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The Novel Map

Bray, Patrick M.

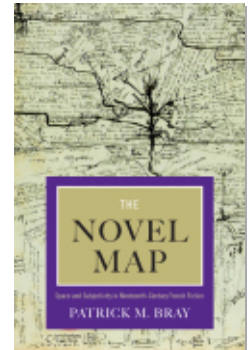
Published by Northwestern University Press

Bray, M..

The Novel Map: Space and Subjectivity in Nineteenth-Century French Fiction.

Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Ghost in the Map

The incomplete fusion of autobiography and fiction allows the entry of the subject into text, it promises the only possibility of objective self-knowledge and creative self-definition. The tension between the identities of Beyle and Brulard can only be preserved if the text remains ambiguous: both autobiography and fiction, and neither one nor the other. The narrator constantly worries about the status of the text, on the one hand about the “truth” of the autobiography and on the other about his lack of memory which might lead him to invent narrative. I analyze in this chapter the various mechanisms employed by the narrator to control the excesses of autobiography and fiction in order to preserve a tenuous balance that would sustain Henry Brulard’s dual nature as a fictive reflection of a “real” Henri Beyle.

Fiction’s threat is that the story of Brulard may no longer reflect that of Beyle, that the author might lose control of the subject (himself). Novelistic paradigms are more or less easily avoidable; the text generally evades suspense, flowery rhetoric, and excessive description that might evoke an artificial realism. The presence of images and maps continually interrupts the narrative and thus impedes the development of a coherent fictional story about Brulard that could compete with Beyle’s own life.

But the very conversion of the self into (fictive or not) text, its reduction to the universal subject of the cogito, its representation at a single instant in time, inevitably imperils the integrity and continuity of the author’s existence, the uniqueness of personal experience. In order for the reader, for the author himself, to perceive the subject, it has to be inscribed into reductive language and placed into irreversible chronological time. Yet this incessant analysis and universalizing jeopardizes what Beyle treasures most, his own memory.

Caught between the illusory self-knowledge of the analytical maps and the text’s invention of memory in ambiguous language, the *Vie de Henry Brulard* falls back once again on the powers of textuality. The text al-

ternates between analytical, chronological descriptions that reduce the subject to discrete and fragmented moments (represented as ichnographic maps or overhead views) and holistic views that temporalize space and reflect the subject's place across time (represented as bird's-eye views). *Brulard's* playful oscillation between partial concealment and total exposure denounces the harmful effects of writing (chronological narrative erases memory) and yet uses writing, in the form of a novel map, to imagine his entire past and supplement memory.

The first section of this chapter, "Monta(i)gnes," explores a temporal cartography present in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, what I liken to a bird's-eye view. The first chapter of Beyle's autobiography begins with a view of Rome from on top a mountain, where the narrator/Brulard/Beyle overlooks the Eternal City, his entire life, and time itself. The perception of time and the evocation of memory hallucinate the ghosts of the past, the dismemberment of the self caused by chronological narrative. The bird's-eye view presents layers of time over space and blurs the distinction between text and self. The second section of this chapter, "The Dazling of Memory," traces *Brulard's* simulated fear of textuality to the fear of the dissolution of the self through language. A mistrust of representation masks, by explaining away, *Brulard's* own control of textuality.

Monta(i)gnes

The majority of maps in the novel could be described as "military" or "mathematical" according to the text's own precise relations of objects in space at one moment in time. They are almost exclusively ichnographic (overhead or floor plan) views with little "unnecessary" detail; the space is flattened; the only point privileged is an impossible abstract view from above. They seem to correspond to the textual impulse for autobiographical truth and objectivity, while often revealing its limits. Another model of imagining space, however, is present in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* which functions as a counterpoint to the "Cartesian"¹ analytic mapping. At the beginning of the text, the narrator describes a view from a mountain, what could be called a bird's-eye view. This different type of map includes the perspective of the viewer in the map itself; the relation of the viewer to the objects and the space represented is privileged over the relations of the objects to themselves. As one imagines a city from a bird's-eye view, certain buildings eclipse others, as contrasted to a street map. Moreover, a duality or plurality of moments in time is implied: the viewer/reader necessarily scans the map in the present; as his or her viewing position (as

well as the distance, and therefore the time, between all objects) is already inscribed in the perspective, one could say that a layer of present time covers the image. At the same time, the map, and what it represents, exists prior to the viewing, a past in wait for the present. This perspectival view differs from the “Cartesian” map already described: in the former (bird’s-eye view) there is no simultaneity of subject and object, but rather of past and present; in the latter (“Cartesian”), the “subject” views the “object” from the outside, they can only occupy the same position successively by a deception in the text, a conflation of the written and the visual. The past does not invade the present in the bird’s-eye view, but coexists with it, which suggests the overcoming of time itself.

The rather uncharacteristic first chapter begins with just such a view. It is uncharacteristic since it contains no sketches or maps (only an eighth of the chapters do not), and yet it develops one of the key cartographic moments in the text. The narrator finds himself overlooking Rome, high on the Gianicolo Hill (“le mont Janicule”), with a view of the entire city. Marcel Proust, in *La Prisonnière*, accurately summarizes Stendhal’s contribution to literature in one sentence: “vous verriez dans Stendhal un certain sentiment de l’altitude se liant à la vie spirituelle” (Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* III, 879) (“you will see in Stendhal a certain feeling of altitude tied to spiritual life”). Like one of his fictional characters, Stendhal’s narrator is spiritually moved by this view of Rome; so much so that one could say that the entire work flows from the musings inspired by this moment:

Je me trouvais ce matin, 16 octobre 1832, à San Pietro *in Montorio*, sur le mont Janicule, à Rome, il faisait [*sic*] un soleil magnifique. Un léger vent de sirocco à peine sensible faisait flotter quelques petits nuages blancs au-dessus du mont Albano, une chaleur délicieuse régnait dans l’air, j’étais heureux de vivre. Je distinguais parfaitement Frascati et Castel Gandolfo qui sont à quatre lieues d’ici, la villa Aldobrandini où est cette sublime fresque de Judith du Dominiquin. Je vois parfaitement le mur blanc qui marque les réparations faites en dernier lieu par le prince F[rançois] Borghèse, celui-là même que je vis à Wagram colonel d’un régiment de cuirassiers, le jour où M. de Noue, mon ami, eut la jambe emportée. Bien plus loin, j’aperçois la roche de Palestrina et la maison blanche de Castel San Pietro qui fut autrefois sa forteresse. Au-dessous du mur contre lequel je m’appuie sont les grands orangers du verger des capucins, puis le Tibre et le prieuré de Malte, un peu après sur la droite le tombeau de Cecilia Metella, Saint-Paul et la pyramide de Cestius. En face de moi j’aperçois Sainte-Marie-Majeure et les longues lignes du Palais de Monte Cavallo.

Toute la Rome ancienne et moderne, depuis l'ancienne voie Appienne avec les ruines de ses tombeaux et de ses aqueducs jusqu'au magnifique jardin de Pincio bâti par les Français, se déploie à la vue.² (37–38)

Stendhal's view of Rome in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* is much more than a majestic panorama. The panorama of Rome leads to a reflection on the ancients, on painting, on aging, and finally on subjectivity; it is all of Stendhal's works in miniature. Highly personalized, it contains many autobiographical anecdotes and details. Some of the details are relevant to the narrative that will follow (his presence or nonpresence at the battle of Wagram, and the Lake Albano) others are not (most of the Roman buildings). Many of the best-known sites, though in theory visible from this viewpoint, are not described: the Pantheon, the Santa Trinità del Monte, the Palatine Hill and Forum, the domes of the baroque city center (closer and larger than Santa Maria Maggiore and San Paolo), the Coliseum and the Palazzo Farnese (only mentioned on the following page). The majority of place names correspond to "personal" monuments hardly visible at all. The Vatican is brought up in the text later by reference to the *Transfiguration*, though the Holy See, and the painting it contained, is not visible from San Pietro in Montorio. The relatively faraway hill towns of Frascati, Albano, and Palestrina ("quatre lieues" or 17 km away from Rome) mark the outer limit of the view, and so, even on the clearest day, could hardly provide any visual details; the Villa Aldobrandini above Frascati could barely seem more than a speck on the landscape. Indeed, what is privileged is the narrator's personal relation to place, especially in its capacity to evoke particular events in time. The overall movement of description is first the location of the narrator (San Pietro in Montorio), then the limits of his view (Frascati, Albano, Gandolfo, and Palestrina), eventually the places closest to him (the orange grove, the Priory of Malta, the Tiber). It is as if all of Rome, "ancient and modern," were approaching him. This initiating map inscribes the narrator's affective perspective on the city, while situating the narrative in the present (1832), as he reminisces about time. "All of Rome, ancient and modern" presents itself to him, as well as, and especially, his own "Life."

This is, of course, Stendhal's Rome and not yet Brulard's Grenoble (Brulard does not live past Milan). As this chapter stands as a preamble to the rest of the novel, *Promenades dans Rome*, written in 1829, is a preamble to *Brulard*. The *Promenades* is a pseudo-travel journal composed of Stendhal's memories of Rome (written in Paris) and his unabashed plagiarism and parody of other popular guides (Crouzet, *Promenades*, VIII); in short, it is a mixture of genre and citation. It is evident that the later

Souvenirs d'égotisme and *Vie de Henry Brulard* would follow the same path as the *Promenades*: a fictional autobiography that tries to balance objective concerns through the fragmentation of the autobiographical genre. More remarkable is the fact that the beginning of the first chapter of *Brulard* is almost a direct citation from the *Promenades*:

San Pietro in Montorio. J'admire de nouveau la vue; c'est sans comparaison la plus belle de Rome: on voit tout admirablement bien et l'on voit le mont Albano et Frascati, Cecilia Metella, etc. Il faut un jour de soleil à nuages chassés par le vent; alors tous les dômes de Rome sont tour à tour dans l'ombre et dans le clair.³ (*Promenades*, notes, 750–51)

This view is, then, Stendhal's idealized vision of Rome, about which he fantasized (“ce lieu est unique au monde, me disais-je en rêvant”—“this place is unique in the world, I told myself dreaming”) in Paris while writing the *Promenades*, and in which he encapsulated, crystallized, the ancient city.

What at first seems to be a view of Rome on a particular day in 1832 is actually a palimpsest composed uniquely of memory and citation. This view of Rome in 1832, an ideal moment, a literary moment for Stendhal, is not a factual detailing of a view, but an aesthetic invention, a novel map. By all accounts he was in Abruzzo, not in Rome, from the 7th to the 20th of October in 1832. The manuscript margins state clearly “*Book* commencé le 23 novembre 1835” (37) (“*Book* started November 23, 1835”); the ink and paper used is the same throughout the first chapter. The “present” of the narrative jumps forward three years to 1835 to coincide with the actual writing. There is hardly a break in narrative voice (and no graphic break in the manuscript), as Stendhal announces, “Je ne continue que le 23 novembre 1835” (40) (“I can only continue November 23, 1835”), as if trying to slip the date past the reader. It is true that earlier that year (June 20 to July 4) he worked on the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, but Rome is hardly mentioned in that text.

By antedating the text, Stendhal stresses the proximity to his fiftieth birthday (January 23, 1833) and links it to the city of Rome, and in particular to San Pietro in Montorio. The presence, or rather absence, of Raphael's *Transfiguration* in this church for 250 years provides the essential digression: the painting would have, at least symbolically, shared this view; fifty years is the echo of 250 years (Béatrice Didier has emphasized Stendhal's particular number symbolism in relation to death [*Stendhal autobiographe*, 202]). The painting is now “buried” in the Vatican, resurrected in the text of *Brulard*.

Rome is the city of tombs and death: “Quand on arrive de Naples à Rome, on croit entrer dans un tombeau. Il est peu de contrastes aussi douloureux” (*Oeuvres intimes II*, journal entry 1832, 157) (“When you arrive from Naples to Rome, you would think you were entering a tomb. There are few contrasts as painful.”) The Castel’ San Angelo (formerly Hadrian’s tomb), the tomb of Cecilia Metella (made famous by the neo-classicists Winkelman and Piranesi), the pyramid of Cestius (an elaborate tomb designed by an ancient Roman banker), and the tombs along the Appian Way are all spectacular ancient monuments to death cited in the view of Rome. In the *Promenades*, Stendhal recounts the last wish of the poet Tasso, to die on the Gianicolo overlooking Rome: “La vue si étendue et si belle que l’on y a de Rome, cette ville des tombeaux et des souvenirs, doit rendre moins pénible ce dernier pas pour se détacher des choses de la terre, si tant est qu’il soit pénible” (*Promenades*, 376) (“The expansive and beautiful view one has here of Rome, this city of tombs and memories, must make less painful this last step to detach oneself from the things of this earth, if indeed it is painful”). San Pietro in Montorio is, as Stendhal himself writes: “au lieu même où Saint Pierre souffrit le martyre” (*Promenades*, 397) (“the very place where Saint Peter was martyred”). Six of the twenty engravings included in the manuscript have directly or indirectly as subjects Saint Peter (Mossman, 344), thus all referring back to this first paragraph and continually recalling both the church and Saint Peter’s martyrdom. Tasso (next to his oak tree) and Raphael (through what nineteenth-century art critics considered his most celebrated painting) both achieved glory through their “transfigurations,” their artistic sublimation, on this same hill: “De plus grands que moi sont bien morts!” (“Much greater men than I have died!”). Stendhal anticipates his own transfiguration into the text as Brulard. This “spiritual” moment (as Proust would have it), inspired by a fictional view, allows Stendhal to “play dead,” to see his whole life from beginning to end, allowing for the commencement of a complete, and thus fictional, autobiography (but one without an end).

The reflections on mortality are enhanced by the Gianicolo’s position in the Roman landscape; it is at the westernmost limit of the city, with only fields behind it. The narrator has his back facing the West (the occident, meaning where the sun dies) and remains until the sun falls behind him, hinting at the end of his own life. As the narrator says midway through *Brulard*, “[il y a] trois ans que m’est venue, sur l’esplanade de *San Pietro in Montorio* (Janicule), l’idée lumineuse que j’allais avoir cinquante ans et qu’il était temps de songer au départ et auparavant de se donner le plaisir de regarder en arrière” (115) (“three years ago came to

me, on the esplanade of *San Pietro in Montorio* (Gianicolo), the luminous idea that I was going to be fifty years old and that it was time to think about the final departure and before then to abandon myself to looking backwards”). The name Gianicolo is derived from Janus (January), the two-faced god of doors and liminal spaces. The narrator can thus occupy the threshold between two moments in time, facing the future (the sunset of his life) while looking back at the past (the view of Rome), just as his text will occupy the threshold between autobiography and fiction.

As the tombs of Rome evoke Brulard/Beyle’s mortality, its ruins and the memories they recall hallucinate the dismemberment of the body in time. The totality (in time and space) of the view of Rome distorts the subject like a baroque anamorphosis, revealing different moments and facets from different angles. Disturbing the idyllic portrait of Rome is the recurrence of traumatic or sublime images that haunt the text. The “sublime fresco of Judith” recalls, of course the severed head of Holofernes. The innocuous repairs done on a wall summon up François Borghèse, colonel at Wagram, present when Beyle’s friend M. de Noue lost his leg. The repairs included in the same sentence as well as M. de Noue’s name (de-noue, “dénoue” or “untie”) anticipate the loss of his leg. A series of ancient tombs is listed, starting with that of Cecilia Metella, which had inspired Stendhal’s acquaintance Byron in his *Childe Harold* and is best known for its bucranium, or ox skull (the medieval name of the tomb was “Capo di bove,” “oxen’s head”). Next in the list is San Paolo, which marks the spot where Saint Paul was decapitated. Cestius’s Pyramid is the tomb of an ancient Roman banker and is adjacent to the Protestant cemetery of Rome, where Keats, Shelley, and others are buried. Finally the Appian Way makes an appearance, with its hundreds of monuments to death. The repetition of death and dismemberment apparent in the bird’s-eye view of Rome suggests that the narrator’s attempt to grasp the totality of the self and its place in the flow of time has failed, leading to a feeling that he has lost any unity of the self and hallucinates his own dismemberment.

The conflation of the mind and the city is at least as old as the second book of Plato’s *Republic*, but in modern times Rome has become the privileged site of the human psyche. Goethe, in the December 20, 1786, entry of his *Italian Journey*, attests to the confusion of exterior and interior he felt in Rome: “It is history, above all, that one reads quite differently here from anywhere else in the world. Everywhere else one starts from the outside and works inward; here it seems to be the other way around” (Goethe, 154). The bird’s-eye view also takes as its point of departure the viewer. In *Brulard*, the entire image of Rome is unfurled, unfolded (“se

déploie à la vue”) in the text from memory, an interior space becoming exterior again through writing. It is literally imagined, transformed into an image to be seen (“je vois,” “je distingue,” “j’aperçois,” “Quelle vue”). There is a reversal of interiority and exteriority, a Möbius strip of consciousness, where Rome reflects Brulard and Brulard Rome. The history of Rome, “ancient and modern,” cannot be separated from the narrator’s sense of time and memory, past and present: “tous les souvenirs de Tite-Live me revenaient en foule” (38) (“all the memories of Titus-Livy come back to me”). His memories of reading Titus-Livy, or literally the memories of Titus-Livy himself, are present as he gazes at the ancient city.

The conflation of text and memory, of the space of Rome and time itself, of city and subject is eloquently elaborated by Montaigne (one of Stendhal’s 3M of French literature, Montaigne, Molière, and Montesquieu, “les trois M donnent du plaisir en français par du noir sur du blanc” [*Oeuvres intimes II*, 165–66]) (“the three M give pleasure in French through black on white”) in “De la vanité”:

J’ay veu ailleurs des maisons ruynées, et des statues, et du ciel, et de la terre: ce sont tousjours des hommes. Tout cela est vray; et si pourtant ne sçauroy revoir si souvent le tombeau de cette ville, si grande et si puissante, que je ne l’admire et revere. Le soing des morts nous est en recommandation. Or j’ay esté nourry dès mon enfance avec ceux icy; j’ay eu connoissance des affaires de Romme, long temps avant que je l’aye eue de ceux de ma maison: je sçavois le Capitole et son plant avant que je ne sçeusse le Louvre, et le Tibre avant la Seine. J’ay eu plus en teste les conditions et fortunes de Lucullus, Metellus et Scipion, que je n’ay d’aucuns hommes des nostres. Ils sont trespassez. Si est bien mon pere, aussi entierement qu’eux, et s’est esloigné de moy et de la vie autant en dixhuict ans que ceux-là ont fait en seize cens.⁴ (*Essais*, 209)

Rome nourishes Montaigne, providing for his psychological and intellectual development, in juxtaposition to Paris. Rome’s ruins, “the tomb of this city,” though in theory lost in the past, have more effect on him than any monument in France. Once something becomes part of the past, “trespasses” the threshold between present and past, life and death, it becomes not further away in space or in consciousness, but eternal. The death of Montaigne’s father eighteen years earlier does not seem closer than the death 1,600 years earlier of the literary Romans that nourished his youth. If they survive in the present, it is because of Montaigne, who feels a duty to honor the dead, who cannot help themselves (*Essais*, 209–10). Brulard also brings back the dead, though his motives seem less pure:

“Qui se souvient d’Alexandrine, morte en janvier 1815, il y a vingt ans? Qui se souvient de Métilde, morte en 1825? Ne sont-elles pas à moi, moi qui les aime mieux que tout le reste du monde?” (166) (“Who remembers Alexandrine, dead January 1815, twenty years ago? Who remembers Métilde, dead in 1825? Are they not mine, who loved them more than anyone else in the world?”). Montaigne holds “en teste” (“in his head”) the time of the ancients and the present, Rome and Paris, the dead and the living.

The two writers collapse the space of two places and times into one textual moment, evoking the phantoms of the past. Montaigne, like Stendhal, does not describe Rome from the present, as he did in the *Journal de voyage en Italie*, but from his memory and from literary citation. Tom Conley, in “A Suckling of Cities: Montaigne in Paris and Rome,” argues that in Montaigne, as well as Freud, the birth of the subject comes about through the city views of Rome.⁵ Like Paris and Rome’s simultaneity of place in the textual map, Montaigne’s psychological past occupies the same space as his perception of the present. The textual trick of forcing two cities to be collapsed into one is the same as that used in *Brulard* to collapse the difference between subject and object, past and present. Conley extends his argument to Freud’s analogy of Rome and the psyche in *Civilization and Its Discontents*: the ruins of the ancient city can be seen through an effort of imagination and can thus be contemporaneous with modern time, just as the psyche of the infant lives on in the unconscious of the adult (Conley, 170–71). The psyche destroys memories the same way that time destroys the city’s structures, but the ruins of memories survive in the same way that ruins survive. The metaphor goes too far for Freud because it suggests a collective psychogenesis and therefore the metaphor leads to the paradox of a unique individual who is nevertheless identical to every other individual (Conley, 169). Freud concludes that it is impossible to occupy two different historical states or places in the same space at the same time (Conley, 169).

Henri Bergson elaborates this paradox (that one subject can occupy two times and spaces simultaneously) into a theory of consciousness and memory before Freud. The conscious is a mechanism to discard what is not useful to the perception of the immediate present; the unconscious would then be what is “impotent,” what the conscious considers unnecessary. Just as objects that are not immediately perceived still really exist (the commonsense rebuttal to Berkeley’s immaterialist *esse est percipi*—to be is to be perceived), “le souvenir-pur” (“pure memory”) and the past coexist with the present. What is more unsettling is that “pure memory” is, according to Bergson, not stored in the brain, but exists independently,

which suggests (though Bergson seems reluctant to extend his concept) that there may exist a universal memory shared by all.

Since space measures the proximity of a potential menace to the body in relation to time, what is essential to perception is a schema of the future; it seems preferable to open the space in front of the body (the future) and to close the time behind. The “real” seems to start with the present, but

quand un souvenir reparaît à la conscience, il nous fait l'effet d'un revenant dont il faudrait expliquer par des causes spéciales l'apparition mystérieuse. En réalité, l'adhérence de ce souvenir à notre état présent est tout à fait comparable à celle des objets inaperçus aux objets que nous percevons, et l'*inconscient* joue dans les deux cas un rôle du même genre.⁶
(Bergson, 161)

Bergson's version of the uncanny is simply the breakdown of the conscious's repression of the past. From here he assumes “notre *caractère* est bien la synthèse actuelle de tous nos états passés” (162) (“our *character* is really the present synthesis of all of our past states”). The bird's-eye view of Rome is a sublime experience that achieves the surpassing of space and time, the synthesis of our past selves. To reverse Bergson's syllogism, Stendhal (or Montaigne) must invoke all his past states in order to comprehend fully, or perceive in the present, his “character” (the expressed purpose of *Brulard* and the *Essais*). Stendhal's (or Montaigne's) conjuring up of his memory of Rome, an object not immediately present, also conjures up his ghosts, “les revenants” (in French “ghosts,” or “that which comes back”) of his past (hence the choice of Rome, “city of tombs”). This incantation temporarily unlocks the unconscious: “all of Titus-Livy's memories rushed back to me.” The unconscious (and the memories it perceives) is always present, occupying the same space as the conscious. The contemporaneous presence of the past only resembles a paradox since the mind, in an economy of perception, represses memory as past. The bird's-eye view of Rome forces the two to coexist, or rather tricks the conscious into projecting the past onto the space in front of the body, what is usually occupied by the future. The return of the suppressed is thus superimposed onto the space of the future represented as map (Stendhal has his back to the West, against the usual progression of time).

Any attempt to analyze the mass of time revealed by this temporary unleashing of memory, that is, to use the conscious to select memories to bring forward to perception, would break the spell by reinstating the mechanism of repression; the unconscious becomes impotent. Indeed, this

ideal moment brought on by the vision of Rome does not even last a few pages, since the narrator has trouble defining whom he was or is. The harmony (“j’étais heureux de vivre”—“I was happy to be alive”) has disappeared and been replaced by confusion, as the narrator no longer knows which spatial and temporal reference points to choose, as seen by the narrative’s wandering through space and time (Rome, Wagram, Paris, Ischia, Grenoble, 1793, 1832, 1835, 1880, 1935). Proust’s insomniac suffers the same existential wandering upon waking. This “égarement” or “straying” leads, of course, to the Cartesian analysis that dominates the novel, an effort to cut through the different layers of time, the analysis and dismemberment of the subject.

There are very few other “panorama perspectives” like the one of Rome in the rest of the work that represent space as a function of time. However, those that exist take on special significance by their rarity and deliberate placement in the text. There are two “figures géométriques” or “cartes” (“maps”) as he calls them, which could be described as representations from a panoramic perspective. Françoise Coulont-Henderson has categorized them as “des croquis à caractère allégoriques, sortes de cartes du Tendre” (149) (“sketches of an allegorical nature, a sort of map of the human heart”). More than just purely visual elements however, they serve to interrupt the text, revealing what the written text cannot. They are equally spaced in the novel: the first 130 pages after the beginning (*Oeuvres intimes*, 159), the second 130 pages after that (290); which is to say almost exactly one-third and two-thirds of the way into the text. Similar to the view of the first chapter (and thus different from the majority of the work), these are affective cartographies or itineraries where time is represented spatially and ideally. Because of their similarity and even spacing in the text, we can link together the first chapter, the last chapter, and these two sketches. These four textual moments serve to question, to undermine the authority of the autobiographical project, the truth in dividing up Henry Brulard’s life into distinct (writeable and drawable) moments, suggesting that the subject cannot be contained by language or chronological narrative.

The first sketch schematizes the different “routes” one can take in life, seen from the point of view of the “moment de la naissance” (“moment of birth”). Facing the “moment of birth” (marked suggestively by a triangle and the letter “A”) is an empty half circle. Extending from the half circle are four “routes” that continue open-ended: “Route de la folie” (“Route of madness”), “Route de l’art de se faire lire” (“Route of the art of getting oneself read”), “Route de la considération: Fx Faure se fait Paire de France” (“Route of esteem: Fx Faure makes himself a Peer of France”),

“Route de la fortune par le commerce ou les places” (“Route of fortune through commerce or appointments”). The map is personalized with the name of Stendhal’s least impressive friend, Félix Faure, who, through luck and lack of personal ambition, rose to the elite of Restoration society. The sketch is included in a letter (now lost) to his friend Roland Colomb (cousin of Stendhal who discovered the world of letters late in life and who edited Stendhal’s works after his death). He explains that once a person has chosen his path in life, he cannot suddenly choose another. He does not blame his friend, however, since if the narrator were to die and approach Montesquieu, he would not be surprised if the great writer were to tell him that he had no talent: “l’oeil ne se voit pas lui-même” (159) (“the eye does not see itself”). The modification of the phrase “Quel oeil peut se voir . . . ?” (“What eye can see itself . . . ?”) to the affirmation “l’oeil ne se voit pas . . .” (“the eye does not see itself . . .”) underscores the impossibility of this cartographic representation: for the map to work, the narrator would have to see himself, presumably by occupying the letter A, the moment of birth. This is exactly what *Brulard* attempts to do, reenter the moment of birth as text in order to see himself objectively.

The second sketch (figure 1.4) has a similar context to the first: the narrator ridicules successful politicians and financiers who decide to add to their megalomania by taking up literature (a vice rampant during the Restoration and July Monarchy, according to Stendhal). This second sketch is more elaborate than the first, since it now contains six routes instead of four. From left to right, they are “‘F’ la route de la folie” (“‘F’ the route of madness”), “‘L’ l’art de se faire lire: Le Tasse, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mozart” (“‘L’ the art of getting oneself read: Tasso, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mozart”), a route with no name, “la route de la considération publique” (“route of public esteem”), “‘P’ Route des bons préfets et conseillers d’Etat: MM. Daru, Roederer, Français, Beugnot” (“‘P’ Route of good Prefects and Councilors of State: Messrs Daru, Roederer, Français, Beugnot”) and finally “‘R’ Route de l’argent: Rothschild” (“‘R’ Route of money: Rothschild”) (290). Five routes have a small letter “B” assigned to them indicating that they are “Routes prises à 7 ans, souvent à notre insu. Il est souverainement absurde de vouloir à 50 ans laisser la route R ou la route P pour la route L. Frédéric II ne s’est guère fait lire et dès 20 ans songeait à la route L.” (“Routes taken at seven years of age, often unconsciously. It is supremely absurd at 50 years of age to want to abandon Route R or Route P for Route L. Frederick II could hardly get himself read and already at 20 he thought about Route L.”). It is “sovereignly [i.e., supremely] absurd,” since only a sovereign like Frederick II would attempt it. It should be noted here that, although he expressed interest in

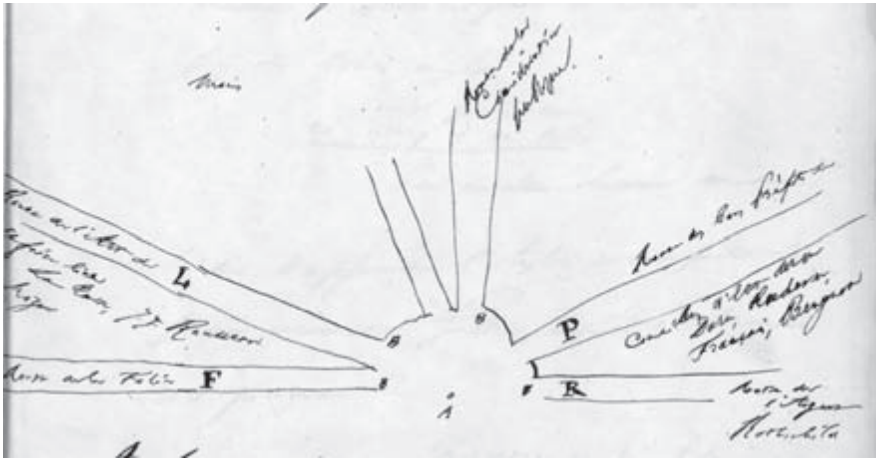


Figure 1.4. Routes taken at various stages of life. *Vie de Henry Brulard*, R299, vol. 2, no. 851, folio 424. Courtesy of Bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble.

writing plays “à la Molière” as he says early in life, Stendhal/Beyle did not publish until after his public career (“auditeur au Conseil d’Etat”) ended with the fall of Napoleon I. Stendhal is himself the best example for why the proposition that one cannot change directions in life is invalid. The road is taken at the age of seven, “often unconsciously,” the age of reason, and the age when Brulard lost his mother. The destiny of the text is determined by this event, but Beyle/Stendhal’s destiny is that of someone who follows more than one path at the same time.

The significance of the letters is left playfully ambiguous, like the road without a name. Just as the analytic maps contain ambivalent letters (H, B, M) which could represent the narrator in the past or present, these letters ostensibly signify any individual, but more often refer indirectly to the narrator: is the moment of birth “A” because it is the first letter of the alphabet, and if so, why are five of the six paths labeled “B” (the second stage in development, or the paths attempted by Brulard?); is it “L” for “littérature” or “lire” (Sartre’s distinction between life’s two great divisions, writing or reading), “R” for “Rothschild” or for “riche,” “P” for “public” or for “préfet”? As in the view of Rome, the first thing that is mentioned is the location of the subject (San Pietro in Montorio, or here “A” the moment of birth”), then the periphery is described since the labels on the various roads are found at their end. Reading from left to right, the two roads on the left (“Folie” and “Littérature”) move toward the subject at “A”; obviously Beyle/Brulard associated himself with literature, and in this text with madness, even if he states perhaps only rhetorically

“Rien n’empêche ma folie” (“Nothing prevents my madness”) (428). The route with no name points directly to the word “mois” (“month”) written in the preceding paragraph and perhaps referring to its homonym “moi” (Brulard could be considered to occupy the place between literature and public esteem, or taking a road with no name). The path of “public esteem” stands directly above “A” moving neither toward nor away, perhaps reflecting Stendhal’s varying success as public official and diplomat. Finally, the roads of money and power are directed away from point “A,” since Stendhal and his narrator had little of either.

These sketches would seem at first to describe a general theory of career advancement and the choices available to men of Stendhal’s generation in the way that the *Rouge et le noir* was supposed to be a “chronicle of the nineteenth century.” One could make an analogy to the view of Rome: anyone looking out from San Pietro would see more or less what the narrator describes. And yet, the “geometric figure,” as well as the bird’s-eye view, is encoded with very personal significance, containing the names and achievements of friends and acquaintances, letters with elliptical meanings, and especially hints concerning his life’s itinerary. Unlike most of the drawings which represent a particular moment in time, these two outline past and future, transcending the present, but also, perhaps, the autobiographical discourse, since the itinerary they trace reinscribes the personal into the universal.

The semicircles found between the “moment of birth” and the various roads explain best the role of the two distinct cartographic systems in the text. If we consider, as the text itself claims, that Brulard/Beyle’s career began when he went to Milan with Napoleon’s army in 1800, then the empty space not gridded, the void contained in the semicircle, corresponds to the time period recounted by the *Vie de Henry Brulard* between the first “je vais naître” and the second. Similarly, in the first chapter with its view of Rome, there is no mention of his childhood in Grenoble, only the date of birth and the date 1800. This void indicates the difference in the text between what is recounted in *Brulard* and the life of Stendhal. The name Henri Beyle is inscribed throughout the text as guarantor of autobiography, as a sort of personal graffiti or a way to appropriate this textual “Life.” The other, affective cartography has the opposite effect: to maintain the distance of the author from the text; to resist the universalizing tendency of language; in short, to prevent the destruction of the “dazling” [*sic*] of emotion and affection. The personal is erased from the surface of the text, but visible, as in a palimpsest, underneath the layers of time.

The “Dazling” of Memory

Representation, in all of its forms, is problematized throughout the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, to a degree which is much more evident than in Stendhal’s “realist” novels.⁷ Indeed, there prevails a constant fear, or hope, that the text will cross genre lines and “fall” into the novel: “Là, ce me semble, a été mon approche la plus voisine du *bonheur parfait*. Pour un tel moment il vaut la peine d’avoir vécu . . . Que dire d’un tel moment sans mentir, sans tomber dans le roman?” (407) (“There, it seems to me, was the closest I have gotten to *perfect happiness*. For such a moment it is worth having lived . . . What can be said of such a moment without lying, without falling into the novel?”). A “true” autobiographical narration that represents objective facts occupies figuratively a higher position than the novel, a genre that not only does not represent reality, but “lies” about it. For Stendhal’s narrator, any description of facts tainted by subjective emotion is incapable of a truthful representation. At best such description is incomprehensible to the reader, since the content is too personal; at worst it creates an alternative narrative that would imitate the “flat” novels of Sir Walter Scott, a literary supplement to memory’s lack. This hyperbolic distrust of descriptive representation is most acute during the narration of emotionally charged events. The narrator systematically despairs of any faithful rendering: “La sensation présente absorbait tout, absolument comme le souvenir de la première soirée où Giul[ia] m’a traité en amant. Mon souvenir n’est qu’un roman fabriqué à cette occasion” (420) (“The present sensation absorbed everything, absolutely like the memory of the first evening when Giul[ia] treated me like a lover. My memory is only a novel fabricated on this occasion”); “En me réduisant aux formes raisonnables je ferais trop d’injustice à ce que je veux raconter” (428) (“By reducing myself to reasonable forms I would commit too much injustice against what I want to say”). As the analyzing maps fail to grasp the totality of the subject and threaten to invent what they cannot represent, the “reasonable forms” of language become an unjust supplement.

The intensity of emotion exceeds not only the capacity of linguistic description, but also of memory itself. The narrator can only recall the sentiments surrounding the event, not the event itself: “Je n’ai aucune mémoire des époques ou des moments où j’ai senti trop vivement” (122) (“I have no memory at all of the periods or moments when I felt too vividly”). When description is not avoided altogether, a variety of rhetorical devices appears in the text that attempt a reconstruction of memory. Abstract and banal adjectives such as “bonheur” (“happiness”), “beau,” and “parfait”

(“perfect”) are used to describe feelings and situations without providing any useful information. Foreign words and phrases express persons and ideas that are too evocative to be said in French: “my poor mother,” “my life,” “campo santo,” “fiasco,” “cette mort . . . me fit *pleasure*. Voilà le grand mot écrit” (177–78) (“This death . . . gave me *pleasure*. There, the great word is written”). Written and yet not written, “les grands mots” bypass the censorship regarding the sublime past; the sublime moment (good or bad) creates a sense of awe that surpasses understanding, rendering the event traumatic and thus unspeakable.

A recurring metaphor for the struggle with description reveals this mechanism of censorship:

Je vois des images, je me souviens des effets sur mon coeur, mais pour les causes et la physionomie néant. C’est toujours les fresques du [] de Pise où l’on aperçoit fort bien un bras, et le morceau d’à côté qui représentait la tête est tombé. Je vois une suite d’images *fort nettes* mais sans physionomie autre que celle qu’elles eurent à mon égard. Bien plus, je ne vois cette physionomie que par le souvenir de l’effet qu’elle produisit sur moi.⁸ (191)

In the manuscript a blank exists, perhaps indicating an intention of returning to the text, or at least suggesting a temporary lack of memory. The editor has supplied “Campo Santo” (which appears elsewhere in the text), Pisa’s renowned monumental cemetery, where colorful medieval frescoes of heroic battle scenes are placed uncannily behind ancient Roman marble sepulchers. The image produced by the aging (or mutilation) of the frescoes evokes dismemberment and decapitation, thus indirectly referring to what language will not express, the fragmentation of the subject. Similar to the images of dismemberment in the view of Rome, Brulard’s personal memory is linked to universal memory (the coexistence of medieval, classical, and modern reminders of death), hallucinating the ghosts of the past and the unweaving of the textual subject. The act of re-remembering, of seeing the “physiognomy” of the past is too traumatic (or too revealing) and so can only come about through metaphor and wordplay, by studying the reaction of the subject, “the effect they had on me.” The narrator vows not to describe events, but only the (sentimental and objective) effect the events had on him. The best description would be no description at all.

The final chapter of *Brulard* could be seen as the culmination of this threat of representation as the narrator, “un amoureux fou,” progressively loses his capacity for language. The “life” narrative of Henry Brulard abruptly ends when he arrives in Milan, “le plus beau lieu de la terre”

(426) (“the most beautiful place on earth”). The first few pages describe in detail his arrival on horseback and his meeting with his relative Martial Daru. The text is accompanied by precise maps of Milan. But when he tries to outline the “bonheur céleste et complet” (“the celestial and complete happiness”) of the succeeding days and months, and in particular his love for Angela Pietragrua, the narrator stops completely, apologizing for the excess of his emotions. The difficulty in representing Angela dates back to the *Journal*, since there is only one oblique mention of her in 1800. He decides three times to summarize, analyze, and catalogue the events and experiences, as he had done at the beginning of the text in the second chapter, without being able to write a single sentence. He then asks the reader to skip fifty pages to excuse his poor memory, but the novel ends a page later, leaving the reader in a void. The appeals for the patience of the reader, the questions as to how to describe perfect happiness without appearing insane, and the anguish at remembering a past too vivid, multiply and become more acute as each sentence becomes shorter. In the manuscript, the handwriting becomes progressively larger, each sentence forms its own paragraph, as if Stendhal were trying hopelessly to fill up the page with (empty) description. The work closes abruptly, undoing everything that precedes it with the final sentence: “On gâte des sentiments si tendres à les raconter en détail” (459) (“One spoils such tender feelings by recounting them in detail”). Has he suddenly discovered that all the “sentiments si tendres,” what the narrator had previously claimed were the real object of the text, have been spoiled? That the text has ruined for the author everything that it has described?

The idea that narrating feelings in detail can in some way spoil or ruin them is a constant in Stendhal’s autobiographical works. Already in the journal entry of 1805 (thirty years before the writing of *Brulard*), Stendhal writes, “Je n’écris plus les souvenirs charmants, je me suis aperçu que cela les gâtait” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 715) (“I no longer write charming memories, I have discovered that that spoils them”). One of the main stylistic traits of Stendhal, an almost stoic absence of detail, is theorized in one of his earliest writings. At least ten different formulations of the same sentence exist in the *Journal* and the *Souvenirs d’égotisme*. In the *Vie de Henry Brulard* this theme is developed and refined. The location of “one spoils . . .” as the last sentence marks its culmination as the last word in Stendhal’s “autobiography,” and the last time he expressed frustration at the harmful effects of writing.

The very act of converting an event into language, reducing it to metaphor, takes it out of the reach of memory. A precise objective rendering of memory necessarily kills the personal, the sentimental; as the *Journal*

indicates, “Je trouve froid ce que j’ai écrit dans l’enthousiasme” (*Oeuvres intimes*, 1300) (“I find cold what I have written with enthusiasm”). *Brulard*’s narrator aims at the destruction of the “dazling” [*sic*] of an event, since an excess of sentiment distorts vision. The dominant form of cartography in the text, the “military” or “mathematical” analysis, exaggerates this distance from the event, reducing Brulard to an initial or a dot. By the text’s own admission, the result of this analysis, of this classification, would be the erasure of memory, a substitution of the subjective by the objective. Thus the act of writing the self in text, of engraving one’s memories with mathematical precision and distance not only spoils the “dazling” of events, the tenderness of feelings, but actually erases memory, erases being. As the view of Rome and the “figures géométriques” have shown, the narrative of Henry Brulard does not correlate with the schema of Beyle’s life; Brulard is written text but unwritten or scratched-out memory. It is as if childhood memories must be erased, the link with Grenoble cut, in order for the individuation of the adult to take place.

Representations (writing, drawing, maps, engravings) enter into the mind and replace memory, threatening the self for the construction of the subject. All signs are conventions, whether linguistic, mathematical, or aesthetic, and therefore signifiers can never match that to which they refer. And yet the *Vie de Henry Brulard* is a text that fetishizes the ambiguity of language, that lives for and by the “danger” of the free play of meaning; any inscription of the subject, as the first chapter has shown, is reliant upon textuality.

Brulard as textual subject is both read by future readers and reads, inscribes himself within other texts (*Tristram Shandy*, *Zadig*). The reader constructs and deconstructs the text, just as the text frames and destabilizes the reading subject. The autobiographical simulacrum allows for a closed cycle of division and individuation of the subject. The “textuality” of the text as a game of multiplicity of meaning is guaranteed by the author’s premature “death” (he can no longer honor the “autobio(thanato)graphical pact”), his ambiguous textual signature (the “five” letters in Brulard, the reader of the *Henriade* and the *Bélisaire*, the “point H”), and the fact that it is left “unfinished,” the reader being encouraged to skip fifty pages ahead.

But the game is fixed, the cycle of meaning is already inscribed in the text. Beyle’s memories, his personal experiences, that which cannot be confided to language, are erased from the text, protected from autobiography. Beyle/Brulard/Stendhal is reader and text, the meaning and the arbiter of meaning. Stendhal’s narrator suspends the autobiography, in effect killing “Henry Brulard” to save Henri Beyle.

Stendhal's Privilege

The *Vie de Henry Brulard* produces the illusion of an objective distance between the author and the subject of his text (himself) by staging the birth of a new subject, simulating the "Life" of Brulard as text. The autobiographical is now displaced, its presence ensured by the game of textuality but nevertheless always questioned by it. Brulard is simultaneously an inscription of Beyle and also a citation of other ambiguous texts. The distance or perspective gained in this textualization or emblemization of the self is affirmed as well as destabilized by the eruption of image in the text. "Cartesian," analytic maps provide for an alternate play of meaning that multiplies the possibility for referentiality the more it tries to define and delimit the subject. The novel maps formed by other key "cartographic" moments in *Brulard*, however, seek to recuperate the self, the personal, remove it from the dangerous effects of textuality. The view of Rome unfolds the totality of time and space from memory. Beyle/Stendhal kills Brulard, simultaneously gaining control of the textual game while ensuring that the game will still be played.

The last stage of this autobiographical progression would be the "fall" of the text into the novel, the great fear and ultimate desire of *Brulard*. Chronologically, the entrance of Brulard/Beyle into Milan almost coincides with that of the French lieutenant in Stendhal's novel *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Almost, but not entirely, since the autobiographical referent is now lost. Similarly, the hero of that novel, Fabrice del Dongo, may be the son of the French lieutenant or even of Beyle, but there is nothing in the text to support the hypothesis except the coincidence of his conception and the lieutenant's passage. The novel, free of autobiography's paternal hold on meaning, unleashes the power of textuality almost to excess (the encoded signals exchanged through Fabrice's prison window are paragraphs long, "expressing" emotions and sighs). Truth, the obsession of Stendhal's autobiography, is detoured in favor of literary invention, of lies.

The impossibility of describing Italy in *Brulard* has been overcome through the relinquishing of the analysis of the self for the creation of myth. In 1840, Stendhal wrote a short list of "privileges," a sort of wish list of imaginary powers (invisibility rings, immunity from impotence, a steady income, etc.) that "God" would bestow on him:

God me donne le brevet suivant: . . . Article 7. Quatre fois par an, il pourra se changer en l'homme qu'il voudra. . . Ainsi, le privilégié pourra, quatre fois par an, et pour un temps illimité chaque fois occuper deux corps à la fois. (*Oeuvres intimes*, 1560)⁹

Stendhal's seventh privilege grants him the one power he already had in his novel maps, the power to occupy various identities at the same time. The literally countless pseudonyms, the literary characters whose lives curiously follow his own (Julien, Fabrice, Lucien), and Brulard, the textual subject between character and pseudonym, allow Beyle a second life in the text. Beyle turned Stendhal will forever be a novel self, immaterial and fleeting, bound to the destiny of the novel.