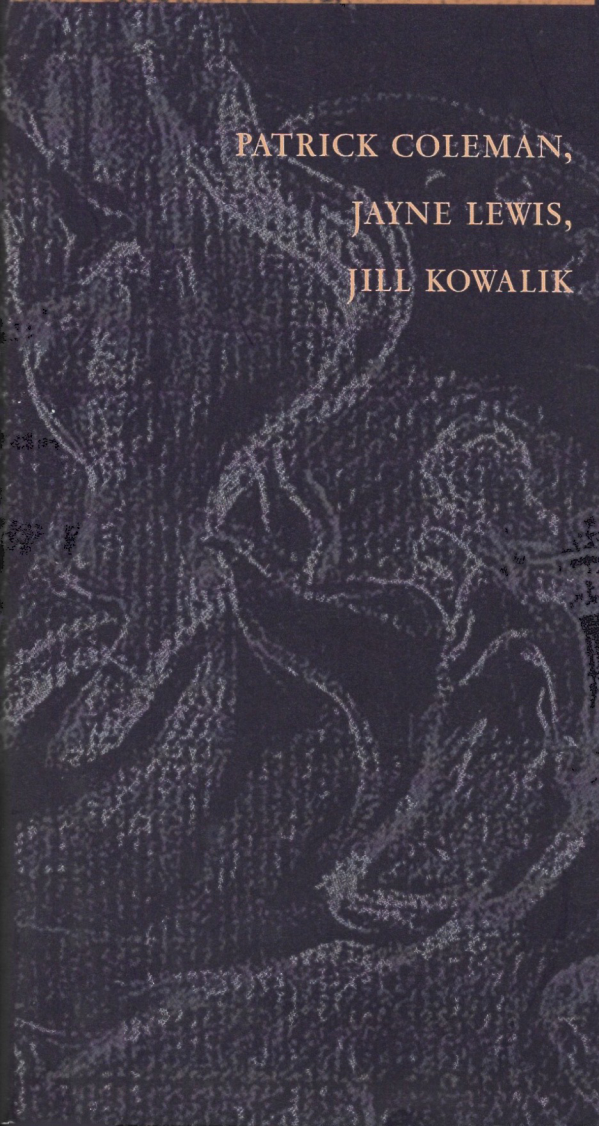




PATRICK COLEMAN,
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REPRESENTATIONS
OF THE SELF FROM
THE RENAISSANCE
TO ROMANTICISM



PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 2000

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Monotype Baskerville 11/12½ pt. [SE]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Representations of the self from the Renaissance to Romanticism /
edited by Patrick Coleman, Jayne Lewis, and Jill Kowalik.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 66146 3 (hardback)

1. Literature, Modern – 18th century – History and criticism.
 2. Self-presentation in literature.
 3. Enlightenment – Europe.
- I. Coleman, Patrick. II. Lewis, Jayne Elizabeth. III. Kowalik, Jill Anne.

PN751.R47 2000

809'.93353-dc21 99-30728 CIP

ISBN 0 521 66146 3 hardback

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Letters, diary, and autobiography in eighteenth-century France

Benoît Melançon

In July 1762, Diderot wrote Sophie Volland about a project he was undertaking in his letters.

My letters are a more or less faithful history of my life. Without meaning to, I am doing what I have so often wished for. Why, I said, an astronomer will spend thirty years of his life on top of an observatory, his eye glued day and night to the end of a telescope, simply to determine the movement of a star, and no one makes a study of himself, no one has the courage to keep an accurate record of all the thoughts that come into his mind, all the feelings that agitate his heart, all his sorrows and joys. In this way century after century will go past without anyone knowing whether life is a good or a bad thing, whether human nature is good or evil, and what makes up happiness and unhappiness. But it would need a lot of courage to reveal everything. One might find it easier to accuse oneself of planning a great crime than to admit harbouring petty or low or despicable feelings . . . This sort of self-analysis would have its uses for the writer too. I am sure that in the long run one would be anxious to have nothing but good things to enter in the record each evening. But what about you, would you reveal everything? Try asking Uranie the same question, for there is absolutely no point in committing yourself to a plan of sincerity which frightens you.¹

Letters, suggested Diderot, should transform themselves into a diary: one should write every day, confide in a text one's most intimate thoughts, and force oneself to say the truth, nothing but the truth. This new breed of text, part letter, part diary, would serve as a moral guide for others as well as for oneself. If this project were to succeed, it would solve a problem which Diderot had been dealing with for a while. With regard to the history of personal narratives, two dimensions of Diderot's project ought to be stressed: first, that the text he wished to write was intended not only for its author, but also for an external reader, in this case Sophie Volland; second, that this project appeared at a time when the diary genre did not yet exist in French literature, at least publicly.

Three years later, again in a letter to Sophie Volland, Diderot wrote about a different type of personal narrative and a different endeavor –

autobiography: "Since my project was to continue the story of my life as soon as the completion of my work left me free, I had jotted down brief notes on a piece of paper that became a logogriph after a while. I don't understand them any more."² Instead of writing daily, Diderot would take notes, and then assemble them into a narrative. This new project would be as difficult as the earlier one. In November 1765, as in July 1762, still years before Rousseau's *Confessions* were to popularize the genre that we now know as autobiography, the writer would address himself to an external reader (Sophie Volland).³

Both of Diderot's projects failed: he neither kept a diary nor wrote the story of his life from childhood to his latter days.⁴ The reasons for Diderot's lack of action – whether because of a lack of courage, in the first case, or because of a poor memory, in the second – matter little here. What should interest the contemporary critic is, rather, the need that Diderot felt as a letter writer to venture into new directions in the 1760s. One question that arises from his two life-writing projects is particularly important in the history of correspondence, diary, and autobiography: what are the effects of each genre's poetics on the construction of the others? This chapter will investigate the relations between correspondence, diary, and autobiography in eighteenth-century French literature, in order to help understand the so-called advent of the two latter genres at the end of the century and its importance with regard to what could be called the invention of individuality during that period. Three texts, or sets of texts, will be studied: not only Diderot's letters of the 1760s, but also Elisabeth Bégon's writings of the 1740s and 1750s, and Rousseau's *Confessions*.⁵ For each set of texts, formal characteristics and the role of the reader will be specifically addressed. In the conclusion, after some methodological remarks, these authors' treatments of time will be compared with those of Restif de la Bretonne and Beaumarchais, for this particular question seems central to the history of personal genres.

Marie-Isabelle-Elisabeth Roberth de la Morandière was born in Montréal in 1696, and she married, in 1718, Claude-Michel Bégon (d. 1748), a Frenchman who would rise from *major de Québec* (in 1726) to *gouverneur de Trois-Rivières* (in 1743). In 1737, their daughter Marie-Catherine-Elisabeth (b. 1719) was married to another Frenchman, Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière, and they had two children, Honoré-Henri (b. 1738), educated in France, and Marie-Catherine (b. 1739). This second child was raised by her grandmother, Madame Bégon, after the death of her mother in 1740, and her father's departure for France and

then Louisiana. In 1748, after she was widowed, Elisabeth Bégon began a correspondence with her son-in-law, Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière, Marie-Catherine's father. The published texts all date between 1748 and 1753, the latter year marking the point at which she learned of La Rouvillière's earlier (1752) passing. Some letters were written from Montréal, others from what is now known as Charente-Maritime, where Madame Bégon moved in 1749, hence acquiring her nickname "l'Iroquoise."⁶ She died there in 1753. Traditionally, her texts have been read either as a source of information about the last decade of New France or as a kind of epistolary novel in which Madame Bégon's affection for her son-in-law soon turns – or so it is said – into love. One could argue that historians and psychoanalysts have not sufficiently considered the formal characteristics of the texts that constitute the volume entitled by its latest publisher *Lettres au cher fils* – that "cher fils" being Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière,⁷ – and that these formal characteristics are of interest in a study of the relations between the personal genres throughout the eighteenth century.

Bégon's corpus, originally edited in 1935 by Claude de Bonnault and Pierre-Georges Roy, then in 1972 and 1994 by Nicole Deschamps, consists of 432 texts. These texts are of two different types. Most of them are labeled "journal" by their author: between 12 November 1748 and 26 February 1751, Madame Bégon filled nine *cahiers* that she would send to her son-in-law as soon as a ship left Montréal bound either for France or Louisiana. Since maritime traffic was stopped many months a year in New France due to the rigors of winter, she decided to write daily but to send out her letters only when she was sure that they could reach their destination. All of those *cahiers* seem to have been preserved. The rest of the texts published in *Lettres au cher fils* are more traditional letters, sent out as soon as written; sixty-one of these letters, written on loose leafs, and mostly dated after 26 February 1751, have survived, but many others were lost. The two components of *Lettres au cher fils* differ not only in their means of transmission and state of conservation but also formally, in at least four ways.

First, the letters from the journal are explicitly part of a continuous text. The incipit of Madame Bégon's writings reads: "My dear son, now that I'm done with a series of letters that burdened me, I will chat with you daily, with the everlasting pleasure I feel when I do so, and I will repeat over and over that this correspondence is the only consolation I am left with."⁸ From day to day, Madame Bégon reminds her addressee of what she had told him previously, she comments on her own writing,

she corrects or develops certain of her stories. On 13 November 1748, in the second of the texts preserved, she writes: “Je te disais hier, cher fils . . .” (I was telling you yesterday, dear son), thus inserting her text in a series.⁹ A few days later, she stresses the fact that, contrary to the day before, she now has something new to say: “Si je n’avais rien de nouveau hier, cher fils, à te dire, en voilà aujourd’hui.”¹⁰ By the end of the exchange, she still uses the same device, when she tells her son-in-law that her irate letter of the previous day must not worry him: “Tu vois, cher fils, que je ne suis pas plus capable aujourd’hui de garder de rancune contre toi que je ne l’ai fait par le passé.”¹¹ The texts in Elisabeth Bégon’s journal are thus linked one to the other, and this creates a sense of continuity that is not to be found in the loose-leaf letters. As she states very clearly, Madame Bégon refuses to interrupt her writing: “C’est seulement, cher fils, pour ne point dérouter mon journal, ayant écrit beaucoup aujourd’hui à Québec,” she writes her son-in-law on 30 May 1749, apologizing for the brevity of that day’s entry, but, at the same time, reiterating the necessity of not skipping a day.¹²

Second, the length of the texts varies considerably. Those of the journal are generally very short, but together in the *cahiers*, they create a longer text than the loose-leaf letters. Each of these loose-leaf letters is longer than the texts of the journal, but they are not part of a larger text as explicitly as the *cahiers*. They remain independent from one another, even though they are included serially in *Lettres au cher fils*. This difference in length is not only material; it changes the temporal frame of Madame Bégon’s writing. Time, the material of which correspondence, diary, and autobiography are all made, is not the same in every type of writing. In the case of the loose-leaf letters, time is fragmented, discontinuous, segmented by mail deliveries and the expectation of letters to come; in the case of the journal, it is still fragmented – Madame Bégon dates all of her entries, – but the fact that she writes every day and that she collects all daily entries in *cahiers* alleviates the fragmentation effects.

The content of the two types of texts is also different. For example, in the journal, Madame Bégon writes continually that she is afraid to bore her correspondent, and she admits quite openly that she repeats herself: “Je crains de t’ennuyer, n’ayant rien d’intéressant à te dire et n’aurais à te répéter que la peine que j’ai toujours de ton absence à laquelle je ne puis m’accoutumer,” she writes on 7 June 1749.¹³ Conversely, what Geneviève Haroche-Bouzinac dubs the “thème postal”¹⁴ – the concrete conditions of epistolary exchange as they are expressed explicitly in letter writing – seems to worry Madame Bégon mostly in her loose-leaf

letters. Once again, these differences in subject matter have to be interpreted with regard to the poetics of the diary and of the correspondence. In the first case, the sense of continuity created by the daily entries of the journal puts the writer in a position to comment on and evaluate her previous entries, and this rereading is one of the characteristics of the diary genre: each day's experience is similar to the previous one, argues Madame Bégon. In the second case, it is the poetics of the correspondence which imposes – up to a point – the subject matter: letter writers tend to be easily obsessed with the whereabouts of their texts, and every mail delivery reinforces that obsession. While the differences between the two poetics cannot solely account for each and every difference in subject matter, it should be stressed that poetics do have that kind of effect on writing.

The last difference between the two series of texts in *Lettres au cher fils* is to be found in the use of the letters sent to Madame Bégon by Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière. Whereas the journal is mostly oblivious to these letters, the loose-leaf letters are clearly structured in relation to them – they are answers. The author of the journal is forced by the circumstances to rely entirely on her own writing when she addresses her son-in-law; for long periods of time she cannot receive letters. The *épistolière*, on the other hand, claims that she never leaves letters unanswered. Since Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière is not a prolific letter writer, to say the least, Madame Bégon always answers the letters she receives, if only to show her correspondent that she really cares about his letters and to require more of them. Moreover, she often states in the earliest *cahier* of her journal that she does not know whether her son-in-law is in France or Louisiana when she writes to him: “mais où t'écrire, cher fils?” asks Madame Bégon on 12 March 1749.¹⁵ This ignorance differentiates further the journal from the loose-leaf letters, since the latter always remind Madame Bégon where her “cher fils” is located.

What are the consequences of these four differences for the study of the relations between the personal genres in eighteenth-century France? They reveal the limits of each genre and they explain – at least partially – Diderot's failure in trying to write letters that would form a diary. When Madame Bégon is forced by external circumstances to write her journal, she proposes to her reader a text that is (comparatively) continuous, has its own subject matter, and stands partially autonomous. On the other hand, when she is able to send letters out on a regular basis, she writes texts that are discontinuous, clearly fragmented, and overtly reader-oriented. In the first case, the formal characteristics of the texts

are determined by the diary's poetics, its specific relation to time and unity; in the second case, the poetics of epistolarity – the fact that letters are, by necessity, part of a “chain of dialogue”¹⁶ – explains the central role of the reader. In Diderot's case, when he intends to send Sophie Volland his diary he tries to integrate into one genre – the correspondence – the formal characteristics of another – the diary. He would have liked to blend continuity and discontinuity, unity and fragmentation, self-centered investigation and dialogue, the image he had of himself and the one he created for Sophie Volland, self-imposed introspection and selfless reactions. In this project Diderot failed, but the questions raised by his attempt are important with regard to the history of life-writing.

One question still remains to be addressed: is Madame Bégon's journal a true *journal intime*, a diary, as the genre is defined today? Although the previous analysis would seem to lead to a positive answer, one has to stress the fact that things are not that clear. On the one hand, Madame Bégon writes every day, confides her love – whether maternal or not – for her son-in-law, recounts her activities, tells of the “nouveau-tés” that concern the people who surround her, depicts her ailments.¹⁷ On the other, she does not venture into her most intimate thoughts – even about Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière – nor recall her past; her dead husband, to take but one example, is mentioned only twice in *Lettres au cher fils*.¹⁸ One should not make too much of sentences like “I feel at peace when I can find the time to tell you that I love you”¹⁹ or “But I'm afraid to confide in anyone. My experience teaches me to keep everything inside.”²⁰ It must not be forgotten that neither Madame Bégon nor Diderot knew of a genre named the *journal intime* that would foster and be defined by self-centered expression. To address a text to someone else is something quite different from writing a *journal intime*.

In the decade that followed Madame Bégon's *Lettres au cher fils*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau started to write his *Confessions*. Even though they were published only after their author's death, the initial stages of their writing coincide precisely with Diderot's attempts at life-writing in his correspondence. Since Rousseau uses letters in the *Confessions*, their analysis should prove fruitful for the historical interpretation of life-writing in the French Enlightenment. The only aspect of the problem addressed here is the status and role of the reader in Rousseau's use of his own correspondence.²¹

Rousseau's goal in writing the *Confessions* is made clear on numerous occasions, notably in the fifth paragraph of the seventh book: “The real object of my confessions is, to contribute to an accurate knowledge of

my inner being in all the different situations of my life. What I have promised to relate, is the history of my soul; I need no other memoirs in order to write it faithfully; it is sufficient for me to enter again into my inner self as I have hitherto done."²² This statement is only partially true. If Rousseau repeats over and over again that he wishes to present posterity with his *vérité*, he does not rely only on his memory to do so. Throughout the tenth book of the *Confessions*, he admits that he perused what remained of his correspondence while preparing his autobiography: "I accordingly determined to devote my leisure to carrying out this undertaking, and I commenced to collect the letters and papers which might guide or assist my memory, greatly regretting all that I had torn up, burned, or lost, up to this time."²³ In writing one's life, memory alone is insufficient. Texts are needed.

The problem Rousseau faces in reading the papers he collected for his *Confessions* is the same he faced whenever writing was involved. For Rousseau, is it not the essence of writing to lie, or at least to create too great a distance between the self and the world? In his autobiography Rousseau does not reflect on this issue *per se*, but he is forced to deal with it each and every time he wants to use or quote a letter: the truth he seeks seems to elude him the moment he alludes to a letter. One example is the exchange of letters that took place between Rousseau and the *maréchale de Luxembourg* at the time of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Madame de Luxembourg had asked Rousseau to send her a manuscript copy of his epistolary novel. Rousseau himself judged his answer to her request to be polite and honest, and he was astonished that his intended message was misinterpreted: "je lui écrivis quelque chose d'obligé et d'honnête à ce sujet; du moins telle était mon intention. Voici sa réponse, qui me fit tomber des nues."²⁴ Surprised, and wondering what he had done wrong, Rousseau wrote Madame de Luxembourg to correct any misunderstanding.

On receiving this letter [by Madame de Luxembourg], I hastened to reply to it before examining it more fully, in order to protest against any impolite interpretation; and, after having devoted several days to this examination with a feeling of uneasiness which may be imagined, without being able to understand what was the matter, I wrote the following note as a final answer on the subject . . . It is now ten years since these letters were written. I have often thought of them since then: and, even to this day, I am so stupid on this point, that I have not been able to understand what she could find in the passage in question that was, I will not say offensive, but even calculated to cause her displeasure.²⁵

Ten years afterward, Rousseau still could not fathom what he had said to stir such a reaction from his former patron.

Whether or not Rousseau's lack of understanding of this matter was due, as he says, to his "stupidité" is irrelevant here. What matters in this episode is the discovery – not fully acknowledged by Rousseau – of the fact that a letter has many meanings, as many meanings as it has readers. Letters are not merely witnesses to events past. As texts, they can be interpreted. Not only their writers but also their readers make them what they are. Their formal characteristics might be different from those of the autobiography, but their nature is not. In ascertaining this phenomenon, Rousseau puts himself into a paradoxical situation: if one can interpret a letter, then one is surely justified in interpreting an autobiography. If the truth of the self lies neither in the letters Rousseau collects, rereads, and quotes, nor in his finished autobiography, where, then, does it lie?

When, in the very same year (1765), Diderot attempted to mold his correspondence into an autobiography, he encountered difficulties similar to those faced by Rousseau. Both wanted to write a life narrative at a time when models for that type of writing did not yet exist. Both relied on letters, which for Rousseau were artifacts and for Diderot were a means of communication. Both knew that their projects were novel – or so they believed. Rousseau stated in the opening sentences of his book that he was the first person ever (and the last, as well) to undertake such a task: "Je forme une entreprise qui n'eut jamais d'exemple et dont l'exécution n'aura point d'imitateur."²⁶ Diderot was not quite so conceited, but he confided to his correspondent that she was to decide whether or not this type of writing was worth continuing: "Voilà, mon amie, une petite ébauche de nos causeries; si elles vous conviennent, je continuerai."²⁷

Why is it, then, that Diderot did not manage to write an autobiography in his letters, when Rousseau succeeded in doing so in his *Confessions*? One could argue that the specific relations between letter writers and their first readers are such that they preclude the writing of an autobiography in the form of letters.²⁸ Diderot addressed his narrative to a very specific person – his lover Sophie Volland. Rousseau, in contrast, was not so specific about his readers – he addresses a vaguely defined posterity. Both Diderot and Rousseau were confronted with the writer's inevitable implied definition of his or her readers. Critics such as Charles A. Porter have already shown that this "implied reader" varies according to the different types of personal narratives: "the address differentiates it [the letter] both from the diary, 'addressed' normally to its author alone, and from the autobiography, which usually does not have an identifiable – at least a single – addressee and is not ordinarily a 'private' communica-

tion.”²⁹ Since Diderot addresses Sophie Volland in what, for the sake of the argument, can be considered a “private communication,” is it possible for him to write his autobiography through his correspondence?

Arguably, the poetics of correspondence forces one to answer this question in the negative. In choosing to write a letter, Diderot chooses to draw of himself a portrait that is defined by the very fact that he writes to one addressee, and not to some faceless posterity. Furthermore, this portrait necessarily evolves over the course of the correspondence, for the letter writer and the addressee change over time, and the conditions in which they write and read the letters are almost as important as the letters themselves. Whereas the autobiographical writer tries to give some coherence to the different episodes of his life after these episodes occurred – or when he claims that these episodes are over – the *épistolier* often writes about events that are still happening by virtue of their retelling and their commenting by the addressee. Since he will not discuss his autobiography with actual readers, Rousseau is not tied as closely as Diderot to the possibility of a reader’s reaction. While it is true that every reader is supposed to make sense of the texts he or she reads – this is one of the lessons of the *Confessions* – an implied reader’s response is not to be confused with the actual dialogue between letter writer and letter reader that characterizes correspondence. Rousseau may have had conflicts with Madame de Luxembourg, but they were not the same as those he had with posterity, and what the *Confessions* recall is to be distinguished from what they provoked. *Tout dire* – which is the root of his life-writing – does not have the same implications for Rousseau as it does for Diderot.

Relations between the personal genres in eighteenth-century literature are too complex to draw any definitive conclusions from the comparison of only three sets of texts, for several other contemporaneous developments helped shape the nature of these relations, among them: the growing cultural appeal of solitude; the new emphasis placed on feeling, sentiment, and sensation; the influence of the first-person novel; shifts in social activities such as conversation; the apparent decline in religious belief with its concomitant impact on confession; changes in traditional forms of self-expression – travelogues, memoirs, collections of sayings (*ana*); the rise of the *fonction auteur*; and the history of both handwriting techniques and the paraphernalia associated with diary-keeping.³⁰ Nonetheless, the study of Diderot, Bégon, and Rousseau can lead to at least three general problems concerning the history of these relations and to a new contextualization of personal genres.

The first of these questions deals specifically with French literature within the general context of European literatures, and it concerns the rise of personal narratives. What are the comparisons that can be made, for example, between Samuel Pepys's diary and those of his French counterparts of the next century? What is the place of Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie* in the evolution of the autobiographical genre? Surely it is unlikely that the transformations of the personal genres can be restricted to one country or one language. The problem here stems from the fact that scholars of the French Enlightenment seem to be oblivious to this European context. In fact, to take but one example (that of autobiography), one could argue that these scholars have accepted at face value Rousseau's initial statement in the *Confessions* that he was creating a new genre, distinct from the spiritual tradition that followed the Augustinian model; they have failed to take note of the many forms of autobiography that were developing concurrently throughout Europe.³¹ This ignorance of non-French traditions doubly reflects the state of literary studies in the French world. On the one hand, most specialists of French literature are not in the habit of reading foreign corpora alongside their own, although they often manage to quote briefly some Locke, Newton, Hume, or Richardson. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxon scholars seem to be more willing than the Francophones to review texts and practices outside of the mainstream and to distance themselves from the cult of great men, thus allowing themselves to open their inquiry to new objects, regardless of their origins. Did the French *livre de comptes* and various *carnets* lead to early forms of autobiography, as they did in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century? Critics of French literature would be hard-pressed to answer this question, for they would have to contest Rousseau's opening lines in order to do so.

Indeed – and this is the second general problem – it does not seem likely that the development of personal narrative can be appreciated only by studying “professional” writers of just one national culture. If Diderot and Rousseau – as well as Casanova – are known for other types of writing, such is not the case with Madame Bégon and Pepys. Texts by non-professional writers, or by writers of less fame than the canonical ones, should also be considered if one is to understand how the diary and the autobiography were born, and how the epistolary genre evolved at the same time. Among them, one would have to scrutinize the Jansenist writers of the *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques* (1728–1803): the victims of persecution one hears from or reads about in this clandestine periodical are not faceless – they tell their individual stories, very often in the form

of letters or diaries. Such is the case of Canon Roussel, from Châlons-sur-Marne: according to a letter sent to the *Nouvelles* on 4 April 1728, he was a “man of great order, and . . . he kept a daily journal of everything he did.”³² Similarly, but in the non-ecclesiastical world, Jean M. Goulemot and Didier Masseau have recently argued that a major change in reading practices occurred at the end of the *Siècle des lumières*, and that this change had important consequences for self-expression. Their analysis of the hundreds of letters received by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre after the publication of his novel *Paul et Virginie* (1788) reveals that the novelist’s readers not only recognized themselves in his characters, but that they felt compelled to tell him in writing how the characters’ lives matched their own. To Rolf Engelsing’s dual model of reading – the German historian distinguishes intensive reading (few books, often read) from extensive reading (many books and periodicals, read once) – Goulemot and Masseau add a new relationship of the reader to the book which they call “lecture intimiste” (one book, often read, in which the reader recognizes himself and feels forced to write to its author).³³ Life-stories from artisans and skilled workers also command particular interest with regard to the birth of life-writing. Whether librarians like Valentin Jamerey-Duval, glaziers like Jacques-Louis Ménétra, or printers like Nicolas Contat, such non-professional writers seem to be less concerned with the canons of literary genres than their professional counterparts.³⁴ Marie-Claire Grassi has demonstrated how formal aspects of letters written by another group of non-professional writers at the opposite end of the social spectrum – members of the nobility – combine to produce what she calls “seuils d’intimité”: the complex intertwining of personal pronouns (*tu/vous*), confidences, and proxemics. For Grassi, the period during which these writers changed their modes of self-expression is located between 1780 and 1830.³⁵

Even an eccentric such as Jean-Marie Chassignon (1735–95) and a minor poet such as the chevalier de Bonnard (1744–84) are of interest here. The first one, in his *Cataractes de l’imagination* (1779), insists on the uniqueness both of his personality and of the genre he uses. In his “Avis essentiel” he writes that

neither Voltaire, J. Jacques, Corneille nor Montesquieu have felt what I feel. I prefer *my self* to all these tiresome characters. I prefer *my self* to everything that exists; the sweetest moments of my life I have spent by *my self*; that solitary *self*, surrounded by graves, and invoking the Supreme Being, would suffice to make me happy even on the remains of the universe . . . A friend’s treachery saddens me less than his importunity when he forces *my self* to re-enter the world . . . In

the streets where I like to walk alone, I go through the same crisis as that of a man lost in a forest full of murderers or ferocious animals; the slightest thing alarms me; my eye fastens on the gaze of the first person that I come into contact with: if he stares at me, I back away; he plans an attack on me; he's going after my delight in *my self*; if he comes up to me, his sole purpose is to harm me; by talking with me, he will put an end to my conversation with a genius; and his conversation cannot compensate for that loss . . . O how I would love to be taken to a barbarous land where no one would know me, where no friend would interrupt me, where *my self* would belong entirely to me; half an hour taken away from me, is a glass of blood drawn from me, is a piece of my heart stripped away from me.³⁶

Three years before Rousseau's *Confessions* and *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* were to be published, Chassignon asserts himself in no ambivalent way. Not only does he stress the fact that his *moi* is without equivalent – not even Voltaire, Rousseau, Corneille, or Montesquieu, those “fastidieux personnages” compare – but he also depicts himself as the victim of others, friend and foe alike, eager to divert his attention away from the real genius with whom he wishes to converse – himself. This solitary *moi*, obsessed with his death and the loss of time, could have tried to write the story of his life, but he did not, with the exception of a short text called “Ma confession; mon horoscope; scenes inouïes.”³⁷ Instead he chose to defend his aesthetic conceptions against those of several contemporary critics. In order to do so, he needed “a genre unknown to our times.”³⁸ Chassignon thus linked explicitly the limits of the genres and the possibility of self-expression: “Just as my way of thinking is opposed to that of other men, so does the form of my book differ from all other books.”³⁹ To express his “way of thinking,” Chassignon had to create a “literary monster” (*monstre littéraire*) mixing erudite collage and dissertation, poetry and prose, French and Latin, testimony and mysticism. Montaigne, whom he names as his model, – as did both Diderot and Rousseau – is clearly not enough.

On a more traditional note the chevalier de Bonnard recorded “nearly everyday,” his “impressions” and “memories.” His editor, Alexandre Piedagnel, quotes a few of them:

I was saying yesterday that I'd gladly trade my life for money, if the amount was large, if I could dispose of it freely to benefit individuals as well as the public, to build helpful institutions, to enrich my friends and to relieve the underprivileged, in a word to be helpful: people laughed at me; nobody believed me . . . What! I could die lowly and unknown to anybody, and I would not swap my death for the glory of being helpful for a long time! . . .⁴⁰

More than the unsurprising presence of “bienfaisance” achieved through things “utiles,” what should concern the reader in this entry is the apparent absence of fear in the face of death, and the author’s treatment of time. Not only does he evoke his immediate past, but he positions himself in the future, first by discussing his place within posterity, second by creating the standard by which he would later be judged.

The treatment of time is crucial in all forms of life-writing. The diary postulates daily writing. The autobiography asks for retrospective linear writing. The letter has the power to mix different kinds of temporal representation: the present of the writing, an idealized past, a much-expected future. If one is to understand the appearance of new personal genres, or of modifications to existing ones, then one should study the temporal possibilities any given genre provides at any given moment in history; this is the third of the three general problems raised in this conclusion. With regard to the personal genres in eighteenth-century France, it could be argued that the need for new ways to handle time manifested itself early in the century (Jamerey-Duval, Bégon, Diderot, Contat), but that it gained momentum, so to speak, in its last twenty-five years (Rousseau, Chassignon, Bonnard, Ménétra, the diaries selected by Pierre Pachet in *Les Baromètres de l’âme*). Then, what appeared to be new genres (the autobiography, the diary) offered themselves as answers to a long-standing quest (as found in many correspondences or lesser-known texts). One could go so far as to say that genres that did not yet exist publicly or on a large-scale, nonetheless imposed their rules and modes of representation on genres that already had a long history. This would suggest that genres are not only concretizations of formal characteristics but that they are answers to questions not yet clearly formulated by society.

But is there really a need for such a differentiating of genres at the end of the eighteenth century in France? Two well-known texts made public at the very same time tend to show that such was the case at the beginning of the 1780s – the very period that saw the publication of the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782) and the *Confessions* (books I to VI were published in 1782, books VII to XII in 1789). Restif de la Bretonne’s *Sara ou la dernière aventure d’un homme de quarante-cinq ans* dates from 1783. It recalls one year in the life of Monsieur Nicolas, Restif’s alter ego, that of his tormented affair with Sara, the young daughter of his landlady. This autobiographical novel shows its narrator obsessed not only with the interpretation of his actions at a particular point in time, but also with the comparison of

these actions to previous ones. Monsieur Nicolas's eagerness to commemorate all aspects of his past, his thirst for anniversaries, his lament for days gone by, is everywhere evident in the book:

After the mother and the daughter left, I began to write the continuation of this Story, which I put down faithfully day by day; what I've added to it since amounts to the causes of events, mostly unknown then . . . I had another odd habit: for a few years I had fancied strolling round the Île Saint-Louis; even before I met Sara, I used to engrave on its stones the dates of the main events of my life. One year later, the same day, I went back to them: then, moved by some kind of exhilaration, to be still alive, I kissed them, and I drew them over, adding *twice* or *thrice*. When I met Sara, I started to write my dates daily; I went to sigh on my beloved island, I wrote every event in shorthand, whether my situation was gay or my soul was suffering, once I was unfortunate. This is how, without knowing it, I sustained my affection for Sara, while fostering my sensibility. May that help others; as for me, I nurse solely my pain! . . .⁴¹

At a time when there is no such thing in France as an autobiography or a diary – if one is to believe most literary histories – here is a character who engraves his diary entries on city walls and tells of this activity in a linear *récit* blending day-to-day writing with subsequent additions. The passage of time pervades every aspect of the narration, from the cult of anniversaries to the retrospective sorrow.

The year after Restif published *Sara*, permission was granted Beaumarchais to stage his *Mariage de Figaro*. Often read as a prelude to the Revolution, Figaro's long monologue in the play's fifth act is as much about the self and its relation to time:

What an incredible series of events! How did it happen to me? Why these things and not others? Who drew them down on my head? Forcibly set on the road of life, not knowing where it leads, and bound to leave it against my will, I've tried to keep it as rosy as my natural cheerfulness permits. Here again I say *my* cheerfulness without knowing if it belongs to me any more than those other things; nor do I know who this *I* may be with which I am so concerned – it's a shapeless collection of unknown parts, then a helpless puny thing, then a lively little animal, then a young man thirsting for pleasure, with a full capacity to enjoy and ready to use any shifts to live – master here and valet there, at the whim of fortune; ambitious from vanity, industrious from need – and lazy . . . with delight! An orator in tight spots, a poet for relaxation, a musician from time to time, a lover in hot fits: I have seen everything, done everything, worn out everything. At last my illusion is shattered, and I'm now wholly disabused . . . blasé . . .⁴²

The *moi* which eludes Figaro is clearly set in time: the character does not comprehend the reasons why he had to live such and such an event, but

he tries to organize the story of his life in a coherent *récit* moving from his conception and his early years, to his youth and his numerous *métiers*. In the context of the *Mariage*, Figaro's soliloquy will soon be followed by his long-awaited, and much-threatened, wedding, and the dark overtones of his narrative will make room for the final "Vaudeville." Figaro's *désabusement* is firmly rooted in time, as is Restif's, but it does not lead to the same resentment.

Throughout the eighteenth century, in France as elsewhere in Europe, people tried to make sense of their lives in writing. Be they the readers-turned-contributors of the *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, a widow leaving New France for France, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's audience, members of the French provincial nobility, artisans and skilled workers, minor figures such as the abbé de Sade, Chassignon, and Bonnard, or famous *hommes de lettres* such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, they all looked for new tools to express themselves. Since they knew of no formal model for such self-expression, they molded older personal genres – correspondence and memoirs – into more appropriate ones for their needs. Their endeavor, in its slow evolution from the 1740s to the 1780s, paralleled that of novelists such as Restif de la Bretonne and dramatists such as Beaumarchais. They would soon be heard in the political arena, most forcefully in the various "Déclarations des droits de l'homme et du citoyen." Still, their will to fuse personal narratives with new treatments of time did not go unopposed: Morellet, in his *Mémoires . . . sur le dix-huitième siècle et sur la Révolution*, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's old man, in *Paul et Virginie*, kept warding off self-expression, even after Rousseau's *Confessions*.⁴³ The tensions between the genres were still very much alive: individuality was not yet what it was eventually to become – the foundation of modern life.

NOTES

1. Denis Diderot, *Diderot's Letters to Sophie Volland: A Selection*, trans. Peter France (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 17; "Mes lettres sont une histoire assez fidèle de la vie. J'exécute sans m'en apercevoir ce que j'ai désiré cent fois. Comment, ai-je dit, un astronome passe trente ans de sa vie au haut d'un observatoire, l'œil appliqué le jour et la nuit à l'extrémité d'un télescope pour déterminer le mouvement d'un astre, et personne ne s'étudiera soi-même, n'aura le courage de nous tenir un registre exact de toutes les pensées de son esprit, de tous les mouvements de son cœur, de toutes ses pensées, de tous ses plaisirs; et des siècles innombrables se passeront sans qu'on sache si la vie est une bonne ou une mauvaise chose, si la nature humaine est bonne ou méchante, ce qui fait naître notre bonheur et notre

- malheur. Mais il faudrait bien du courage pour rien céler. On s'accuseroit peut-être plus aisément du projet d'un grand crime, que d'un petit sentiment obscur, vil et bas . . . Cette espèce d'examen ne seroit pas non plus sans utilité pour soi. Je suis sûr qu'on seroit jaloux à la longue de n'avoir à porter en compte le soir que des choses honnêtes. Je vous demanderois, à vous: 'Diriez-vous tout?' Faites un peu la même question à Uranie; car il faudrait absolument renoncer à un projet de sincérité qui vous effrayeroit"; Denis Diderot, *Correspondance*, ed. Georges Roth and Jean Varloot, 16 vols. (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1955-70), iv: 39. Original French texts and their sources will be cited in the notes immediately after the reference for the English translation. I would like to thank the Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada and the Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche du gouvernement du Québec for their funding of my research on "La naissance de l'intimité au Siècle des lumières."
2. My translation; "Comme mon projet étoit de reprendre l'histoire de ma vie aussitôt que la fin de ma tâche m'en laisseroit la liberté, j'avois jeté des petites notes sur un feuillet volant qui est devenu par lapse de tems un logogriphe à déchiffrer. Je n'y entens plus rien"; Diderot, *Correspondance*, v: 169-70.
 3. On the history of autobiography in France, see Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975). On Diderot's odd autobiographical writings, see Pierre Lepape, *Diderot* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 167, 223-24, 288-90; Jean-Claude Bonnet, "L'Écrit amoureux ou le fou de Sophie," in *Colloque international Diderot (1713-1784)*, ed. Anne-Marie Chouillet (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1985), 105-14; and Yoichi Sumi, "L'Été 1762: A propos des lettres à Sophie Volland," *Europe* 661 (May 1984): 113-19.
 4. François Laforge has studied this failure in "Diderot et le 'journal intime'," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 87:6 (November-December 1987): 1015-22. For his part, Stephen Werner argues that Diderot, instead of writing his own autobiography, resorted to other people's *récit de vie*; see here his "A comic life: Diderot and *le récit de vie*."
 5. From a similar perspective, I have already discussed Rousseau's *Réveries du promeneur solitaire* and Voltaire's *Carnets* and *Mémoires* in the "Conclusion" of my *Diderot épistolier: Contribution à une poétique de la lettre familière au XVIII^e siècle*, (Montréal: Fides, 1996), 423-28. See also Julie Candler Hayes's chapter, in which she shows how biography, autobiography, memoirs, and family romance are intertwined in the abbé de Sade's *Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque*.
 6. Elisabeth Bégon, *Lettres au cher fils: Correspondance d'Elisabeth Bégon avec son gendre, 1748-1753*, ed. Nicole Deschamps (Montréal: Boréal, 1994), 205. All references in the essay are to this edition.
 7. No letters by Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière to his mother-in-law have been preserved. *Lettres au cher fils* also includes, besides Madame Bégon's writings, two letters by one of her sons, Claude-Michel-Jérôme Bégon, and a dozen letters by Marie-Catherine de Villebois, Madame

Bégon's granddaughter, either full letters or complements to Madame Bégon's letters. For a reading inspired by Norbert Elias's sociological thought, see my "La Configuration épistolaire: Lecture sociale de la correspondance d'Elisabeth Bégon," *Lumen* 16 (1997).

8. My translation; "A présent, mon cher fils, que je me vois débarrassée de tant d'écrits qui m'ont beaucoup coûté, je pourrai, avec la même satisfaction que j'ai toujours eue à m'entretenir avec toi, le faire tous les jours, et te répéter cent fois que c'est tout ce qui me reste de consolation"; Bégon, *Lettres*, 43.
9. *Ibid.*, 44.
10. *Ibid.*, 56.
11. *Ibid.*, 336.
12. *Ibid.*, 182.
13. *Ibid.*, 186
14. Geneviève Haroche-Bouzinac, *Voltaire dans ses lettres de jeunesse, 1711-1733* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1992), 183-87.
15. Bégon, *Lettres*, 129.
16. Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 187.
17. Bégon, *Lettres*, 44.
18. *Ibid.*, 161, 221.
19. My translation; "Je me trouve en mon centre lorsque je peux avoir un moment à te dire que je t'aime"; *ibid.*, 313.
20. My translation; "Mais je n'ose me confier à personne. L'expérience m'apprend à tout garder en moi-même"; *ibid.*, 139.
21. For a more elaborate study of this aspect of the *Confessions*, see my "Le Malentendu épistolaire: Note sur le statut de la lettre dans *Les Confessions*," *Littérales* 17 (1995): 77-89.
22. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, Everyman's Library: Biography, 2 vols. (London and New York: J.M. Dent and E. P. Dutton, 1931), I: 252; "L'objet propre de mes confessions est de faire connaître exactement mon intérieur dans toutes les situations de ma vie. C'est l'histoire de mon âme que j'ai promise, et pour l'écrire fidèlement je n'ai pas besoin d'autres mémoires; il me suffit, comme j'ai fait jusqu'ici, de rentrer au dedans de moi"; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, ed. Jacques Voisine (Paris: Garnier, 1980), 322.
23. Rousseau, *Confessions*, II: 161; "Je résolu donc de consacrer mes loisirs à bien exécuter cette entreprise, et je me mis à recueillir les lettres et papiers qui pouvaient guider ou réveiller ma mémoire, regrettant fort tout ce que j'avais déchiré, brûlé, perdu jusqu'alors"; Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, 609.
24. Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, 617.
25. Rousseau, *Confessions*, II: 167; "En recevant cette lettre [by Madame de Luxembourg], je me hâtai d'y répondre, en attendant plus ample examen, pour protester contre toute interprétation désobligeante, et après m'être occupé quelques jours à cet examen, avec l'inquiétude qu'on peut concevoir, et toujours sans y rien comprendre, voici quelle fut enfin ma dernière

- réponse à ce sujet . . . Il y a maintenant dix ans que ces lettres ont été écrites. J'y ai souvent repensé depuis ce temps-là, et telle est encore aujourd'hui ma stupidité sur cet article, que je n'ai pu parvenir à sentir ce qu'elle avait pu trouver dans ce passage, je ne dis pas d'offensant, mais même qui pût lui déplaire"; Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, 617–18.
26. Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, 3.
 27. Diderot, *Correspondance*, v: 173.
 28. Reasons other than formal, notably philosophical or psychological ones, have been advanced to explain Diderot's attitude toward autobiography. Michel Delon has suggested both types of explanation: see "La Circulation de l'écriture dans les *Lettres à Sophie*," in *Diderot: Autographes, manuscrits, éditions*, ed. Béatrice Didier and Jacques Neefs (Paris: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 1986), 131, and "La Faute à Rousseau," *Le Magazine littéraire* 252–53 (April 1988): 23.
 29. Charles A. Porter, "Foreword," *Yale French Studies* 71 (1986): 2. See also Altman, *Epistolarity*, 84–89, 112.
 30. Pierre Pachet has studied both in *Les Baromètres de l'âme: Naissance du journal intime* (Paris: Hatier, 1990), 45, and in "Vers une sténographie de l'intime: Entre Fénelon et Constant: Karl Philipp Moritz," *Littérales* 17 (1995): 41–56. On collections of *ana*, see Francine Wild, "Les Ana et la divulgation de l'intimité," in *Ordre et contestation au temps des classiques*, ed. Roger Duchêne and Pierre Ronzeaud, 2 vols. (Paris–Seattle–Tübingen: Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature, 1992), II: 33–42. On the *fonction auteur*, see Didier Masseau, *L'Invention de l'intellectuel dans l'Europe du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994), 17–44.
 31. For instance, what is the relationship between Rousseau's *Confessions* and the "secular autobiography" Paul Delany describes in the second part of his *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, and Columbia University Press, 1969), 107–66?
 32. My translation; "[un] homme d'un grand ordre, & . . . il tenoit Regître jour par jour de tout ce qu'il faisoit"; *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques, ou Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la constitution Unigenitus: Tome premier Qui contient les années 1728, 1729 & 1730*, 3rd edn. (Utrecht: Aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1735), multiple paginations, 57.
 33. See Jean M. Goulemot, "Tensions et contradictions de l'intime dans la pratique des Lumières," *Littérales* 17 (1995): 13–21. Also, see Jean M. Goulemot and Didier Masseau: "Lettres au grand homme ou Quand les lecteurs écrivent," in *La Lettre à la croisée de l'individuel et du social*, ed. Mireille Bossis (Paris: Kimé, 1994), 39–47; and "Naissance des lettres adressées à l'écrivain," *Textuel* 27 (February 1994): 1–12. Engelsing's model is exposed in *Der Bürger als Leser: Lesergeschichte in Deutschland, 1500–1800* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974).
 34. Valentin Jameray-Duval, *Mémoires: Enfance et éducation d'un paysan au XVIII^e siècle*, ed. Jean M. Goulemot (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1981); Jacques-Louis Ménétra, *Journal de ma vie: Jacques-Louis Ménétra, compagnon vitrier au 18^e siècle*,

- ed. Daniel Roche (Paris: Montalba, 1982). There are two modern editions of Contat's *Anecdotes typographiques* (1762): Nicolas Contat, *Anecdotes typographiques, où l'on voit la description des coutumes, mœurs et usages singuliers des compagnons imprimeurs*, ed. Giles Barber (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1980); and Philippe Minard, *Typographes des lumières suivi des "Anecdotes typographiques" de Nicolas Contat, 1762* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1989).
35. Grassi has numerous articles on this topic: see, for example, "Friends and Lovers (or The Codification of Intimacy)," trans. Neil Gordon, *Yale French Studies* 71 (1986): 77–92.
36. My translation; "Voltaire, J. Jacques, Corneille ni Montesquieu n'ont pas senti ce que je sens. Je préfère *moi* à tous ces fastidieux personnages. Je préfère *moi* à tout ce qui existe; c'est avec ce *moi* seul que j'ai passé les plus doux moments de ma vie; ce *moi* isolé, entouré de tombeaux, & invoquant le grand être, suffiroit à mon bonheur sur les décombres de l'univers. . . . La perfidie d'un ami m'eût fait moins de peine, que son importunité, lorsqu'il est venu m'arracher à *moi-même* . . . Dans les rues où je me plais à marcher seul, je suis dans la crise d'un homme égaré dans un bois rempli d'assassins ou de bêtes féroces: le moindre objet m'allarme; l'éclair de mon œil va saisir le regard du premier qui me coudoie: s'il m'envisage, je recule; c'est un attentat qu'il médite; il en veut à la jouissance de *moi-même*; il ne m'aborde que pour me nuire; il va supplanter en me parlant, le génie avec lequel je converse; & dont son entretien ne peut me dédommager . . . que ne suis-je transporté dans une contrée barbare où personne ne me connoisse, où je ne sois interrompu par aucun ami, où *moi* m'appartienne tout entier; une demi-heure qu'on m'enleve, est une verrée de sang qu'on me tire, est un lambeau de mon cœur qu'on m'arrache"; [Jean-Marie Chassignon], *Cataractes de l'imagination, déluge de la scribomanie, vomissement littéraire, hémorragie encyclopédique, monstre des monstres: Par Épiménide l'inspiré, Dans l'ancre de Trophonius, au pays des visions*, 4 vols. (n.p., 1779), 1: 79–81. With his strange use of *moi* (my self), Chassignon clearly wishes to distinguish himself from all other men, even in his grammar.
37. *Ibid.*, III: 81–89.
38. My translation; "Un genre inconnu à ce siècle"; *ibid.*, 1: 6.
39. My translation; "Ma façon de penser est aussi opposée à celle des autres hommes, que mon ouvrage diffère par la forme des autres ouvrages"; *ibid.*, 1: 76.
40. My translation; "Je disois hier que je donnerois volontiers ma vie pour de l'argent, si la somme étoit forte, si j'avois la liberté d'en disposer en actes de bienfaisance générale et particulière, en établissemens utiles, ou pour enrichir mes amis et soulager un grand nombre de malheureux, enfin pour être utile: on se moquoit de moi; on ne me croyoit pas . . . Eh quoi! je m'expose à mourir obscur et ignoré, et je n'achèterois pas de ma mort la gloire d'être longtemps utile"; quoted in *Œuvres choisies du chevalier de Bonnard publiées avec une introduction par Alexandre Piedagnel* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1891), x–xi.

41. My translation; "Après le départ de la mère et de la fille, je me mis à écrire la suite de ce Récit, que j'ai fidèlement tracé jour par jour; ce que j'y ai depuis ajouté se réduit aux causes des événements, alors ignorées pour la plupart . . . J'avais encore une autre manie: je me sentais depuis quelques années un goût décidé pour me promener sur l'Île Saint-Louis; avant même de connaître Sara, j'y gravais sur la pierre les dates des principaux événements de ma vie. L'année suivante, au même jour, je les revoyais: alors, transporté d'une sorte d'ivresse, d'exister encore, je les baisais, et je les retraçais de nouveau, ajoutant *bis* ou *ter*. Quand je connus Sara, mes dates devinrent journalières; j'allais soupirer sur mon île chérie, j'y écrivais chaque événement en abrégé, la situation gaie ou douloureuse de mon âme lorsque je fus malheureux. C'est ainsi que, sans le savoir, je prolongeais mon attachement pour Sara, en entretenant ma sensibilité. Que tout cela serve aux autres; car, pour moi, je ne me nourris plus que de douleur! . . ."; Restif de la Bretonne, *Sara ou la dernière aventure d'un homme de quarante-cinq ans* (Paris: Stock, 1949), 150. To contextualize Monsieur Nicolas's moral stance, one should turn to Michel Condé's book, *La Genèse sociale de l'individualisme romantique* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989).
42. *Six French Plays*, vol. iv of *The Classic Theatre*, ed. Eric Bentley, trans. Jacques Barzun (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), 448-49; "O bizarre suite d'événements! Comment cela m'est-il arrivé? Pourquoi ces choses et non pas d'autres? Qui les a fixées sur ma tête? Forcé de parcourir la route où je suis entré sans le savoir, comme j'en sortirai sans le vouloir, je l'ai jonchée d'autant de fleurs que ma gaieté me l'a permis: encore je dis ma gaieté sans savoir si elle est à moi plus que le reste, ni même quel est ce *moi* dont je m'occupe: un assemblage informe de parties inconnues; puis un chétif être imbécile; un petit animal folâtre; un jeune homme ardent au plaisir, ayant tous les goûts pour jouir, faisant tous les métiers pour vivre: maître ici, valet là, selon qu'il plaît à la fortune; ambitieux par vanité, laborieux par nécessité; mais paresseux . . . avec délices! orateur selon le danger; poète par délassement; musicien par occasion; amoureux par folles bouffées, j'ai tout vu, tout fait, tout usé. Puis l'illusion s'est détruite, et, trop désabusé . . . Désabusé"; Beaumarchais, *Le Mariage de Figaro*, in *Théâtre*, ed. Jean-Pierre de Beaumarchais, Act 5, scene 3 (Paris: Garnier, 1980), 306-07.
43. See André Morellet, *Mémoires de l'abbé Morellet de l'Académie française sur le dix-huitième siècle et sur la Révolution*, ed. Jean-Pierre Guicciardi (Paris: Mercure de France, 1988), 39, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*, ed. Robert Mauzi (Paris: G. F. Flammarion, 1966), 143. Morellet's *Mémoires* were written in 1805 and published in 1821.