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The Novel Map

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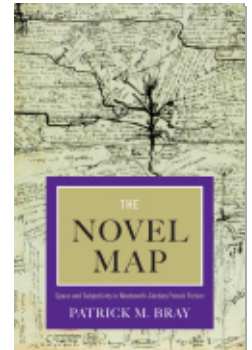
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CHAPTER ONE

The Life and Death of Henry Brulard

René

The contradictions of its first two chapters orient the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, as a chaotic autobiographical discourse gives way to a linear narrative. Various styles and perspectives succeed each other as the narrator struggles to define the project and to summarize the “life” of Brulard. After describing the view of Rome in a style reminiscent of Chateaubriand, the narrator wonders, “Je vais avoir cinquante ans, il serait bien temps de me connaître. Qu’ai-je été, que suis-je, en vérité je serais bien embarrassé de le dire” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 38) (“I am going to be fifty years old, it’s about time I get to know myself. What have I been, what am I, in truth I would have a hard time saying”). In vain he tries to respond to these questions by evoking the opinion of others, which leads him to stray off the subject. By the middle of the chapter he has lost a unified notion of the subject (himself) and of his narrative. In the rest of the chapter, he attempts to define himself, his character, “without lying,” by telling his life thematically but not chronologically; this takes him from 1832 to 1802, to 1880 and to 1935 (the dates he hopes his text will be published and understood), to 1809, and back to 1835 (the present of the narrative).

By the end of the first chapter, the text is almost impossible to follow. The free association of places and people disturbs the habitual chronological progression of autobiography. As the narrator himself admits: “Mais je me laisse emporter, je m’égare, je serai inintelligible si je ne suis pas l’ordre des temps, et d’ailleurs les circonstances ne me reviendront pas si bien” (44); “Mais je m’égare encore . . . Mais je m’égare” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 45) (“But I let myself get carried away, I’m straying off topic, I will be unintelligible if I do not follow the order of events, and moreover circumstances will not come back to me very well”; “But I stray again . . . But I stray”). The incoherency of the writing is evoked through the use of

verbs of movement or space (“carry away,” “stray,” and “come back”), suggesting that the error lies in the spatial component of the analysis. The text calls for a more temporal perspective, one that is less “topical” and more chronological. The narrator is literally “carried away” from one place to another in the text, occupying several different moments at a time. Subjects change over time, in a sense they are because of what they become. A narrative based solely on the association of place would tend to confuse time periods, negating temporal progression. The distinction of subject and object can only occur through the analysis of time; Brulard can only become text through chronological narrative.

In chapter 2, Stendhal changes tactics and tries to order his narrative logically and chronologically (similar to the “notices autobiographiques” that he had written earlier). The methodology employed in this chapter is reminiscent of René Descartes’s *Discours de la méthode*, a text that, like *Brulard*, conflates autobiography and fiction in its search for the foundation of subjectivity. The Cartesian method attempts to negotiate the interaction between subject and object through classification and analysis. A problem, here the subject Brulard, must be divided up into distinct parts, numbered, and catalogued in order to understand how the whole functions. For perception and analysis to be clear and free from subjective bias, the basis for subjectivity must be reducible to a universal. Descartes momentarily pretends to be without past and without a body (what Sartre will later call “being-in-itself”), reducing his existence to pure consciousness or thought (“being-for-itself”); Cartesian subjectivity is then a timeless (or perhaps instantaneous) hollowing of the self to the point where the only thing left is consciousness. The pseudo-Cartesian method found in *Brulard*’s second chapter announces a new cogito and the birth of the subject as text. Like Descartes, Brulard/Beyle must momentarily put past and body aside, with the aim of reaching a truthful analysis of the self by rendering it text (other).

In the ten pages of the second chapter, the narrator organizes his life, not without more detours, by four major categories according to temporal order, recalling Descartes’s second rule, “diviser chacune des difficultés . . . en autant de parcelles qu’il se pourrait” (*Discours de la méthode*, 49) (“divide each difficulty . . . into as many sections as possible”). The first category is Stendhal’s military and public career: “né en 1783, dragon en 1800, étudiant de 1803 à 1806 . . . J’ai été homme d’esprit depuis l’hiver de 1826, auparavant je me taisais par paresse” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 46) (“born in 1783, dragoon in 1800, student from 1803 to 1806 . . . I have been a man of wit since the winter of 1826, before I kept quiet out of laziness”). The subject is too vast to be reduced to simple dates, rank,

and social status, with the result that certain details seem incongruous. Most obviously because his careers overlap: his “military” career was little different from his public one, and his diplomatic career coincided with his literary one. How can one suddenly become “a man of wit”? Such declarations ultimately conflict with the narrator’s conception of the subject as changing over time.

The narrator must look elsewhere for the essence of his life, leading him to resume his affective “career” by ranking the women he loved: “Pour les considérer le plus philosophiquement possible et tâcher ainsi de les dépouiller de l’auréole qui me fait *aller les yeux*, qui m’éblouit et m’ôte la faculté de voir distinctement, j’ordonnerai ces dames (langage mathématique) selon leurs qualités diverses” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 50) (“In order to consider them as philosophically as possible and to try thus to remove the halo that gets *in my eyes*, that dazzles me and impairs my ability to see clearly, I *will arrange in order* these women (mathematical language) according to their individual qualities”). The Cartesian predilection for light as the privileged metaphor for knowledge (especially in the *Monde*) and the edict that one should accept as true only that which is presented clearly and distinctly to the mind are here inverted. The narrator’s *crystallisation* of these women has produced too much light, blinding the would-be philosopher. As the narrator states later in *Brulard*: “On ne peut pas apercevoir distinctement la partie du ciel trop voisine du soleil” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 433) (“One cannot perceive distinctly the part of the sky too close to the sun”). But by mathematically placing the women in chronological and social order and numbering their initials, he can remove the sacred halo. The “vanity” of these women, and obviously of himself as well, leads him to contemplate his finances, and then the (dis)loyalty of his friends, the third and fourth categories. Finally, at the end of the chapter, he presents a simple chart which he likens to his friend André de Jussieu’s collection of plants: “Enfance et première éducation, de 1786 à 1800. . . . 15 ans, Service militaire de 1800 à 1803. . . . 3 ans, . . . Second service, consul du 15 septembre 1830 au présent quart d’heure. . . . 5 ans” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 54) (“Childhood and first education, from 1786 to 1800. . . . 15 years, Military service from 1800 to 1803. . . . 3 years, . . . Civil service, consul from September 15, 1830, to the present quarter of an hour. . . . 5 years”). This schematic is more convincing than those previous, but only because it is much more vague, completely erasing all but the general trajectory of his life.

Stendhal candidly and almost joyfully declares his newfound distance from himself. His intellectual solitude in Rome, which will later be related to the state he felt in Grenoble, is aggravated by the classification of his

relations, creating an even greater distance between himself and all credible outside criteria. The narrator must seek inside himself, far from any sentimentality, for his identity. This new approach is almost certainly the exact opposite of the one employed in the first chapter; here we have, as he himself calls it, a “military” or “mathematical” system of classification, whereas in the first chapter (to be studied later) there was an affective palimpsest of memory that led to opaqueness of vision.

The discourse of this second chapter, with its manifestly objective and objectifying realism, will take precedence over that of the first chapter with its more subjective, personal tone. The goal of knowing the truth about himself, of “seeing” himself as other, results in self-abstraction. And yet the piling up of details and charts prevents the entry of the subject into the narrative, that is, a discourse of the event in the past: “Il faut narrer, et j’écris des *considérations* sur des événements bien petits mais qui précisément à cause de leur *taille* microscopique ont besoin d’être contés très distinctement. Quelle patience il vous faudra, ô mon lecteur!” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 52–53) (“I have to narrate, and I am writing *reflections* about very small events, but which precisely because of their microscopic *size* need to be recounted very distinctly. How much patience you have to have, oh my reader!”). These necessary general considerations mark the presence of the narrator, who is thus independent from, or outside of, the narrative that follows, guaranteeing some measure of objectivity.

In order for this preliminary discourse to be transformed into narrative, there must be a superposition of the present of the narration and the past of the narrative, the “I” of the narrator and the “I” of the narrated subject. Louis Marin evokes Émile Benveniste to show how autobiographical narrative, the combination of discourse and narrative, can only occur through simulacrum (“The Autobiographical Interruption,” 600). Narrative, “with its intent on objectivity,” is devoid of discourse’s enunciative marks: the person “I-you” as opposed to the nonperson “he,” the present opposed to the nonpresent of the past (599). A ruse changes the “I” into a “he,” present to past, while maintaining the virtual “presence” of the author/narrator. In fact this simulacrum incites the reader to forget the subject of the narrative: “Memory set up as narrative simulates forgetting” (600). The narrator Brulard/Beyle recounts the memory of the child Brulard, forgetting and erasing the difference between the two.

The shift from discourse to narrative takes place at the end of chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3. After one last attempt at a totalizing summary (his “beginning in the world” in 1794, the date closest to the events of *Brulard*), the chapter ends with the concise formula, “après tant de considérations générales, je vais naître” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 55) (“after

so many general remarks, I am going to be born”). For the narration to begin, everything else must be moved aside, the new “je” must start from nothing, it must be independent of the narrator.

The doubts about the narrator’s identity (the “what am I?” of the first chapter) have culminated in a Stendhalian cogito and the birth of a new subject, Brulard. Just as Descartes feigns that he has no body, no past, but exists only in thought, Brulard proclaims that he has renounced the “general remarks” of the past, and exists only in the text. Paradoxically, this move toward universality and logic can only be possible through a mechanism of the imaginary: Descartes “feigns” that he is only thought and Brulard/Beyle must pretend that he can be born again.

Autobiography relies on a slippage between pronouns and between verb tenses, and from the beginning it is already slipping into fiction. The autobiographical subject is at once autonomous from the “authorial subject” (for how else could it be perceived?) and conceived as an ideal (fictional) projection of the “authorial” self. This is made possible because language collapses distinctions, now reduced to metaphor, and the subsequent forgetting of the nature of language as metaphor. The difference between the two subjects (Beyle and Brulard, author and character) is created and then forgotten by the text.

Brulard, “je,” the narrator/main character, is born by and in the text. This birth is the goal of autobiography (the perception of the self as object), and yet it also constitutes the inscription of the self into a fictional narrative.¹ Stendhal transforms his “general remarks” into narrative, sacrificing his personal experience in order to become text. The inscription of Brulard into a text, a sort of textual or simulated subject, does not just occur once, but recurs at various moments throughout the narrative. Product of language (a metaphor that is then forgotten), the textual subject reveals itself and the impossibility of its simulacrum (a subject imagined by an “author” to reflect the author) through slips in language, through wordplay. Affirmed and denied in the play of visible/legible markers, thriving in the ambiguity of letters, Brulard masks Beyle.

Even before the declaration that he is “going to be born,” the narrator stages a scene of writing and the inscription/encryption of Beyle. Before he classifies the women of his life, he recalls a recent trip to Lake Albano near Rome, when he traced their names in the dust:

Je trouvai que ma vie pouvait se résumer par les noms que voici, et dont j’écrivais les initiales sur la poussière, comme Zadig, avec ma canne . . . :
 Virginie/Kubly/, Angela/Pietragrua/, Adèle/Rebuffel/, Mélanie/Guilbert/,
 Mina /de Griesheim/, Alexandrine /Petit/, Angeline, que je n’ai jamais

aimée /Bereyter/, Angela /Pietragrua/, Métilde /Dembowski/, Clémentine/, Giulia/. Et enfin, pendant un mois au plus Mme Azur dont j'ai oublié le nom de baptême, et imprudemment, hier, Amalia /B/. La plupart de ces êtres charmants ne m'ont point honoré de leurs bontés; mais elles ont à la lettre occupé toute ma vie. A elles ont succédé mes ouvrages."² (47–48)

He includes a sketch of himself by a tree with a cane, the name “Zadig” next to the figure with the cane, and under Zadig, “Astarté” in slightly larger characters and different ink, perhaps as if “drawn” by Zadig. Two pages later the same scene is summarized: “J'écrivais sur la poussière comme Zadig ces initiales: V An₁ Ad M₂ Mi A₁ Aine₃ Apg₂ Mde C₄ G₅ Aur (Mme Azur dont j'ai oublié le nom de baptême). Je rêvais profondément à ces noms, et aux étonnantes bêtises et sottises qu'ils m'ont fait faire” (49) (“I wrote on the dust like Zadig these initials, V An₁ Ad M₂ Mi A₁ Aine₃ Apg₂ Mde C₄ G₅ Aur (Mme Azur whose given name I have forgottn). I dreamed deeply about these names, and about the astonishing blunders and foolishness that they made me do”). There is a double substitution that occurs in this inscription of initials: the narrator's life can be summed up from A (Astarté/Angela) to Z (Zadig/Azur), reduced to the names (which are further reduced to initials) of his lovers, but the narrator also takes the place of Zadig by his citation and imitation. In the *conte philosophique* by Voltaire, it is Astarté who traces Zadig's name; in the written text her name is not mentioned, but it appears in the sketch ambiguously (is it placed under “Zadig” to indicate that Zadig drew the word “Astarté,” or is it a correction of the written text?). Occupying Zadig's position, then, it would be the women whom he loved who would trace *his* name, he would exist through their writing.

To appropriate their names, to “be occupied to the letter” of their initials, he writes the nicknames he gave them (Métilde for Mathilda, Azur for Alberthe de Rubempré), places their family or married names in brackets (perhaps creating a rift between their public and private lives, or their social status), and places a number in subscript to indicate the ones “qu[il a] eu” (“that [he] had”). In a “Testament” (will) giving the manuscript to a publisher, his only condition is that all the women's names be changed to prevent scandals (or perhaps to preserve his own appropriation of them). Angela is always counted twice, since he met her during his first trip to Milan and had an affair with her during the second, eleven years later. A salient detail in the accompanying drawing is a note declaring that this page was written at night, making it illegible. Every sentence of the passage is thus written twice, retraced word for word, as if to

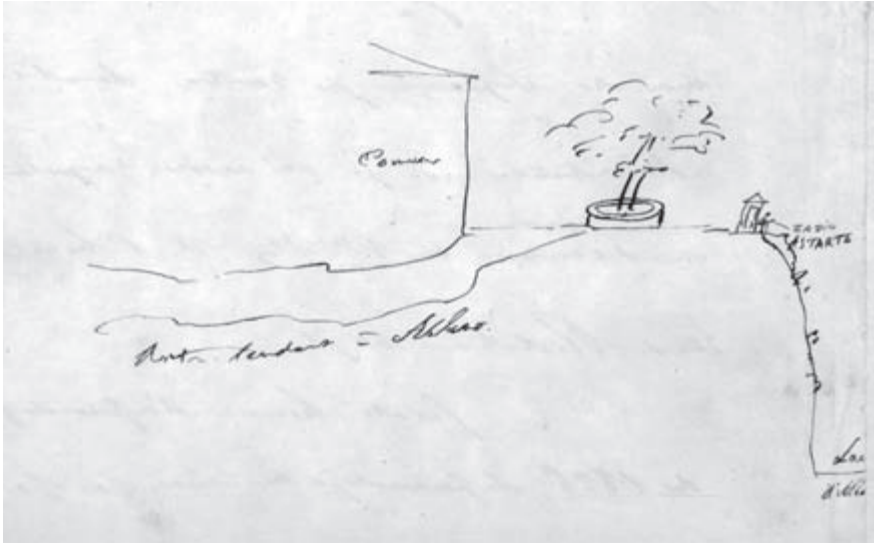


Figure 1.1. The narrator as Zadig. *Vie de Henry Brulard*, R299, vol. 1, no. 113, folio 53v. Courtesy of Bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble.

emphasize the physicality of writing, to take pleasure one more time in the evocation of the names. If one were to murmur the initials quickly, the sound might approach “va maman” (Marin, “Sur un certain regard du sujet”). The unwritable, unspeakable love jumps out of the initials, revealing at once this “initial” love, the one trait that unites the women, and the textual matrix from which Brulard will emerge.

Henry’s decision to become a writer and dramaturge, à la Molière, is similarly imbued with shame and secret desire as revealed through the tension of text and image. While his maternal grandfather, Doctor Gagnon, was seeing patients, the young Brulard would sneak into the extensive library to look for the “histoire naturelle de *la femme*” (184) (“the natural history of *woman*”). By good fortune, he moves away from Pliny toward a confused stack of libertine novels belonging to his uncle (marked with an L on the accompanying and subsequent maps): “c’était l’essence de la volupté. . . . La possession d’une maîtresse réelle . . . ne m’eût pas plongé dans un tel torrent de volupté. Dès ce moment ma vocation fut décidée: vivre à Paris en faisant des comédies comme Molière” (185) (“this was the essence of pleasure. . . . The possession of a real mistress . . . would not have plunged me into such a torrent of sensual delight. From this moment on my vocation was decided: to live in Paris whole making comedies like Molière”). All his desires culminate in literature, its production and its

consumption, revealing the inextricable link between text and individuation through desire (to write).

His “tyrannical” Aunt Séraphie is portrayed as the principle obstacle to Henry’s goal as a writer, and so provides the perfect foil for Henry’s individuation. Her religious devotion and deceptively angelic name (like Henry’s father Chérubin) hide the ultimate hypocrisy: she is Chérubin’s mistress (a phantasm Brulard suspects but cannot prove). Later in the novel, when she is sick and dying, she causes Brulard one last embarrassment:

Une de ses dernières actions avait été, un soir que je lisais sur la commode de ma tante Élisabeth, au point H [of the accompanying sketch], la *Henriade* ou *Bélisaire* que mon grand-père venait de me prêter, de s’écrier: ‘Comment peut-on donner de tels livres à cet enfant! Qui lui a donné ce livre?’³ (221)

Like Brulard’s discovery of his vocation as writer, this scene mixes desire to read (he had implored his grandfather to loan the book to him) with the danger of being rebuked. Henry, “au point H,” is drawn as a stick figure at one end of the room, whereas “toute la famille était en rang d’oignons devant le feu au point D” (222) (“the entire family was in a row like a bunch of onions in front of the fire at the spot marked D”) at the other end of the room. Why would his religious aunt be angry that Henry read the edifying, moralistic, and relatively dry *Henriade* and *Bélisaire*? Critics have overlooked that inscribed in Voltaire’s epic *Henriade* and Marmontel’s didactic novel *Bélisaire* is not Henry Brulard, but Henri (-ade) Beyle (-isaire). The repressed identity of the author Henri Beyle is composed of the letters of the books he read as a child. The “true” author, outside of the text, is reconverted to text by his reading.

His aunt serves as a catalyst for the process of individuation by publicly shaming him. Séraphie’s rant amounts to an interpellation: Henry/i is separated from the rest of the family and called by his “real” name. This interpellation attempts to fix the identity of the subject, temporarily unraveling the simulacrum that collapses Beyle and Brulard, narrator and character into one. The textual stability is retrieved when Dr. Gagnon dismisses Séraphie, excusing her for being “malade,” suggesting that she is mentally ill.

This ambiguity between personal insight and (inter)-textuality maintains and exposes the impossible nature of *Brulard*: a fictional autobiography, Henri Beyle as text. Worrying whether his readers will be able to tolerate four or five volumes “of *Is* and *mes*” the narrator exclaims:



Figure 1.2. Henry in the corner H, the rest of his family in a line at D. *Vie de Henry Brulard*, R299, vol. 2, no. 283, folio 140. Courtesy of Bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble.

Cependant, ô mon lecteur, tout le mal n'est que dans ces cinq lettres [*sic*]: B, R, U, L, A, R, D, qui forment mon nom, et qui intéressent mon amour-propre. Supposez que j'eusse écrit *Bernard*, ce livre ne serait plus comme le *Vicaire de Wakefield* (son émule en innocence), qu'un roman écrit à la première personne.⁴ (284)

Editors have negated the ambiguity of the text, the “unconscious” of Brulard, by “correcting” the manuscript: the “sept lettres” of B, R, U, L, A, R, D. replace in the standard editions the “cinq lettres” of the unwritten (and yet always present) B, E, Y, L, E. The text seems to have already anticipated Philippe Lejeune’s *Le Pacte autobiographique* and set out to challenge it. Lejeune defines the autobiographical pact as “l’affirmation dans le texte de cette identité [of the “*nom* auteur-narrateur-personnage”] renvoyant en dernier ressort au *nom* de l’auteur sur la couverture” (Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique*, 26) (“the affirmation in the text of this equivalence [of the *name* author-narrator-character] referring back in the end to the *name* of the author on the cover”). Any slight deviation from

this “pact” excludes the work from the category of autobiography, since autobiography, for Lejeune, is “all or nothing” (25).

Yet, in order for Stendhal’s autobiography to work according to the logic it proposes in the first two chapters, an ambiguity must prevail, and not an affirmation, regarding the identity of the author/narrator/character. This margin of doubt concerning the identity of the subject creates the necessary distance for self-reflection: the textual “birth” of Brulard allows Beyle to see himself. Moreover, if Beyle, Stendhal, the narrator, and Brulard were all identical, they would not be distinguishable.

Brulard wants to be between autobiography and fiction. Beyle is inscribed in the text, is manifest for the astute reader, a “signature” or guarantee of autobiography; but autobiography is “all or nothing,” and the character (Brulard) is not expressly equivalent to the author. The narrator admits to playing with the possibility of writing a novel, changing the name, once again, into “Bernard.” Yet he does and does not change the name; it is not Bernard written by Brulard, but Brulard written by Brulard (who is not Brulard, but Stendhal, who is Beyle).

The various title pages only serve to complicate matters: “Vie de Hy Brul[ard] écrite par lui-même. *Life*. Nov. 35.”; “Vie de Henry Brulard À M.M. de la Police. Ceci est un roman imité du *Vicaire de Wakefield*. Le héros, Henry Brulard, écrit sa vie, à cinquante-deux ans, après la mort de sa femme, la célèbre Charlotte Corday . . . Moi Henry Brulard j’écris ce qui suit à Maro [Roma] de 1832 à 1836” (430–31) (“Life of Henry Brulard. To Messrs. The Police. This is a novel imitated from *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The hero, Henry Brulard, writes his life, at the age of 52, after the death of his wife, the famous Charlotte Corday . . . I, Henry Brulard, wrote what follow in Maro [Roma] from 1832 to 1836”). Any student of Stendhal’s novels would know never to trust a title page or a citation (think of how many of the citations of *Le Rouge et le noir* are invented),⁵ but *Brulard* presents some revealing paradoxes. Even if one were to discard temporarily the identity real-author/narrator, the assumed author according to the title page would be Henry Brulard, *himself*; leading the reader to believe that the text claims to be an autobiography. But as Miriella Melara has remarked, “the addition of ‘imitated novel’ . . . is both unexpected and disconcerting. An author who has apparently undertaken the task of writing his own life story admits to having imitated a novelistic paradigm” (249). As with the *Henriade*, the *Bélisaire*, or *Zadig*, Brulard/Beyle is already a repetition, a reinscription of another text. Philippe Lejeune maintains that these titles are not to be taken seriously, in part due to the unpublished nature of the text, since the humorous nature of the titles can only be meant to entertain Stendhal and was not conceived

for the final edition (*Le Pacte autobiographique*, 29). Since autobiography is “all or nothing,” Lejeune must assume that the title pages are not part of the “text itself” but a camouflage, a ruse to divert unwanted readers. The narrator writes of willing the manuscript to an editor after his death, but there are no indications for what will or will not be included in “*l’édition*,” leading the modern critic to accept all of the manuscript or none of it. Once again, *Brulard* is able to have it both ways, all and nothing, autobiography and fiction, the identity and nonidentity of Brulard and Beyle.

The continual rebirth of Brulard as text could be said to conclude with yet another “birth.” Near the end of the text, the narrator describes working at the Ministry of War in Paris for his powerful relative Pierre Daru (who will later facilitate his first voyage to Italy), when, in the middle of the passage, he writes: “Je vais naître, comme dit Tristram Shandy, et le lecteur va sortir des enfantillages” (381) (“I am going to be born, as Tristram Shandy says, and the reader will leave this childishness”). The repetition of such a key phrase thirty-seven chapters later marks the time, the space of the text, which separates the two occurrences, and delineates the “Life” of Brulard. Soon after, Henry will leave with the army across the Alps to Milan, the city he will consider his true *patrie* (homeland or “fatherland”), or perhaps *matricie*, for his mother’s family claims Italian heritage. Indeed, Beyle’s tombstone in Montmartre cemetery is engraved: “Arrigo Beyle, Milanese/ Visse, Scrisse, Amò”—“Henri Beyle from Milan, Lived, Wrote, Loved.” Moreover, the text begins in Italy, and so it also ends there. But this “je vais naître” differs greatly from the first. It is a repetition of an earlier moment in the text, and also a citation of another famous literary *égotiste*, Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*.⁶ Repetition engenders difference since the second cogito modifies the meaning of the first, confirming the reader’s suspicion that Brulard is pure text. The second part of the sentence is playfully ambiguous. If Brulard/Shandy is going to be born, wouldn’t the reader *enter* rather than leave these “enfantillages”? Or perhaps, by appropriating the words of (or rather attributed to) Sterne, the narrator trades places, and becomes *himself* the reader, thus becoming able to leave behind his childhood. Instead of a birth, then, this might be a death or a disappearance: “By means of this interruption and uprise, a triple substitution is simultaneously brought about: ‘I’ and ‘he’; reading and writing; life and death. I disappropriate myself by means of the other, I appropriate the other by means of myself” (Marin, “The Autobiographical Interruption,” 606). The crystallization of narrator, author, and character, which composed Brulard as text, dissolves as Brulard enters a fictive intertext and the autobiographical “je” claims to be reborn

outside of the text as a reader. The fictive narrator would remain to tell the story of Brulard/Shandy. The author turned reader is cut from the text, allowed to read and be read. The death of Henry Brulard as written text coincides temporally (1800) with the birth of the writer, Beyle/Stendhal, of the *Journal*.

Des/Cartes

The questioning of genre, the suspension between Beyle and Brulard, the play between the readable and the visible, are guaranteed by the most unique aspect of the *Vie de Henry Brulard*: the over 170 sketches that are scattered throughout the text.⁷ Some drawings depict objects (his one and only childhood toy, a spinning top), others are abstract representations of concepts, but the overwhelming majority are maps: street maps of Grenoble, Paris, and Milan, maps of mountains, maps of houses, the spaces of his youth. According to Béatrice Didier, the sketches are an analytic procedure to distance the author from the emotion of past events, to re-create the past objectively in its entirety.⁸ This cartographic impulse is another manifestation of the Cartesian, the “mathematical” and “military” analysis of his life. As such the maps would seem to be a way to spare the narrator from tedious description, another sign of the novel (in *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, Beyle attributes his inability to write novels to the boredom he derives from material descriptions à la Walter Scott [*Oeuvres intimes*, 1454]). However, the maps are rarely “geographic” but rather “topographic” (Marin, “Sur un certain regard du sujet,” 226–27); they schematize relations between space and the subjects that occupy it, rather than describing a real surface relation that would produce space.

Maps would then have a narrative function, linked to the subject's relation to space through time. They would not add “a reality effect” but would supplement, sometimes replace or call into question, the written, readable, text. Very often they contain their own legends, with writing over the place represented. These legends do not always correspond to the references in the text or in the map itself. Many of the maps fill an entire manuscript page, thereby literally opening a rift in the text.

This second, visual narrative would also require the presence of the textual subject. The engraving “San Girolamo nel deserto” by Domenichino, separating the phrase “je vais naître” from chapter 3, reinforces the birth of the subject in the text as character (both as printed character or letter and as character). Carol Mossman has suggested that the engraving of Saint Jerome, the translator of the Bible into Latin, could be interpreted

as an (ironic?) evocation of the self-sacrifice of the writer for the sanctity of textuality (Mossman, 350). Saint Jerome is, of course, always represented next to a skull, contemplating mortality and his own humility in the face of the greatness of the holy scriptures.

The first engraving of the manuscript, fittingly enough “La Resurrezi-one di Lazaro,” serves as an introduction, a leading into the presence of the image in the text.⁹ The actual painting by Garofolo is not present, but only the engraving, that is, an abstraction devoid of color and subtlety. The resurrection of the image occurs through a trace, a poor copy torn out of another book. The image depicts a triumphant Jesus and a weary Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus prefigured that of Jesus, and also of Brulard, who twice declares “je vais naître.” The witnesses to the resurrection are holding their noses, perhaps referring to the degraded state of Lazarus, or to the degraded state of the painting turned engraving; or perhaps this is an oblique reference to a note on the following page, “Petits faits à placer, 1 mauvaise odeur des gens qui assistaient aux vêpres à la charité” (“Little facts to place, 1 bad odor of those who attend evening mass”). The presence of the engraving of Lazarus opens a space between the readable and the visible which prevents any one interpretation from taking root.

As we have seen in the introduction, Christian Jacob has pointed out the inherently problematic nature of maps. Maps seem more real than written text because there is a material support that appears to coincide with the referent, yet the obligations of perspective (reducing three dimensions to one or two) reveal a referential illusion. However, the presence of a map in a text changes the function of a map or an image; the function is less problematic than it is ambiguous, since the referent is displaced. The place or the object represented might very well exist, but the fictional narrative adds another possibility of signification. Do the maps in *Vie de Henry Brulard* refer to the “real” Grenoble or to the Grenoble in the narrative, or even just to itself as map (questions never fully answered by *Brulard*)? The image stands independent of the text, but participates in the network of meaning.

The first sketch by Beyle presents Zadig/Astarté/Brulard tracing initials in the dust, a visual *mise en abîme*; the narrator draws the narrator drawing the narrator’s newly assumed name. “Astarté” in the drawing provides the key to understanding the misquotation of Voltaire, absent in the written text. Brulard is present and absent in the sketch, just as he is and is not already a citation, is and is not the same as the author.

He first appears in a map, on his own, in the chapter following the first “je vais naître,” in the first passage about his mother. The text intro-

duces her, describes her vaguely, and then announces her death and his incomprehension of the event. The next page in the manuscript portrays an overhead view of the room they shared: “1. Mon matelas. [My mattress]— 2. Moi. [a very crude figure composed of two circles placed on the bed]— 3. Lit d’Henriette.” [“Henriette’s bed,” next to a large X or cross instead of a body] (61). The X takes the place of the lost mother, marks the spot of the object of desire. On the following page the text reveals the significance of the map: “Un soir, comme par quelque hasard on m’avait mis coucher dans sa chambre par terre, sur un matelas, cette femme vive et légère comme une biche sauta par-dessus mon matelas pour atteindre plus vite à son lit” (61) (“One night, as by accident I was laid to sleep in her room on the ground, on a mattress, this lively woman, light as a doe, jumped right over my mattress in order to get to her own bed more quickly”). Many commentators have interpreted this leap to be the revelation of sexual difference (notably, Lang, 1083); the text gives away no details, only the possibility of meaning. The very absence of the mother (or the absence of the mother’s phallus), marked by the X, creates a lack that can only be filled by the drawings, “a substitute for the missing object of desire” (Mahuzier, 207). Later in the novel he takes drawing lessons, and admits, “ma mère avait eu un rare talent pour le dessin” (“my mother had a rare talent for drawing”); could drawing (and indirectly the presence of maps in the text) be his way of searching for his mother? (Didier, préface to *Vie de Henry Brulard*, 13).¹⁰ The death of the mother gives birth to the narrator: “Elle mourut donc dans sa chambre . . . Là j’étais né . . .” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 63) (“She died in her room . . . There I was born . . .”). The text and the map have condensed time, forcing the death of the mother from complications in childbirth (Henry’s younger brother) and the birth of Henry to coincide.

Henry, “au point H,” H, B, or M, is present in almost all of the maps. This presence is at once a doubling of the textual identity (the subject is visible in the map and readable in the text) and its reduction to an emblem (an initial, a dot, or a stick figure). The narrator is able to refer to himself in the text as image, turning himself as subject into an object. This would seem to be a direct response to the question he asks himself near the end of the first chapter: “Quel oeil peut se voir soi-même?” (“What eye can see itself?”) (*Oeuvres intimes*, 31), as well as to the inscription of the Delphic Temple, “Gnoti Saouton” (“know thyself”) quoted later in the text (218). As Christian Jacob writes in *L’Empire des cartes*, “l’oeil ne voit pas, il construit, il imagine l’espace. La carte n’est pas un objet, mais une fonction” (29) (“The eye does not see, it constructs, it imagines space.

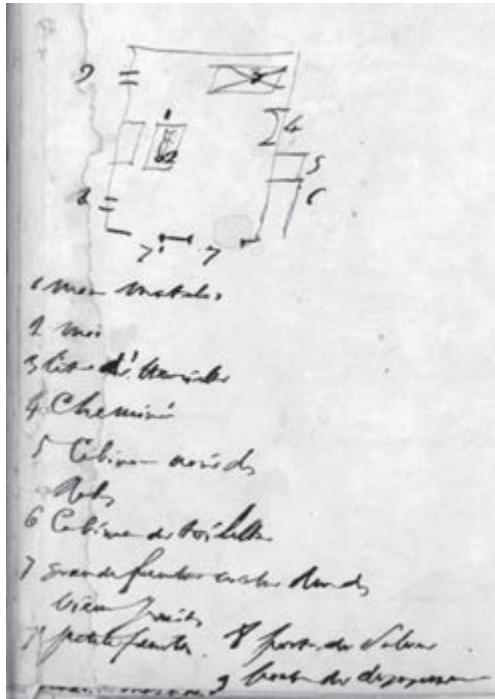


Figure 1.3. Henry in his bedroom. *Vie de Henry Brulard*, R299, vol. 1, no. 211, folio 102. Courtesy of Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble.

A map is not an object, but a function”). The function of the cartographic eye in this text would be to imagine the relation of objects in space, at a particular time, in order for the narrator to “see” himself. The double perspective of the narrator, who seems to be both subject and object, is a ruse made possible by both the succession of text and image and the reduction of Henry to a dot and an initial. The space between text and image, their different media, create the distance, the cartographic mirror, for the narrator to “perceive” the Henry on the map, that is, to refer to it. At the same time, H (Henry/i), B (Beyle, Brulard), and M (Moi, which could be anyone), by their ambiguity, can signify either the present of the narration or the past, the author, the narrator or the young Henri/y. This ruse is analogous to that of autobiographical narrative: a simulacrum (here, a map) is needed to incite the reader to forget the dual position of the narrator in the past and the present, in the written text and in the image.

The maps, as supplements to the text, occasionally both give away and maintain the simulacrum, in the same way that the letters of the text give

away the presence of Beyle; they guarantee the authenticity of the autobiographical representation and simultaneously call the genre of the text itself into question. Twice, more than one moment of time is explicitly represented in an analytical map, disrupting the relation of Henry “au point H” to the rest of the space represented: in chapter 33, there is a map of Grenoble with a bridge built by his friend Crozet in 1827, though the narration in the map and the text indicate 1800 (314); in chapter 13, there is a new road constructed in 1810, “que je n’ai jamais vue” (“which I have never seen”), and posterior to the narration, which takes place in 1791 (155). If neither the narrator, nor Henry could have seen the road or the bridge, how can the map function coherently as a system of relations?

In one extraordinary series of maps (chapter 33), an element of time and movement creates an alternative narrative to the written text. Henry and his friends plan a “conspiracy” against the “arbre de la Fraternité,” a scrawny tree planted symbolically in the main square of Grenoble across from Henry’s home during the Revolution. The tree holds a sign with a crown, a scepter, chains, and some uninspiring verse, which constitute an offense to the young Brulard’s aesthetic sensibility. The written text recounts the incident with the narrator’s usual apology for his lack of memory and the fuzzy details of the representation. The maps, however, are set up like a comic strip, a treatment for a film. The first map is an overhead view, a sort of establishing shot; the legend indicates details not yet relevant to the written narration, but anticipating it: F. the tree, P. the well, C. the house that the Dilles Codé [*sic*] rented. The second map is larger, giving more details; there is now a dotted line, from M to M’ for “marche,” that indicates the entry of the conspirators and their eventual flight (also not yet mentioned in the text). The third sketch is covered in writing, pointing out all the neighbors that could be watching and who might turn in the youths to the “corps de garde”; the tree itself has disappeared in order to highlight the sign. Then there is a “cut,” a change in perspective: the profile of one conspirator is shown firing the pistol (two semicircles indicate the sound or the shot) at the sign on the tree. The last two maps represent the presence of the “corps de garde,” followed by the flight of the conspirators (the gun still smoking), now signified by the line FFF (“Fuite”), through the Dilles Codé’s living room. As at other points in the text, “l’auteur ‘se voit’ en H puis en H’ sans avoir aucune idée de ce qui s’est passé dans l’intervalle” (Coulont-Henderson, 146) (“the author ‘sees himself’ at H and then at H’ without having any idea what happened between intervals”). In the interval between maps—between cuts—is where movement occurs. The reader, who imagines the movement and fills in the interval, necessarily produces the “action” of this

conspiracy. The narration of the written text is not only superfluous, but deficient, unable to provide a credible account of the story.

Certain maps produce memory in the written text instead of being produced by it (which seems to be a reversal of the usual procedure). An event, a place, is drawn in a map even though the accompanying text claims amnesia. A few pages later the text, aided by the visual representation, will “remember” the event or place. One could classify the maps, then, into two groups: those that prolong the text and those that short-circuit it by marking an ellipsis in the writing (Coulont-Henderson, 142). At these moments, the repetition of the same image (such as the grandfather’s house which is drawn over a dozen times, from all perspectives) would seem to trigger the writing of the text.

But the inversion of text and image upsets the dual position of the narrator/subject in text and image created by the citation of the map in the text. Instead of the text referring to itself as map, instead of the “I” of the narrator/Brulard existing in the past and present, the written text arises from the map: the text produces itself. The written narrative must refer backward in the space of the text and backward in time for the reader. The production of “memory” by certain maps reverses the chronological order of narrative established in chapter 2. The narrator is now a repetition of the narrated, the past has taken over the present of narration. Instead of the surpassing of time itself, this is an invasion of the (imagined) past that problematizes the textual subject. Unlike the “conspiracy” episode, where the accumulation of individual sketches suggests movement to the reader to the detriment of the written text, these “short-circuiting maps” inspire the text to invent narrative instead of representing the past.¹¹ Despite, or because of, the analytical “Cartesian” maps, the truthful autobiography has fallen into the novel.

In the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, Stendhal has devised a unique representation of the self through the convergence of autobiography and novel, text and map. The “truthful” autobiographical text would paradoxically be based upon a moment of deception or imagination, where the autobiographical subject gives way to an independent novel subject. The narrator/author imagines or desires the self as other in order to obtain knowledge of the self. The textual ruse would postulate a sort of Holy Trinity, where the author, narrator, and subject are entirely distinct (creating an autobiographical mirror) and yet the same (the reason for the writing of the text). This imagined other, through a new cogito (“after so many general remarks, I am going to be born”), is momentarily stripped of particular details, until it approaches a universal, allowing it to become

text. The new textual subject is then recounted by a narrator, whose discourse is impossibly the same as the subject's (a present superimposed onto the past of the subject). The autobiographical simulacrum collapses these distinctions, inciting the reader to overlook the imaginary conception of autobiography.

The textual subject, at least as can be deduced from *Brulard*, exists through a discourse of simulacrum, the ambiguous identities of subject, narrator, and author, and the multiplicity of meaning inherent to textuality. The more ambiguous or even incoherent the representation, the more truthful the image of the subject, since, in Stendhal's logic, a style that is too polished must be lying (which is his principal objection to Rousseau and Chateaubriand). If the (textual) subject is revealed through a pun, then the ultimate text would have to indulge in the free play of language. The abundance of precise "military" and "mathematical" maps draw the limits of the subject, and yet add another level of meaning, often increasing the ambiguity of the text. Maps literalize Brulard's "what eye can see itself" because they encode the self as a sign represented by a letter, a dot, or a stick figure, while becoming, themselves, interpretable text.

However, as I explore in the following chapter, the textuality of the *Vie de Henry Brulard* must be controlled so that any one element (the autobiographical or the novel subject) does not upset the suspension between the elements necessary for the transformation of subjectivity. When the maps create an alternative fiction that oversteps the bounds of the autobiographical simulacrum, an element of censure, in the form of an alternative cartography, emerges that prevents the text from turning definitively to fiction, just as the gaps in the chronological narrative of Beyle/Brulard's life prevent the dominance of the autobiographical mode. Brulard the novel subject must be reined in by Stendhal the writer in order to resemble and yet transcend Beyle the author.