrate the diplomat’s control over the writing of his own history, as he trims them off his text. In the very beginning of his account, the diplomat comments that it is very hard for a foreigner to penetrate Turkish society. Although he became friendly with some Turkish men who were known to keep harems filled with beautiful women, they never talked about them, and the diplomat, respectful of local customs, feigned lack of interest. However, an old pasha surmised the diplomat’s curiosity, and “[s]ur le champ il m’offrit de

¹⁸ Interestingly, the title of the 1741 English translation of *Grecque moderne* reads *The History of a Fair Greek, who was taken out of a Seraglio at Constantinople, and brought to Paris by a late Ambassador at the Ottoman port: Interspersed with the surprising Adventures of several other Slaves*. This translation is very close to the original, so there are no “several other slave adventures,” only that of Maria Rezati, but it seems as though slaves stories were a selling point for the English readership. To be sure, the original French edition of the *Grecque moderne* had also hinted a lot more discreetly with a sentence in the text that there would be more slave stories in the text. When the diplomat comments that Théophraste’s story was not very original and that he heard similar ones every day around Constantinople, he adds “la suite de cette relation en fournira bien d’autres exemples” (93). The only other example that actually makes it into the text is that of Maria Rezati; the “many others” are all put away in a separate volume. These two references to the inclusion of other slaves’ adventures show their real (in the case of the English translation) and imagined (in the case of the narrator’s comment) allure to the reader. The narrator’s ultimate decision not to include them is again a show of a historian’s self-restraint.

m'accorder la vue de ses femmes. J'acceptai cette faveur sans empressement. Nous entrâmes dans un lieu dont la description est inutile à mon dessein" (58). Following his own precepts, Prévost makes his narrator skip the description of the place because it does not contribute to his testimony. Likewise, in the second part of the book, he writes,

Il m'avait parlé de sa maison comme du centre de sa puissance et de ses plaisirs; c'est-à-dire qu'avec tous les ornements qui sont au goût des Turcs, il y avait un serrail et une prodigieuse quantité d'esclaves. Je l'avais entendu vanter d'ailleurs comme le plus beau lieu qui fût aux environs de Constantinople. Il était à huit milles de ma maison. Nous n'y arrivâmes que le soir, et je fus privé ce jour-là du plaisir de la perspective, à laquelle il n'y a peut-être rien de comparable dans aucun lieu du monde. Mais le *sélictar* nous prodiguant aussi-tôt tout ce qu'il avait recueilli de richesses et d'élégances dans l'intérieur des édifices, je fus obligé de convenir dès le premier moment que je n'avais vu rien en France ni en Italie qui surpassât un si beau spectacle. Je n'en promets point une description. Ces détails ont toujours de la longueur dans un livre (185-6)¹⁹.

Here again, the narrator builds up even more intense expectations about the place he is about to visit. We are curious: the *sélictar* had boasted his was the most beautiful place in Constantinople. Indeed, the diplomat describes the outside view of the place as incomparable to anything in the world; the inside surpassed anything he had seen in France or Italy. Yet the narrator, satisfied with pronouncing his grandiose judgment of the place, refuses to share details with his reader. Like a Turkish master himself, he refuses to disclose to the Western reader the "ornements qui sont au goût des Turcs" – the harem and the

¹⁹ This last sentence reminds us of Renoncour's description of *Manon Lescaut*: "un récit de cette longueur aurait interrompu trop longtemps le fil de ma propre histoire" (35).

slaves. While the description is probably extraneous to his narrative's objective (to tell the story of his relationship with Théophraste), mentioning it and building it up in the text points to, and creates, temptation. By giving us a glimpse of what he is seeing, he conveys the lure of the text he could offer us, and yet he does not succumb to presenting it. He cuts the foreign ornaments off of the view of the reader while capitalizing on their promise.

The narrator's repeated refusal to indulge the reader with details parallels the relationship between the diplomat and Théophraste. The narrator's strategy of eliminating the Turkish ornaments (the slaves and the harem) for the sake of the text's economy follows a castrating logic that denies the reader the pleasures of the text just as Théophraste denies the diplomat sexual satisfaction (by her adoption of European/Christian moral values in their very castrating precepts). Diplomat and reader are turned into expectators to the possibilities, they observe and participate but are refused ultimate gratification. In denying the reader the alluring detour opportunities afforded by the descriptions and stories, the narrator seeks to neutralize the exotic impact of Théophraste's presence in the text. Paradoxically then, in a story set in Turkey about a Greek odalisque, the main victim of the narrator's writing process is exoticism.

Prévost's New Novel and the Writing of Literary History

Thus far I have examined the relationship between the novel and history as represented in the interactions between Théophraste and the diplomat. Their competing narratives illustrate the narrator's frustrated desire to write history as well as Théophraste's struggle for autonomous storytelling. The diplomat's ambition emphasizes lineage and European reliance on empirical examination of evidence to represent the truth as close to the source as possible. His narrative also betrays the shortcomings of the historical method

in the hopeless subjectivity of his testimony structure, for no matter how truthfully he claims to be reporting the facts, these same true facts yield no conclusion, and thus the impossibility of judgment. Because of this ambiguity, the diplomat's narrative has to be "downgraded" from history to memoir. The novel is represented by Théophraste's own oriental tale. Her quest for freedom from slavery and from the diplomat's influence and advances symbolize the novel's incipient desire for independence from other narrative forms such as history. Moreover, by setting other foreign slaves free and sending them all home represents a step further in the ideal of freedom – a vote of confidence in the potential of every tale to become a novel and survive on its own. The struggle and the stalemate between the two characters in Grecque moderne, the way they use their own and other's stories as pawns, the compromises they have to make, all force us to question the generic borders of history, memoir, tale, and novel.

Yet this is still the Histoire d'une Grecque moderne, a *novel* by Abbé Prévost. How does he, the author, negotiate the two genres in the text? To begin with, the Grecque moderne displays a much tighter text than Prévost's earlier novels. The MHQ, Cleveland, and DK, for example, are long and rambling memoir-novels with several detours (Manon Lescaut, the seventh volume of the MHQ, is a major detour). Prévost makes the Grecque moderne noticeably shorter by applying a method of economic *rationalization* to his writing: he changes a pre-existing ad-hoc workflow into one that is based on a set of published rules. This new set of rules for the novel stems from the more reliable *histoire particulière* method, as published in Marguerite d'Anjou; it warns against the depiction of feelings and sentiments, and prescribes self-control and sacrifice. In Grecque Moderne the narrator embodies Prévost's newly acquired conciseness and the text illustrates what happens when an author does not exercise self-control, and slips into the temptation afforded by foreign ornaments.

Grecque moderne was Prévost's first novel after a series of disillusionments with the genre during the 1730s. Its "Avertissement" exposes Prévost's new approach toward the novel, the rationalization principle resulting from a late 1730s crisis. Compared to other prefaces, most notably that of Cleveland, the relative "poorness" of the Grecque moderne's preface points to his vacillating feelings toward the novel's authorship. Unlike the diplomat's exordium and his commentary, which insists upon particular way of reading the text, the "anti-preface" of Grecque moderne provides no guidance. In annulling the preface and the guidelines it contains, Prévost abandons all pretense of defending the text, as he had painstakingly done with Cleveland and DK. The preface to the Grecque moderne originally consisted of two concise paragraphs²⁰, the first of which reads as follows:

Cette histoire n'a pas besoin de préface; mais l'usage en demande une à la tête d'un livre. Celle-ci ne servira qu'à déclarer au lecteur qu'on ne lui promet, pour l'ouvrage qu'on lui présente, ni clé de noms, ni éclaircissement sur les faits, ni le moindre avis qui puisse lui faire comprendre ou deviner ce qu'il n'entendra point par ses propres lumières. Le manuscrit s'est trouvé parmi les papiers d'un homme connu dans le monde. On a tâché de le revêtir d'un stile supportable, sans rien changer à la simplicité du récit, ni à la force des sentiments. Avec la tendresse, tout y respire l'honneur et la vertu. Qu'il parte sous de si bons auspices, et qu'il ne doive son succès qu'à lui-même. (51)

Prévost turns the preface into a remarkable list of negations, starting with his claim that the novel no longer needs a preface. The very *en passant* comment about the original

²⁰ The "avertissement" consisted of two paragraphs in the first edition of the Grecque moderne (1740). Singerman, in the Flammarion edition to the Grecque moderne text used in this chapter, argues that the publisher François Didot eliminated a third paragraph dispelling the parallels between Théophraste and Mlle Aïsée, thinking the allusion would only raise more suspicions. Singerman also notes that because of pressures from Mlle Aïsée's family, the preface was eventually eliminated altogether (51-2).

manuscript comes close to a negation of the found manuscript *topos* he had extensively developed in Cleveland. Furthermore, no longer would the preface point to the right way to read a text, nor to what is important or interesting; neither would it clarify obscure events, nor provide a key to the names. The preface will reveal nothing: Prévost seems to be projecting his view that the novel does not need any of its traditional supports and claims (usually elaborated in the preface) to survive on its own: “qu’il [le manuscrit] ne doive son succès qu’à lui-même”. Face to face with a text barely veiled by some adjustments in style, the reader is left to his own judgment, *ses propres lumières*, to find his way. In its claim for the novel’s autonomy, the (exhibitionist) self-effacing preface serves as a manifesto for the novel’s independence, which is paralleled in the text by Théophraste’s own denial of origins and by her setting the slaves free from the harems and sending them home. When Prévost writes “qu’il [le manuscrit] parte sous de si bons auspices,” he is, like Théophraste did with the slaves she liberated, underscoring his confidence in his text’s future survival. Thus the novel’s independence is not just a matter of loosening its ties from history; it is also the freedom to pursue other territories, be them the internal space of passions and sentiments or the external space outside of one’s known world.

But if Prévost seems to be proposing travel as ultimate liberation for the novel, it does not mean that the text should depict the foreignness of faraway lands and peoples. On the contrary, there seems to be a constant denial of the ornaments afforded by such landscapes. The influence of Prévost’s historiography methods upon the writing of the Grecque moderne become clearly discernable when he proposes to trim off all the excess exoticism of the text. We learn in the second paragraph of the preface that “on a retranché un étalage d’érudition turque, qui aurait appesanti la narration, et l’on a rendu par des termes françois tous les noms étrangers qui pouvaient recevoir ce changement.” (52) This passage

illustrates the sacrifice-of-the-ornament precept that permeates much of the Grecque moderne's text. As the diplomat had done with the volume of slave stories, Prévost *retranche*, that is, he cuts out a showcase of Turkish erudition, the ultimate ornament to a book. The content of this foreign, exotic ornament can be easily substitutable, easily transportable to a French context: "Ainsi, l'on a mis *serrail* au-lieu de *hareem*, [...] *marché* au-lieu de *bağar*". In eliminating an appendix with explanations of Turkish terms and adapting them to French, he explicitly denies the foreignness of the account²¹. Thus Prévost is not just supporting the novel's independence from history; he is also cautioning against the excessive influence of exotic tales such as Mille et une nuits for the novel's autonomy.

Yet all these negations and eliminations still exist as text – the reality is that the Grecque moderne still bears a list of denials as preface, because usage demands it. "[L]a préface exhibe le code en même temps qu'il l'annule" (Herman 1999, 257); that is, both preface and text indicate the novel's bold potential for autonomy, but the novel is still attached to history. Prévost makes use of the image of the ornament to reflect the different configurations of this relationship. In Marguerite d'Anjou, he had proposed the depiction of passions and sentiments as an ornament that was the novel's terrain, but that should be eliminated from history. The ornament is thus characterized as a self-contained entity that could be entirely cut off from the history text. In Grecque moderne, that is precisely what happens to the "étagère d'érudition turque" from the preface, and with the volume containing the slaves stories in the main text. Maria Rezati's story is also treated as an ornament, for it is used as a means of emotionally affecting the characters. Its lingering

²¹ This is a practice Prévost further elaborated in his translations of historical texts. Indeed, this is another one of his writing's important characteristics. Not only does Prévost adapt mediaeval and Renaissance history to eighteenth-century reader (as in Histoire de M. Thou, Marguerite d'Anjou, Guillaume le conquérant), he also adapts foreign texts to French audiences.

presence in the text creates all sorts of detours that detract from the main narrative, but slowly its presence is eliminated.

Théophraste's story, however, is the ornament that was never eliminated; rather, it was brought in, intact, to the center of the diplomat's history. Her presence in the diplomat's text, her attempts to bring in other stories such as Rezati's and the other slaves, his inability to penetrate her, threatens the narrator's objective of writing history to the point where he finally has to reconcile his intent with his inability to fully comprehend his subject; and thus the diplomat settles for a memoir. But if Théophraste's own story is cloistered in his narrative, and Théophraste herself dies, her slave tales are freed to develop into autonomous novels, and that is Prévost's tentatively hopeful view of the novel's future.

What is Prévost's compromise in Grecque moderne? Unlike his other novels, Grecque moderne is a text that needs no justification. Prévost seems to mature with his novel and his own narrator, letting go of his earlier eagerness to play the novel's game of mimicking history, and thus having to support a whole paratextual apparatus that ultimately undermined the novel's standing. This attitude not only distinguishes the novel from history, it also asserts his separate stances as both a novelist and a historian. Prévost also erases his own participation in the novel, leaving reader and text alone: The Grecque moderne's fortune is the result of its own attributes, and the reader's understanding of it is the result of his own knowledge. Likewise, this desire for keeping everything separate is further exemplified as he writes at the head of his preface, "[c]ette histoire n'a pas besoin de préface", nodding to both the narrator intent (the text is "histoire") and Théophraste's presence (no preface, thus no origin). Their relationship – the narrator does not need to explain the origins of the story – also spells separation. Yet the fact that they are all there, preface, history and sacrificed supplement, history and memoir, and novel and oriental tale seems to

indicate that Prévost is aware of the difficulty of keeping his categories separate, and that is perhaps the compromise he has learned to live with. Ultimately, the suspense of the unsolved trials of the Grecque moderne remains open, and the reader is faced with yet another question: will the novel survive on its own? The rest of the eighteenth century's literary history will tell.

Chapter 3

Diderot's Supplément and the Failed Novel

In 1772, the year following the publication of the first edition of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's account of his circumnavigation of the world, Voyage autour du monde (Voyage), Denis Diderot wrote a critique (*compte rendu*) of the travel account for the Correspondance littéraire (CL). He sent the *compte rendu* to his friend Friedrich Melchior Grimm, who edited the CL, but shortly thereafter, before it was published, Diderot asked it to be returned to him. Upon its return, Diderot turned his critique into the first two parts of a philosophical dialogue by two friends, A and B, who discuss the Voyage and the damage caused by European colonization of the newly discovered lands. Diderot then added the two final parts, in which A and B debate how European civilization had turned a naturally honorable act – sex – into the source of all societal evils. This text, published serially in the CL in 1773 and 1774, is known to us today as the Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville (Supplément¹).

Diderot's decision to turn his *compte rendu* of the Voyage into the Supplément – a philosophical dialogue – reflects a change in the text's focus. If the first dealt directly with the travel account's problems and achievements, the second, I argue, includes Diderot's evolving view of fiction and the novel, and ultimately, his view of the novel's relationship to travel literature. Diderot's conflicted relationship with novels began with the publication of

¹ After its initial serial publication in the CL in the early 1770s, the Supplément was only posthumously published again in 1796 in the Opuscules Littéraires. However, the four surviving manuscripts suggest that Diderot worked on various versions of the text until his death. The first version is the one which appeared in the CL. The second and third are very similar, and are called FV and FV' (Fonds Vandeul, Diderot's daughter's archive). Finally, there is the Leningrad manuscript, discovered in the early twentieth century, in which Diderot interspersed another chapter (chapter IV). The Supplément au voyage de Bougainville, as we know it today, is based on the Leningrad manuscript and composed of five chapters. This dissertation quotes from an edition of the Leningrad manuscript.

Les Bijoux indiscrets (Bijoux) in 1748. The Bijoux were a libertine Oriental tale about Mangogul, the ruler of Congo, who had a ring that made women's genitals speak. Although the book's *succès de scandale* provided Diderot with temporary financial relief, it also earned him harsh literary criticism for its bawdiness. After the Bijoux, Diderot's novels were only published during his lifetime in semi-private publications such as the CL.

Fourteen years later in 1762, the year after Samuel Richardson's death, Diderot wrote an elegy extolling the virtues of the author of England's first best seller, Pamela. In the "Eloge de Richardson" ("Eloge") Diderot clearly states his disdain for the French novel as he praises Samuel Richardson's œuvre, especially Clarissa. Influenced by his unpleasant experience with the Bijoux, and his great admiration of Richardson, Diderot's establishes in the "Eloge" what we could call his "theory of the novel," arguing that fiction, as written by Richardson, forces the reader to react in an emotional way to what he is reading; this emotional engagement in turn leads to discussions, and to a better understanding of moral issues.

In this chapter, I suggest that the Supplément may be read as an elaboration of Diderot's experience with the novel genre. First, contrary to what the title of the text would lead us to suppose, the Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville is largely independent from Bougainville's Voyage. In the text of the Supplément, Diderot quickly substitutes the Voyage with a *Supplément*, B's fictional supplement to the voyage, which will become be the centerpiece of the dialogue between A and B². Secondly, and most importantly, I show that if we, as A and B do, read this *Supplément* as fiction – as a potential novel based on the Voyage, then the entire Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville is both Diderot's comment

² From this point on, Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville (Supplément), underlined, designates Diderot's five-chapter dialogue between A and B. *Supplément*, in italics, designates the tome A and B are reading together in the Supplément.

on the Bijoux controversy, and an application of the reading and writing of the ideal novel as described in the “Eloge de Richardson”.

Despite a prodigious amount of literary analysis on the Supplément linking it to several distinct other texts by Diderot and other authors, no study of the role of fiction in Diderot’s Supplément has been conducted with regard to Diderot’s experience with the Bijoux, or his theory of the novel as expounded in the “Eloge”. I argue that one of the most important facets in Diderot’s theory of the novel is his handling of the Other, and in turn, of travel literature. In the Bijoux, he had invented a fabulous Orient, parodying fashionable exotic tales of the mid-eighteenth century, and was criticized not only for the eroticism of his text but also for his lack of real knowledge of the Other. In turn, in the “Eloge” Diderot strongly criticizes novels set in foreign lands in favor of descriptions of much closer Europeans landscapes and mores. In the Supplément Diderot establishes a qualified relationship between his writing and that of Bougainville to make full use of the Other. Even though Bougainville provides him with indisputable, factual, historical knowledge of Tahiti, Diderot shows however that such knowledge of the Other is neither possible nor sufficient. The limits of the novel in the Supplément are exposed as Diderot shows that a novel based on Tahiti cannot represent the universal as Richardson’s novels do.

From *compte rendu* to Supplément

Friedrich Melchior Grimm’s Correspondance littéraire was one of the most important eighteenth-century “clearing houses” for French literary and cultural criticism. Grimm compiled texts from a number of *philosophes*, hand-copied the originals, and circulated the compilation periodically among a very select group of subscribers that included enlightened monarchs such as King Stanislaw II of Poland, Queen Louise Ulrica of

Sweden, and Empress Catherine II of Russia. Eric Walter explains that such manuscript publications were “en premier lieu un vehicule des idées philosophiques les plus hardies,” that “[mobilisent] l’énergie et l’astuce des auteurs et copistes” (392). Diderot was a frequent contributor to the CL. In fact, many of the texts that compose Diderot’s corpus today only appeared to this select audience during his lifetime, and were not published in book form to the general public until after his death. This is the case of some of his most acclaimed texts, such as Jacques le fataliste et son maître, La Religieuse, and the Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville.

In 1772 Diderot wrote a *compte rendu* of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville’s account of the first official French circumnavigation of the world, Voyage autour du monde, for the CL. In this text Diderot describes Bougainville’s voyage, some of the important passages of the text, the navigator’s impartiality as a narrator of important events. Diderot also calls for Bougainville to distance himself from the “innocent and fortunate” Tahitians (449), whom the navigator had largely described as the habitants of Aphrodite’s island (Bougainville named the island of Tahiti *Nouvelle Cythère*). Diderot sent the manuscript to Grimm, but the Voyage’s *compte rendu* was never published; private correspondence between Grimm and Diderot suggests that the latter requested it to be returned to him before publication. The obvious similarity between the first two chapters of the Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville and the *compte rendu*³ evidences that the former was based on the latter: some passages from the *compte rendu* were transcribed almost verbatim to the Supplément. To these

³ Although the *compte rendu*’s authorship is generally attributed to Diderot, the evidence is circumstantial. The two extant manuscript copies of the *compte rendu* are copies, yet not by the hand of Diderot himself. This is not particularly surprising given that Diderot’s handwriting was in his own words hard to read, and he made use of copyists for his manuscripts. The strongest evidence that the *compte rendu* was written by Diderot comes from a passage in a letter from Diderot to Grimm. In it, Diderot makes reference to a “papier sur Bougainville”. Scholars have assumed that this “papier” is the *compte rendu*. However, it is not impossible that this *compte rendu* was written by someone else, such as Grimm himself, or the Abbé Raynal. The *compte rendu* was only found many years after the death of Diderot in the Ermitage archives, and published for the first time in 1875.

first two chapters, Diderot added two more, and the Supplément was originally published in four chapters (corresponding to chapters I, II, III and V of the final manuscript) in the CL, between September 1773 and April 1774.

In the first chapter, Diderot has his two interlocutors, A and B, discuss the Voyage and Bougainville. The use of A and B is a logical extension of the fact that the Supplément was the third part of a triptych of tales where A and B had already figured⁴. This first chapter, aptly called “Jugement du voyage de Bougainville”, consists of a dialogue between A and B in which the two friends evaluate and judge Bougainville’s character and navigational skills, his voyage, and his travel account. Bougainville’s self-conscious impartiality, which Diderot somewhat derided in the *compte rendu*, is articulated in the dialogue: A asks the scoffing questions about the Voyage, and B only praises it in his answers, defending Bougainville’s text, its purpose and its means. Point by point, B “acquits” Bougainville from A’s suggestive doubts. For example, when A wonders if Bougainville was the right man for the enterprise, B answers:

Bougainville est parti avec les lumières nécessaires et les qualités propres à ses vues: de la philosophie, du courage, de la véracité; un coup d’œil prompt qui saisit les choses et abrège le temps des observations; de la circonspection, de la patience; le désir de voir, de s’éclairer et d’instruire; la science du calcul, des

⁴ Because today it is often published with other philosophical texts of Diderot, few pay attention to the status of the “Supplément” as part of a triptych of short stories (“contes”) published in the Correspondance Littéraire. The “Supplément” is the third and longest story that follows “Ceci n’est pas un conte” (April 1773) and “Madame de la Carlière” (May 1773). This is evidenced by the continuum of the dialogue between A and B, and cross-references between the three texts. The Herman edition of Diderot’s complete works rectifies this situation by publishing the three tales together, but to this day the “Supplément” is mostly published by itself, or as part of collections of Diderot’s philosophical works. Much of the scholarship loses sight of the integrative meaning of the “Supplément” as the last and longest tale of the trilogy. This is particularly problematic for the understanding of Diderot’s philosophy, as the “Supplément” culminates a certain train of philosophical thought. As noted in the heading to the first tale, “Ceci n’est pas un conte”, in the CL “[l]e conte que l’on va lire est de M. Diderot, il sera suivi de plusieurs autres du même auteur. On ne verra qu’à la fin du dernier la morale et le but secret qu’il s’est proposé.” Diderot may have been tongue-in-cheek about keeping “la morale et le but secret” until the end. In the very least, it appears as though Diderot has an *a priori* moral purpose in writing these stories.

mécaniques, de la géométrie, de l'astronomie; et une teinture suffisante
d'histoire naturelle. (142)

In this passage, Diderot situates himself on Bougainville's side in a famous eighteenth-century quarrel about travel accounts and the existence of a state of nature. In his 1754 Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (Discours sur l'inégalité) Jean-Jacques Rousseau shows his disdain for travelers and travel literature. He writes that "il n'y a guère que quatre sortes d'hommes qui fassent de voyages de long cours; les marins, les marchands, les soldats et les missionnaires. Or, on ne doit guère s'attendre que les trois premières classes fournissent des bons observateurs" (footnote X, 180). Missionaries, in his opinion, are likewise unreliable because of the obvious religious purpose of their missions. Rousseau thinks that only a philosopher would be capable of properly describing the world. Bougainville himself seizes upon this comment in his introduction to the Voyage and claims that "[j]e suis voyageur et marin; c'est-à-dire, un menteur et un imbécile aux yeux de cette classe d'écrivains paresseux et superbes qui, dans les ombres de leur cabinet, philosophent à perte de vue sur le monde et ses habitants, et soumettent impérieusement la nature à leurs imaginations" (57). Through B, Diderot concurs with and defends Bougainville, characterizing him as a perfect fit for the job, a man possessing all the knowledge and qualities necessary for what he set out to do. In defending Bougainville, Diderot attempts what Rousseau could not accomplish in his Discours sur l'inégalité. Rousseau's method was to describe the natural state of man through conjectures – since man received reason from God since creation, and thus the state of nature had never existed. Diderot, on the other hand, seizes on Bougainville and his Voyage to engage this question from another point of view. Instead of dismissing the available data and imagining the

natural man heuristically as Rousseau had done, Diderot takes Bougainville's observations seriously and conceives the natural man in the dialogues in the Supplément.

Diderot's defense of Bougainville and his Voyage continues as B considers that the travel account produced advances in three different areas: a better knowledge of the globe and its inhabitants; safer seas; and better maritime charts (142). A and B agree that Bougainville suffered much in the hands of other Europeans, who did not lend the French navigator any support as he tried in vain to obtain food and water during his trip (Bougainville mentions problems with the Portuguese in Brazil, as well as with the Dutch in the Spice Islands), and commiserate with Bougainville's difficulties: "un crime digne de châtement," (143) says A. B also acquits him from having brought Aotourou, a Tahitian native, to France, a decision for which Bougainville had been heavily criticized. "Bougainville a renvoyé Aotourou après avoir pourvu aux frais et à la sûreté de son retour" (146). In unequivocal terms, B states that the Voyage is "le seul [livre] qui m'ait donné le goût pour une autre contrée que la mienne" (146).

Perhaps most indicatively, B remarks upon Bougainville's objectivity. For example, in the *compte rendu*, Diderot had many questions about the *Ile des Lanciers* (the Akiaki atoll in French Polynesia); he comments wistfully, "M. de Bougainville n'en sait rien" (449) and proceeds to wonder himself about the answers. In the Supplément B rather states that Bougainville "n'explique rien; il atteste le fait" (143). As Diderot transposes his critique of the Voyage from the *compte rendu* to the Supplément, Bougainville goes from ignorant (he does not know) to uncommitted historian (he reports facts impartially). The navigator and his Voyage become unbiased purveyors of natural facts, much as Bougainville himself had pledged in the Voyage's "Discours préliminaire": "je ne cite ni contredis personne: je prétends encore moins établir ou combattre aucune hypothèse" (57). B's implication is that it

is the *Supplément*, the one that is about to appear in the Supplément, that is going to add a perhaps logical, perhaps ideological, but surely fictional, explanation for the unexplained facts. In transforming the *compte rendu* into a dialogue Diderot modulates his opinions of Bougainville and his voyage to the benefit of the Supplément. He no longer criticizes Bougainville's text, but rather finds each text its own role, drawing the line between the Voyage's purpose (facts) and the *Supplément*'s (explanations).

The first chapter of the Supplément ultimately also serves as an apologia for Bougainville and his book against much of the criticism to which it was subjected. Diderot's strategy is simple: by emphasizing Bougainville's credentials as an Enlightenment navigator and extolling his commitment to factuality, he extracts Bougainville's travel account from the tradition of the marvelous and places it more properly in the empirical realm of modern history. In strengthening the credentials of Bougainville's text, Diderot also strengthens his own. Etienne Tassin writes that "[l]e récit de Bougainville confère une réalité géographique et historique à l'état de nature" (6). Similarly, Michel Bideaux, in his introduction to the Supplément, notes that Voyage, "c'est une commodité d'écriture. Exploitant un matériau préexistant (le livre dont il dit que son texte n'est qu'un supplément), il réduit l'effort de documentation et, par là, permet une réaction plus rapide, une introduction plus incisive dans le débat d'idées engagé par le premier ouvrage" (7).

Yet Diderot goes further than simply bolstering the Voyage's qualities in order to strengthen his own text's credentials. At the end of the first chapter, A asks if B believed in Bougainville's "Tahitian fable" ("Est-ce que vous donneriez dans la fable de Tahiti?" (146)). "Ce n'est point une fable," B explains, "et vous n'auriez aucun doute sur la sincérité de Bougainville, si vous connaissiez le *Supplément* de son Voyage" (146, italics added). Thus rather than make history underscore the *Supplément*'s truthfulness, B suggests that it is rather

this *Supplément* that underpins the *Voyage*'s veracity. At this point, we still do not know what the *Supplément* contains, but in B's estimation, the relationship between *Voyage* and *Supplément* seems to indicate that truth lies beyond the travel account, in the *Supplément*. B's cryptic allusions also mark the turning point in the discussion between A and B. Making the distinction between *Voyage* and *Supplément* clear, Diderot insists upon the materiality of this separate tome: A asks B, "Et où trouve-t-on ce *Supplément*?" B answers, "Là, sur cette table" (146). From this point on, A and B will leave the *Voyage* behind and concentrate in reading together, and commenting upon, the fictional *Supplément*. The transition from *Voyage* to *Supplément* at this point of the *Supplément* is not always noted by critics. Moreover, the very title of Diderot's text – supplement – leads readers to assume that the *Supplément* "comble un vide" (Derrida 208): they tend to view the *Supplément* as Diderot's attempt to fill a gap in the *Voyage*. Indeed, most of the scholarship on this text deals with the moral and ideological discussions that are evident in Diderot's text and conspicuously absent from Bougainville's.

The *Supplément* did not attract any particular attention from critics in the nineteenth century. As one of the intellectual fathers of the Revolution, Diderot and his work were more or less favored depending on the political views of the reader and the power structure of the moment. Today, however, Denis Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* is one of his most read and critically analyzed texts. The turning point came in the early twentieth century with the discovery of the most complete version of the *Supplément* in the Leningrad archives by M. S. Viktor Johansson. This manuscript was edited and published in 1935 by Gilbert Chinard. Critical interest grew, however, after Herbert Dieckmann's 1955 edition of the *Supplément*. Although the text he presented was likely the first of the *Supplément*'s text and not as developed as the Leningrad manuscript, Dieckmann's introduction addressed some of Chinard's critical failures and also sparked the discussion on

the text. Since 1955 the Supplément has been published at least nineteen times, alone or in compilations. Concomitantly, scholarship on the text has flourished, and today Diderot's Supplément is embedded in a maze of intertextual and ideological connections with Diderot's other works, and with distinct philosophical lineages.

For example, Dieckmann's introduction focused, via philosophy and Bougainville, on one of the most evident and discussed intertextual issues of the Supplément, the relationship between Diderot's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophies. For Dieckmann, the Supplément was a response to Rousseau's Discours sur l'inégalité. In Dieckmann's view, the two texts, side by side, illustrate not only the eighteenth-century philosophical debate on the "noble savage" versus the "civilized European," but also the complex relationship between Rousseau and Diderot. In the early 1960s, Michelle Duchet, author of the indispensable Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières, shifted the focus of scholarship on the Supplément to its relationship to Abbé Raynal's Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (Histoire des deux Indes). Duchet re-situates the Supplément as part of Diderot tradition of anti-colonial writings, underpinned by his many contributions to Raynal's Histoire des deux Indes.

Instigated by Chinard, Dieckermann, and Duchet, various critics seized on the Supplément in the 1960s. Then, in 1973, Georges Benrekassa published "Dit et non dit idéologique: A propos du Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville", raising important questions for the interpretation of the text that pointed to the inevitability of contradictions inherent to intertextual analyses. He states that it is only through the relationship between the Supplément and other texts that Chinard, Dieckmann, and specially Duchet are able to discuss the ideological content of the Supplément. Using Duchet's analysis as an example,

Benrekassa pointedly comments that “cette articulation se fait difficilement au prix sinon de contradictions, du moins de retournements surprenants” (31). His point holds true to this day: no critic, including Benrekassa himself, has ever been able to get away from the *Supplément*’s intertextuality as an interpretative tool.

The notable variety of intertextual analyses show that the *Supplément* could well be considered a patchwork of other texts, Diderot’s own or borrowed. Several critics have pointed to the structural similarities between this text and other texts by Diderot. To cite a few, Strugnell draws parallels between the *Supplément* and *Jacques le Fataliste*. Otis Fellows sees a triad structure everywhere in the text and argues that the *Supplément* is a counterpoint to *La Religieuse*. James Kaplan links the theme of sacrifice of individual needs to the society’s greater good (the “Iphigenia theme”) in the *Supplément* to Diderot’s interest in opera. And Irvin Greenberg argues that ethical and structural similarities between the *Supplément* and chapter XVIII of the *Bijoux Indiscrets* suggest they were written at around the same time. But the *Supplément* has also been connected to other authors’ texts. Dieckmann, William Stowe and Dena Goodman are but of the few who draw parallels between Diderot and Rousseau’s *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité parmi les hommes*. Dominique Lanni, for example, claims that that “Les Adieux du vieillard”, was lifted from the travelogue of Olfert Dapper, *Description de l’Afrique*. The Old Man character, in turn, is heir to a whole lineage of “savages” who criticize European colonization and civilization, the extant eighteenth-century examples being Lahotan’s *Huron* and Voltaire’s *Ingénu*, but going back to Montaigne’s cannibals comments on French society at the end of the sixteenth century.

Tracing the textual (structural) and ideological (ethical) lineage of the *Supplément* invariably leads critics to imagine coherence in a text that defies any simple, linear

interpretation. Most critics conflate an ideological approach and archeological research, where “meaning” is found by tracing the lineage of the text to other texts, allowing readers to place the Supplément’s ideology into an intelligible context. Yet choosing one intertextual connection will invariably leave interpretative gaps that can only be properly explained by another intertextual connection. Benrekassa himself is unable to avoid using intertextuality in his analysis. For him, Diderot’s Supplément is inextricably linked to Bougainville’s Voyage, and must supplement it by giving a voice to the Vieillard. “Ce qui manquait au Voyage de Bougainville,” says Benrekassa borrowing Derrida’s terms, “le vide que le Supplément est censé combler, c’est cet espace où peut se déployer un discours à la fois ‘nouveau’ et très ancien” (36). In Benrekassa’s argument the existence of a Supplément implies that the Voyage is lacking, and Diderot provides to the Voyage with ideology.

However, Diderot makes it clear that such purported lack is not negligent; it is simply not intended in the Voyage. As I previously suggested, the Voyage serves a historical purpose (Bougainville *reports the facts* – “Il atteste le fait”), and the Supplément, a meaningful purpose not yet revealed (Diderot *explains*, as Bougainville “n’explique rien”). Benrekassa fails to take into account the simultaneity of the two meanings of supplement: it is both whole and an addition to another whole (Derrida 208). To be sure, as other critics establish the text’s textual and ideological lineages, they support the definition of “supplement” as a “plénitude”, because they underscore the “Supplément’s” life beyond the Voyage. Moreover, one of the most important features of Derrida’s supplement is that it takes over (*tient-lieu*), it substitutes the original act. Diderot’s Supplément however does not substitute; it separates, it assigns different purposes and means to each text; it may “complete an original, not cancelling it” (Stowe 355).

The most interesting part of Benrekassa's argument is, however, that Diderot's use of fiction is the main obstruction for ideological interpretations of the text. Despite all the connections the Supplément and Diderot's philosophy may have, it is the text's fictional and multiple discourses that complicate and deny critics the possibility of a definitive interpretation (38). Dena Goodman, on the other hand, offers a very intelligent solution to the question of fiction and political argument. In her view, the Supplément's fiction allows for communication between Tahiti and France (130); communication – the dialogue between A and B – is then achieved as the alien is integrated into the familiar world of France through fiction. Likewise, I have shown that Diderot distances his Supplément from the Voyage right at the end of the first chapter. His characters A and B spend the remaining four chapters discussing the contents of the *Supplément*, not the Voyage's. This *Supplément* – the fictional tome that A and B read together inside the Supplément – is also the “intertext” between Bougainville's Voyage and Diderot's Supplément, the intermediary, interpolated fiction that bridges the empirical travel account and the philosophical dialogue.

Taking it further, I propose that readers, as A and B do, should read the *Supplément* as a novel, and discuss it accordingly as a work of fiction. In the next section I show how the existence of the *Supplément* and the dialogue between A and B about the *Supplément* articulate Diderot's experiences with the novel since Les Bijoux indiscrets, and as proposed in his “Eloge de Richardson”. I will examine the internal intertextual connection between *Supplément* and the Supplément, and the external connection with the Bijoux and the “Eloge”. Rather than positioning the Supplément in Diderot's ideological networks, I have focused on literal intertextual references between texts and supplements (Bijoux and letters XVIII and XIX; “Eloge” and Clarissa's will; Voyage and Supplément; Supplément and *Supplément*; *Supplément* and side stories). Parallels between these connections provide us in

turn with insights into Diderot's reading and criticism of fiction, and ultimately with a view into Diderot's philosophy of the Other.

The *Supplément* in the Supplément: The Novel Within

B initially draws our attention to the *Supplément* as proof that Bougainville's Tahitian account is not a fable; as cited earlier, B states to A that "vous n'auriez aucun doute sur la sincérité de Bougainville, si vous connaissiez le supplément de son voyage" (146). We are initially led to believe that it was Bougainville's editorial choices that had left the material now available to us in the *Supplément* out of the main text of the travel account. For some mysterious reason, this material was edited out from the Voyage's text, yet it still proves Bougainville's sincerity and thus that his account of his encounter with Tahitians was true. The hint of power of this mysterious text is B's first "selling point".

B is also somewhat mysterious about the *Supplément*. "Et où trouve-t-on ce supplément?" (146) asks A. The specificity of B's answer – "Là, sur cette table" – seems to indicate that one cannot find the supplement anywhere else (Strugnell 39), and thus that the *Supplément* is a manuscript belonging to B. Adding to the mystery, B also refuses to let A borrow the *Supplément*. A asks "Est-ce que vous ne me le confierez pas?" (146); "Non, mais nous pourrions le parcourir ensemble, si vous voulez," B replies. B seems to own the *Supplément*, not only materially (A asks for permission to look at it), but intellectually as well, as he obviously possesses intimate knowledge of the *Supplément* (he knows it proves the veracity of the Voyage) that he is only willing to share with A if A lets B guide him.

B's attitude toward the *Supplément* suggests a desire to protect the manuscript from criticism; if B guides the reading and controls its outcome, his interpretation of the text prevails. B's caution betrays knowledge of the issues associated with the publication of the

sort of text that mixes exotic locales and issues involving sex – it may reflect Diderot’s previous experience with his Bijoux indiscrets in 1748. Despite the Bijoux’s enormous success, Diderot was also heavily criticized. Notably, Abbé Raynal, publisher of the proto-CL, a review called Nouvelles Littéraires, wrote about the state of the novel in France in 1748, calling it a futile genre, but giving qualified praise to Abbé Prévost, Lesage, Marivaux and Crébillon fils. At the end of his critique Raynal comments that “[l]e succès de Crébillon a tourné la tête à mille sots qui ont voulu faire des romans dans son genre. Nous venons d’en voir un, intitulé les *Bijoux indiscrets*” (139). More specifically, Raynal continues, “Les *Bijoux indiscrets* sont obscures, mal écrits, dans un mauvais ton grossier et d’un homme qui connaît mal le monde qu’il a voulu peindre. L’auteur est M. Diderot, qui a des connaissances très-étendues et beaucoup d’esprit, mais qui n’est pas fait pour le genre dans lequel il vient de travailler” (139-40).

Raynal’s pointed criticism exemplifies the kind of attack Diderot suffered in this incursion into the novel genre, which in turn seem to have changed Diderot’s ideas about writing novels. Soon after publishing the Bijoux in 1748, he published his Mémoires sur différents sujets des mathématiques. In its dedicatory letter to Madame de P...⁵, Diderot abandons the novel. “Je veux que le scandale cesse; et, sans perdre le temps en apologie, j’abandonne la marotte et les grelots, pour ne les reprendre jamais; et je reviens à Socrate” (79). Indeed, Diderot only ventured into novel territory again with Jacques le fataliste and La Religieuse, which were only privately distributed through the CL during Diderot’s lifetime. B’s reluctance to show his work to A seems to reflect Diderot’s careful dissemination of his own works of fiction after the scandal of the Bijoux.

⁵ According to Antoine Adam, “la femme sans doute du mathématicien Prémontval, [qui] lui avait fait des reproches sur les *Bijoux*” (20).

Lorraine Piroux writes that Diderot had suggested similar guided readings in two earlier works, the Bijoux and the L'interprétation de la nature (1754). Piroux points out that in the earlier texts' dedicatory letters, Diderot utilizes the Augustinian formula "Prends et lis" (*tolle, lege!* or "take up and read"). In Saint Augustine's Confessions, *tolle, lege!* is a child's song that leads him to a gospel passage and to his conversion to Catholic Christianity. Likewise, in the Supplément, Diderot exhorts A (through B) to "Tenez, tenez, lisez". In Piroux's view, beyond the conversion allusion, the two earlier texts' dedicatory letters seek to guide the reader toward an understanding of a "savoir souterrain, capable d'outrepasser les limites que le visible impose à la pensée" (127). Similarly, the Supplément's first chapter alludes to this challenge. As A accepts B's invitation to engage in a dual reading of the *Supplément*, the bad weather that had been dogging the two friends suddenly clears up: "Assurément, je le veux. Voilà le brouillard qui retombe, et l'azur du ciel qui commence à paraître. Il semble que mon lot soit d'avoir tort avec vous jusque dans les moindres choses; il faut que je sois bien bon pour vous pardonner une supériorité aussi continuel" (147). In this passage A suggests the possibility of seeing things that were previously obscured to vision. Moreover, A also defers to B – albeit amicably, or perhaps jocularly, A yields to B's desire to control the reading of the *Supplément*, placing himself in an eager pupil's position. This positioning parallels Zima's and the *jeune homme*'s implied in the dedicatory letters of the Bijoux and the L'Interpretation de la nature, as explained by Piroux, transforming A into a potential "disciple accompli," (130) who must not only take up and read, but read the entirety of the text. If we continue to apply Piroux's analysis to the Supplément, we could suggest that just as "l'allusion au bijou voyageur ne marque pas seulement un changement d'épistémologie, elle indique surtout le passage d'un genre littéraire à un autre," (Piroux 147) B wants A not only to see beyond the Voyage, but he is also marking the passage from travel account to novel.

In order to see the *Supplément* as a novel, we must start by discerning four distinct parts in the *Supplément* A and B read in the Supplément: “Préambule,” “Adieux du vieillard,” “Entretien entre L’Aumônier et Orou” (divided into two parts), and a “troisième morceau”. In addition to these main parts, B mentions also a suppressed “Note en marge de l’aumônier,” a “Eloge” of Tahiti by the chaplain at the end of the “Entretien,” and finally, a list of the Western world’s problems I call “Litanie d’Orou”. They are distributed as shown below, with the main parts of the *Supplément* represented in bold, and the suppressed/additional fragments between parentheses:

(1) Préambule

(2) Adieux du Vieillard

(3a) Entretien de l’Aumônier et d’Orou

(Note en marge)

(3b) Suite de l’Entretien

(Eloge)

(4) Troisième Morceau

(Litanie)

The reading of the *Supplément* by A and B reveals an interplay between main text and suppressed/additional texts. The “Adieux” are characterized as the main text, the highlight of the *Supplément*. A receives it with admiration, but wonders about the European overtones of the discourse. The “Entretien” is, however, and according to B himself, somewhat less interesting than the “Adieux,” and A does seem more prone to interrupting the reading and diverting attention to the marginal notes. We can thus divide the *Supplément* then in two distinct parts, the first containing the “Préambule” and the “Adieux du Vieillard,” and the

second containing the remaining parts (“Entretien,” “Note en marge,” “éloge,” “troisième morceau,” and “litanie”). When we interpret these intratextual relationships in the Supplément in light of other texts by Diderot, the idea that the *Supplément* might be a novel B is trying to write takes shape. The “Eloge de Richardson” and its extolling of Clarissa provide a model for the structure and reading of the “Adieux du Vieillard” in the *Supplément*. Reading the “Entretiens de l’Aumonier et d’Orou” through Bijoux indiscrets’ lenses shows in turn the limits of the relationship between travel account and novel, and more specifically, of the novel genre itself.

Les “Adieux du Vieillard” and the “Eloge de Richardson”

A and B start their reading of the *Supplément in media res*: B tells A “Tenez, tenez, lisez: passez ce préambule qui ne signifie rien, et allez droit aux adieux que fit un des chefs de l’île à nos voyageurs. Cela vous donnera quelque notion de l’éloquence de ces gens là” (147). B’s advice to skip the preamble seems to diverge from the idea of a full, close reading that is proposed in the Bijoux (“Prenez, lisez, et lisez tout” (27)), but it does not seem particularly out of the ordinary in the context of novels. In fact, this preamble that “means nothing” may characterize the *Supplément* as a novel. Novels’ prefaces’ claims to truth and morality had been commonplace among Enlightenment novelists. As I have shown in the two previous chapters, the preface had been the space where the novel battled for its legitimacy in the early eighteenth century. As the century progressed, the preface seemed to lose ground as the foundation of the novel’s legitimacy. For example, if Lesage’s Beauchêne (1732) contains several prefatory texts attesting to various levels of legitimacy of his text, starting with Prévost’s Grecque moderne (1740), “cette histoire n’a pas besoin de préface” (51). Rousseau himself seems to care little whether the reader believes him or not in Julie’s preface (1761).

In short, the preface had been progressively looked upon as an overused, increasingly meaningless convention at the beginning of a novel. Through B's comment on the preamble of the *Supplément*, Diderot seems to be alluding to this very phenomenon. B, as the "author" of the *Supplément*, wrote the preface, which is a requirement for the novel's claims to legitimacy, but that matters little in the end. What matters, in B's opinion is the "Adieux du Vieillard," and it seems as though he is particularly proud of it. B diverts A's attention from the *Voyage*, and carefully draws attention to his own manuscript, elaborating on the mysteriousness and value of the *Supplément's* text. B is clearly eager to show the "Adieux" to A, which he characterizes as evidence of Tahitians' eloquence, but which in fact may reflect his own.

The "Adieux du Vieillard" is a modified transcription of Diderot's own direct harangue to Bougainville to halt the colonization of Tahiti, as he had written in the *compte rendu*. In the *Supplément* the speech is rendered by one of the island's chiefs, the Old Man (*le Vieillard*). The Old Man is one of the two characters Diderot adopts from Bougainville's travel account to populate his fictional *Supplément* (the second one being the Chaplain, or *l'Aumônier*)⁶. The Old Man was an obscure character of the *Voyage*. Michel Bideaux and Sonia Faessel, editors of the latest annotated edition of Bougainville's *Voyage*, point out that there is no mention of the Old Man in Bougainville's navigation journal that served as the basis for the *Voyage*, and that he probably appropriated the description of the scene in which the Old Man appears from the journals of other crewmembers (footnote 5, p 207). The Old Man's description is restricted to the following passage in the *Voyage*:

⁶ Some critics identify the Tahitian who argues with the Chaplain, Orou, with Aotourou, the Tahitian Bougainville brought back to Paris from his voyage. Besides the slight phonetic proximity between the two names, and the physical proximity that Orou's presence in Paris would allow, this identification seems unlikely. Both Aotourou and Orou are mentioned by name in the dialogues between A and B, which implies that A and B are aware of the existence/difference between the two.

Il y avait dedans cinq ou six femmes et un vieillard vénérable. Les femmes nous saluèrent en portant la main sur la poitrine, et criant plusieurs fois *tayo*. Le vieillard était père de notre hôte. Il n'avait du grand âge que ce caractère respectable qu'impriment les ans sur une belle figure: sa tête ornée de cheveux blancs et d'une longue barbe, tout son corps nerveux et rempli, ne montraient aucune ride, aucun signe de décrépitude.

Cet homme vénérable parut s'apercevoir à peine de notre arrivée; il se retira même sans répondre à nos caresses, sans témoigner ni frayeur, ni étonnement, ni curiosité: fort éloigné de prendre part à l'espèce d'extase que notre vue causait à tout ce peuple, son air rêveur et soucieux semblait annoncer qu'il craignait que ces jours heureux, écoulés pour lui dans le sein du repos, ne fussent troublés par l'arrivée d'une nouvelle race. (207-8)

Bougainville's stylized description of a person he may not have actually seen points most notably to his use of recognizable mythical references⁷, which in turn hint at the marvelous and become the fabulous (as in "la fable du Tahiti," as A puts it in the dialogue in the Supplément). Bideaux and Faessel explain that the image of the Old Man had been a well-used *topos* in travel literature, his old-age wisdom underscoring an apocalyptic attitude regarding the newcomers⁸. In Bougainville's representation, the Old Man is a patriarch immune to and almost against the commotion surrounding the arrival of the French on the island; he does not partake in the new era that unravels the moment the French set foot in

⁷ Bougainville used several mythical references when describing his first impressions of Tahiti. In addition to the Old Man, references to the "Champs Elysées," "Vénus," "Cythera," and "Jardin d'Eden" all contribute to the characterization of the archipelago as a sort of paradise on earth. Bougainville will retract many of his first impressions as he learns more from Aotourou about the racist, unfair, and quite violent interactions within Tahitian native societies.

⁸ To mention but a few writers who used the old man *topos*, in addition to Jean de Léry and Luis de Camões, Sir Johns Hawkesworth (who wrote the travel account of James Cook's voyage) himself describes a very similar apparition during James Cook's voyage to Tahiti in 1769.

Tahiti. Because of his silence, the Old Man denies first-hand knowledge to the European explorer, and the unspoiled Tahiti becomes unreadable; his remarkable entrance and quick exit underscores a mysterious, illegible judgment, hinted at, but not entirely decoded by Bougainville's text. In the Voyage, the Old Man represents Tahiti's refusal to share its own history, and thus the impossibility of reading Tahiti's past. As he turns his back to Bougainville, Tahiti capitulates to the Europeans; the perceived lack of history turns Tahiti into an undocumented foundling, and thus unprotected in the hands of the colonizer.

Diderot seizes the character from Bougainville's text, paraphrasing Bougainville's description: "A l'arrivée des Européens, il laissa tomber des regards de dédain sur eux, sans marquer ni étonnement, ni frayeur, ni curiosité. Ils l'abordèrent; il leur tourna le dos et se retira dans sa cabane" (147). In this first introduction to the Old Man in the Supplément, his "rêveur and soucieux" looks is interpreted by Diderot as as "dédaigneux". Moreover, for Diderot, the cause of this disdainful silence is all too evident. If Bougainville tentatively infers that the Old Man is worried about his people ("son air rêveur et soucieux semblait annoncer qu'il craignait [...]"), Diderot is much less hesitant about the Old Man's meaning: "Son silence et son souci ne décelaient que trop sa pensée: il gémissait en lui-même sur les beaux jours de son pays éclipsés" (147). For Diderot, the Old Man embodies proud Tahitian history, and his silence and worries are signs to be read. As the Old Man retreats, Tahiti's history fades into darkness. However, if in Bougainville's text the Old Man retires forever into his hut, leaving behind the mystery of his solitary departure, in Diderot's he returns as the French are about to leave, to deliver a speech that reveals his ancient wisdom about catastrophic encounters between two different cultures, leaving no doubt about the future of Tahiti. As Diderot drags the Old Man from his hut to deliver his speech, he attempts to

create a fictional Tahitian history from the native point of view, giving Tahitians an opportunity to resist, or to at least appeal to the colonizer's scruples.

Although the "Adieux" has been characterized as a "morceau mal placé" in the Supplément by Dieckmann, its powerful eloquence makes it the centerpiece of the *Supplément*, and perhaps what approaches it to a novel in Diderot's best sense of the word. Although the invented history of the Old Man's speech is ideologically powerful, its capacity to reach the readers' emotions makes it effective. In Diderot's view, Samuel Richardson's novels' triumph rests in the author's ability to put morals into action. Richardson succeeds in engaging the reader, creating a sentimental bond between him and the characters, forcing him take sides. That is indeed the crucial difference between Richardson's novels and the rest of the novelistic production that was taking place at the time; so much so that Diderot calls for the invention of a new genre to accommodate Richardson's work (29).

A and B's reading of the "Adieux" parallels Diderot's reading of Richardson. Although in the "Eloge" Diderot writes about Richardson's three main works, Pamela, Grandisson, and Clarissa, he is clearly taken by the last few pages of Clarissa. "Mes chers concitoyens, si les romans de Richardson vous paraissent longs, que ne les abrégez-vous? [...] Sautez tout de suite aux vingt dernières pages de *Clarisse*" ("Eloge" 34). Diderot's suggestion to his fellow citizens – to "skip" the text and go straight to Clarissa's last twenty pages – echoes B's suggestion to A in the Supplément to skip the preamble and go directly to the "Adieux". The parallel between the two quotes becomes clear when we realize the twenty pages Diderot was referring to were Clarissa's posthumous letters and her will, "deux morceaux que le traducteur français a supprimé, sans qu'on sache trop pourquoi" ("Eloge" 44).

Thanks to the Abbé Prévost, the translator of Richardson into French, the French version of Clarissa counted with a “supplement”. Prévost’s translation followed his own professed method: “[p]ar le droit suprême de tout écrivain qui cherche à plaire dans la langue naturelle,” he writes in the introduction to Histoire de Miss Clarisse Harlove, “j’ai changé ou supprimé ce que je n’ai pas jugé conforme à cette vue” (v). Clarisse had been published for the first time in French in 1751. Although the book was well received by the public, comparisons with the English original soon enough made it clear that Prévost had taken too many liberties in his translation. Grimm, who had originally delighted himself in the reading of Clarisse in 1751, criticized Prévost five years later for having significantly altered the original text. Responding to this criticism, the 1762 edition of Clarisse produced a seventh tome, entitled Supplément à Clarisse, containing the “Eloge de Richardson” by Diderot, the Mordeu letters describing Clarissa’s funeral, her posthumous letters and her will.

Although this Supplément à Clarisse was only published after the “Éloge” publication, Diderot had in his hands a copy of the funeral letters and will that had been suppressed from Prévost’s translation. The importance of these sections (the “last twenty pages”) lies in the powerful reaction they cause on readers. Diderot illustrates this with a description of a friend⁹ as he was reading it. “D’abord je vois couler des pleurs, il s’interrompt, il sanglote; tout à coup il se lève, il marche sans savoir où il va, il pousse des cris comme un homme désolé, et il adresse les reproches les plus amers à toute la famille des Harlove” (44). Likewise, in the Supplément the “Adieux” cause a similarly dramatic, albeit opposite, reaction. The Tahitians, who were in disarray as Bougainville and his crew were leaving the island, fall into deep silence and disperse after the old man’s speech is over: “un vaste silence régna dans toute l’étendue de l’île; et l’on n’entendit que le sifflement aigu des

⁹ See Eloge footnote 2, page 44: it is actually Diderot himself who has such a reaction.

vents et le bruit sourd des eaux sur toute la longueur de la côte: on eût dit que l'air et la mer, sensibles à la voix du vieillard, se disposaient à lui obéir” (151).

The desolation of these two reader-reactions shows the sort of engagement that Diderot expects from the novel's text. Both Clarissa's will and posthumous letters and the Vieillard's speech are marginal, suppressed fragments to Prévost's and Bougainville's texts. For Diderot, however, the meaning of such suppressed fragments is vital – they actually contain the most important parts of the story. The silence that overcomes the Tahitian natives is also a function of the nature of the text, much like Clarissa's; these are texts to which there can be no reply (will, posthumous letters, farewell). The power of this type of text is that it does not hold anything back: the author is at full liberty to speak the truth. They are final judgments – Clarissa certainly condemns Lovelace for her death, and the Old Man certainly condemns Bougainville for contaminating his people and putting their future at risk.

Furthermore, when we compare B's conception of the “Adieux” to Diderot's reaction to *Clarissa*, we see more parallels between the two texts that indicate that the *Supplément* is a novel. In reading *Clarissa*, Diderot confesses in the “Eloge”,

Une idée qui m'est venue quelquefois en rêvant aux ouvrages de Richardson, c'est que j'avais acheté un vieux château; qu'en visitant un jour ses appartements, j'avais aperçu dans un angle une armoire qu'on n'avait pas ouverte depuis longtemps, et que, l'ayant enfoncée, j'y avais trouvé pêle-mêle les lettres de Clarisse et Paméla. (36)

What in the “Eloge” is but a Cervantesque fantasy of found manuscripts becomes a full-blown invention of his own in the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*. B asks A

what he thought of the speech, and A responds he could detect some European ideas and tone. B encourages A to also think of the “Adieux du Vieillard” as a found manuscript:

Pensez donc que c’est une traduction du tahitien en espagnol, et de l’espagnol en français. [Le vieillard] s’était rendu, la nuit, chez cet Orou qu’il a interpellé, et dans la case duquel l’usage de la langue espagnole s’était conservé de temps immémorial. Orou avait écrit en espagnol la harangue du vieillard; et Bougainville en avait une copie à la main, tandis que le Tahitien la prononçait. (151-2)

The strangeness of this explanation jumps out at the reader; rather than explaining the European tone of the text, B seems to elaborate on the distance between text and reality. First, B claims the text they are reading in the supplement is a translation of a translation. Second, it was written in Spanish, which was (bizarrely) spoken in Orou’s house since “time immemorial”. Third, B claims there is, or at least was, an actual piece of paper, a copy by Orou’s hand, of the speech, pointing to the staging of the speech already being prepared the day before. The Tahitian audience was thus listening to a rendition of the text, while Bougainville was reading a translation of it.

A concludes after hearing B’s explanation, “je ne vois que trop à présent pourquoi Bougainville a supprimé ce fragment” (152). A’s comment has often been interpreted as referring the content of the speech – an inference that the content of the speech is too controversial for Bougainville to include it in the *Voyage*. However, this comment comes right after B’s bizarre response to A’s doubts, and is most likely A’s tongue-in-cheek response to B’s unbelievable explanations. The connivance between A and B in the reading of the *Supplément*, the unspoken contract between friends, becomes a turning point in the reading of the text. Clearly, A understands that B is inventing stories and testing them on

him. A decides to play along, indulging in poetic faith and temporarily suspending his disbelief, trying to do his best to react sincerely to B's work and provide him with the criticism (approval) that B intimately seeks for his text.

To be sure, although most critics like to identify B as Diderot and thus as the "strong" voice in the Supplément, B is only able to proceed because of A's friendly (and skeptical) consent¹⁰. Not only does A accept this absurd explanation, he actually claims to be engaged by it: "[m]a curiosité pour le reste n'est pas légère". For A, the explanation that B gives him about the actuality of the discourse is sufficient; the bizarre "veracity" that the manuscript of the speech lends to it is a reason to continue reading. B constructs a fiction and pushes it to an absurd limit; paradoxically, this absurdity is the mark of fiction, precisely what engages A to the rest of the text.

Both in the "Eloge de Richardson" and in the Supplément au voyage de Bougainville Diderot's emphasis on the power to engage the reader is directly linked to the fictionality of the suppressed fragments. In the "Eloge", Diderot states the inverse relationship between fiction and reality: "O Richardson! j'oserai dire que l'histoire la plus vraie est pleine de mensonges, et que ton roman est plein de vérités. [...] j'oserai dire que souvent l'histoire est un mauvais roman; et que le roman, comme tu l'as fait, est une bonne histoire" (39-40). Veracity of facts, or the semblance of veracity, is only important insofar as it engages readers to the point that it does not matter whether what they are reading is true or not: "C'est alors qu'affaîssé de douleur ou transporté de joie, vous n'aurez plus la force de retenir vos larmes prêtes à couler, et de vous dire à vous-même: *Mais peut-être que cela n'est pas vrai*. Cette pensée a

¹⁰ A parallel could be made here between A and B's relationship and that between Diderot and the Marquis de Croismare, who was the original recipient of the fabricated letters from Suzanne Simonin, the nun in Diderot's La Religieuse. The Marquis was the object of a practical joke from Diderot, who wrote the letters as Simonin, asking for the Marquis' help. The Marquis seemed to believe the letters and answer accordingly, but Diderot never really quite believed that the Marquis was being duped – and that conversely, he was the one being fooled by the Marquis and his friends (Chouillet 255).

été éloignée de vous peu à peu; et elle est si loin qu'elle ne se présentera pas" (35-6).

Likewise, for B, the *Supplément*/novel underscores the *Voyage*'s/history's veracity, and it goes beyond what history makes visible to the reader by soliciting emotions. Moreover, the impact of the Old Man's vehement speech almost vanishes when A detects European overtones in it – as if A were asking himself, *But perhaps this is not true*. Only then B resorts to another fiction, that of the found manuscript, this time bordering on the fabulous, to successfully engage A to accept this reading pact and continue to read his book.

Since no reply is possible to the texts of the Clarissa's will and posthumous letters and the "Adieux", Diderot's focus turns to the reader's response. The reading of Richardson incites better conversations: "J'ai remarqué que, dans une société où la lecture de Richardson se faisait en commun ou séparément, la conversation en devenait plus intéressante et plus vive. J'ai entendu, à l'occasion de cette lecture, les points les plus importants de la morale et du goût discutés et approfondis" (37). Likewise, in the *Supplément*, Diderot re-creates the reading of fiction in the same way he had explained in the "Eloge". B expects the reactions of A, and they will debate various points of the *Supplément*, in particular those found in the final three chapters. Diderot implies that there is no moral in fiction itself; the moral comes from the reaction the reader has from reading fiction, and discussing it afterwards. Hence, the *Supplément* does not contain any moral itself – moral emerges in the reactions and the ensuing discussions between A and B.

The "Entretien entre l'Aumônier et Orou" and *Les Bijoux indiscrets*

After the "Adieux," B continues to read from the *Supplément*, moving on to the "Entretien de l'Aumônier et d'Orou", however setting A's expectations lower: "Ce qui suit [les Adieux], peut-être, vous intéressera moins" (152). Here, the second character

appropriated by Diderot from Bougainville's text is introduced: *l'Aumônier* (the Chaplain) is Orou's counterpart in the dialogues transcribed and commented upon in chapters III, IV and V of the Supplément. Although the Chaplain is not mentioned in the *compte rendu*, he is, as the Old Man, an obscure character in Bougainville's Voyage; indeed, he may well be a reference to Bougainville's expedition chaplain, M.F. François-Nicolas Buet de Kemper, who was killed in Rio de Janeiro during the fleet's stay in that city. In the text of the Voyage, we learn little about the chaplain: as though his reader would be familiar with the background of the story, Bougainville simply notes that he had demanded an explanation and action from the Portuguese local authorities for the assassination of the chaplain of *L'Etoile* (112), the smaller vessel of his expedition which had arrived in Rio before his own, *La Boudense*. In the letters and journals of other members of Bougainville's expedition (François Vivez's, the doctor, and Phillibert de Commerson's, naturalist) we learn that the chaplain was killed during an incursion into the city: he was found drowned on a beach, dressed in civilian clothes (footnote 18, 112). Although Bougainville did not elaborate much on the episode, the mystery surrounding the chaplain's death had much to do with the fact that he was not wearing his religious habit.

Although we cannot establish that Diderot had particular or detailed knowledge about this episode, we could infer that Bougainville's passing comment on the resolution of the matter indicates that the case was indeed publicly known¹¹; but Diderot seems to seize upon the mysterious conditions surrounding the actual chaplain's death for the construction of the curious character in the *Supplément*. He uses his Chaplain to discuss sexual mores and religion with Orou, and most indicatively, the question of the Chaplain's habit is repeatedly

¹¹ Herbert Dieckman notes that some of the information about Tahiti contained in Diderot's Supplément is not found in Bougainville's Voyage, and lists the writings by other officers in Bougainville's expedition that were circulating at the time. Whether Diderot ever read these other journals is purely speculative.

pointed out. In chapter three, which describes the beginning of the conversation between the two men, the first welcoming act toward the Chaplain, as he is “adopted” by Orou and his family, is to undress him: “Elles le deshabillèrent, lui lavèrent le visage, les mains et les pieds, et lui servèrent un repas sain et frugal” (153). That same night, the Chaplain sleeps with Orou’s youngest daughter, Thia, who was the only one without children of her own in Orou’s family.

The following day Orou asks the Chaplain, “pourquoi tu n’est pas vêtu comme les autres? Que signifie cette casaque longue qui t’enveloppe de la tête aux pieds, et ce sac pointu que tu laisses tomber sur tes épaules, ou que tu ramènes sur tes oreilles?”¹² (175). The Chaplain explains to Orou that “l’habit fait le moine”: “tel que tu me vois, je me suis engagé dans une société d’hommes qu’on appelle, dans mon pays, des moines. Le plus sacré de leurs vœux est de n’approcher d’aucune femme, et de ne point faire d’enfants” (175). When the Chaplain specifies “tel que tu me vois” he identifies his wearing of the habit at that particular moment directly with his religious obligations, which he describes foremost as celibacy. The ultimate implication here is that without the frock he would not necessarily be a monk – or celibate. Indeed, over the next few nights, the Chaplain ends up sleeping with Orou’s two other daughters and his wife. The importance of religious clothing is further underscored when the Chaplain muses in the end that “il avait été tenté de jeter ses vêtements dans le vaisseau et de passer le reste de ses jours parmi eux [les Tahitiens]” (177). Diderot’s insistence on the significance of the Chaplain’s habit seems to refer to the real chaplain’s conspicuous lack thereof at the moment of his death in Rio, which would have concealed his religious status to the Portuguese locals, who would have instantly recognized it. At the same

¹² In the *compte rendu* Diderot heavily criticizes the Jesuits, who had been expelled from Paraguay right at the time when Bougainville was in the region. This description of the hood on the frock eliminates the possibility that the Chaplain is a Jesuit, as Jesuit’s frocks do not have a hood.

time, his civilian attire also left him unprotected – the same Catholic locals would not have dared to touch a priest.

Why is the “Entretien” “less interesting” than the “Adieux”, according to B? One possible answer would be because of its potential length. The structure of the “Entretien” points to that of an Oriental tale’s, a Tahitian Mille Nuits, or more likely, a Polynesian Bijoux indiscrets. It seems as though we could foresee in the first part of the “Entretien” that every night the Chaplain will sleep with a different beauty, and every day he will spend debating the finer points of East-West contrasts with Orou. B knows it, and is slightly hesitant to show the “Entretien” to A. A’s constant interruptions to the reading of the “Entretien” show that he is indeed less interested, or at least impatient with the Oriental tale formula that starts to take form in the *Supplément*. For instance, in the middle of the “Entretien”, A gets a glimpse of some writing on the margin of the page B is reading, and eagerly asks to see it. B says that it is a note by the Chaplain (*note en marge*). In the *note en marge*, the Chaplain writes that

les préceptes des parents sur les choix des garçons et des filles étaient pleins de bon sens et d’observations très fines et très utiles; mais qu’il a supprimé ce catéchisme, qui aurait paru, à des gens aussi corrompus et aussi superficiels que nous, d’une licence impardonnable; ajoutant toutefois que ce n’était pas sans regret qu’il avait retranché des détails où l’on aurait vu, premièrement, jusqu’où une nation, qui s’occupe sans cesse d’un objet important, peut être conduite dans ses recherches, sans les secours de la physique et de l’anatomie [...] (164).

The Chaplain explains that he had decided to suppress many such commentaries so as to not offend French audiences. This writing on the margin is thus a suppressed text of

the suppressed supplement, the supplement of the supplement. Although these writings about aspects of sexual behavior are not supposed to exist, they still do, once or twice removed from the main text.

Yet this suppressed fragment of the *Supplément* is fully developed in Chapters XVIII of Diderot's final Bijoux. Chapters XVIII and XIX did not appear in the original 1748 edition of Diderot's novel; it was only in 1798 that a posthumous edition of Diderot's work published them as part of the Bijoux. Chapters XVIII and XIX describe Mangogul, the ruler of Congo, reading his emissaries' travel accounts to his favorite mistress Mirzoza. The travel account describes in detail the intricacies and advantages for young men and women of geometrically and thermometrically matching female sexual organs to the appropriate male organs:

Nos insulaires sont conformés de manière à rendre tous les mariages heureux, si l'on y suivait à la lettre les lois usitées [...] Au son des hautbois et des musettes, s'approchèrent deux couples d'amants conduits par les parents [...] Le bijou féminin carré et le bijou masculine parallélépipède furent examinés avec la même précision; mais le grand prêtre, attentif à la progression des liqueurs, ayant reconnu quelques degrés de moins dans le garçon que dans la fille, selon le rapport marqué par le rituel (car il y avait des limites), monta en chaire, et déclara les parties inhabiles à se conjoindre. (96-8)

The Chaplain's suppressed fragment about Tahitian parents' wise methods for sexually matching their sons and daughters seems to have made its way to the hands of Mangogul in the Bijoux indiscrets. What was deemed too scandalous for the reader of the *Supplément* fit right into Diderot's earlier novel, the one he had forsaken in 1748. Diderot had

clearly not forgotten nor repudiated his Bijoux; Irwin Greenberg presents convincing evidence that Diderot wrote these two chapters at around the same time as the Supplément. And if the Bijoux were on his mind, the idea of the *Supplément* – especially the “Entretien” – as a novel in the mold of an Oriental tale much like the Bijoux acquires firmer ground. Diderot’s choice to exclude it from the *Supplément* and include it in the Bijoux indicates that while such a topic is fair for his earlier, “disgraced,” novel, it would not be appropriate for the *Supplément*. The fragment’s exclusion denotes Diderot’s “maturity” – his understanding of the novel as a literary form that evolved from the time of the Bijoux’s publication. At the same time it precisely eliminates what would make the “Entretien” more enticing to the common reader. In a way, B’s elimination of the fragment denotes a desire to keep the text “serious”. Conversely, A’s curiosity demonstrates the more “pedestrian” attraction of potentially “piquant” scenes.

After this explanation of the *note en marge*, B wants to go back to the “Entretien”, but A interrupts him again. A asks B to remind him of a story that had taken place in New England. B proceeds to recount the story of Polly Baker, in which a young woman in the British colonies of America successfully defends herself from being fined for becoming a mother for the fifth time without being married. Baker’s central argument is that she is increasing Her Majesty’s subjects in a new land where subjects are lacking, and that the laws against it are not only unjust but counter-productive. Polly Baker’s story is not included in the *Supplément*; after hearing the first part of the “Entretien” and the *note en marge*, A appears to remember the story and asks B to remind him of it. B says that he thinks Abbé Raynal had included it in the Histoire des deux Indes – to which Diderot had been contributing at that time. It is worth remembering that the Abbé Raynal had been the chief critic of the Bijoux in 1748. A’s defense of Raynal at the end of the Polly Baker story may be Diderot’s

nod to the Abbé, as well as an attempt to insinuate a parallel between the *Supplément* and the *Histoire de deux Indes*. Raynal's history of the Indies was, in Michelle Duchet's estimate, built with the objective of defining and orienting a particular colonial policy that would satisfy many conflicting interests (1995, 131). When A prefers Polly Baker and defends Raynal instead of listening to B's reading of the "Entretien," he may be pointing to the latter's lack of political substance. Yet, most significantly, A's reaction at the end of B's recounting of it still underscores A's willingness to play along with B's storytelling. A asks, "Et ce n'est pas là un conte de votre invention?" (167) B simply replies, "Non". And A seems to continue to give B the benefit of the doubt: "J'en suis bien aise".

A's interest in the *note en marge* and Polly Baker's story reflects his lack of interest in the "Entretien" and may indeed show that A is pointing out to B that the *Supplément* is neither a libertine tale *nor* a philosophical novel. In contrast to the "Adieux," the "Entretien" is a tentative text, as though B were still working on it; it hints at a *démodé* structure, and does not even include the most interesting parts; neither does it seem to contain an ideological message, as the reference to Raynal may indicate. B, its author, knows it is "less interesting," and A, the listener, has difficulty staying focused on the text. A's interest in the side stories also reflect B's advice to A in the first chapter to skip the preamble and go straight to the "Adieux": both fragments are condensations of the previous arguments, short, illustrative explanations of the long-winded arguments between the Chaplain and Orou. These side stories, especially Polly Baker's, effectively turn the dialogue into a long-winded introduction, and show that storytelling is more effective than the "prefatory text".

Most importantly, these two side stories evince the dilemma of B's novel through their implicit or explicit intertextual connections. How is B utilizing the information from the *Voyage*? Is he turning Tahiti into a new Monomotapa, with his text falling into the same

libertine category as did the Bijoux? Or is he following the route of Abbé Raynal's Histoire des deux Indes, submitting historical facts to political ideology? The two stories are not in the *Supplément* but interrupt the "Entretien" and are in the middle of it in the "Supplément;" their side-to-side presence serves as cautionary tales about the dangers of either genre. The suppressed fragment found its way into a scoffed novel. Polly Baker's story did not fare well either: B explains that the Abbé Raynal had been accused of having employed "des mains étrangères" in the writing of the Histoire des deux Indes (Diderot's own hands, since it has been estimated that he wrote about one-third of the text), and had thus been deprived of his reputation. As A concludes, it takes so long for a reputation to be rebuilt that "l'homme est mort; il a souffert de l'injure qu'il a reçue de ses contemporains, et il est insensible à la réparation qu'il obtient de la posterité" (167).

A is not as impressed by the "Entretien" as he had been with the "Adieux". At the end of the "Entretien" A simply comments, sympathetically, "J'estime cet aumônier poli" (177). As though he were drawing A's attention away from the Aumônier, B replies "Et moi, beaucoup davantage, les mœurs des Tahitiens, et le discours d'Orou". A thus takes the Chaplain's/European side, and B defends Orou/Tahitian side; in other words, A refuses to stay within B's guidance or to look beyond his own parameters. A is still puzzled by the European modulations of Orou's discourse, and comments that it is "un peu modelé à l'europpéenne". B in turn responds curtly, "Je n'en doute pas" (177). Again, it seems as though A is politely reminding B that he is not entirely duped, underscoring for the reader the fictitious status of the text; and B, in turn, is acknowledging that A is right in having doubts. Yet this implicit agreement between A and B about the *Supplément* starts to fall apart as A resists being entirely convinced. Not only is A pointing out a second time that the text has conspicuous European overtones, he is also refusing to stay within B's point of view.

While A appreciates the Chaplain, B stands by Orou and the Tahitians. From this point on, A's willingness to play along considerably diminishes, and B gets progressively upset.

At the end of the "Entretien" B summarizes the Chaplain's elegiac conclusions (*éloge*) of Tahiti to A. The Chaplain declares that he is afraid of regretting not having stayed behind with the Tahitians. A then proceeds to interrogate B about the finer points of B's stories – "Malgré cet éloge, quelles conséquences utiles à tirer des mœurs et des usages bizarres d'un peuple non civilisé?" (177). Indeed, A is pointedly questioning the summarized conclusions as stated in the *éloge*, not in the "Entretien". In rapid succession, A fires question after question about what is natural or not natural about European customs, as though A were forcing B to elucidate the meaning of his stories. A presses B to the point where B complains, "Mais vous m'engagez là dans un cours de morale galante" (180). A's way of making sense of B's story is to bring the discussion back to European parameters. In order to explain his point, B gets to the final, "troisième morceau" of the *Supplément*. B tells A that "l'Aumônier remarque, dans un troisième morceau que je ne vous ai point lu, que le Tahitien ne rougit pas des mouvements involontaires qui s'excitent en lui à côté de sa femme, au milieu de ses filles; et que celles-ci en sont spectatrices, quelquefois émues, jamais embarrassées" (180).

Immediately after this remark, B embarks on a heated diatribe against European civilization's distance from natural law, so vehement that A asks B, "Ne vous fâchez pas" (181). Finally, A asks B how the most natural and honored act (sex) had become the source of depravation and evil. B says somewhat impatiently to A: "Orou l'a fait entendre dix fois à l'aumônier: écoutez-le donc encore, et tâchez de le retenir" (182). B then recites Orou's litany on what is wrong with Western society: "C'est par la tyrannie de l'homme, qui a converti la possession de la femme en propriété [...]" and so on. After listing seven items of

discord between nature and European society laws as dictated by Orou, B slides again into a diatribe of his own, vehemently voicing his unhappiness with his own world. B's own harangue takes a defying tone as slides from the third person in the litany to a polarization between second person (vous) and the first person (moi): "vous deviendrez féroces, et vous ne réussirez point à me dénaturer" (182-3). Although men try their best to suppress natural instincts with societal rules, B harangues, he will not succumb. This seamless passage from Orou's litany to B's diatribe (much as the passage from the chaplain's "troisième morceau" and B's own complaints) indicates the level of integration between narrator and author, as though B simply continued to speak as Orou (or the chaplain), evidencing again that B is the author of this *Supplément*.

Thus if B's *Supplément* initially seeks a pedagogical profile as did the Bijoux and the Interprétation de la nature, A neither reads its entirety nor does he accept B's guided reading or lessons. A is more interested in the marginal stories and discussions than in the text proper; he does not read *le tout*. And as much as B tries to bring him back to the text, A raises doubts about the text's veracity that in turn question the very underlying philosophy of the *Supplément* and the Supplément: the battle between the natural man and the artificial (moral) man within: "Il existait un homme naturel: on a introduit au dedans de cet homme un homme artificiel; et il s'est élevé dans la caverne une guerre continuelle qui dure toute sa vie" (183). As A repeatedly points out the European overtones of the Tahitians' speeches, he seems to be questioning the very existence of the natural man, as though the concept were in itself an European invention.

The circumstances surrounding A and B's reading of the *Supplément* (the book A and B read together inside the Supplément) show that as a novel, the text is not particularly good, and most likely not even finished. To recapitulate, in the Supplément Diderot

describes B trying his text *Supplément* on his friend A, who soon loses interest. Although the first part, the “Adieux” is vehement enough to pique A’s curiosity for the rest, the “Entretien” between the Chaplain and Orou fails to capture A’s attention. A’s repeated comments on the text’s European overtones raise doubts that the text is in the very least fictional, and B’s protective attitude toward it indicate he is its author. A seems to be more interested in the side stories, or in simply understanding what the point of the discussion is, when he is not subtly warning B that he can see through the text’s shortcomings that it is not a real supplement to Bougainville’s *Voyage*, and highlighting the fact that B’s novel is neither an appealing Oriental-like tale, nor quite a tome of political history. Most importantly, the *Supplément* fails to emotionally engage A, who has trouble suspending his disbelief in the characters presented by B, and who is thus unable to see beyond. Still, other passages also suggest that there are subtle developments from the *Bijoux* and the *Supplément*. In the next concluding section, I will examine the development of Diderot’s novel as which pass through references to Diderot’s own model reading of Richardson’s novels and his approach to travel literature.

Novel and Voyage

In chapter XLVII of *Les Bijoux indiscrets* we hear the very piquant details of Cypria’s sexual life throughout her voyages. Cypria’s polyglot account is told in the language of the country where each adventure took place. Because they are told in foreign languages, Mangogul claims he does not understand her tales; but he understands enough of them to call Cypria’s *bijou* an “assez impertinent conteur” (265). Mangogul also claims that all he could gather from Cypria’s account was that “les voyages sont plus funestes encore pour la pudeur des femmes, que pour la religion des hommes”. In other words, Mangogul seems to

have understood Cypria's adventures well enough to judge them inappropriate for a female readership. Likewise, the Bijoux's putative compiler, "l'auteur africain," explains his motivations:

L'auteur africain finit ce chapitre par un avertissement aux dames qui pourraient être tentées de se faire traduire les endroits où le bijou de Cypria s'est exprimé dans des langues étrangères.

"J'aurais manqué, dit-il, au devoir de l'historien, en les supprimant; et au respect que j'ai pour le sexe, en les conservant dans mon ouvrage, sans prévenir les dames vertueuses, que le bijou de Cypria s'était excessivement gâté le ton dans ses voyages; et que ses récits sont infiniment plus libres qu'aucune des lectures clandestines qu'elles aient jamais faites." (263)

Linking the novel's futility to a female readership was a favorite criticism of the genre in the eighteenth century; Rousseau wrote famously in the preface to Julie that "ce recueil avec son gothique ton convient mieux aux femmes que les livres de philosophie.[...] Quand aux filles, c'est autre chose. Jamais fille chaste n'a lu des romans" (4). In the Bijoux Diderot further elaborates on the danger of novels, by affirming that foreign accounts are even more detrimental to morals. Yet this passage also reveals the very seduction of novels – the desire and pursuit of knowledge. Cypria's text is attractively characterized as going beyond any of the clandestine texts that the virtuous ladies read; and it is written in several foreign languages, which may interfere with the comprehension of the text, and would require a concerted effort to understand it. Cypria's account should have been suppressed from the Bijoux yet it survives in its attempted "unintelligibility". Searching for Cypria's knowledge, according to the *auteur africain*, requires an extra step for the reader who is all too obviously interested in this sort of account.

However, that was Diderot's strategy in the Bijoux; in the Supplément, as we have seen, the Chaplain rather suppresses a fragment that may shock the public, and Diderot in turn retroactively adds the suppressed fragment into the Bijoux. The license allowed (and added to) in the Bijoux and self-censored in the Supplément show Diderot's evolving understanding of the novel and its use of travel accounts. His opinion may be understood through Mangogul's reaction to travel accounts in the Bijoux. At the end of Cyclophile's account in chapter XIX Mangogul "[se] débarrasse d'un ouvrage inutile": "le sultan dépité prit les cahiers de ses voyageurs, et les mit en pièces" (112). As explained above, Mangogul reacts negatively to Cypria's "Le Bijou voyageur" (Chapter XLVII); he concludes "[...] mais surtout plus de voyages. Ils me fatiguent à mourir" (265). Although these may reflect Mangogul's view as a ruler, and as a ruler whose first priority is his own pleasure, it is not too far from Diderot's view of the relationship between novel and travel account described in the "Eloge".

In the "Eloge", Diderot views the novel as intrinsically linked to dubious taste and weak morals; only Richardson's work seems to represent a new facet for the genre:

Par un roman, on a entendu jusqu'à ce jour un tissu d'événements
chimériques et frivoles, dont la lecture était dangereuse pour le goût et pour
les mœurs. Je voudrais bien qu'on trouvât un autre nom pour les ouvrages de
Richardson, qui élèvent l'esprit, qui touchent l'âme, qui respirent partout
l'amour du bien, et qu'on appelle aussi des romans. (29)

Diderot actually affirms himself as a novelist here: the creator of a frivolous and chimerical novel detrimental to good taste and morals is himself, the author of Les Bijoux indiscrets. What is special about Richardson's novel, in contrast to what is usually deemed as

a novel, is that the he does not resort to foreign landscapes to illustrate moral situations.

Diderot writes that:

[Richardson] ne fait point couler le sang le long des lambris; il ne vous transporte point dans des contrées éloignées; il ne vous expose point à être dévoré par des sauvages; il ne se renferme point dans des lieux clandestins de débauche; il ne se perd jamais dans les régions de la féerie. Le monde où nous vivons est le lieu de la scène; le fond de son drame est vrai; ses personnages ont toute la réalité possible; ses caractères sont pris du milieu de la société; ses incidents sont dans les mœurs de toutes les nations policées; les passions qu'il peint sont telles que je les éprouve en moi; ce sont les mêmes objets qui les émeuvent, elles ont l'énergie que je leur connais; les traverses et les afflictions de ses personnages sont de la nature de celles qui me menacent sans cesse; il me montre le cours général des choses qui m'environnent. Sans cet art, mon âme se pliant avec peine de biais chimériques, l'illusion ne serait que momentanée et l'impression faible et passagère. (30-1)

Jean Sgard suggests that the passage above references Prévost's Cleveland and Manon Lescaut, in which Prévost places scenes in the Americas. For Sgard, the shadow of Prévost is everywhere in the "Eloge" – not in the least, as we have seen, because it is due to Prévost that there actually exist a will and a funeral of Clarissa. For Diderot, unlikely situations in faraway places only inflict ephemeral impressions on him; Richardson's realist depictions of immediate surroundings make his moralist message palpable. Roger Chartier (1999) explains that one of the principal characteristics of Richardson's novels for Diderot is "l'abolition de toute distinction entre le monde du livre et le monde du lecteur. Le lecteur [...] est projeté dans le récit, et à l'inverse, les héros de la fiction deviennent ses semblables"

(654). Such is the definition of realism in Diderot's view of Richardson – the incapacity to distinguish between one's own life and fiction. Chartier further explains that in Diderot's view, "ce qui donne au roman un tel poids de réalité est son universalité". However, although Diderot indeed extols the universality of Richardson's depictions of the human heart ("tu as embrassé tous les lieux et tous les temps. Le cœur humain, qui a été, est et sera toujours le même, est le modèle d'après lequel tu copies," ("Eloge" 40)) it is clear from the passage above that there is an immense difference between « les nations policées » that Richardson portrays in his novels, and the "contrées éloignées," inhabited by "sauvages" – the "peuples non-civilisés," as A refers to Tahitians. Richardson's "universality" is evidently bound by European standards, much as A argues with B that Tahitian standards are local and not applicable to Europe.

Diderot's reading of Richardson represents a turning point in his life: "Depuis qu'ils me sont connus, ils ont été ma pierre de touché," (41) he affirms. Richardson's achievement is due to his "étonnante connaissance des lois, des coutumes, des usages, des mœurs, du cœur humains, de la vie" (40). His reading of the Voyage ten years later is also described as a major turning point. If Richardson's triumph was to depict scenes that are familiar to the reader, Bougainville succeeds in portraying different lands by remaining faithful to the facts, and by his writing style, described as "sans apprêt. Le ton de la chose, de la simplicité et de la clarté, surtout quand on possède la langue des marins" (142). In the *compte rendu* he concludes his critique of the Voyage in praising terms, and he transposes his opinion verbatim to the first part of the Supplément, where B avows: "Le voyage de Bougainville est le seul qui m'ait donné du goût pour une autre contrée que la mienne; jusqu'à cette lecture, j'avais pensé qu'on n'était nulle part aussi bien que chez soi" (146). Thus in both instances – in

Richardson's novels and Bougainville's travel account – it is the authors' deep knowledge of the object at hand that set them apart from other authors of the genres.

Despite Bougainville's evident accomplishments, the existence of B's *Supplément* has usually been interpreted as filling a perceived lack in the navigator's account. In this view, the *Supplément* would be a comment on the ideological void that Bougainville's *Voyage* leaves behind. Yet when we consider the deliberate fictionality of B's *Supplément* – when we learn to see it as a novel, and we understand what the novel means in Diderot's view, another interpretation of the relationship between *Supplément* and *Voyage* becomes available. B bolsters the *Voyage*'s credentials as a purely factual, scientific account; then, by naming it a “supplement,” he initially seeks to give the impression that the *Supplément* springs from the *Voyage*, thereby creating an unobstructed access to Bougainville's realism. However, B fails in his endeavor of creating a novel based on the information found on a travel account as he transforms difference into fiction itself.

First, Diderot's elaboration of Bougainville's *Voyage* points to a change in the nature of the travel account. With the emergence of scientific travel accounts in the eighteenth century, and the increasing popularity and ease of travel, the “marvelous” – to use Greenblatt's term – inherent in the literature concerning discoveries was fading. Tahiti was one of the last breaths of this literature. Bougainville largely resists the temptation to bow to the conventions of such literature, and Diderot even justifies it. B comments that “[n]é avec le goût du merveilleux, qui exagère tout autour de lui, comment l'homme laisserait-il une juste proportion aux objets, lorsqu'il a, pour ainsi dire, à justifier le chemin qu'il a fait, et la peine qu'il s'est donnée pour les aller voir au loin?” (145). Diderot appears to cease this opportunity, not by re-creating the marvelous, but by using a derivation of it – fiction, to

dispel the marvelous. His elegy of cultural relativism by and large underpins the notion that the marvelous only exist in an Eurocentric context.

In the Supplément Diderot is not necessarily pointing at the impossibility of linking morality to foreign situations, as he had suggested in the “Eloge”. Rather, the essence of Diderot’s Supplément demonstrates his understanding of the radical difference that separates the Tahitian from the European as depicted by Bougainville through a comparison of their women: “tandis qu’en Europe les femmes se peignent en rouge les joues, celles de Taïti se peignent d’un bleu foncé les reins et les fesses” (Voyage 226). The distance between the lower body and the upper body that Bougainville alludes to is further translated into the distance between a child and an old man. “Le Tahitien touché à l’origine du monde, et l’Européen à la vieillesse” (146). There is no hope of understanding between the two, as there is no conciliation between the body and the mind.

The unbridgeable gap between Tahiti and France is made evident not by the physical presence of Bougainville in the Tahiti, but perhaps by the presence of the Other in Europe. In the Supplément, B tells A that he thinks that Aotourou would not be able to explain what he saw in Paris to his family in Tahiti because of the radical difference between the two cultures. A wonders what Aotourou would tell his fellow Tahitians about Europe upon his return to Tahiti. B replies that Aotourou would have little to say “parce qu’il en a peu conçues [des choses] et qu’il ne trouvera dans sa langue aucun terme correspondant à celles dont il a quelques idées” (146).

B’s failure in writing his *Supplément* follows the same logic. A is only able to comment on the “Adieux du vieillard” as a powerful speech because he understands it – and what is most evident to A are the speech’s European overtones. Likewise with the “Entretien entre l’Aumonier et Orou,” Orou is intelligible because he “speaks European”. Although B’s

writing conveys his message clearly enough, this very intelligibility undermines the originality and realism of the text, as though the European accents of the discourse detracted from its content. Thus if in the “Supplément” Diderot still conveys that in the Tahitian novel “l’illusion ne serait que momentanée et l’impression faible et passagère,” he further refines the issue by asserting that the problem is not in the essence of the voyage, nor in the place of the action, but in the language barrier. Tahiti is not a fable or a chimera – Bougainville has made it *real* in European terms. What the Supplément shows, however, is that B fails to make his novel *Supplément realistic* by returning it to a translated Tahitian state.

Chapter 4

Paul et Virginie, Pastoral and Voyage

By and large, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre characterizes his Paul et Virginie (1788) as a *pastorale* – a pastoral. The text indeed starts as a utopian pastoral, emphasizing the temporal and geographical isolation/circularity and self-sufficiency of the idyllic and illiterate enclosure where the characters live. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre uses this preferred term to refer to Paul et Virginie in all the prefatory texts he wrote for it, the “Avant-Propos” (1788), the “Avis sur cette édition” (1789), and the famous “Préambule” (1806). However, close readings of the prefatory texts show how the author modulated his use of the term pastoral, suggesting an increasing degree of ambivalence toward the literary category.

In the “Avant-Propos,” for example, he starts by underscoring the pastoral identity of the text even before mentioning the word *pastorale*. The Encyclopédie defines the object of the *pastorale* as “le repos de la vie champêtre, ce qui l’accompagne, ce qui le suit” (157). Likewise Bernardin de Saint-Pierre emphasizes the peacefulness of natural environments: “J’ai tâché d’y peindre un sol et des végétaux différents de ceux de l’Europe. Nos poètes ont assez reposé leurs amants sur le bord des ruisseaux, dans les prairies et sous le feuillage des hêtres” (251). His project is to expand the boundaries of the established pastoral formula by setting it into a tropical landscape: “J’en ai voulu assoir sur le rivage de la mer, au pied des rochers, à l’ombre des cocotiers, des bananiers et des citronniers en fleurs”.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre continues to reference the pastoral genre by stating that “[i]l ne manque à l’autre partie du monde que des Théocrites et des Virgiles pour que nous en ayons des tableaux au moins aussi intéressants que ceux de notre pays” (251). By citing

Theocritus and Virgil in the text, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre references the two greatest authors in ancient pastoral poetry¹, not only suggesting himself as one of them, but also characterizing Paul et Virginie as a descendant of an ancient pastoral tradition. However, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's references to other genres suggest that he is also aware of the possibility that Paul et Virginie may be interpreted as something other than a *pastorale*. The first challenge to his tropical pastoral integrity is its similarity to travel accounts: "Je sais que des voyageurs pleins de goût nous ont donné des descriptions enchantées de plusieurs îles de la mer du Sud; mais les mœurs de leurs habitants, et encore plus celles des Européens qui abordent, en gâtent souvent le paysage" (251).

In this passage Bernardin de Saint-Pierre seems to be making reference to Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's 1771 Voyage autour du monde, in which Bougainville describes his circumnavigation of the world, his "discovery" of Tahiti, and the environment of "free-love" that reigned on the island. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had met Bougainville and Aotourou, the Tahitian native Bougainville brought back to France, and mentions both in the text of his Voyage à l'Île de France². Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's awareness of the possible genre confusion is denoted by his initial "je sais que...", but he quickly establishes the distinction between his tropical pastoral and travel literature. He explains that in contrast to travel accounts, his wish was to "réunir à la beauté de la nature entre les tropiques la beauté morale d'une petite société" (251). While Paul et Virginie may start as many a travel account by describing enchanting natural landscapes, the fundamental difference between the two is in the morals of the characters that inhabit these landscapes. Thus Paul et Virginie

¹ Theocritus is considered the father of pastoral poetry; Virgil, the principal Roman poet to have followed, and developed, the pastoral poetry tradition ("Pastorale, poésie" 158-9).

² Malcolm Cook speculates on the influence of the meeting between Bougainville and Aotourou had on Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's thought in his 1994 article, "Bougainville and One Noble Savage: Two Manuscript Texts of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre".

is *not* a travel account because Bernardin de Saint-Pierre chose to inhabit the tropical pastoral landscape not with the reality of travelers' and natives' "debauchery," but with his version of a small society's moral beauty.

In addition to the possible connection to travel accounts, the author is also aware that Paul et Virginie may be taken as a novel. The very quality which distinguishes Paul et Virginie from travel literature raises the question of fiction: if travel literature is populated by less-than-moral travelers and natives, where did Bernardin de Saint-Pierre find a model for the exceptional characters he depicted in Paul et Virginie's *petite société*? Bernardin de Saint-Pierre anticipates his readers' wondering whether the characters in the story are actual or fictional, and suppresses any incipient questions by stating that "[...] il ne m'a point fallu imaginer de roman pour peindre des familles heureuses. Je puis assurer que celles dont je vais parler ont vraiment existé, et que leur histoire est vraie dans ses principaux événements³. Ils m'ont été certifiés par plusieurs habitants que j'ai connus à l'île de France" (252).

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's denial of the novel label on historical grounds does actually little to distinguish his text from other novels; to be sure, every eighteenth-century novelist claimed that his or her text was true⁴. The author's claims only insert him in a well-known novel preface tradition, underscoring the suspicion that Paul et Virginie is indeed a novel. Ultimately, in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's view, what distinguishes Paul et Virginie

³ To a large extent, the landscapes and characters depicted in the text are the product of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's own observations in Ile de France, where he had spent two and a half years in the late 1760s. For example, both the runaway slave and the Vieillard characters find inspiration in the people the author had met there and subsequently described in the 1773 account of his travel, Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, &c. Moreover, anecdotal and historical evidence points to at least three different accounts of deaths in similar conditions to that of Virginie that could have inspired Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. If any of these are true, Virginie's death is "vraie dans leurs principaux événements," giving credence to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's definition of the non-fictional profile of Paul et Virginie.

⁴ With the famous exception being, perhaps, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's seemingly nonchalant claims about the reality/fictionality of Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse's epistolary correspondence: "Quoique je ne porte ici que le titre d'éditeur, j'ai travaillé moi-même à ce livre, et je ne m'en cache pas. Ai-je fait le tout, et la correspondance entière est-elle une fiction? Gens du monde, que vous importe? C'est sûrement une fiction pour vous" (3).

from a novel is not so much its historical claims, but the idea that its truth derives from the inherent message it wants to convey. The author characterizes his text as the evidence of truth: “je me suis proposé [...] d’y mettre en évidence plusieurs grandes vérités, entre autres, celle-ci: que notre bonheur consiste à vivre suivant la nature et la vertu” (251). Indeed, as we shall see further along this chapter, the very correspondence between natural law and moral righteousness underscores the moral truth of his text.

Thus, Paul et Virginie is neither a travel account nor a novel, and these claims would not be so uncommon, as Jean Fabre puts it, “si Bernardin de Saint-Pierre n’avait pas retenu l’étiquette de *Pastorale*, pour l’attacher à une œuvre si difficile à caractériser que Paul et Virginie” (226). Although Fabre defends Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Paul et Virginie by taking the pastoral label seriously and proving that the author was following the contemporary notion of a *pastorale* to the letter, it is important to remember that at the end of the “Avant-Propos” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre finally characterizes his “petit ouvrage” as “une espèce de pastorale” (252), suggesting with a vague “espèce de” a lingering uncertainty in the generic categorization of the text. Why is it not quite a pastoral? what prevents it from being a “true pastoral”?

Much like travel literature and the novel challenge generic categorization of the text as a pastoral in the “Avant-Propos,” travel and the novel threaten the pastoral stability within Paul et Virginie. The “Avant-Propos”’s uncertainty about genre starts to be developed in the text of Paul et Virginie when Bernardin de Saint-Pierre introduces a voyage – Virginie’s voyage to France – into the pastoral formula. The voyage’s inherent spatial shifting and chronological sequencing break the geographical and temporal immobility of the pastoral, and it is in this unstable context created by the voyage that literacy, through novels and letters, is introduced into the text. Paul and Virginie, illiterate until then, must learn to

read and write so as to establish a correspondence; in the absence of letters, they read novels. Paul in particular ends up reading novels of all sorts that give him a glimpse of the world Virginie lives in, beyond the pastoral enclosure. The voyage and the novel introduce a new, written language to the protagonists and with it the awareness of history to the pastoral, giving it a sense of past and present, and the instability of the future. We can thus read Paul et Virginie as an allegory of the conflict between the pastoral and the novel, where the pastoral's circular time isolation is threatened by the linear narrative premise of the voyage and the novel. Although Paul et Virginie's pastoral tries to reconcile itself with the need to place itself within a larger, historical framework, Virginie's voyage ultimately shows the limits of the genre, and pushing the pastoral into a metaphysical sphere, and Paul et Virginie into novel territory. In the next few sections I will show how these elements corrupt the pastoral's integrity, and how ultimately Bernardin de Saint-Pierre transforms the text into a new, "espèce de pastorale", whose stability depends upon the immobility of the past as well as a novelistic, wishful hope for the future.

The Pastoral in Paul et Virginie

Paul et Virginie can be divided in two parts, the pastoral and the voyage. The first part corresponds to the first half of the book, in which the narrator, the Vieillard, describes Paul and Virginie's childhood, with their mothers Marguerite and Mme de la Tour, and their slaves Domingue and Marie, on the island of Mauritius, until they are about twelve years of age. These descriptions make up the essence of the pastoral in Paul et Virginie. Philosophically, they derive from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's treaty on nature, the Etudes de la Nature (1784); textually, many of the descriptions are taken from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's own Voyage à l'Ile de France (1773). In this part, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre

successfully combines the *beauté morale* to the *beauté de la nature* to create his tropical pastoral. We could thus affirm without much hesitation that for the first half of its text Paul et Virginie is a “true (tropical) pastoral”. The second part of Paul et Virginie starts when the need for voyage arises – Virginie’s incipient sexual maturity necessitates some separation from Paul, as at twelve years of age they are too young to start a family. Virginie is thus sent to France under the premise that she will receive an aunt’s heritage and come back rich to marry Paul a few years later. Before analyzing the effect of introducing a voyage into the pastoral, however, it is important to understand the elements of the pastoral in the first half – the very elements that will be threatened by the second half’s voyage.

Despite suspicions to the contrary, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre characterizes his text as a pastoral, and makes unequivocal references to the genre’s principal authors and features in the “Avant-Propos”. Likewise, critics interested in eighteenth-century genre theory seem to doubt the pastoral character of the text, only to go back to it. In his article “Paul et Virginie, *pastorale*,” Jean Fabre explores all of Paul et Virginie’s genre possibilities and concludes that we must recognize Paul et Virginie as a pastoral, “[.] selon le sens précis que la mode avait donné à ce terme, après 1780: une églogue dramatisée en forme de nouvelle exemplaire, rapprochée de la vie mais dictée par le rêve qui permettait de fuir la vie, écrite selon les conventions et dans le ton même définis par les d’Aubignac en miniature et les petits Lysidas de ce temps” (255).

Likewise, Angelica Goodden argues that while Bernardin de Saint-Pierre casts his work in a pastoral tradition he introduces innovations to the genre (the “Christianization of pastoral and the exaltation of woman in his novel” (562)) that create some difficulties for the

interpretation of Paul et Virginie as a pastoral⁵. These innovations suggest an expansion of the thematic boundaries and consequent development of the pastoral genre at the end of the eighteenth century. In her study on the pastoral's contributions to the modern novel, Françoise Lavocat explains that one of the features of the late eighteenth-century pastoral is the incorporation of utopian themes. Paul et Virginie seems to fit her characterization of utopian pastoral (478), in which a society-oriented work ethic substitutes the pastoral *dolce far niente*. In sum, these critics seem to point to the pastoral's own mutability to account for the difficulties in characterizing Paul et Virginie as a pastoral, as though Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was only staying up-to-date with the genre's metamorphosis, or introducing innovations to the formula.

While it may be correct to point out that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was only following contemporary conventions on the pastoral, I would argue that in the second part of Paul et Virginie, the introduction of chronology-based genres into the immobile pastoral narrative represent a devastating blow to the pastoral. Unlike Florian, author of Estelle, and of the "Essai sur la Pastorale," (1788) who suggests the introduction of novelistic techniques to the pastoral in order to make its message more palatable, and therefore more useful, to the reader⁶, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre shows how the introduction of the novel and of its inherent historicism corrodes and ultimately tears down the pastoral structure of the text. The text only remains a "espèce de pastorale" because Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, though his narrator, the Vieillard, rebuilds the pastoral again and again, albeit modified and compromised by the presence of other genres.

⁵ According to Goodden, the moral significance of the deaths at the end of the novel is particularly hard to interpret, and her article seeks to explain the uncertainty in interpretation precisely in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's "departure from features characteristic to of the tradition in which he casts his work" (558).

⁶ Florian proposes to merge novelist techniques into the pastoral form so as to attenuate the slow boredom of pastoral descriptions. Florian recommends speeding up and interconnecting the pastoral descriptions with novel-like scenes and brief links (9-10): "car le roman admet, exige même, des scènes" (9).

Paul et Virginie's connection to other genres begins with its own publication history, as it was originally published within the auspices of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's 1784 Etudes de la nature (*Etudes*). Malcolm Cook has repeatedly contended that Paul et Virginie must be studied in the context of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's choice to publish it as a tome of his Etudes de la Nature: "there is little doubt in my mind that the novel is, essentially, a fictional exemplification of the political and philosophical ideas expressed in the Etudes" (156). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre himself leaves no doubt about the relationship between the two texts: Paul et Virginie "n'est au fond qu'un délasement de mes *Etudes de la Nature*, et l'application que j'ai faite de ses lois au bonheur de deux familles malheureuses" ("Préambule" 30). It is thus within the Etudes that we find the philosophical precepts that are developed under the pastoral setting of Paul et Virginie.

Paul et Virginie and the Etudes share a common concern about the representation of nature. In Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's opinion, the existing literature on nature misunderstands and misrepresents nature by imposing human codes on natural phenomena. These misrepresentations of nature are equivalent to fiction. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre explains that "[n]os livres sur la nature n'en sont que le roman, et nos cabinets que le tombeau. Combien nos spéculations et nos coutumes ne l'ont-elles pas dégradée! [...] partout on a disséqué l'homme, et l'on ne nous montre plus que son cadavre. Ainsi le plus digne objet de la création a été dégradé par notre savoir, comme le reste de la nature" (458). Imposing theories on natural phenomena is equivalent to killing nature, and in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's view, creating fiction: "[l]a fiction n'embellit que l'histoire des hommes; elle dégrade celle de la nature. La nature est elle-même la source de tout ce qu'il y a d'ingénieux, d'utile, d'aimable et de beau. En lui appliquant de force les lois que nous imaginons, ou en

étendant à toutes ses opérations celles que nous connaissons, nous en masquons de plus admirables que nous ne connaissons pas” (458).

The basic principle of the Etudes is that “[c]’est dans la nature que nous en devons trouver les lois, puisque ce n’est qu’en nous écartant de ses lois que nous rencontrons les maux” (429). The product of this principle are the scattered observations he calls his the Etudes: “Descriptions, conjectures, aperçus, vues, objections, doutes, et jusqu’à mes ignorances, j’ai tout ramassé, et j’ai donné à mes ruines le nom d’*Etudes*, comme un peintre aux études d’un grand tableau auquel il n’a pu mettre la dernière main” (459). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre develops Paul et Virginie’s text from the Etudes’ newly-found laws of nature, which in turn dictates a simple, true precept: nature teaches virtue, and virtue leads to happiness. One of the key aspects of the relationship between the two texts is that following the author’s logic, the mere fact that Paul et Virginie illustrates the true laws of nature he exposed in the Etudes prevents it from being a novel.

Ergo the *pastorale*: the genre’s inherent correspondence between nature and virtue, between landscape and human character, is the obvious vehicle for the illustration of the Etudes philosophy. The pastoral, in contrast to the novel, is unburdened by the discussions regarding its veracity; the genre is defined in the Encyclopédie as “une imitation de la vie champêtre représentée avec tous ses charmes possibles” (“Pastorale” 157). Fueled by the Etudes’s natural laws, Paul et Virginie follows the *pastorale* formula remarkably closely. The Encyclopédie’s entry for *pastorale* explains for example that “on peut juger du caractère des bergers par les lieux où on les place” (157). Likewise, Paul and Virginie, “enfants de la nature” as they are, grew up in intimate correlation with the natural environment around them:

Les périodes de leur vie se réglaient sur celles de la nature. Ils connaissaient les heures du jour par l'ombre des arbres; les saisons, par les temps où ils donnent leurs fleurs ou leurs fruits; et les années, par le nombre de leurs récoltes. Ces douces images répandaient les plus grands charmes dans leurs conversations. [...] Quand on l'interrogeait sur son âge et sur celui de Paul: "Mon frère, disait-elle, est de l'âge du grand cocotier de la fontaine, et moi de celui du plus petit. Les manguiers ont donné douze fois leurs fruits, et les orangers vingt-quatre fois leurs fleurs depuis que je suis au monde." (154-5)

The *pastoral*'s definition continues with "les bergers doivent être délicats et naïfs; c'est-à-dire que dans toutes leurs démarches & leurs discours, il ne doit y avoir rien de désagréable, de recherché, de trop subtil; & qu'en même tems ils doivent montrer du discernement, de l'adresse, de l'esprit même, pourvu qu'il soit naturel" (157). Paul and Virginie, in their prime childhood years, are described as the perfect illustration of this pastoral ideal of natural wisdom:

[L]eurs besoins et leur ignorance ajoutaient encore à leur félicité. Il n'y avait point de jour qu'ils ne se communiquassent quelques secours ou quelques lumières: oui, des lumières; et quand il s'y serait mêlé quelques erreurs, l'homme pur n'en a point de dangereuses à craindre. Ainsi croissaient ces deux enfants de la nature. Aucun souci n'avait ridé leur front, aucune intempérance n'avait corrompu leur sang, aucune passion malheureuse n'avait dépravé leur cœur: l'amour, l'innocence, la piété, développaient chaque jour la beauté de leur âme en grâces ineffables, dans leurs traits, leurs attitudes et leurs mouvements. (155)

Furthermore, as Lavocat explains, the pastoral renaissance of the second half of the eighteenth century was marked by well-defined themes of insularity, enclosure, isolation and rejection of the foreign (379). As mentioned before, these themes point to the utopian turn that the pastoral genre may adopt in some texts. Paul et Virginie's double insularity – not only is it set in an island far away from France, but the *petite société* is also enclosed by mountains and isolated from the rest of the island's society – points to its insertion in the eighteenth-century vogue of utopian pastorals. To be sure, this isolation is not incidental, but consciously active. When solicited by the poor and the rich during their few outings to the church in Pamplemousses, Paul and Virginie's mothers made a habit of refusing all invitations: “[e]lles passèrent d’abord auprès des uns pour timides, et auprès des autres pour fières; mais leur conduite réservée était accompagnée de marques de politesse si obligeantes, surtout envers les misérables, qu’elles acquirent insensiblement le respect des riches et la confiance des pauvres” (148).

In sum, for the first half of the text Paul et Virginie is a pastoral in the truest sense of its 1788 expectations, bowing to traditions and introducing innovations. And as in a good pastoral not much happens in the isolation of Paul and Virginie's *petite société*. The text is filled with pastoral descriptions similar to the ones above, showing Paul and Virginie growing up in close contact to their immediate surroundings and actively avoiding close contact with society at large. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre then interferes with this pastoral immobility by introducing a voyage, when “en général on doit éviter dans le style pastoral tout [...] ce qui supposeroit quelque long & pénible voyage, en un mot tout ce qui pourroit donner l'idée de peine & de travail” (“Pastorale” 158). Virginie's voyage breaks the stability of the pastoral by introducing movement to the static tableaux of the two children in nature, unleashing a variety of problems to the text's generic classification.

Voyage and Voyage

Despite the philosophical parallels between the Etudes and Paul et Virginie, the relationship between the two texts still seems to be a *post-factum*, felicitous connection channeled mainly through their prefaces. We could summarize the formal relationship between the two texts in two ways⁷. First, the Etudes are directly mentioned in the prefatory texts of Paul et Virginie – making the Etudes at the very least the official source of Paul et Virginie. Second, Paul et Virginie's first-half's pastoral structure seems to be the perfect vehicle for illustrating the Etudes's philosophy. However, the Etudes are hardly the only influence on Paul et Virginie. The intertextual connection between Paul et Virginie and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's 1773 travel account Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, &c. Avec des Observations nouvelles sur la nature et sur les Hommes, par un officier du Roi (Voyage à l'Île de France) seems to actually be not only stronger, but also more relevant than those between Paul et Virginie and Etudes.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre published Voyage à l'Île de France, a collection of letters and essays about the Mauritius, two years after his return from a two-and-a-half-year (voyage that took him to the Indian Ocean as an *ingénieur du roi* between 1768 and 1771. Pierre Trahard comments that the Voyage à l'Île de France is “le livre le moins discutable et le plus attrayant de Bernardin, parce qu’il est simple, direct, coloré, poétique, parce qu’il est un document géographique, historique et humain, sans déclamation ni fadeur” (x). Eighteenth-century critics received the book somewhat favorably, albeit not warmly, as exemplified by the review in the Mercure de France: “Il y a sans doute dans cet ouvrage beaucoup de choses

⁷ Malcolm Cook suggests that the Vieillard's conversations with Paul are mostly discussions of the Etudes's ideas, but this intertextual connection between Paul et Virginie and the Etudes remains to be analyzed, and is outside of the argument of this chapter.

déjà connues, plusieurs choses d'inutiles ou de minutieuses, quelques fois peut-être de la recherche dans les idées et de l'affectation dans le style; mais en général il attache et il plaît parce qu'il y a de l'imagination dans sa manière d'écrire et que l'amour de l'humanité anime toutes les réflexions" (133).

Foreshadowing the sort of criticism Bernardin de Saint-Pierre would endure later for his *Etudes*⁸, critics dismissed the *Voyage à l'Île de France*'s science while praising the author's style and sensibility. Despite its relative merits, the book failed to provide Bernardin de Saint-Pierre with the financial security he sought. Its publisher, Merlin, refused to honor the payment due to the author, and although he would eventually receive his dues, they were not an important sum. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre would spend the next decade of his life vying for sponsorship from patrons and for pensions from the government⁹.

Manuscript studies show that although *Paul et Virginie* was only published as the fourth tome of the third (1788) edition of *Etudes*, it had been conceived much earlier, and that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre laboriously and repeatedly revised the text. A manuscript entitled "Histoire de Mlle de la Tour", brought to light in 1977 by Marie-Thérèse Veyrenc, can only be characterized as an earlier version of *Paul et Virginie*. Veyrenc dates this manuscript, which is probably the most complete one, at "1777, et au plus tard en 1780"

⁸ The *Etudes* were largely mocked by the critics for much style and no substance; one of them compared Bernardin de Saint-Pierre to Voltaire's Pangloss (*Correspondance Littéraire* Avril 1785, 135). The critic continues:

car le fonds de l'ouvrage ne porte, comme l'on voit, que sur des observations fausses, des principes de physique tout à fait erronés; il n'offre que des idées communes ou la métaphysique du monde la plus obscure; mais tout cela est mêlé de tant de peintures riches et variées, de tant de digressions intéressantes, que le talent de l'écrivain fait oublier à tout moment ce qu'il a dit ou ce qu'il va dire d'absurde et de ridicule; l'ensemble de l'ouvrage respire d'ailleurs une mélancolie si douce, une sensibilité si aimable, un amour si vrai pour tout ce qui est honnête et vertueux, que si la critique n'est pas entièrement désarmée, il ne peut manquer au moins de laisser une impression très-favorable à l'auteur. (138)

Or, as Flahault summarized more recently, "si la poésie de B. de Saint-Pierre est véritablement poésie, sa philosophie est une mythologie, et sa science, une cosmologie" (369).

⁹ Chapter 4 of Cook's biography of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre details the author's struggle to secure steady income in the years after the publication of the *Voyage*.

(49). If in 1777 the manuscript was already very similar to the final version, it means that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had already been working on it for some time, perhaps at the same time as the Voyage à l'Ile de France. Robert Chaudesson, editor of the manuscript prospectus for the second edition of the Voyage à l'Ile de France, writes that the author considered at some point attaching Paul et Virginie to it (28). In any case, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre did not have the boldness to initially publish Paul et Virginie on its own; and he was aware of how one publication could benefit from the success of another¹⁰. As he explains in the “Avant-Propos”, “[j]’ai donc compris ce faible essai sous le nom et à la suite de mes *Etudes de la Nature*, que le public a accueillis avec tant de bonté, afin que ce titre, lui rappelant mon incapacité, le fit toujours ressouvenir de son indulgence” (252). While manuscript studies show circumstantial evidence that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre considered attaching Paul et Virginie to the Voyage à l'Ile de France, the intertextual and ideological connections between the two texts provide solid support to the idea that Paul et Virginie both appropriates the travel account’s descriptions of Ile de France’s landscapes and illustrates its precepts.

As seen in the “Avant-Propos,” Bernardin de Saint-Pierre is aware of Paul et Virginie’s similarities to a travel account; like them, he is about to present an enchanting description of a tropical paradise based on his own observations and on the Voyage à l'Ile de France. The *beauté de la nature* Bernardin de Saint-Pierre represents in Paul et Virginie is

¹⁰ Maurice Souriau points out that according to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s archives, the author had plans to publish a second, revised edition of the Voyage à l'Ile de France, which indicates that despite the book’s relative lack of success, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was still actively working on its text for many years after its first publication. In 1986 Robert Chaudesson edited a manuscript version of the planned second edition, unveiling not only a prospectus, but also the proposed changes Bernardin de Saint-Pierre intended to implement. In the prospectus Bernardin de Saint-Pierre also proposes to publish a second edition of the Voyage à l'Ile de France as tomes IV and V of the 1796 edition of the Etudes. After the success of the Etudes and Paul et Virginie, the Voyage à l'Ile de France became a much sought-after book by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s aficionados, and the author probably understood the opportunity to further capitalize on the success of his other texts by publishing his travel account again.

evidently represented by (favorable) descriptions of the Ile de France, although critics often point out that the tropical paradise depicted in Paul et Virginie bears no resemblance to the Ile de France described in the travel account. Yves Bénot for instance thinks that the Voyage à l'Ile de France's pessimistic take on travel makes the text an “anti-voyage, [...] qui ne donne envie ni d'y aller voir ni même d'en rêver” (13).

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre does provide a dismal description of the island in the first letters he writes from there (Letter VI in particular):

une chaîne de hautes montagnes hérissées de rochers sans arbres et sans buissons. Les flancs de ces montagnes sont couverts pendant six mois de l'année d'une herbe brulée, ce qui rend tout ce paysage noir comme une charbonnière. Le couronnement des mornes qui forment ce triste vallon est brisé. La partie la plus élevée se trouve à son extrémité et se termine par un rocher isolé qu'on appelle le Pouce. Cette partie contient encore quelques arbres; il en sort un ruisseau qui traverse la ville, et dont l'eau n'est pas bonne à boire. (I, 102-3)

He uses a modified version this desolate description from letter VI in Paul et Virginie to indicate a drastic change in the pastoral landscape that coincides with the onset of Virginie's puberty:

C'était vers la fin de décembre, lorsque le soleil au capricorne échauffe pendant trois semaines l'Ile de France de ses feux verticaux.[...] La terre se fendait de toutes parts; l'herbe était brûlée; des exhalaisons chaudes sortaient du flanc des montagnes, et la plupart de leurs ruisseaux étaient desséchés. Aucun nuage ne venait du côté de la mer. Seulement pendant le jour des

vapeurs rousses s'élevaient de dessus ses plaines, et paraissaient au coucher du soleil comme les flammes d'un incendie. (158-9)

However, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's first impressions changed as time passed.

Although in final account his view of his voyage was generally pessimistic, his appreciation for the landscape notably evolved to a more positive stance as his stay on the island advanced. His trip to the *Rivière noire*, as well as his tour of the island on foot, allowed him to observe nature from a much closer perspective. And thus, in Letter XVIII, the last one he writes from Ile de France, he describes the same landscape in a very different manner:

Le fond du bassin, formé derrière la ville par les montagnes, comprend un vaste terrain, où l'on peut rassembler tous les habitants de l'île et leurs noirs. Le revers de ces montagnes est inaccessible, ou peut l'être à peu de frais. Il y a même un avantage fort rare: c'est qu'au fond de ce bassin, dans la partie la plus élevée de la montagne, à l'endroit appelé le Pouce, il se trouve un espace considérable, planté de grands arbres, où coulent deux ou trois ruisseaux d'une eau très saine. (I, 326)

It is this final, appreciative description of the Ile de France's nature that will be transcribed and elaborated into Paul et Virginie, from the subjective point of view of the narrator. This same landscape is thus developed in the *ouverture* of Paul et Virginie's text:

[...] [les ruines de deux petites cabanes] sont situées presque au milieu d'un bassin formé par de grands rochers, qui n'a qu'une seule ouverture tournée au nord. On aperçoit à gauche la montagne appelée le Morne de la Découverte, d'où l'on signale les vaisseaux qui abordent dans l'île, et au bas de cette montagne la ville nommée le Port Louis [...].

A l'entrée de ce bassin, d'où l'on découvre tant d'objets, les échos de la montagne répètent sans cesse le bruit des vents qui agitent les forêts voisines, et le fracas des vagues qui brisent au loin sur les récifs [...] Un grand silence règne dans [l']enceinte [des montagnes], où tout est paisible, l'air, les eaux et la lumière. [...] Un jour doux éclaire le fond de ce bassin, où le soleil ne luit qu'à midi; mais dès l'aurore ses rayons en frappent le couronnement, dont les pics s'élevant au-dessus des ombres de la montagne, paraissent d'or et de pourpre sur l'azur des cieux. (109-10)

Ultimately, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's transcription of his final, acquired appreciation for Ile de France to Paul et Virginie's text begins to underscore the intertextual connections between the Voyage à l'Ile de France and Paul et Virginie. Yet the ideological connections between the two texts provide even more solid evidence that Paul et Virginie belongs within his travel account's sphere than with the Etudes'. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's Voyage à l'Ile de France counted with a few extra materials not usually found in travel accounts. One of the characteristic features of this genre, for example, is that it starts with the departure and ends with the end of voyage. The Voyage à l'Ile de France, however, contains three different extra appendages *after* Bernardin de Saint-Pierre describes his arrival back in France: a glossary of nautical terms¹¹, a long series of three fictional dialogues between a traveler and a lady called "Entretiens sur les arbres, les fleurs et les fruits" ("Entretiens")¹², and a curious letter/chapter entitled "Sur les voyageurs et les voyages".

¹¹ Among the three appendages, the glossary is definitely the less unusual one. Many eighteenth-century travel accounts counted with lists of words explaining technical or foreign terms to the lay reader.

¹² Yves Bénot, who edited the most recent edition of the Voyage à l'Ile de France (1983), chose not to include the nautical tables, nor the "Entretiens", nor the detailed table of contents. See Nathalie Vuillemin's article for an analysis of the "Entretiens."

A priori, “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages” concludes Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s pessimistic views on traveling abroad he had developed throughout the Voyage à l’Île de France. Thus after describing his largely gloomy 29-month long voyage to the Indian Ocean, the author comes back with two messages. The first is to decry the barbaric treatment of slaves in the colonies¹³; and the second is to discourage men from leaving France: “Je crois avoir rendu service à ma patrie, si j’empêche un seul honnête-homme d’en sortir, & si je peux le déterminer à cultiver un arpent de plus dans quelque lande abandonnée” (v).

Upon closer inspection, what makes “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages” remarkable is its close connection to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s 1761 “Préface de Julie, ou Entretien sur les romans”. This text, also known as “seconde préface de Julie”, was published at the end of Rousseau’s epistolary novel Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse. To begin with, “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages” functions as a “second preface” to the Voyage à l’Île de France. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre starts the essay by saying “[i]l est d’usage de chercher au commencement d’un livre à captiver la bienveillance d’un lecteur, qui souvent ne lit point la préface. Il vaut mieux, ce me semble, attendre à la fin, au moment où il est prêt à porter son jugement” (222). Likewise, Rousseau explained in the “Seconde préface”: “J’ai cru d’ailleurs devoir attendre que le livre eut son effet, avant d’en discuter les inconvénients et les avantages, ne voulant ni faire tort au libraire, ni mendier l’indulgence du public” (571). “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages,” without being as explicit a “second preface” as Rousseau’s “Séconde préface,” ends up indeed reading much like a preface as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre embarks upon the usual apologetic comments about style and language, all the while asking for the readers’ sincere appraisal.

¹³ His indignant description of the treatment of slaves does not mean he is not a racist who believes in the superiority of the white race. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre is not an abolitionist; rather, he is opposed to the violent treatment he saw the slaves being submitted to in Île de France.

Most importantly, “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages” and the “Second préface” share an essential anti-voyage message. Rousseau had stated that novels depict the supposed charms of a worldly life to countryside people, making them dislike their own status and yearn for a different life like the one in the novels, and thereby making them suffer (579). He underscores the importance of representing the beauty of country-side life so as to foster countryside values (as opposed to novels that depict the depraved lives in the city) and retain people in their countryside home:

[Il s’agit de] montrer aux gens aisés que la vie rustique et l’agriculture ont des plaisirs qu’ils ne savent pas connaître; que ces plaisirs sont moins insipides, moins grossiers qu’ils ne pensent; qu’il y peut régner du goût, du choix, de la délicatesse; qu’un homme de mérite qui voudrait se retirer à la campagne avec sa famille, et devenir lui-même son propre fermier, y pourrait couler une vie aussi douce qu’au milieu des amusements des villes. (579)

Likewise, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre comments that travelers, “mettent presque toujours le bonheur hors de leur patrie. Ils font des descriptions si agréables des pays étrangers qu’on en est, toute la vie, de mauvaise humeur contre le sien” (II, 231). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre pushes beyond Rousseau’s countryside-city conflict and compares native and foreign countries, Paris to other large cities, and finally his own countryside homeland to other countryside homelands, always preferring the first – always preferring whatever is his own to what belongs to others:

En tout la campagne me semble préférable aux villes: l’air y est pur, la vue riante, le marcher doux, le vivre facile, les mœurs simples, et les hommes meilleurs. Les passions s’y développent sans nuire à personne [...] Je préférerais de toutes les campagnes celle de mon pays, non parce qu’elle est

belle, mais parce que j'y été élevé. Il est dans le lieu natal un attrait caché, je ne sais quoi d'attendrissant, qu'aucune fortune ne saurait donner et qu'aucun pays ne peut rendre. Où sont ces jeux du premier âge, ces jours si pleins sans prévoyance et sans amertumes? (II, 236-7)

Each author thus seems to work on a different approach to the anti-voyage stance: while Rousseau depicts the virtues of countryside living, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's unflattering account of his voyage's hardships serve in turn to discourage traveling. Ultimately, "Sur les voyages et les voyageurs" disheartening message serves not only as the culmination of the Voyage à l'Île de France's text but also as a preface to Paul et Virginie – particularly when we consider the evidence that Paul et Virginie was originally a supplement to the Voyage à l'Île de France, as discussed above. The connection between Paul et Virginie and the travel account becomes clearer when Bernardin de Saint-Pierre pushes the opposition between home and elsewhere to an essential yearning for an irretrievable past, as the question "Où sont ces jeux du premier âge, ces jours si pleins sans prévoyance et sans amertumes?" denotes. The inextricable link between home country and childhood moral purity is thus at the core of his anti-voyage stance, and of Paul et Virginie's pastoral.

The pastoral descriptions of the first half of Paul et Virginie's text are, from the point of view of the Vieillard (who like Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre holds as a principle that "il faut préférer les avantages de la nature à tous ceux de la fortune, et que nous ne devons point aller chercher hors de nous ce que nous pouvons trouver chez nous" (170)), an exaltation of Paul and Virginie's home country and childhood. In turn, the flipside of this precept is illustrated in the second part of Paul et Virginie: the voyage distances oneself from home and childhood and therefore from happiness. As such, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre develops the anti-voyage predicament of "Sur les voyageurs et les voyages" in

the two most memorable scenes from Paul et Virginie: the runaway slave episode, and of course, Virginie's tragic voyage.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre illustrates the abuses of slavery he had condemned in the Voyage à l'Ile de France when Virginie shelters a runaway slave and takes her back to her owner. The slave is described as "décharnée comme un squelette, [...] son corps sillonné des cicatrices profondes par les coups de fouet qu'elle en avait reçus" (126-7). Virginie hopes that if she pleads nicely, the owner will not punish the runaway slave: she says to the slave, "J'ai envie d'aller demander votre grâce à votre maître; en vous voyant il sera touché de pitié" (127). Virginie, Paul, and the slave decide to undertake the voyage to the Rivière-noire to ask for the slavemaster's forgiveness. When they get there, instead of inspiring pity, Virginie's beauty arouses the slave owner's desire, who in turn seems to be asking her for her "love" in exchange for clemency toward his slave:

[...] quand il eut remarqué la taille élégante de Virginie, sa belle tête blonde sous une capote bleue, et qu'il eut entendu le doux son de sa voix, qui tremblait ainsi que tout son corps en lui demandant grâce, il ôta sa pipe de sa bouche, et levant son rotin vers le ciel, il jura par un affreux serment qu'il pardonnait à son esclave, non pas pour l'amour de Dieu, mais pour l'amour d'elle. (128)

Virginie produces the slave and then runs away with Paul. Yet more so than showing the horrors of slavery, the runaway slave episode seems to reflect the perils of venturing outside of the *petite société* perimeter, foreshadowing also the troubles associated with leaving childhood. The message about the horrors of slavery becomes overshadowed by the two children getting lost on their way back. Despite Virginie's intention to do the right thing by the slave (she characterizes her returning the slave and asking the slave master for mercy as

“faire le bien”), her primary responsibility is towards her own. Built into this episode (and actually taking most of its text) is a description of the two children getting lost in the forest on their way back home, after having deposited the runaway slave into her master’s hands. Despite all the knowledge of nature Paul and Virginie have, they are unable to go back home on their own. “Au bout de quelque temps ils quittèrent sans s’en apercevoir le sentier frayé sans lequel ils avaient marché jusqu’alors, et ils se trouvèrent dans un labyrinthe d’arbres, de lianes, et de roches, qui n’avaient plus d’issue” (132). Paul feels terrified, and reacts like a child: “il sentit alors par son expérience toute la faiblesse de ses ressources, et il se mit à pleurer” (133). Virginie, in turn, feels responsibility and guilt for the pain she is causing her family: “C’est moi qui suis la cause de toutes tes peines, et celles qu’éprouvent maintenant nos mères. Il ne faut rien faire, pas même le bien, sans consulter ses parents. Oh, j’ai été bien imprudente!” (133). That is, there is no good action that is not previously approved by the *petite société*, or that would cause it any pain.

Paul and Virginie are found by their own slave Domingue and their dog Fidèle. It is then that Domingue tells Virginie of the sad fate of the runaway slave: she ends up being mercilessly punished, “attachée, avec une chaîne au pied, à un billot de bois, et avec un collier de fer à trois crochets autour du cou” (134). Although Virginie seems to be mortified by the consequences of her actions, she is ultimately redeemed by the troupe of runaway slaves that offers to carry her and Paul back home when their feet are too swollen to walk. The leader of the troupe explains that “nous vous avons vus passer ce matin avec une négresse de la Rivière-noire; vous alliez demander sa grâce à son mauvais maître: en reconnaissance nous vous reporterons chez vous sur nos épaules” (135). The runaway slaves take them back home and shower them with blessings; and Virginie finally decides that her actions were not so bad: “jamais Dieu ne laisse un bienfait sans récompense” (136).

Back home, Virginie explains to her mother what had happened: “nous venons [...] de la Rivière-noire demander la grâce d’une pauvre esclave marronne, à qui j’ai donné ce matin le déjeuner de la maison, parce qu’elle mourait de faim; et voilà que les noirs marrons nous ont ramenés” (136). Thus, according to the troupe of runaway slaves, and to Virginie, her good action was to take the slave back to her master, and for that she got a ride on the shoulders of the other runaway slaves. Both accounts choose to omit the slave’s punishment and the fact that Paul and herself got completely lost in the forest. Virginie’s “wrongdoing” – to go far away from home without her mother’s knowledge or consent – is concealed by her emphasis on her good action, which was already rewarded by God’s sending the troupe of runaway slaves.

The lesson of the runaway slave passage is thus only nominally about slavery, or the abuses of slavery, but it teaches Virginie (and the reader) two other important lessons. First, Virginie learns to conceal; to a great extent, her silence about the fate of the slave reveals her wish to preserve the moral integrity of her actions as well as that of her community, and she is rewarded and praised for the actions she reported. Her safe return home in the arms of the troupe of slaves and her edited account of the episode ensure that her adventure outside of the *petite société* enclosure inflicts no lasting effect on the immobility of the pastoral community. Second, Paul and Virginie’s trip to the *Rivière noire* introduces the inextricability of travel, time, and change looming outside the protected pastoral setting. However dismissed to the background of the episode, the account of the slave’s fate still indicates that outside of the enclosure where the families live, a return to the original state is impossible; the slave may have returned to her place of departure, but unlike Virginie, she was worse off than when she left. The extirpation of the slave’s punishment from Virginie’s account thus

indicates a desire to eliminate the evidence of the passage of time, as illustrated by the slave's changed (worsened) conditions.

The second message of the Voyage à l'Île de France is that happiness is found in one's native land; the corollary of this precept, much like the runaway slave episode illustrates, is that distancing oneself from it will lead to unhappiness. Virginie's voyage to France represents this idea in Paul et Virginie: her absence from the island leads to generalized unhappiness for her family, and particularly for Paul. The pastoral environment created in the first part of the text by the young couple suffers a dire blow when Virginie leaves. When she is rushed out of the island in the middle of the night, Paul is desolate; his reaction shows how the pastoral landscape is only half-complete without her.

Il en parcourait tous les endroits qui avaient été les plus chers à Virginie. Il disait à ses chèvres et à leurs petits chevreaux, qui le suivaient en bêlant: "Que me demandez-vous? Vous ne reverrez plus avec moi celle qui vous donnait à manger dans sa main." Il fut au Repos de Virginie, et à la vue des oiseaux qui voltigeaient autour, il s'écria: "Pauvres oiseaux! Vous n'irez plus au-devant de celle qui était votre bonne nourrice." En voyant Fidèle qui flairait çà et là et marchait devant lui en quête, il soupira, et lui dit: "Oh! tu ne la retrouveras plus jamais." Enfin il fut s'asseoir sur le rocher où il lui avait parlé la veille, et à l'aspect de la mer où il avait vu disparaître le vaisseau qui l'avait emmenée, il pleura abondamment. (181-2)

Paul's desolation is only attenuated by his sense of duty, and he retires to his work on the garden: "Enfin, voyant que ses regrets augmentaient ceux de sa mère et de madame de la Tour, et que les besoins de sa famille demandaient un travail continu, il se mit, avec l'aide de Domingue, à réparer le jardin" (182). As mentioned earlier, in the utopian pastoral

setting of Paul et Virginie, work plays an important role, and if Paul and Virginie had never been full-time shepherds as the traditional pastoral format demanded, they were rather active gardeners. Virginie's garden, named "Le Repos de Virginie," had been her place of isolation; the garden had been damaged by a storm right before Virginie's departure, and in Virginie's absence, Paul takes it over and dedicates himself to restoring it. The garden becomes Paul's solitary enclosure, representing the next, innermost sphere of isolation within the island's and the *petite société*'s perimeters. In the enclosure of Virginie's garden, Paul is only subject to the circular time of seasonal gardening, and enjoys the isolation from society and the passage of time. Thus while Virginie moves out of the enclosures of the pastoral utopia, Paul moves one more step inward.

It is within these circumstances that the novel is physically and conceptually introduced in the text. Before her voyage the children were blissfully ignorant in traditional education terms:

Paul et Virginie n'avaient ni horloges, ni almanachs, ni livres de chronologie, d'histoire, et de philosophie. [...] ils ne connaissaient d'autres époques historiques que celles de la vie de leurs mères, d'autre chronologie que celle de leurs vergers, et d'autre philosophie que de faire du bien à tout le monde, et de se résigner à la volonté de Dieu (154).

After Virginie's leaves, Paul "indifférent comme un Créole pour tout ce qui se passe dans le monde," (183) tries to find a bridge between his isolated enclosure in Ile de France and Virginie's worldly existence in France. He asks the Vieillard to teach him how to read and write so that he can establish a correspondence with Virginie, and to educate him in general to help him situate and understand Virginie's new experiences abroad. However, "[il] ne trouva pas beaucoup de goût dans l'étude de la géographie [...]. L'histoire, et surtout

l'histoire moderne, ne l'intéressa guère davantage. [...]. Paul is only interested in texts that depict his own emotional turmoil: “Il préférait à cette lecture celle des romans, qui, s'occupant davantage des sentiments et des intérêts des hommes, lui offraient quelquefois des situations pareilles à la sienne” (183). He finds illustrations of his former self in a particular kind of novel portraying life in the countryside:

Aussi aucun livre ne lui fit autant de plaisir que le Télémaque, par ses tableaux de la vie champêtre et des passions naturelles au cœur humain. Il en lisait à sa mère et à madame de la Tour les endroits qui l'affectaient davantage: alors ému par de touchants ressouvenirs, sa voix s'étouffait, et les larmes coulaient de ses yeux. Il lui semblait trouver dans Virginie la dignité et la sagesse d'Antiope, avec les malheurs et la tendresse d'Eucharis. (183-4)

Télémaque is François Fénelon's hero in Les Aventures de Télémaque (1699) (Télémaque). Fénelon had written Télémaque as a didactic text to instruct his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy; according to Ehrard, Télémaque was one of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's favorite readings. Paul, however, is only partial to the references to his own situation (“il lisait [...] les endroits qui l'affectaient davantage”): only the *tableaux de la vie champêtre*, the *passions naturelles*, and the similarities between the two love objects of Telemachus, Eucharis and Antiope, to Virginie, interest him. As such, Paul's selections of Télémaque create a *pastorale* out of Fénelon's work, depicting Paul and Virginie's very own childhood together. Throughout the first half of Paul et Virginie, Paul and Virginie indeed “perform” in pastoral scenes that can only be characterized as “tableaux champêtres”. This is best exemplified in the theatrical games Paul and Virginie played, where “Virginie chantait le bonheur de la vie champêtre, et les malheurs des gens de mer que l'avarice porte à naviguer sur un élément

furieux, plutôt que de cultiver la terre, qui donne paisiblement tant de biens” (150). The scene is developed in further pastoral detail:

[Virginie] s'avancait avec timidité à la source d'une fontaine voisine pour y puiser de l'eau. Domingue et Marie, représentant les bergers de Madian, lui en défendaient l'approche et feignaient de la repousser. Paul accourait à son secours, battait les bergers, remplissait la cruche de Virginie, et en la lui posant sur la tête il lui mettait en même temps une couronne de fleurs rouges de pervenche qui relevait la blancheur de son teint. (150)

Reading novels provides Paul with the opportunity to reflect upon his life with Virginie on the island, allowing him to situate himself not only in the world (as the “romans [...] lui offraient quelquefois des situations pareilles à la sienne”), but also in a time frame. Before, they had no history or chronology; without any formal education, “[i]ls ne s'inquiétaient pas de ce qui s'était passé dans des temps reculés et loin d'eux; leur curiosité ne s'étendait pas au-delà de cette montagne. Ils croyaient que le monde finissait où finissait leur île; et ils n'imaginaient rien d'aimable où ils n'étaient pas” (121). Virginie's voyage is the first “event” in their lives that may be characterized as historical, and introduces a linear chronological sequencing to the text that was until then absent. Until then, Paul and Virginie counted their years by the number of times their coconut trees had produced fruit. During Virginie's voyage, Paul is aware of the precise number of days, months and years since her departure; in other words, conventional time only starts to count because of the voyage. Likewise, Fénelon's “pastoral” clearly represents Paul's childhood in the island with Virginie; its depiction of ancient heroes' adventures parallel Paul and Virginie's timeless childhood in Ile de France, but it also creates a sense of “past” that did not exist before. This notion of history becomes particularly evident when the *pastorale* finds a counterpoint. As the passage

below explains, not all novels are created equal; some also depict contemporary life in France: “[d]’un autre côté [Paul] fut tout bouleversé par la lecture de nos romans à la mode, pleins de mœurs et de maximes licencieuses; et quand il sut que ces romans renfermaient une peinture véritable des sociétés de l’Europe, il craignit, non sans quelque apparence de raison, que Virginie ne vint à s’y corrompre et à l’oublier” (184).

Thus Paul’s education as guided by the Vieillard was chiefly informed by novels¹⁴, and not only pastoral novels, but “bad” novels too, as the expression “roman à la mode” implies. The “roman à la mode” evidently represents what was current at the time, and portrayed the prevailing depraved morals to which Virginie was exposed that very moment¹⁵. Paul’s awareness of the distinction between “roman” (as exemplified by Fénelon’s “*pastorale*”) and “nos romans à la mode” create a sense of history based on fictional illustrations of other societies. Because of his readings, he understands his position in relation not only to the past (“ce qui s’était passé dans des temps reculés...”), but to the parallel present elsewhere (“... et loin d’eux” (121)). Paul’s consciousness about the opposition between pastoral and novel reflect *Paul et Virginie*’s essential genre ambiguity raised in the “Avant-Propos”. Clearly, the underlying commonality between voyage and novel – their dependence upon narratives that use chronology and outside parameters –

¹⁴ In the earlier manuscript, “Histoire de Mlle Virginie de la Tour,” the Vieillard describes the two types of novels, but does not reference Fénelon, neither calls contemporary novels “romans à la mode”. It seems as though in the definitive text the author chose to make a precise point about the different kinds of novels that existed.

¹⁵ Jean Fabre compares *Paul et Virginie* to Chardelot de Laclos’ *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782): “*Paul et Virginie* est un roman, le roman qui, formant diptyque avec les *Liaisons dangereuses*, son antagoniste, clôt, à la veille de la Révolution, la glorieuse perspective d’un genre qui a conquis, en ce siècle, sa pleine dignité. Quel autre genre serait assez varié et assez souple pour souffrir deux œuvres si dissemblables?” (234-5). Although *Les Liaisons dangereuses* were published well after the time when the story of *Paul et Virginie* supposedly took place, it could very well be, in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s mind when he was writing *Paul et Virginie*, the novel where “trahison [est] traitée de plaisanterie,” and may well serve us as a reference for the kind of *roman à la mode* Paul reads to learn about European models.

threaten the *pastorale* because they create a sense of history incompatible with the geographical and chronological immobility of the pastoral.

Thus, informing Paul's education, we have on one hand texts depicting land-based happiness that reference in parallel both ancient mythology and childhood memories; that is, the *pastorale*, intrinsically alluding to an irretrievable past. On the other hand, we have texts showing contemporary society and licentious morals that can only be reached when one leaves the land-based happiness for the foreign (France in this case) – when one undertakes a voyage and starts to observe the world at large. At this stage, Paul is right at the cusp between the two worlds represented by the *pastorale*, where he is “ému par de touchants ressouvenirs,” and the *roman à la mode*, where he finds reality, “non sans quelque apparence de raison”; he is caught between lingering emotion about his childhood with Virginie in Ile de France and a nascent understanding of the world beyond, and only starting to suspect that Virginie might be corrupted by contact with European society.

Virginie's Letter

Paul's suspicions are temporarily appeased by the arrival of a letter from Virginie after eighteen months of silence. Although this is the only one letter we actually read verbatim in the text – it is “fully transcribed” by the narrator – it is but one of many Virginie writes home. She explains that she feels trapped and friendless in Paris, and cannot trust anyone around her. In order to circumvent this situation, she quickly learns to read and write so as to establish a correspondence with her mother. We learn that she had written a number of letters, but those were intercepted by her chambermaids, and that she had arranged for the present letter to be smuggled out of the convent through one of her friends.

Virginie's literacy, contrary to Paul's, bears a touch of rebellion and illicitness. Letter-writing is forbidden to her by her aunt, who believes her contact with the world outside of the convent would damage her chances of a good marriage: "[m]a grand-tante m'a interdit toute correspondance au dehors, qui pourrait, selon elle, mettre obstacle aux grandes vues qu'elle a sur moi" (186). Clearly, Virginie's production of letters denotes a desire to communicate, to link herself back to her original community; the interception/interdiction of correspondence is an attempt to sever her links to the outside world.

Virginie's newly acquired literary skills allows her not only to step outside of her constrained convent life, but also to express herself in a written format that is inherently based on a linear chronology that emphasizes time and history. Before her voyage, life in Ile de France was staunchly devoid of language for communication. As mentioned before, the *petite société* actively shunned any connection to the island's society, mostly to avoid any kind of idle talk. Indeed, Paul and Virginie's mothers seem to protect their peaceful living by refusing communication in general, so as to avoid fueling gossip: "Elles avaient banni de leurs conversations la médisance, qui, sous une apparence de justice, dispose nécessairement le cœur à la haine ou à la fausseté" (137).

Within their immediate surroundings, Paul and Virginie's families seemed to not need words to express their happiness in nature: "[s]ouvent leur repas se passait sans qu'ils se dissent un mot. A leur silence, à la naïveté de leurs attitudes, à la beauté de leurs pieds nus, on eût cru voir un groupe antique de marbre blanc représentant quelques-uns des enfants de Niobé" (123). This preference for silence is further pointed out when the Vieillard describes the families' gatherings: "C'était sur ce rocher que ces familles se rassemblaient le soir, et jouissaient en silence de la fraîcheur de l'air, du parfum des fleurs, du murmure des fontaines, et des dernières harmonies de la lumière et des ombres" (140). Clearly, in the nature-virtue-

happiness scheme of Paul et Virginie's pastoral, words are not only unnecessary (“[Ils] n'ont pas besoin de rendre le sentiment par des pensées, et l'amitié par des paroles” (123)), they may be detrimental to the peaceful existence of the members – as it is illustrated in the *négrresse maronne* episode, and by the reference to Niobe, which reinforces the silence imperative: Niobe was the queen of Thebes who provoked the ire of Apollo and Diana by bragging to their mother Latona that she had seven sons and seven daughters to be proud of. “And truly the happiest of mothers would Niobe have been if only she had not claimed to be so,” (Bulfinch 105) for clearly it was her talking about it that led her to her fall. Silence prevents the recounting of a painful past, or even the interpretation of the present; in other words, silence is necessary for the geographical and historical isolation of the pastoral from the problems of the world at large.

Yet this lack of language becomes particularly problematic as Virginie matures. Before she left for France, Virginie had started to feel an incipient sexual desire for Paul. As mentioned earlier, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre makes her sexual awakening clear to the reader by making parallels between her new feelings and the nature around her. First, he points to the heat wave that ravages the island's green landscapes. Then he continues:

Dans une de ces nuits ardentes, Virginie sentit redoubler tous les symptômes de son mal. Elle se levait, elle s'asseyait, elle se recouchait, et ne trouvait dans aucune attitude ni le sommeil ni le repos. Elle s'achemine, à la clarté de la lune, vers sa fontaine; elle en aperçoit la source qui, malgré la sécheresse, coulait encore en filets d'argent sur les flancs bruns du rocher. Elle se plonge dans son bassin. D'abord la fraîcheur ranime ses sens, et mille souvenirs agréables se présentent à son esprit. Elle se rappelle que dans son enfance sa mère et Marguerite s'amusaient à la baigner avec Paul dans ce même lieu; que

Paul ensuite, réservant ce bain pour elle seule, en avait creusé le lit, couvert le fond de sable, et semé sur ses bords des herbes aromatiques. Elle entrevoit dans l'eau, sur ses bras nus et sur son sein, les reflets des deux palmiers plantés à la naissance de son frère et à la sienne, qui entrelaçaient au-dessus de sa tête leurs rameaux verts et leurs jeunes cocos. Elle pense à l'amitié de Paul, plus douce que les parfums, plus pure que l'eau des fontaines, plus forte que les palmiers unis; et elle soupire. Elle songe à la nuit, à la solitude, et un feu dévorant la saisit" (159-60).

Virginie, however, is at a despairing loss for words: "Plusieurs fois, voulant lui [à Mme de la Tour] raconter ses peines, elle lui pressa les mains dans les siennes; plusieurs fois elle fut près de prononcer le nom de Paul, mais son cœur oppressé laissa sa langue sans expression, et posant sa tête sur le sein maternel elle ne put que l'inonder de ses larmes" (160). Mme de la Tour, in turn, "pénétrait bien la cause du mal de sa fille, mais elle n'osait elle-même lui en parler". This strategy of silence persists for a while, until Mme de la Tour, in an effort to convince Virginie to go to France, reveals that she plans to eventually marry her to Paul; Virginie, taking her mother's announcement as a sign of empathy, breaks down and confesses her "troubles" to her mother (169). Mme de la Tour, who had imagined this marriage to take place after Virginie comes back from France, is unsettled by Virginie's confession and tells her unequivocally: "cache ton amour à Paul. Quand le cœur d'une fille est pris, son amant n'a plus rien à lui demander". Thus when Virginie actually finds words to express her sexual feelings for Paul to her mother she is also explicitly told to shut off these expressions.

Writing, already a rebellious act against her aunt, also becomes a means of circumventing her own mother's admonition not to reveal her love to Paul. As she had done

in her account of the runaway slave episode, Virginia will again omit the crux of the problem from her letter – in this instance, Paul, and her love for Paul. Indeed, “Paul fut bien étonné de ce que Virginie ne parlait pas du tout de lui, elle qui n’avait pas oublié, dans ses ressouvenirs, le chien de la maison” (188). But if Virginia removes Paul from the official account of her life in France (the body of the letter) she engages him individually in a *bors-texte* space, dedicating an entire postscript to him:

Dans un post-scriptum Virginie recommandait particulièrement à Paul deux espèces de graines: celles de violettes et de scabieuses. Elle lui donnait quelques instructions sur les caractères de ces plantes, et sur les lieux les plus propres à les semer. "La violette, lui mandait-elle, produit une petite fleur d'un violet foncé, qui aime à se cacher sous les buissons; mais son charmant parfum l'y fait bientôt découvrir." Elle lui enjoignait de la semer sur le bord de la fontaine, au pied de son cocotier. "La scabieuse, ajoutait-elle, donne une jolie fleur d'un bleu mourant, et à fond noir piqué de blanc. On la croirait en deuil. On l'appelle aussi, pour cette raison, fleur de veuve. Elle se plaît dans les lieux âpres et battus des vents." Elle le priait de la semer sur le rocher où elle lui avait parlé la nuit, la dernière fois, et de donner à ce rocher, pour l'amour d'elle, le nom du Rocher des Adieux.

Elle avait renfermé ces semences dans une petite bourse dont le tissu était fort simple, mais qui parut sans prix à Paul lorsqu'il y aperçut un P et un V entrelacés et formés de cheveux, qu'il reconnut à leur beauté pour être ceux de Virginie. (188-9)

Paul is a *laboureur de la terre*, and in principle does not need any instructions to plant Virginie's seeds. More than just an agricultural worker, Paul intuitively understands the

esthetics of gardening: Paul “avait embelli ce que le noir Domingue ne faisait que cultiver” (138). He is the “author” of the many *virtuoso* gardens surrounding his and Virginie’s homes, all of which bear meaningful titles. Virginie is also naturally aware of the esthetics of gardening. She sows seeds everywhere she goes, understands the properties of plants, and even has a garden named for herself. The very fact that Virginie chooses to include written instructions to go along with the seed package suggests that the postscript’s text contains an elaborate hidden message to Paul that goes beyond gardening advice.

In turn, the embroidery of the seed package – the interlaced P and V – reminds us of Paul et Virginie itself, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s own *petit ouvrage*. When we juxtapose the postscript and the seed package, we can read the postscript as a preface to a “novel in germination”. Indeed, the structure of the letter-postscript-seed package exactly matches that of the Voyage à l’Île de France–“Sur les voyageurs et les voyages”–Paul et Virginie. Virginie’s letter is one of many (lost letters) describing her life in and impressions of a foreign country; Bernardin de Saint-Pierre himself had written letters from Île de France and later compiled them into the Voyage à l’Île de France¹⁶. The postscript provides guidance in sowing the seeds, acting like a preface to the appended seed package. Similarly, “Sur les voyageurs et les voyages” provides ideological support and an introduction to Paul et Virginie, which was not appended to the Voyage à l’Île de France but, as shown, could have well been a supplement to it. Finally, the seed package matches Paul et Virginie, not only by sharing a title, but because the seeds themselves represent the essential dichotomy of Paul et Virginie’s text: life before and after Virginie’s voyage.

¹⁶ Incidentally, Virginie ends her letter with longing for her native country. Although she is pressed to become French (one of her chambermaids says “souvenez-vous que vous êtes Française et que vous devez oublier le pays des sauvages” (188)) she resists, like Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had resisted in the Voyage à l’Île de France: “Ah, je m’oublierais plutôt moi-même que d’oublier le lieu où je suis née, et où vous vivez!” (188).

The violet represents Virginie before her voyage, living her pastoral life with Paul and their families. Indeed, the Vieillard had already described their lives earlier in the text as separated from society, as “des violettes, sous des buissons épineux, exhalent au loin leurs doux parfums, quoiqu’on ne les voie pas” (136). Yet here in the postscript, the violet’s meaning may also take a more *risqué* turn. Using her newly acquired writing skills, Virginie seems to be making reference to her concealed sexual desire for Paul. This idea is reinforced by the instructions she gives as to where to sow these seeds. Virginie wants him to sow them at the bottom of the coconut tree that represents her, and which was planted next to another coconut tree representing Paul. The narrator explains that at twelve years of age, the coconut trees “déjà [...] entrelaçaient leurs palmes, et laissaient prendre leurs jeunes grappes de cocos au-dessus du bassin de la fontaine” (144). This intertwinement happens right by the same fountain where Virginie tried to cool off her ardent desire for Paul before she left Ile de France.

The scabious, in turn, represents Virginie in France, and gives a more complex view of her current situation. An alternate name for the scabious is mournful widow, or “fleur de veuve” as Virginie calls it; accordingly, the scabious seem to indicate Virginie’s sadness because of Paul’s distance. Virginie explains that this flower thrives in harsh and windy conditions, which may represent her strength under pressure in France. Virginie asks Paul to sow the scabious seeds by the rock where they said their last goodbyes, decorating the place with a flower that reflects what has become of her since her departure – a mix of both sadness and strength.

Thus the novel germinating in the seed package contains both a pastoral and a voyage version of Virginie. If this germinating novel is called P&V, and Virginie’s past and present are represented by the seeds, Paul’s role is to sow the seeds and tend to the garden to

see that they grow in Ile de France, which is precisely Paul's response: "Paul lui écrivit une lettre fort longue où il l'assurait qu'il allait rendre le jardin digne d'elle, et y mêler les plantes de l'Europe à celles de l'Afrique, ainsi qu'elle avait entrelacé leurs noms dans son ouvrage" (189). Yet Paul's "pastoral reaction" to the seed package – his immediate willingness to get to work on Virginie's garden – also betray his lack of understanding of the possible sexual undertones of Virginie's message. Although the coconuts seem to indicate that both he and Virginie are sexually mature ("Il lui envoyait des fruits des cocotiers de sa fontaine, parvenus à une maturité parfaite")¹⁷, Paul is unwilling to send seeds to Virginie: "Il n'y joignait, ajoutait-il, aucune autre semence de l'île, afin que le désir d'en revoir les productions la déterminât à y revenir promptement" (189). In other words, Paul is ready to introduce elements from Virginie's voyage into the garden – the inner core of the pastoral setting or Paul et Virginie – indicating his willingness to assimilate the seed package into the pastoral. But he is not willing to send Virginie a sample of his garden out to France, only a reminder of what it can produce (the coconut) so that Virginie comes back as soon as possible to Ile de France and to their pastoral idyll.

However, the failure of the European seeds in the African garden, despite Paul's best efforts to grow and maintain them, clearly foreshadows trouble in the pastoral. Paul's focus on his garden seems to distract him from the meaning of the seeds and of the garden's failure. The Vieillard, on the other hand, seems to be the only one capable of reading into Virginie's newly found eloquence and its consequences. He suggests that "les fleurs semblaient avoir quelque analogie avec le caractère et la situation de Virginie," (190) and explains that "soit qu'elles [les semences] eussent été éventées dans le trajet, soit plutôt que le

¹⁷ The reference to the coconut trees here are fortuitous indications of sexual maturity; Paul only seems to become aware of Virginie's sexual maturity some time later, when he sees the papaya trees she had sown two years before bear papaya fruit (197-8).

climat de cette partie de l'Afrique ne leur soit pas favorable, il n'en germa qu'un petit nombre, qui ne put venir à sa perfection" (190). The flowers may symbolize Virginie's character and situation, but their failure to thrive due to the voyage and African climate predicts, if not Virginie's upcoming return and death (the scabious references death afterall), at least the irremediable troubles she would have upon returning to Ile de France. In the very least, the Vieillard is aware that even if Virginie were to return home, the initial *pastorale* is inevitably doomed because Virginie will never be the same; and thus he takes action to save the pastoral.

Saving the *Pastorale*

As the violets and scabious fail to thrive in the Ile de France's tropical climates, Paul also fails to receive another letter from Virginie. The pastoral silence of their childhood years is unwelcome at this point; with the distance between them, words are necessary. Now, Virginie's lack of news only leads to idle gossip, and to Paul's confusion. Word in the island had it that Virginie was about to be married to a nobleman, and the locals started to commiserate with Paul's loss.

Mais comme plusieurs habitants de l'île, par une pitié perfide, s'empresaient de le plaindre de cet événement, il commença à y ajouter quelque croyance. D'ailleurs dans quelques-uns des romans qu'il avait lus, il voyait la trahison traitée de plaisanterie; et comme il savait que ces livres renfermaient des peintures assez fidèles des mœurs de l'Europe, il craignit que la fille de madame de la Tour ne vînt à s'y corrompre, et à oublier ses anciens engagements. Ses lumières le rendaient déjà malheureux. Ce qui acheva d'augmenter ses craintes, c'est que plusieurs vaisseaux d'Europe arrivèrent ici

depuis, dans l'espace de six mois, sans qu'aucun d'eux apportât des nouvelles de Virginie. (190-1)

As Rousseau explains in the “Entretiens sur les romans” novels affect urban and country-side readers differently: “Quand on vit isolé, [...] on les [les lectures] varie moins, on les médite davantage; et comme elles ne trouvent pas un si grand contrepoids au dehors, elles font beaucoup plus d’effet au-dedans” (577). The *romans à la mode* Paul reads in the isolation of his enclosures find little outside evidence to prove them wrong. If on one hand there is no news of Virginie, on the other, there is plenty of local gossip that seem to give credence to what Paul imagines may be happening to Virginie in France. Paul is still not entirely sure of the gulf between the two worlds, and reaches out to the Vieillard for guidance: “Cet infortuné jeune homme, livré à toutes les agitations de son cœur, venait me voir souvent, pour confirmer ou pour bannir ses inquiétudes par mon expérience du monde” (191).

Up until this point, we knew little about the Vieillard, as he acted mostly as a narrator of Paul et Virginie’s pastoral. Indeed, the pastoral in Paul et Virginie is the product of the Vieillard’s narration: it is through his voice that we hear the correspondences between nature and the honest character of the *petite société* members, the descriptions of their peaceful and isolated existences, and the elegy of their simple lives. Although the Vieillard acts as an *eminence grise* for most of the first half of Paul et Virginie, he clearly assumes a greater profile at this juncture of his narration, and starts to take more charge of the pastoral that is about to fall apart along with Paul. Thus not only do we hear the Vieillard speaking about himself and his philosophy, but we also see him reasoning with Paul. We learn that the Vieillard is a proponent of solitude and isolation: “la solitude ramène en partie l’homme au bonheur naturel, en éloignant de lui le malheur social” (191). Thus he makes the choice to live alone;

he describes his life as being much like the life led by the *petite société*: “[j]e passe donc mes jours loin des hommes, que j’ai voulu servir, et qui m’ont persécuté. Après avoir parcouru une grande partie de l’Europe, et quelques cantons de l’Amérique et de l’Afrique, je me suis fixé dans cette île peu habitée, séduit par sa douce température et par ses solitudes” (193).

The Vieillard’s worldly wisdom – his choice of a solitary, pastoral life in Ile de France, is in direct contrast with what Paul proposes to do:

Je suis bien chagrin. Mademoiselle de la Tour est partie depuis deux ans et deux mois; et depuis huit mois et demi elle ne nous a pas donné de ses nouvelles. Elle est riche; je suis pauvre: elle m’a oublié. J’ai envie de m’embarquer: j’irai en France, j’y servirai le roi, j’y ferai fortune; et la grand-tante de mademoiselle de la Tour me donnera sa petite nièce en mariage, quand je serai devenu un grand seigneur. (198)

Before Virginie’s voyage, Paul lived in a world without past or future, enclosed in a geographical space isolated from the rest of the world – in the Vieillard’s pastoral world. Now, her voyage makes Paul conscious of the passage of time; he starts to measure the length of Virginie’s absence, and realizes the meaning of past, discerning the time “quand Virginie était ici” (214) from his present desolation. His *lumières* – his readings – make the differences between the past and present, Ile de France and France, pastoral and roman become real issues to him, and he begins to yearn for the world outside of the garden. Without Virginie, nor news from Virginie, Paul has little alternative but to imagine her behavior in a *roman à la mode*, and finally, to picture himself in one of them too – with Virginie, in France. Paul’s plan seems to stem from a novel-induced madness, as Rousseau puts it in the “Entretiens sur le roman”: “[...] en montrant sans cesse à ceux qui les [les romans] lisent les prétendus charmes d’un état qui n’est pas le leur, ils les séduisent, ils leur

font prendre leur état en dédain, et en faire un échange imaginaire contre celui qu'on leur fait aimer. Voulant être ce qu'on n'est pas, on parvient à se croire autre chose que ce qu'on est, et voilà comment on devient fou” (579).

The Vieillard’s response to Paul’s mad ambitions is, unsurprisingly, entirely discouraging. The dialogue that follows between the two is thus the Vieillard’s unequivocal refutation of Paul’s inquiries about social mobility in France (a denial of any possible desire to join Virginie’s *roman à la mode*) or elsewhere (a denial of travel in general). The Vieillard argues strongly against travel, deflating Paul’s ideas of social ascent in France, and attempting as such to save the remains of the *pastorale* in the text: Paul’s lonely work in the garden. The Vieillard’s counterarguments to Paul’s aspirations stem from Paul’s illegitimate birth and lowly social status – that is, Paul’s non-existent to marginal historical existence. Before Virginie left Ile de France, Marguerite reveals to Paul: “Mademoiselle de la Tour appartient, par sa mère, à une parente riche et de grande condition: pour toi, tu n’es que le fils d’une pauvre paysanne, et, qui est pis, tu es bâtard” (173). Clearly, the emphasis on birthright and social class is akin to the intervention of history into the pastoral; although Paul’s *défaut de naissance* and *paysan* status had never been an issue to him until now, now they seem to be both intrinsic to his being and an insurmountable obstacle to his happiness. At first Paul seems to think his lack of birthright does not matter much: “je ne sais ce que c’est que la naissance. Je ne me suis jamais aperçu que j’en eusse moins qu’un autre, ni que les autres en eussent plus que moi” (199). The Vieillard, however, puts it in his world-wise perspective: “Le défaut de naissance vous ferme en France le chemin aux grands emplois. Il y a plus: vous ne pouvez même être admis dans aucun Corps distingué” (199).

Likewise the Vieillard will argue that Paul’s history (or lack thereof) prevents from being anything else but a *paysan* in France. Although the Vieillard claims that the best

profession is that of the land (“celui qui fait produire à un terrain un gerbe de blé de plus leur rend un plus grand service que celui qui leur donne un livre” (203)), paradoxically in Europe “le travail des mains déshonore. On l’appelle travail mécanique. Celui même de labourer la terre y est le plus méprisé de tous. Un artisan y est bien plus estimé qu’un paysan” (210). Paul is shocked, as he is *laboureur de la terre*, by necessity, by pleasure, and by family heritage, as his mother is a *paysanne*. Paul is taken aback, for the Vieillard had previously made him believe that “une des causes de la grandeur de la France était que le moindre sujet pouvait y parvenir à tout” (199). The Vieillard replies that “je vous ai dit la vérité sur les temps passés; mais les choses sont bien changées à présent. Tout est devenu vénal en France” (199).

In order to keep Paul from leaving, the Vieillard resorts to speaking of past and present, acknowledging history and the inevitable changes that come with the passage of time. Essentially, because of his illegitimacy, Paul is denied ties to anything other than his mother’s *paysan* identity; Paul’s pastoral existence is primarily tied to a circular notion of history linked to seasonal demands of his agricultural work; the enclosure of his garden thus traps him not only geographically but also temporally in an annual cycle of garden maintenance. As opposed to Virginie’s intrinsically historical aristocratic lineage, Paul’s inherent lack of history automatically denies him subjectivity in the linear, evolving narrative of historiography – or the novel.

Not surprisingly, travel is also denied to Paul. In view of the impossibility of life in France, he considers traveling to Bengal to make fortune; given his illegitimate birth and the consequent lack of options, trying his luck at sea is the only alternative left if he is to obtain the fortune he thinks is necessary to earn Virginie’s hand. But the Vieillard reminds him that he is the only support for his own and Virginie’s mothers. He must remain in Ile de France,

where his work is valuable at least in that it supports his entire family, if not because it is a sign of virtue: “vous qui soutenez vos parents par vos travaux, vous n’avez pas besoin qu’on vous la définisse [la vertu]” (211)). The Vieillard’s advice to Paul continues to follow Rousseau’s precepts in the “Entretien sur les romans”: Paul should learn the virtues and sweetness of his own country-life existence. Paul has no option but to embrace the hope that Virginie will come back to marry him.

Thus, despite Paul’s unhappiness, the Vieillard succeeds in keeping him at home. Not only Paul desists from leaving Ile de France, he is also more aware that Virginie, in all likelihood, is not coming back – or, as the Vieillard suspects, if she does, she will have changed. The use of the *présent de l’indicatif* and *passé composé* in the following passage, as opposed to the use of the uncertain verb *craindre* in the earlier ones, denotes Paul’s understanding of the passage of time and increasing certainty about his beloved’s loss. He complains to the Vieillard:

Virginie ne m’écrit point. Si elle était partie d’Europe elle m’aurait mandé son départ. Ah! les bruits qui ont couru d’elle ne sont que trop fondés! sa tante l’a mariée à un grand seigneur. L’amour des richesses l’a perdue comme tant d’autres. Dans ces livres qui peignent si bien les femmes la vertu n’est qu’un sujet de roman. Si Virginie avait eu de la vertu, elle n’aurait pas quitté sa propre mère et moi. Pendant que je passe ma vie à penser à elle, elle m’oublie. Je m’afflige, et elle se divertit. Ah! cette pensée me désespère. Tout travail me déplaît; toute société m’ennuie. Plût à Dieu que la guerre fût déclarée dans l’Inde! j’irais y mourir. (212-3)

Given that the Vieillard had already defined Paul and his work in the land as virtue itself, it is not surprising that in Paul’s view virtue becomes the opposite of voyage: “si elle

avait eu de la vertu, elle n'aurait pas quitté sa propre mère et moi". To alleviate his desperation, the Vieillard suggests that Paul should read good books: "Au milieu de tant de passions que nous agitent, notre raison se trouble et s'obscurcit; mais il est des phares où nous pouvons en rallumer le flambeau: ce son les lettres [...] Lisez donc, mon fils. [...] Un livre est un bon ami" (214-5). But Paul wants nothing to do with books, acknowledging that they only serve as an unhappy substitute for Virginie: "Ah! s'écriait Paul, je n'avais pas besoin de savoir lire quand Virginie était ici. Elle n'avait pas plus étudié que moi; mais quand elle me regardait en m'appelant son ami, il m'était impossible d'avoir du chagrin" (214-5).

Paul's angry laments signal his understanding – his acceptance indeed, of the fact that he cannot leave; but his characterization of Virginie's travel as corrupt and his ultimate rejection of books (and thus *lumières*) signify his submission to the Vieillard's *pastorale* too. Paul's acceptance of the pastoral is sealed when he goes back to work in the garden. To alleviate Paul's penchant for otiosity and death wish ("Tout travail me déplaît; toute société m'ennuie. Plût à Dieu que la guerre fût déclarée dans l'Inde! J'irais y mourir") the Vieillard's advises Paul to work; in the off-chance Virginie actually returns to Ile de France, she will want to see her garden reestablished. He reminds Paul that "Virginie reviendra avec plus de philosophie que vous n'en avez. Elle sera bien surprise de ne pas retrouver le jardin tout à fait rétabli, elle qui ne songe qu'à embellir, malgré les persécutions de sa parente, loin de sa mère et de vous" (215).

Without Virginie nor news from Virginie, nor a legitimate birth, nor a distinguished profession, and morally trapped in Ile de France taking care of his aging family, Paul's only solace is to retire to the isolation of his garden: "L'idée du retour prochain de Virginie renouvelait le courage de Paul, et le ramenait à ses occupations champêtres. Heureux au milieu de ses peines de proposer à son travail une fin qui plaisait à sa passion!" (215). Paul's

happiness as he undertakes his “occupations champêtres” indicates that Paul can still, at least temporarily, draw upon his childhood bliss as an innocent *paysan*, and work toward her approval of the garden if, and when, she comes back. In this new model, the spatial and time isolation of the original pastoral gives way to an emotional compromise with the voyage’s and the novel’s essential geographical and chronological awareness. *Paul et Virginie*’s initial *pastorale* is thus adapted to the inevitable passage of time: and the precarious stability of this new, contingent, and lonely *espèce de pastorale*, is based on the delicate task of keeping Paul’s focus on the garden, where time is suspended, and he is sustained by hopes for an unlikely future and a longing for an irretrievable past.

Virginie is Dead; Long Live the Pastoral

It is in such state of anesthetized despair that Paul receives notice that a ship arrived at the port with Virginie aboard. Because of rough seas, the ship is unable to anchor at a safe distance from land, so a letter precedes Virginie’s disembarkation. In the letter related by the Vieillard she describes the circumstances of her unannounced return from France:

Virginie mandait à sa mère qu'elle avait éprouvé beaucoup de mauvais procédés de la part de sa grand-tante, qui l'avait voulu marier malgré elle, ensuite déshéritée, et enfin renvoyée dans un temps qui ne lui permettait d'arriver à l'Ile de France que dans la saison des ouragans; qu'elle avait essayé en vain de la fléchir, en lui représentant ce qu'elle devait à sa mère et aux habitudes du premier âge. (216)

The grand-aunt’s efforts to educate and marry Virginie were thwarted by Virginie’s obstinacy to stick to her original engagements – “ce qu'elle devait à sa mère et aux habitudes du premier âge”. Virginie evokes her mother’s and her own promises against her grand-

aunt's wishes. Mme de la Tour had engaged Virginie to marry Paul: "Je n'ai d'autre projet que de te rendre heureuse et de te marier un jour avec Paul, qui n'est point ton frère" (169). Likewise, before leaving, Virginie makes a solemn promise to Paul invoking the "habitudes du premier âge":

O mon ami! j'atteste les plaisirs de notre premier âge, tes maux, les miens, et tout ce qui doit lier à jamais deux infortunés, si je reste, de ne vivre que pour toi; si je pars, de revenir un jour pour être à toi. Je vous prends à témoin, vous tous qui avez élevé mon enfance, qui disposez de ma vie et qui voyez mes larmes. Je le jure par ce ciel qui m'entend, par cette mer que je dois traverser, par l'air que je respire, et que je n'ai jamais souillé du mensonge.

(178)

Contrary to what the Vieillard and Paul had suspected, she is faithful to her "anciens engagements" and principles, and uncorrupted by European decadence. Virginie undertakes a dangerous voyage to Ile de France in lieu of succumbing to a court marriage and riches in France, a decision deemed "romanesque" in her grand-aunt's European mind (and incidentally, similar to what Mme de la Tour had chosen for herself when she married Virginie's father). In the grand-aunt's view, Virginie's refusal to enter history by assuming her family's duties in French society is the result of reading too many novels. However, to Paul's eyes, by choosing to return to the island, Virginie refuses the novel that marrying into French society represents and therefore obliterates any inkling that her life had become less than virtuous. Virginie returns to her native land, to her family, and to the "habitudes du premier âge," and in doing so, she rejects both history and the novel: Virginie chooses the *pastorale*.

Virginie's *desire* to return to her native island, in this view, asserts Paul et Virginie's essential pastoral identity; her *actual* return to the island, however, threatens the newly-found, precarious stability of the lonely pastoral it has become. The original plan was that Virginie would secure her great-aunt's inheritance in France, and come back to the island with enough money to marry Paul and support her family. Virginie's voyage to France represented their best shot at survival, as Mme de la Tour reasoned with her daughter before she left for France: "Mon enfant, nos domestiques sont vieux; Paul est bien jeune, Marguerite vient sur l'âge; je suis déjà infirme: si j'allais mourir, que deviendriez-vous sans fortune au milieu de ces déserts?" (168). Working on the land, according to Mme de la Tour, should be the option of last resort. Should she die, Mme de la Tour explains, "[v]ous resteriez donc seule, n'ayant personne qui puisse vous être d'un grand secours, et obligée, pour vivre, de travailler sans cesse à la terre comme une mercenaire. Cette idée me pénètre de douleur" (168-9).

Since these arguments had little effect on hard-working Virginie, Mme de la Tour announces that she plans to marry her to Paul upon her return; but she warns Virginie as well, "songe maintenant que sa fortune depend de toi" (169). Paul himself seems to expect Virginie to come back rich, he comments to the Vieillard: "Oh! que Virginie est vertueuse! C'est par vertu qu'elle a voulu être riche, afin d'être bienfaisante [...] Virginie étant riche, nous aurons beaucoup de Noirs qui travailleront pour vous. Vous serez toujours avec nous, n'ayant d'autre souci que celui de vous amuser et de vous réjouir" (211-2). In sum, Paul and Virginie's pastoral happiness after childhood depended upon Virginie's securing the financial means to ensure that no one had to work. Interestingly, had Virginie returned rich from France and no one (but the slaves) had to work anymore, the pastoral would not revert to its initial state. An elimination of work obligations from the petite société would mean the

elimination of the utopian work ethic, and thus revert the pastoral to an even earlier, more traditional model of idleness.

However, Virginie is coming back to Ile de France as poor as she had left, only “avec plus de philosophie,” and this alternative produces a very different sort of scenario. To be sure, not only are Mme de la Tour, Marguerite and their slaves all getting old, but Virginie’s marriage to Paul would produce offspring, and as her mother put it, “[q]uel chagrin pour nous si Virginie mettait au monde des enfants malheureux, qu’elle n’aurait peut-être pas la force d’élever!” (163). The Vieillard echoes the same preoccupation in hindsight, characterizing Virginie’s return to Paul as a potentially disastrous situation:

Mais que savez-vous si l'objet de qui vous deviez attendre un bonheur si pur n'eût pas été pour vous la source d'une infinité de peines? Elle était sans bien, et déshéritée; vous n'aviez désormais à partager avec elle que votre seul travail. Revenue plus délicate par son éducation, et plus courageuse par son malheur même, vous l'auriez vue chaque jour succomber, en s'efforçant de partager vos fatigues. Quand elle vous aurait donné des enfants, ses peines et les vôtres auraient augmenté par la difficulté de soutenir seule avec vous de vieux parents, et une famille naissante. (235)

Paradoxically, in a pastoral that idealizes childhood, the perfectly happy *enfants de la nature* can only produce *enfants malheureux*. Clearly, Virginie’s impecunious return to her native home and the inevitable onset of sexual relationships with Paul would destroy not only the original, idealized picture of pastoral happiness, but also Paul’s hardly achieved pastoral stability without her. Thus, although Virginie’s death may represent a tragic end to the pastoral, it also prevents the pastoral from turning into a protracted account of the

unhappiness of a young, poor couple raising unfortunate children and supporting old parents – and thus not a pastoral at all.

Indeed, Virginie's death (and the subsequent death of every member of her family) denies the pastoral a past or a future – rejecting the possibility of a historical chronology or a novelistic narrative linearity. And if Virginie's death represents the definite end of the initial childhood pastoral and the contingent pastoral, the Vieillard's account of the end assures that what was left on earth becomes an extemporal, mythical, metaphysical pastoral that is contingent on Virginie's death, and most importantly, protected from the interference of other genres' time-based narratives. The Vieillard describes Virginie marching assuredly toward death as a martyr on the deck of the *Saint-Géran*, reassured that her virtue would open the doors of heaven: "d'un port noble et assuré, elle nous faisait signe de la main, comme nous disant un éternel adieu [...] Virginie, voyant la mort inévitable, posa une main sur ses habits, l'autre sur son cœur, et levant en haut des yeux sereins, parut un ange qui prend son vol vers les cieux" (224). Her beatification starts when the Vieillard finds her body, intact and serene; he stops short of describing the smell of roses indicative of her sanctity, but still manages to include references to roses.

[...] un des premiers objets que j'aperçus sur le rivage fut le corps de Virginie. Elle était à moitié couverte de sable, dans l'attitude où nous l'avions vue périr. Ses traits n'étaient point sensiblement altérés. Ses yeux étaient fermés; mais la sérénité était encore sur son front: seulement les pâles violettes de la mort se confondaient sur ses joues avec les roses de la pudeur. Une de ses mains était sur ses habits, et l'autre, qu'elle appuyait sur son cœur, était fortement fermée et roidie. J'en dégageai avec peine une petite boîte: mais quelle fut ma

surprise lorsque je vis que c'était le portrait de Paul, qu'elle lui avait promis de ne jamais abandonner tant qu'elle vivrait! (226)

Virginie's holding of Saint Paul's image, which had been given to her by Paul before she left for France, symbolizes her adherence in death to her faith, her virtue, and of course, Paul. The fact that this particular Saint Paul is Saint Paul the Hermit (162) may also suggest that Virginie is hanging on to the ideal of isolation underscoring the pastoral happiness of her childhood. Virginie's funeral description incorporates some further references to Virginie's beatification. Her virginity and social status are emphasized by her pallbearers and funeral procession: "Huit jeunes demoiselles des plus considérables de l'île, vêtues de blanc, [...] portaient le corps de leur vertueuse compagne, couvert de fleurs. [...] après [un chœur de petits enfants] venait tout ce que l'île avait de plus distingué dans ses habitants et dans son état-major, à la suite duquel marchait le gouverneur, suivi de la foule du peuple" (228). Then, this official and honorable procession falls apart in face of overwhelming emotion, and Virginie is made a saint by popular induction:

[...] Mais quand son corps fut arrivé au pied de cette montagne, à la vue de ces mêmes cabanes dont elle avait fait si longtemps le bonheur, et que sa mort remplissait maintenant de désespoir, toute la pompe funèbre fut dérangée: les hymnes et les chants cessèrent; on n'entendit plus dans la plaine que des soupirs et des sanglots. On vit accourir alors des troupes de jeunes filles des habitations voisines pour faire toucher au cercueil de Virginie des mouchoirs, des chapelets, et des couronnes de fleurs, en l'invoquant comme une sainte. Les mères demandaient à Dieu une fille comme elle; les garçons, des amantes aussi constantes; les pauvres, une amie aussi tendre; les esclaves, une maîtresse aussi bonne. (228-9)

The mythification of Virginie's death culminates in the Vieillard's representation of the ultimate pastoral to Paul. Once again, the representation of the pastoral is developed in contrast to the voyage and the misfortunes stemming from it. According to the Vieillard, Virginie is among angels, sending Paul the message that

[L]a vie n'est qu'une épreuve. J'ai été trouvée fidèle aux lois de la nature, de l'amour, et de la vertu. J'ai traversé les mers pour obéir à mes parents; j'ai renoncé aux richesses pour conserver ma foi; et j'ai mieux aimé perdre la vie que de violer la pudeur. Le ciel a trouvé ma carrière à la pauvreté, à la calomnie, aux tempêtes, au spectacle des douleurs d'autrui. Aucun des maux qui effrayent les hommes ne peut plus désormais m'atteindre; et vous me plaignez! (241)

Life on earth becomes the voyage, a trial for the virtuous, filled with obstacles and detours, encumbered by storms and society's corrupt dealings. In contrast, the ultimate pastoral is afterlife's supernatural happiness such as the one Virginie is experiencing, free of humanly constraints. The Vieillard continues to invoke Virginie's view of death and afterlife:

Je suis pure et inaltérable comme une particule de lumière; et vous me rappelez dans la nuit de la vie! O Paul! ô mon ami! souviens-toi de ces jours de bonheur, [...] [n]ous éprouvions un ravissement dont nous ne pouvions comprendre la cause. Dans nos souhaits innocents nous désirions être tout vue, pour jouir des riches couleurs de l'aurore; tout odorat, pour sentir les parfums de nos plantes; tout ouïe pour entendre les concerts de nos oiseaux; tout cœur, pour reconnaître ces bienfaits. Maintenant à la source de la beauté d'où découle tout ce qui est agréable sur la terre, mon âme voit, goûte, entend, touche immédiatement ce qu'elle ne pouvait sentir alors que par de

faibles organes. Ah! quelle langue pourrait décrire ces rivages d'un orient
éternel que j'habite pour toujours? (240-1)

The sensual pleasures they used to derive from contact of nature are now felt by Virginie immediately without the mediation of human flesh (“Je suis pure et inaltérable comme une particule de lumière”) or human words (“quelle langue pourrait décrire ces rivages d'un orient éternel que j'habite pour toujours?”). The ultimate pastoral is thus not only metaphysical; unsurprisingly it does not subsist on language either – it cannot be lived, or even told in words. This is further evidenced by their lack of records. In the end, torn by grief and longing for Virginie’s company, Paul and everyone else in the family die, and the entire family is reunited in death: “On a mis auprès de Virginie, au pied des mêmes roseaux, son ami Paul, et autour d'eux leurs tendres mères et leurs fidèles serviteurs. On n'a point élevé de marbres sur leurs humbles tertres, ni gravé d'inscriptions à leurs vertus; mais leur mémoire est restée ineffaçable dans le cœur de ceux qu'ils ont obligés” (247). The only (oral) historical record of these two young lovers are in the names of natural sites in Maurice: “La voix du peuple, qui se tait sur les monuments élevés à la gloire des rois, a donné à quelques parties de cette île des noms qui éterniseront la perte de Virginie”. The entire island becomes then their burial ground – everywhere and nowhere – symbolizing the final communion between the *enfants de la nature* with Ile de France’s nature itself. Figure 5 shows some of the places invoked by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Paul et Virginie as testament to Virginie’s eternal afterlife. Not only do we see the locations of places such as *la Rivière noire*, *les Trois mamelles*, and *les Pamplémousses*, and most significantly, *le Cap Malheureux*, “que le Saint-Géran ne put doubler la veille de l'ouragan pour entrer dans le port,” (247) and *la Baye du tombeau*, “où Virginie fut trouvée ensevelie dans le sable”.

chronologically affect the necessary isolation of the pastoral, as though any connection with the world outside, in space or in time, would bear weight upon the unburdened lives of the pastoral protagonists. While Paul's lonely pastoral in the middle tries to accommodate itself within the inevitable sequencing imposed by the events and rumors around him, his situation is precarious. As Virginie dies, so die the attempts to *write* a pastoral. This concluding denial of written language represents a definite rejection of historiography's chronological and documentary principles. According to the Vieillard, the story of Paul and Virginie will survive in the memories of those who knew them, and in the island's natural landscape.

Yet as the Vieillard refuses the pastoral a chance at posterity, Paul et Virginie survives as a novel, because as the seed package implies, it had been a latent novel all along. The very sequencing of the three pastoral situations described in Paul et Virginie together suggest the inevitable maturation of the characters, the chronological imperative underlying the narrative, and the episodic form of the novel in Paul and Virginie. To be sure, it is only when we take the entire sequencing of pastoral metamorphoses that we can discern the incipient novel in the text. This story is told by the Vieillard to a traveler who had happened upon the ruins of the houses where the families had lived in the Mauritius. In the beginning of Paul et Virginie, this traveler is attracted to the peaceful, silent enclosure in the mountains behind Port-Louis, as though the traveler is entering a very silent and very lonely pastoral setting:

les échos de la montagne répètent sans cesse le bruit des vents qui agitent les forêts voisines, et le fracas des vagues qui brisent au loin sur les récifs; mais au pied même des cabanes on n'entend plus aucun bruit, et on ne voit autour de soi que de grands rochers escarpés comme des murailles. Des bouquets d'arbres croissent à leurs bases, dans leurs fentes, et jusque sur leurs cimes,

où s'arrêtent les nuages. Les pluies que leurs pitons attirent peignent souvent les couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel sur leurs flancs verts et bruns, et entretiennent à leurs pieds les sources dont se forme la petite Rivière des Lataniers. Un grand silence règne dans leur enceinte, où tout est paisible, l'air, les eaux et la lumière. (110)

As he considered the ruins of the buildings, the Vieillard arrives, and the traveler asks the Vieillard whether he knew who owned them. The Vieillard's response is not only to reveal who the former owners were, but also to hint at the interest of their story, betraying his desire to tell it:

Mon fils, ces mesures et ce terrain inculte étaient habités, il y a environ vingt ans, par deux familles qui y avaient trouvé le bonheur. Leur histoire est touchante: mais dans cette île, située sur la route des Indes, quel Européen peut s'intéresser au sort de quelques particuliers obscurs? Qui voudrait même y vivre heureux, mais pauvre et ignoré? Les hommes ne veulent connaître que l'histoire des grands et des rois, qui ne sert à personne. (111)

The Vieillard's initial description of the story he is about to tell is thus placed at a precise historical and geographical framework: it happened twenty years ago, in the island of Mauritius, situated in the route between France and India. The events the Vieillard is about to tell the traveler follow a certain order; the Vieillard, "comme quelqu'un qui cherche à se rappeler diverses circonstances, après avoir appuyé quelque temps ses mains sur son front," (111) needs to pause and think about what he is about to tell. Placing the story in time and space, and emphasizing the story's chronology already points to an attachment to historical frameworks; yet what approaches Paul et Virginie to the novel is its "serious concern with the daily lives of ordinary people" (Watt 60), one of the novel's defining features in the

eighteenth century. While the Vieillard rejects the notion of traditional, aristocratic history, he is touting the touching history of two poor, unknown, but happy families.

Thus the novel still originates in the ruins of a pastoral that in turn had been threatened throughout by the novel itself. And if in the Vieillard's view Paul and Virginie's story must ultimately subsist in the realm of popular myth, the traveler seems to perceive the embryonic novel in the Vieillard's narrative; it is only because the traveler takes it out of Ile de France and brings it back home that the Vieillard's account becomes written language. The relationship between the pastoral and the novel in Paul et Virginie may thus be finally characterized as a compromise between oral and written history. While the pastorals remain in the realm of the immediate, oral storytelling by the Vieillard, the traveler seizes them to refashion them into a novel.

Almost twenty years after the first publication of Paul et Virginie, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre himself comes to term with the monumental novel his *espèce de pastorale* had become. In the *Préambule* of the final 1806 edition of Paul et Virginie, the author spends considerable ink defending the indefensible science of his Etudes. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre writes that his critics claimed that he “n'[était] pas propre qu'à faire des romans; que [sa] Théorie des marées n'est qu'un roman” (43). In his view, however,

Plût à Dieu qu'ils fussent persuadés que mes *Etudes* sont des romans comme *Paul et Virginie*! Les romans sont les livres les plus agréables, les plus universellement lus, et les plus utiles. Ils gouvernent le monde. Voyez l'Iliade et l'Odyssée, dont les héros, les dieux, et les événements sont presque tous de l'invention d'Homère; voyez combien de souverains, de peuples, de religions, en ont tiré leur origine, leurs lois, et leur culte. De nos jours même, quel

empire ce poète exerce encore sur nos académies, nos arts libéraux, nos théâtres! C'est le dieu de la littérature de l'Europe. (51)

If Paul et Virginie had originally relied on the popularity of the Études when it was first published in 1788, in 1806 it seems as though the Études were relying on Paul et Virginie's enormous success to underscore its credibility. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre goes from a denial of the novel label to a full elegy of the genre, redefining the origins of the novel and of Paul et Virginie to his own benefit. Confident of his *petit ouvrage*'s iconic status, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre leaves behind the pastoral of Theocritus and Virgil, and compares his now *roman* Paul et Virginie to the great classic epics, suggesting it is founding myth of French national identity – history in other words. As it meets chronology, mobility, narrativization, the text meets its essence: Paul et Virginie finally becomes a novel.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this dissertation, I argued that eighteenth-century Modern historiography challenged the Aristotelian notion that “poetry [...] is a more philosophical and higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, and history the particular,” (27) by drawing upon another Aristotelian notion – that of the pleasure found in accuracy in representation. History’s triumph over poetry would therefore be related to the representation of truth, of things as they are, so that the pleasure of learning would derive from a faithful representation of reality, and not of the way things should be, which often distorted reality in poetry. In order to achieve such accuracy, Modern historiography adopted empirical methods and language that would ensure the proper collection and representation of events. Concomitantly, travel literature underwent rigorous reform as a result of the adoption of similar empirical methods of collection and compilation of New World data. Travel accounts, the realm of the marvelous up until the seventeenth century, became the arena for scientific debates that depended upon the homogeneization of rules for the representation of the foreign in the eighteenth century.

Current paradigms explaining the development of the French novel in the eighteenth century sustain that the Classic novel became more realistic as authors tried to appease their critics, who claimed that the depiction of far-fetched situations and characters were detrimental to the public’s morals. Since the seventeenth and throughout the early part of the eighteenth centuries authors would composed their novels by stringing unlikely stories together under the guise of true history by claiming that the text, usually in the form of letters or memoirs, stemmed from an original manuscript. I argue that in order to satisfy an increasing critical demand for realism, the novel adopted not only the theoretical rhetoric

and formal appearance, but also the methodological practice of history. This shift in the novelists' understanding and practice of realism in their texts parallels that of historiographers. Novelists became preoccupied with verisimilitude, a concept that depended upon the reader's judgment of the story's credibility. Influenced by didacticism, early novelists sacrificed the credibility of character, manner and event in favor of a verisimilar plot that in the reader's eyes amounted to what should be – the lesson to be taught. As the century wore on, historical empiricism taught novelists that realism was in the sum of factual parts and not in the reader's acceptance of the ideal lesson, as though a careful and continuous construction of probable characters and events would appeal to the reader's rational judgment more effectively than the expectation of a didactic conclusion to a series of extraordinary circumstances.

The texts examined in this dissertation are to different extents products of this new historical and empirical approach to the writing of novels. Each author displays awareness of the Modern historiographic rules that will help them develop this new understanding of realism. However, my contention is that such awareness and, indeed, application of Modern historiography rules, is only part of the story behind the development of the eighteenth century novel in France, and its concept of realism, for each text also shows that such belief in historical empiricism, to borrow Michael McKeon's term, was not that naïve. Examining the relationship between novel and history through yet another genre, travel literature, only exacerbates the novel's dialectical relationship with history, for travel literature's impetus to represent the foreign only makes historiography's limits all too clear. Thus, rather than merely accepting the information from travel accounts and transposing it into their own texts to give them an exotic flavor, I argue that these writers pointed to the limitations of travel accounts, evidencing the inadequacies of eighteenth-century European historical

practice in face of the foreign. In short, my principal claim is that in incorporating travel accounts, the eighteenth-century novel is not just imitating another form to pass as a historical document. As it must invariably reach into the open world of travel and travel accounts – as opposed to the closed, intimate world of letters and memoirs – the novel must contend with a multitude of issues likewise open to criticism and interpretation. It is therefore the novel's dialectical appropriation of travel literature that points to new horizons for the genre, as the novel incorporates *and* challenges travel and historical narratives' structures. Thus, by looking at how authors adapted travel accounts from the New World into their novels, this dissertation also stands at the boundaries of current theories, looking at new possibilities for the understanding of the development of the French novel in the eighteenth-century. By analyzing the process of critical appropriation between history and novel through travel literature, I hope to make the progress and limitations of this relationship clear, and show how from Modern history's shifting concept of realism, the novel established its own open-ended approach toward the end of the century.

If in Lesage we see the beginnings of a critique of historicism through the continuous attack on the documentary claims that sustained the novel's veracity, by the end of the eighteenth century, with Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, we understand that the very essence of history, the connection between facts that compose the narrative, the chronological structure that allows for cause and effect and change, may be destructive to the illustration of static philosophical precepts. History, historiography, and perhaps even more so travel, and travel literature, inflict a narrativization premise on the representation of the world that has no option but to reflect change, from past to present, from A to B, for better *or* for worse, annulling the very essence of poetry, of what *should be*. The triumph of Modern historiography's factual realism, it seems, does not result in clear messages besides

the ambiguous nature of narrative truth itself. Prévost's depiction of a French diplomat's attempt to write the history of a young Greek woman shows precisely how method may not yield results.

Otherwise put, the novel's adoption of Modern historiography through travel literature gives texts and their readers a sense of material realism that is based on the acknowledgement of the individual's presence not only in historical time, but also in the world at large. What *should be* becomes relative, as Diderot's Supplément shows, putting poetry's premise of universality to test. At the same time, this relative material realism does not satisfy human's need for identification. The particularity of characters, events and manners portrayed by history, and even more so, foreign history, is likewise insufficient to touch the reader's sensibility. What the progression of the chapters here show is that rather than resolving the dichotomy between poetry and history, novelists increasingly opted and adapted another Classic approach to their texts – still Aristotle's idea of aesthetic pleasure in imitation and the necessary distance it requires to enjoy it, combined with the century's belief in a human-centered pursuit of progress. The novel emerges toward the end of the eighteenth century as a work of art, its realism stemming from minute mimesis, exquisite rendering, and from a new universal pleasure in the recognition of the whole as a possibility of an individually self-reflective, representation of universal truth.

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“Knowledge of the World: Science and Possession in Bougainville’s *Voyage autour du monde*”. Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference in Burlington, VT, November 2004.

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“The Embargo is Over, Long Live the Embargo: Notes on How the U.S. Embargo Affects Cuban-Latin American Relations”. With Dr. Philip Brenner. Latin American Studies Association Conference, Washington, DC, September 1995.

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