ABSTRACT

Personal journals are often seen as merely historical documents, but this is not the case. In *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* by Henriette-Lucy Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet, we find a literary text. This self-proclaimed “simple journal” proves to be a literary endeavor that can be compared with canonical writings of the same period. Written in the first half of the nineteenth century, La Tour du Pin’s work is influenced by authors such as Daniel Defoe, François-René de Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and Jacques Delille. I begin this work with detailed character studies and pay special attention to the role of gender. Chapter one is devoted to La Tour du Pin’s use of the female body and constructions of women’s identity. This is best demonstrated in a discussion of Henriette-Lucy, the main character and heroine. In chapter two I direct my focus to the men in the text. I work with Naomi Schor’s assertion that it is difficult to create representations of men in women’s literature. Chapter three culminates in a literary analysis of La Tour du Pin’s work. Here, I compare her text to those of the canonical authors mentioned above. I use the American episode of her work as a literary case study and explore her treatment of common tropes used in representations of America in
literature: country existence, slavery, portrayal of American Indians, and religious conversion.

In chapter four I return to a focus on the main character. I employ Kathleen Woodward’s definition of the mirror stage of old age to address the tensions created by aging and I explore La Tour du Pin’s use of age within her text to illustrate her version of the life cycle and the stages of which it consists. In conclusion, Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans presents an interesting case for the discussion of fiction versus reality. In this work the line between literature and history is blurred and we see the creation of a narrative that exists between the two.

INDEX WORDS: Autobiography, Memoir, French literature, France—18th Century, France—19th century, French nobility, Women’s writing, Women’s history, Female body in literature, Masculinity in literature, Age in literature, Henriette-Lucy Dillon Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet, Daniel Defoe, François-René de Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Jacques Delille
A LA RECHERCHE D’UNE HISTOIRE PERDUE: THE FICTIONALIZATION OF PERSONAL HISTORY IN JOURNAL D’UNE FEMME DE CINQUANTE ANS BY HENRIETTE-LUCY DILLON, MARQUISE DE LA TOUR DU PIN DE GOUVERNEN

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents who have helped me in different ways to become the person that I am. This dissertation is for my mother who is my constant source of support and love, and for my father who has always been with me though no longer physically present.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me to arrive at the completion of this dissertation. I would first like to thank my major professor, Dr. Doris Kadish, who has been an inspiration from the start. She suggested a study of Henriette-Lucy and I wisely took her advice. She has been invaluable to me as a mentor and I am eternally thankful for the opportunity to work with her. I would also like to thank my committee members: Drs. Nina Hellerstein, Catherine Jones, Jonathan Krell, and Timothy Raser for all of their work and patience. It has been a long journey to a completed work and I am appreciative that they have stood by me and have given me superior feedback along the way. They have always provided the intellectual support that I have needed.

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I thank in particular, Dr. Debbie Bell, who has always been there to ask the foreboding question “Have you turned in that chapter yet?” I dreaded the question, but I needed to hear it. I thank her for always asking. Amy Hernandez, you helped me to follow “the plan.” Though we
spent mere weeks in library our time there led to a completed “thes-ertation” and the solidification of a friendship. I would like to thank John Bash, my partner in all things. You have always helped me to remember that happiness is necessary for success and have helped me to discover it. I will be forever thankful for your unconditional support of and belief in me.

Finally, I extend my thanks and admiration to Henriette-Lucy Dillon, the Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet. Her remarkable life and willingness to record it has provided me with an amazing opportunity to explore her world. I know this is not the end of my work with her and I look forward to the new challenges she will present.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>.................................................................</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION. ..........................................................................................................................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WRITING THE FEMALE BODY ......................................................................................................</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MASCULINE ............................................................................................</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENT’S LITERARY SOUL .............................................................................</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONTENDING WITH AGE: THE CYCLE OF LIFE ..............................................................................</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUSION ..............................................................................................................................</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>...............................................................................................................................................</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“The only way you can write the truth is to assume that what you set down will never be read. Not by any other person, and not even by yourself at some later date. Otherwise, you begin excusing yourself. You must see the writing as emerging like a long scroll of ink from the index finger of your right hand; you must see your left hand erasing it. Impossible, of course. I pay out my line, I pay out my line, this black thread I’m spinning across the page” (Atwood 283).

Margaret Atwood adeptly addresses the difficulty presented in writing a truth and the ultimate challenge of the memoirist. The space created by those who write personal journals and memoirs cannot help but reflect an urgent need to be heard, to be remembered. This desire becomes more pressing in times of political and social upheaval, as was the case in the years following the French Revolution. At this time, France was in a transitional state that continued for decades. Returning émigrés brought with them nostalgia for a world that could no longer exist. Not surprisingly, the years spanning 1789 to 1848 saw a rise in the number of autobiographical texts, particularly those written by women. Amateur autobiographers intent on recapturing the past blurred the borders between historical documentation and literary creation to a point of near dissolution. For women in particular there was more to writing than reliving lost youth. Critic Henri Rossi advances the idea of a two-fold nostalgia that manifests in these texts: “nostalgie d’un monde aristocratique que, politiquement, elles regrettent car il assurait la prééminence de la caste à laquelle elles appartiennent; mais aussi nostalgie d’un univers dans lequel leur sexe exerçait une puissance qu’elles sentent désormais fragilisée, voire anéantie à jamais” (16). In post-Revolutionary France, women lost many of the rights and privileges they formerly held and were left with fewer possibilities for effecting change. Many rediscovered
their voices through writing even if they never witnessed or desired publication of the texts they penned. As Atwood expresses above, writing becomes an act for itself. The author and reader remain at a distance from the creation though it is through them that it comes into existence.

* * * *

Henriette-Lucy Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet, is a shining example of one such writer. The text written by the Marquise de La Tour du Pin is presented under many titles. In French it is commonly named Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans,\(^1\) whereas in English the titles range from the simple, The Memoirs of the Marquise de La Tour du Pin,\(^2\) to the more fanciful, Recollections of the Revolution and Empire\(^3\) and Laughing and Dancing All the Way to the Precipice.\(^4\) The true title of the work, however, can never be known if we are to believe its author who claims never to have desired its publication and to have written it solely for her son. The editor of a current French edition and descendant of La Tour du Pin, Christian de Liedekerke Beaufort, expresses his opinion in a note to the preface:

> Je lis en marge de son manuscrit : “Le 14 mai 1849, ayant lu une partie du cahier à mon fils (à Pise), je me suis aperçue que cela l’avait ennuyé, ce qui a été une petite humiliation pour mon amour-propre que je lui pardonne très volontiers.”

Ainsi non seulement la marquise n’écrivait pas pour être lue, mais la seule personne dont elle pouvait espérer, dans l’intimité, susciter l’intérêt, la décourage.

Si elle poursuit sa rédaction c’est donc vraiment et uniquement pour elle-même.

(447)

While this is a potential interpretation of her margin notes, others are equally plausible. She could have misinterpreted her son’s comments and he could have been a poor critic. It is also possible that she is simply playing the role of the overly and wrongly persecuted writer, a common literary technique. As such, it could merely be a note indicative of the need for further revision. It seems that she was continually revising the text because there are significant discrepancies in the dates mentioned in the work. Despite the impossibility of knowing the true intention of the author, she did write a book and thus produce an obvious subject for textual analysis. In fact, in the introduction to the first American edition of the book published in 1971, Peter Gay explains, “Henriette-Lucie Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin, begins one of the most instructive documents to come out of France about the Revolution and Napoleon. Whatever her intentions, she did write a book, and a fascinating one” (4a). The fascinating nature of her stories and the historical import of her accounts are accompanied by a clear interest in a literary endeavor, as we will see.

Since the life of the historical figure is closely tied to that of the character represented in the work. Thus, it is necessary to first present the actual Henriette-Lucy. As described by her great-great-grandson and the editor of a current French edition of her memoir, “Elle appartenait à une famille dont l’illustration est à l’image même de la noblesse la plus ancienne, fidèle non à des patries étroites, mais à des souverains et aux principes que ces monarques incarnaient” (11-12). As a member of the aristocracy she enjoyed certain privileges that were unavailable to other

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5 For example, when describing her “belles dents” in chapter four we read, “Je les conserve encore intactes à soixante et onze ans” (60). This makes the year 1841, twenty-one years after having begun the memoir. Because this episode is so near the beginning, this interjection is indicative of the theory that she was perpetually revising the text.
women. La Tour du Pin’s privilege extends beyond that determined by class. The version of herself that she creates in her work designates her as an exceptional woman. Geneviève Fraisse describes this phenomenon and the duality realized in such a character: “soit il est porteur de promesses (l’exception sert d’exemple, peut faire règle à l’avenir), soit il indique une anomalie indépassable, quasiment une minorité dans le genre féminin” (65). La Tour du Pin satisfies both of these categories. Though this may seem to be contradictory, it is important to take into account the passage of time and its effect on both the perception of society and the self-perception of La Tour du Pin. As we will see, she permits herself behaviors uncommon for other women, but she does not cause revolutionary change amongst women, nor does she seem to seek it. When she reflects on these experiences many years later, her perspective is different and her voice within the text reflects the change. We as modern readers can also see her importance as a model for women, even if it was in spite of herself. She often discusses the importance of women’s education and never hesitates to take charge of situations without waiting for another person to do so. In this way, her example provided an alternative to societal norms even if her intention was only to live her life.

Henriette-Lucy Dillon was born in Paris in 1770 into an aristocratic family of English and Irish descent that had gained military celebrity in service of the French monarchy. She was the only surviving child of Thérèse-Lucy de Rothe Dillon and Arthur Dillon. Her younger brother died in infancy and it is to him that she ultimately attributes the shortening of her mother’s life for presumably both physical and emotional reasons (40). Thérèse-Lucy was a lady-in-waiting and notable favorite in the court of Marie-Antoinette. According to the writer, the queen “se

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6 The aristocratic place of the family is discussed in the preface to the work: “L’origine de cette maison irlandaise remonte à sir Henry le Dillon, autrement dit le chevalier Henri Delion d’Acquitaine qui, en 1185, fut envoyé par Henri II d’Angleterre sous les ordre du prince Jean en Irlande” (12).
laissait toujours séduire par tout ce qui était brillant” (36) and in her daughter’s eyes Thérèse was nothing short of perfection. Arthur was a general in the French military and played an integral role in operations in the Caribbean, eventually becoming the representative to the Estates General for Martinique. With Arthur abroad, Henriette-Lucy and her mother lived with her maternal grandmother, Lucy Cary de Rothe, and her great uncle, the archbishop of Narbonne.

Insistent that her childhood was all but non-existent, La Tour du Pin as an authorial voice states: “Je n’ai pas joui de ce bonheur sans mélange, de cet état d’imprévoyance si doux que j’ai vu depuis dans les enfants” (37). The antagonistic relationship between mother and grandmother contributed directly to Henriette-Lucy’s inward turn as a child. The harmful influence on personal development is further described:

Continuellement témoin des scènes affreuses que ma mère subissait, obligée de ne pas avoir l’air de m’en apercevoir, je compris, tout en arrangeant une poupée ou en étudiant une leçon, la difficulté de ma situation. La réserve, la discrétion me devinrent d’une nécessité absolue. Je contractai l’habitude de dissimuler mes sentiments et de juger par moi-même des actions de mes parents. (37)

Of particular interest in this quote is the word “situation.” To begin, this is likely a reference to her direct familial interaction and the contentious future that Henriette-Lucy would have with her grandmother. At the same time, this situation extends beyond her difficult family situation, and is thus suggestive of her interest in the plight of women. Though the author does not directly address women’s issues as an activist, she does illustrate the hardships that specifically affect women. The education of women, social practices and expectations, and the corporeal issues of health and pregnancy are only a few of the areas addressed by the author.

7 The narrative position of the authorial voice is that which Susan Lanser describes in The Narrative Act. Further discussion of this narrative strategy will occur later in the text.
The wisdom of a woman who had already lived an extraordinary life can be seen in these words. While implying that even at age ten she fully understood what her life was to be, this serves as an example of the meeting of the present and the past that so often occurs in the memoir. Critic Henri Rossi explains the effect of time on textual creation:

Si l’on ajoute à ces éléments d’esthétique littéraire les inévitables altérations qui affectent le réel tel qu’on le reproduit dans l’écriture vingt, trente ou quarante ans après que les événements ont eu lieu et qui lui donnent toujours la coloration d’une reconstruction poétique, on admettra que les mémoires désormais sont intégrés à l’ensemble de la création littéraire. (18)

Even in my reporting the biographical information pertaining to Henriette-Lucy, it is impossible to avoid the plurivocality created by the reconstruction of a life history written many years after events had occurred. In this particular case, the authorial voice in the text recreates her childhood with more experienced eyes and a deeper understanding of the situations that informed her development.

Thérèse died in 1782, leaving twelve-year-old Henriette-Lucy in the hostile environment cultivated by her grandmother. In 1784 Arthur remarried the Countess de La Touche, the aunt of the soon-to-become Empress Josephine. Though Henriette-Lucy understood her thirty-three-year-old father’s wish to marry and perhaps, his more urgent desire to have a son, her grandmother did not approve of the marriage. As a result, Henriette-Lucy met her stepmother only once and saw her father even less frequently than before. In 1786 he was appointed to a governmental position in Tobago after having been denied key positions in both Martinique and Saint-Domingue due, from Henriette-Lucy’s perspective, in large part to lack of support from her uncle, the Archbishop of Narbonne. The animosity between Arthur Dillon and Lucy Cary de
Rothe only increased when Henriette-Lucy’s marriage prospects materialized. Her father and grandmother had opposing views as to the appropriate choice of a husband, but ultimately the decision was in Henriette-Lucy’s hands.

In 1787, in defiance of her grandmother’s wishes, Henriette-Lucy married Frédéric-Séraphin de La Tour du Pin, a man whose presence she describes in the memoir as having sensed even before she knew of his existence. Her father had once mentioned Frédéric-Seraphin de La Tour du Pin as a potential husband, but she did not immediately respond to the idea. In 1785, while returning from the Estates General in Bordeaux Henriette-Lucy learned of the close proximity of the La Tour du Pin estate. Her response was as follows:

Cette réponse me troubla bien plus que je n’aurais cru devoir l’être par l’évocation de quelqu’un qui jusque-là m’était indifférent et que je n’avais jamais vu […] Je fus très préoccupée en traversant la rivière à Cubzac, dont le passage, comme je le savais, appartenait à M. de La Tour du Pin. En mettant pied à terre sur le rivage, et jusqu’à Saint-André, je me répétai intérieurement que je pourrais être dame de tout ce beau pays. Je me gardai bien, toutefois, de communiquer ces réflexions à ma grand’mère, qui ne les aurait pas accueillie avec bienveillance.

Cependant elles me restèrent dans l’esprit. (57)

She has not yet seen or met Frédéric, but his presence is felt. This introduction to their relationship establishes it, from the start, as an otherworldly experience.⁸

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⁸ A similar episode can be found in Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, published in 1813. The main character, Elizabeth Bennett admires the grounds of her future husband with similar thoughs in mind: “Elizabeth’s mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. […] They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!” (158-159).
After marriage plans with Adrien de Laval and Espérance de l’Aigle failed to transpire, La Tour du Pin’s family approached the Dillon-de Rothe family in order to discuss a possible union. The response of the sixteen-year-old Henriette-Lucy and the considerably older authorial voice as stated in the text is as follows: “C’était un instinct, un entraînement venant d’en Haut. Dieu m’avait destinée à lui! Et depuis cette parole, échappée comme malgré moi de ma bouche, à seize ans, j’ai senti que je lui apparentais, que ma vie était son bien. Je bénis le ciel de ma décision, en écrivant ces lignes, à soixante et onze ans, après avoir été sa compagne pendant cinquante années” (63). This was the final word on the marriage and the ceremony took place May 21, 1787. Unlike many marriages of the time that were arranged for reasons of inheritance and bloodlines, the La Tours du Pin enjoyed a loving relationship that lasted the duration of their lifetime together. With her marriage, Henriette-Lucy began to come into her own. As in all of her relationships, she was comfortable in the position of power though was not seen as domineering. In the introduction to the 1985 British edition of the memoir Margaret Crosland explains precisely this aspect of Henriette-Lucy’s character:

Her most valuable privilege was one she could never lose—that of intelligent femininity. She had the subtle gifts that accompanied this: she could organize her husband and family without dominating them, she could observe and value personal relationships with a kind of sympathetic detachment that cannot easily be learnt, while at the same time she expressed herself always from instinct and never with artifice, despite all she had seen of the unnatural life at the French court. (2)

Henriette-Lucy was a devoted wife to Frédéric and suffered cruelly in his absence as he was frequently away for official purposes and spent significant time in hiding. Her desire to remain
with him even takes her to jail with him from December 1832 through March 1833 where he
serves time for writing an article in defense of his son who took part in the Vendeen uprising in
La Guyenne.

The La Tours du Pin had six children and Henriette-Lucy additionally suffered numerous
miscarriages. They buried all but one of their children. Only their youngest son, Aymar,
survived his parents. He was their joy and the seemingly sole designated reader of his mother’s
memoirs. While the Le Journal does not provide great detail of the personal tragedies
surrounding the La Tour du Pin’s children, it is not difficult for the reader to glimpse her
connection to them. Editing of the original document must be taken into consideration as well
and is so stated by the editor:

Comme il était naturel qu’elle le fît en rédigeant des Mémoires de la marquise de
La Tour du Pin avait ajouté des notes personnelles concernant sa famille, sa vie
privée; elle s’est même trouvée conduite à des répétitions qui allongeaient la
trame du récit. Ce sont là les passages retranchés dans cette édition qui garde des
anciens tirages le même intérêt de fond et la même richesse d’expression. (19)

Nonetheless, her desire for a family life and her efforts to that end are clear.

As the Terror took hold of France, Henriette-Lucy feared for her young family. With her
husband in hiding, it was she who took the initiative to plan their escape to America after having
seen an advertisement for a ship sailing to Boston: “j’étais appuyée pensive sur la table, lorsque
mes yeux se portèrent machinalement sur un journal du matin qui était ouvert. J’y lus, aux
Nouvelles commerciales: « Le navire la Diane, de Boston, 150 tonneaux, partira dans huit
jours… »” (170). Henriette-Lucy quickly took the necessary steps to secure the safe passage of
her family. She met with Tallien to gain the appropriate documentation for the trip and
coordinated Frédéric’s return from hiding. Using passports under the name Latour, they left France March 10, 1794 to arrive in Boston two months later on May 12, 1794. Letters of introduction from the Princess d’Hénin helped them transition into Bostonian society and they soon found and purchased a farm in Albany where they settled peacefully in November of 1794. Welcoming prominent guests such as Talleyrand and La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt and making and selling their own private label butter, the La Tours du Pin remained in America until May 1796 when they returned to France in order to reclaim familial properties previously taken by the government. It was with great anxiety that Henriette-Lucy left her American farm: “Pour moi, j’éprouvai une toute autre sensation. La France ne m’avait laissé qu’un souvenir d’horreur. J’y avais perdu ma jeunesse, brisée par des terreurs sans nombre et inoubliables” (232). When Henriette-Lucy left America it was not the end of her émigré status. The family was not able to stay long in France and it soon became necessary to flee again. This time the La Tours du Pin chose to take refuge in England from late 1798 through early 1800.

With Napoleon in power, Josephine was given the opportunity to re-establish high society in Paris, but Henriette-Lucy did not choose to participate. At the same time she did respond when they summoned her. The family soon left Paris for monetary reasons, as she explained to Talleyrand:

“Que fait Gouvrnet? Veut-il quelque chose?”

“Non,” répondis-je, “nous comptons aller nous installer au Bouilh.”

“Tant pis,” s’écria-t-il, “c’est une bêtise.”

“Mais,” repris-je, “nous ne sommes pas en état de rester à Paris.”

“Bah!” dit-il, “on a toujours de l’argent quand on veut.” (281)

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9 Frédéric wished to move as close as possible to French-speaking Canada because, unlike Henriette-Lucy, he was not a fluent speaker of English (190-91).
The availability of money when necessary for survival underlines the importance of political connections. The associations Henriette-Lucy had with Napoleon and others ultimately contributed to the appointment of both her husband and her son to positions within the government. In the years to follow, Frédéric would receive appointments in Brussels, Vienna, Paris, and Turin and Henriette-Lucy would always accompany him. In a biography of Henriette-Lucy, Alix de Rohan Chabot says of Frédéric: “Le marquis de La Tour du Pin n’a certes pas été le diplomate le plus habile de la Restauration. Mais on ne peut lui denier—malgré quelques écarts de langage—la qualité de clairvoyance. Il a compris dès 1814 qu’on pouvait rester fidèle à la légitimité tout en l’adaptant aux exigences de l’évolution historique” (217). Whether he was the most strategic of statesmen or not, it mattered very little to Henriette-Lucy.

It becomes increasingly difficult to discuss Henriette-Lucy’s life after 1815 because that is where her memoir stops. Her eldest son, Humbert, is killed in a duel in 1816 and his sister Charlotte dies of tuberculosis the following year. The Marquise lives for her grandchildren, her son, and her husband until he too precedes her in death on February 26, 1837. As explained by Rohan Chabot: “Si elle continue à s’intéresser au présent, c’est dans le passé qu’elle se réfugie pour rester proche de ce mari qu’elle a aimé, soutenu, conseillé et consolé pendant tant d’années. Elle a remémoré tous les événements d’une vie marquée par les bouleversements d’une société qui paraissait si stable lorsqu’elle a vu le jour en 1770” (247). Henriette-Lucy’s life was both all the more remarkable and tragic because she outlived the majority of people with whom she was acquainted in life, dying in Pisa in 1853 at the age of eighty-three.

* * *

The Marquise de La Tour du Pin began her memoir, Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans, at age fifty though the precise timing can be questioned. She dates the opening page of ther
work January 1, 1820 the year she would turn fifty. At this time she is not yet fifty, but she is less than two months from the date. The text begins with her childhood and ends in 1815 though there is a significant amount of correspondence that speaks to the years after 1815. In her book *Blood Sisters*, Marilyn Yalom explains that the memoir was written in two sections: the first, written in 1820, describes the years 1778-1794 and the second, written in 1843, describes the years 1795-1815. The *Le Journal* was first published in 1907 by her family and continues to be a popular source of historical data. Her work describes the life of a lady-in-waiting and friend of the monarchy, a fleeing émigré, a mother and wife, a farmer and slave owner, and a displaced aristocrat. She creates an autobiographical portrait, a literary text and a cultural commentary within an historical document.

Notions of genre permeate *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* without attaching themselves definitively to the work. In the prefatory paragraphs, La Tour du Pin does little to clarify her literary intent beyond implying that she does, in fact, have one. Furthermore, she seems to seek a certain ambiguity with respect to genre. The descriptors she lists in reference to her work – livre, récit, histoire, journal, fragments, confessions (35) – present a multifaceted image that the reader is left to explore. These disclosures can be seen as historical, religious, or intimate. The opening lines: “Quand on écrit un livre, c’est presque toujours avec l’intention qu’il soit lu avant ou après votre mort. Mais je n’écris pas un livre. Quoi donc? Un journal de ma vie simplement” (35) provide a fleeting moment of clarity. Placing “livre” in opposition to “journal,” La Tour du Pin identifies her text within a genre and thus admits to reflection on the subject. It does not matter that she protests her desire for an audience and claims to write only for her son, she is a writer and produces more than a familial diary. Another interesting aspect of these lines is the progression from a general commentary about “one” who writes to the personal
admission that she is writing the journal of her life. There is a grammatical progression from third person “on écrit” to second person “votre mort” to first person “je n’écris pas” (35). This tactic displaces the focus momentarily from La Tour du Pin to the notion of life writing and demonstrates again that the author does see herself as more than a person keeping a simple, personal journal.

Henri Rossi categorizes the genre inhabited by these works written by women as the women’s aristocratic memoir. According to Rossi these texts embody “la continuelle reconstruction d’un univers englouti, ils constituent le chant du cygne d’une classe qui se sent progressivement dépossédée. A ce titre, ils sont œuvre collective aussi bien que personnelle. Chaque individu, par les mots qu’il dépose sur le papier, livre à la postérité le témoignage de ce que fut sa vie” (13-14). Though many of the texts deal most particularly with the individual lives of the authors, they also have implications for society at large and it is here that the complex intersection of history and literature takes place. Philippe Lejeune explains the multiple objectives of the autobiographical text in Le Pacte-Autobiographique: “l’acte autobiographique met en jeu de vastes problèmes, comme ceux de la mémoire, de la construction de la personnalité et de l’auto-analyse. Mais l’autobiographie se présente d’abord comme un texte littéraire”(7). This contention is of greatest interest to this study, that of Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans, the memoir written by Henriette-Lucy Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet. I will examine her texte less as an historical document than as a literary creation. Her work is recognized in historical circles as a useful and factual source, but my contention is that she

10 “Women’s aristocratic memoir” is my translation of Rossi’s term, “mémoire aristocratique féminin” that I will use throughout. I chose women’s rather than feminine as Rossi’s definition focuses on works written by women and not on specific “feminine” qualities that could imply a pejorative connotation.
inhabits a literary space that has long been ignored.\textsuperscript{11} While telling her story she creates a world that exists parallel to historical reality. In this parallel world she embellishes the truth without tarnishing its surface. Patricia Spacks identifies this phenomenon in the following way:

We assume that the happenings of autobiography are more or less given, although the writer obviously selects among his memories and shapes them to his purposes. Events in autobiography, then, do not create character in the same way as events in fiction. Yet one may feel that the central character of an autobiography has created a self then written the book to validate the creation. The writing itself may constitute the creation. (16)

\textit{Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans} reveals the analysis and journey that ultimately result in the creation of a self.

* * * *

In this dissertation I will explore \textit{Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans} as a literary text. The first chapter focuses on the representation of women in the text. Specifically I address the author’s use of women’s bodies, beginning with a discussion of clothing and physical appearance and ending with a focus on illness, health, and pregnancy. La Tour du Pin makes a strong statement about the importance of the body for women though she does not reduce women to a purely biological existence. Her use of the body as a narrative tool does not diminish the significance of the mind; rather, it emphasizes intellect and the complexity of the characters she shapes. Chapter one serves to familiarize us with the main character, Henriette-Lucy, and the circle of women in her life who influence and are influenced by her life.

\textsuperscript{11} One such example of an historian’s perspective is found in Eleanor DeLorme’s Book, \textit{Josephine: Napoleon’s Incomparable Empress}, published in 2002: “Lucie had been a \textit{dame du palais} to Marie-Antoinette, and her husband was governor of Versailles, so her memories of the former régime and the Empire are valuable though tinged with an air of superiority” (169).
In chapter two I shift the gender focus from women to men. Here I discuss the construction of male characters in the text using Naomi Schor’s contention that it is difficult to find images of men in women’s literature. I follow Schor’s proposal that rarefaction, multiplication, pastiche, and disfiguration are constraints under which men appear in women’s literature. The men within *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* can be categorized accordingly as: the new man, the anomaly, the mal du siècle hero, and the anti-René. Despite their presence, nonetheless, these men all serve to illustrate the greatness of their heroine, Henriette-Lucy. Her value is increased through their inability to self-actualize.

The character studies provided in chapters one and two form a solid base on which to build the argument that *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* is, in fact, a literary text. In chapter three I study La Tour du Pin’s work alongside canonical texts written by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Daniel Defoe, François-René de Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and Jacques Delille. I focus on the American episode within the narrative and discuss the relationships between the literary tropes used by the aforementioned authors and those used by La Tour du Pin. I look specifically at her use of voyage, her construction of slaves and Native Americans, and her treatment of religion.

In the final chapter I will return to the heroine, Henriette-Lucy with a discussion of aging and the life cycle. Kathleen Woodward advances the idea that there is a mirror stage of old age to which the aging population is subject. This second mirror stage is a reversal of the first in that there is a clear rejection and denial of the reflection that is affected both by the individual perceiver and the societal construct of old age. *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* is driven by the notion of time and age from the title of the work to the minute details of the narration. We will see the progression of Henriette-Lucy and other characters in this process and explore the
marked differences that present themselves according to gender, race, and age. The examination of Henriette-Lucy and her life will demonstrate the complexity of the space she inhabits. The women’s aristocratic memoir, Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans, finds its place in the space between reality and fiction.
CHAPTER 2

WRITING THE FEMALE BODY

Proust’s Marcel was not the first to complicate a literary text from a narratological perspective. As mentioned previously, the Marquise de La Tour du Pin creates such a situation in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans. Though the author of the memoir shares a name with the authorial voice and the main character in the text, she is neither of these fictional beings. As it would be for Rimbaud, “JE est un autre.” This memoir is not merely an historical document, but a fictionalized account of a woman’s life. The manner in which La Tour du Pin tells her story creates a persona who is distinct from the real historical figure. In order to navigate La Tour du Pin’s narrative it becomes necessary to address the narratological framework within the work. Susan Lanser’s construct, the authorial voice, is a successful match for La Tour du Pin’s method of narratology. To begin, the authorial voice addresses the complex relationships created in the combination of fiction and reality. Lanser explains:

Aesthetic convention permits an author to invent perceivers and speakers, to create imaginary voices and imaginary points of view. The fictional text can disperse, diffuse, or multiply its perceiving subjects, just as it can fashion objects of perception and relations between personae and their worlds. But the fictional speech act, because it is a speech act, appropriates the language of history. It is never wholly free from its ties to historical perception and communication; implied in ever act of fictional speech, therefore, are acts of perception and communication having their roots in the ‘real world.’ (The Narrative Act 4-5)
The invention of perceivers and speakers and the tension between fiction and history define the narrative strategy of La Tour du Pin.

The authorial voice thus bridges the gap between these worlds. Lanser describes the authorial voice as follows:

I use the term *authorial voice* to identify narrative situations that are heterodiegetic, public, and potentially self-referential […] The mode I am calling authorial is also ‘extradiegetic’ and public, directed to a narrate who is analogous to a reading audience. I have chosen the term ‘authorial’ not to imply an ontological equivalence between narrator and author but to suggest that such a voice (re)produces the structural and functional situation of authorship. In other words, where a distinction between the (implied) author and a public, heterodiegetic narrator is not textually marked, readers are invited to equate the narrator with the author and the narratee with themselves (or their historical equivalents). (Fictions of Authority 15-16)

The privileged position of the authorial voice allows for the combination of the narrator and author functions within one “person.” In *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* Henriette-Lucy, the character, is used to reenact the experiences lived by La Tour du Pin, the authorial voice. Henriette-Lucy becomes all that her creator wished to have been, all that she would have been but for lack of experience and knowledge. The distance between La Tour du Pin and Henriette-Lucy varies; fiction and reality meet from time to time. La Tour du Pin’s interventions in the text narrow the expanse between the pair and solidify the distinction between authorial voice and character.
Characters are established in the texts they occupy by the actions they perform and the bodies in which they perform them. The characters in *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* are much more than physical bodies; they are an important part of the narration of the work. In this chapter I will begin by addressing the superficial aspects of the body including clothing and physical appearance. *La Tour du Pin* devotes much of her memoir to meticulous descriptions of these characteristics. These seemingly surface details claim an infinitely more important function in the text than that of descriptors. Careful wardrobe choice and personal maintenance express Henriette-Lucy’s\(^{12}\) emotions and desires through the body. Nonetheless, outward appearance is not the only factor to consider. The corporeal nature of the characters also serves a narrative function within the text. Illness and pregnancy demonstrate the character’s strengths and weaknesses in a way that is less accessible through other devices. This emphasis on the bodily presence of the characters in the text leads to a deeper understanding of their psychology. It is in reading their bodies that their minds and emotions are better understood. In this chapter I will explore the nature of the female characters within *La Tour du Pin*’s text in an effort to define the heroine of the text, Henriette-Lucy.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a one-time lady-in-waiting to Marie-Antoinette and member of the aristocracy, the Marquise de *La Tour du Pin* undoubtedly saw the world through clothing. As a writer she knows, writes, respects, and holds high the rules of dress. Additionally, she holds those persons she writes about to the same high standards she imposes upon herself. She takes great pains to present the fashions that clothe all the characters in the story, and focuses much of her attention on the wardrobe of Henriette-Lucy. As such, Henriette-Lucy inhabits a world in which

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\(^{12}\) Henriette-Lucy from this point on refers strictly to the fictional character created by the author. *La Tour du Pin* will be used in reference to the authorial voice.
costuming is everything. The first significant clothing description reflects La Tour du Pin’s opinion of women’s formalwear and demonstrates her presence as distinct from Henriette-Lucy’s. The older and infinitely wiser La Tour du Pin addresses the past critically and comments what her reality must have been:

A cette époque il y avait moins de bals qu’il n’y en a eu depuis. Le costume des femmes devait naturellement transformer la danse en une espèce de supplice. Des talons étroits, hauts de trois pouces, qui mettaient le pied dans la position où l’on est quand on se lève sur la pointe pour atteindre un livre à la plus haute planche d’une bibliothèque; un panier de baleine lourd et raide, s’étendant à droite et à gauche; une coiffure d’un pied de haut surmontée d’un bonnet nommé Pouf, sur lequel les plumes, les fleurs, les diamants étaient les uns sur les autres, une livre de poudre et de pommade que le moindre mouvement faisait tomber sur les épaules: un tel échafaudage rendait impossible de danser avec plaisir. Mais le souper où l’on se contentait de causer, quelquefois de faire de la musique, ne dérangeait pas cet édifice. (38-39)

La Tour du Pin questions the societal regulations exacted upon women and explains the physical limitations of the required social attire. The vocabulary used to describe the ball uniform presents multiple and conflicting images: women as showpieces, women as victims of the revolution, and women as readers.

Initially, the reader encounters a striking description of the unconcealed elegance, glamour, and wealth; La Tour du Pin itemizes the necessary accessories including whalebone, feathers, and diamonds. The woman wearing this attire is of little importance compared to the adornments themselves. She who wears such clothing becomes little more than a decorative
piece, built into an “édifice.” The clothing reflects the woman’s role in society: to sit quietly and to be the object of admiration. Women are thus made into admirable structures of purely aesthetic value. Though presenting an idealized image, the high heels and heavy headgear make the mere wearing of such items dangerous. Dancing literally becomes torture, and the only acceptable activity becomes sitting quietly in place. Use of the term “naturellement” when referring to the negative transformation of dancing into suffering is consequential. There is nothing natural about the uniform imposed upon women; they become pure artifice.

La Tour du Pin takes the pain associated with this elaborate costuming a step further with her use of the term “échafaudage.” One cannot help but think of the revolution that would soon take place for Henriette-Lucy and is a significant period for the author, the authorial voice, and before long for the character. The Terror did not simply weigh people down with diamonds and powder, but cleanly removed heads with the guillotine. Women are the victims of a pre-revolutionary fashion tool that foretells a difficult period to come. This can also be seen as a commentary on women’s conditions in France. Women did not lose only comfortable clothing, but also freedoms. La Tour du Pin alludes to this with the guillotine reference. Losing their heads a bit differently than Marie-Antoinette soon would, women would soon become societal victims of the Napoleonic Code and those who would enforce it.

13 The Revolutionary period was especially difficult for La Tour du Pin who lost both her father and her father-in-law to the Terror and was forced to flee France because she could have suffered the same fate.

14 Later on, restrictions and ambiguities in the Napoleonic code would provide no clear definition of women’s status. Fraisse discusses Léon Richer’s book published in 1883, Le code des femmes: “le code civil s’ouvre sur une curieuse confusion: “l’article 7 distingue les citoyens de l’ensemble des personnes exerçant des droits civils, mais l’article 8 dit que tout Français jouira des droits civils; or, les femmes ne jouissent que de certains droits civils” (96). This calls into question whether women are first French or first female and is a question for which there is no real response.
The revolutionary symbolism is even more interesting when juxtaposed with that of reading and women’s education. Describing the unreasonable height of the shoes worn by women, La Tour du Pin uses the metaphor of reaching for a book on the highest shelf in the library. The use of such a metaphor indicates familiarity with books and reading and establishes her authority as a reader and educated person. Not only does La Tour du Pin paint herself as a reader, but as one who must seek volumes from the highest shelf because she has exhausted the other shelves and is still not satisfied. In this way, La Tour du Pin incorporates herself into the text as a role model for Henriette-Lucy. Another function of this metaphor is to interfere with the concept of the passive, beautiful, and victimized woman. Clothing and political turmoil may oppress, but La Tour du Pin reinforces that it is possible to survive and better oneself through education. Additionally, the feet, though constrained by the tall shoes, are positioned to more naturally reach the books that would otherwise be out of her reach. Although this description ultimately speaks more directly of the author than of the character, it serves as an appropriate introduction to Henriette-Lucy, who represents, but is not limited to, the above listed qualities. As an ideal heroine, Henriette-Lucy is able to pass from role to role flawlessly, always successful in her pursuits.

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A young Henriette-Lucy attempts to avoid complex clothing constructions, like that described above, though in even the most basic attire she is subject to others’ gazes. Her attitude on wardrobe evolves with her confidence and experience. Seen here, the day on which her marriage contract is signed, Henriette-Lucy is the picture of virginal innocence. She wears ostensibly simple, self-chosen clothing, but does not initially realize that she will still be on display before the world and, more importantly for her, her husband-to-be:
Ma toilette était très simple. J’avais conjuré ma grand’mère de la laisser à mon choix. On portait alors des robes lacées par derrière qui marquaient beaucoup la taille, et que l’on nommait des fourreaux. J’en avais de gaze blanche, sans aucun ornement, et une ceinture gros bleu de beau ruban avec des bouts effilés en soie brillante, qui venait d’Angleterre. On trouva que j’étais mise à peindre. (67)

In contrast to the aforementioned dress whose seemingly sole function is to weigh down the wearer, Henriette-Lucy’s dress is wearable. Her toilette does not relegate her to sitting quietly in the corner. Nonetheless, she begins the scene as an observer in the shadows because she is of little importance. Her father and not Henriette-Lucy signs the marriage contracts. When she is permitted to escape from the shadows, she finds herself to be the object of judgment stating, “on trouvait que j’étais mise à peindre.” It is not enough that she is beautiful; she must be a reified object, a still life awaiting its painter and furthermore a subject for study by the public at large.

The clothing is itself an issue, due largely to its coloring. Only a blue ribbon, indicative of royalty, complements the virginal white appropriate to pre-marital life.15 Not only does the blue equate her with royalty, but La Tour du Pin also intimates that the ribbon came from England and thus reinforces Henriette-Lucy’s elevated societal status. She is a person who can easily acquire goods from abroad. This also calls attention to both Henriette-Lucy’s and La Tour du Pin’s English/Irish descent and command of the English language. Additionally, there is an obvious religious comparison to be made with the Virgin Mary. She is presented as a child who is unsure of herself and feels awkward in front of a group of extended family. Her proximity to Frédéric, her fiancé, exacerbates her timidity and increases her discomfort. As the object of a masculine gaze, Henriette-Lucy feels increasingly anxious: “Un tel examen était insoutenable en

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15 See below for a more detailed discussion of the color blue.
présence du haut et puissant seigneur futur époux, comme on l’avait nommé vingt fois de suite en lisant les articles” (67-8). An encounter that began with comfort in the choice of her own wardrobe ends in betrayal by the authorial voice who reminds the reader that Henriette-Lucy is little more than a young girl overwhelmed by romantic ideals.

Another interesting component to this episode is the fact that Frédéric’s appearance does not matter in the least. It is of little consequence that Frédéric seemingly possesses rather negative qualities: “Je savais qu’il était petit et laid, qu’il avait contracté des dettes, joué, etc., toutes choses qui m’auraient à l’instant éloignée de tout autre. Et pourtant ma résolution était prise: je disais à Sheldon que je n’épouserais que lui” (62). Whereas she is required to be beautiful, he can be “petit et laid;” the marriage is still desirable for her. While Frédéric is seen as a reasonably good match, his appearance is not a major factor in the courting and marriage rituals. La Tour du Pin’s narrative intervention placing emphasis on the “haut et puissant seigneur futur époux” (68) makes light of the traditional hierarchy between husband and wife. This brief comment reinforces the youthful innocence of Henriette-Lucy in 1787 and is indicative of the emotional growth to follow. At age seventeen, Henriette-Lucy has not yet come into her own, but deals as best she can with her situation in life. Using the discomfort of a young bride to her advantage, La Tour du Pin draws on this instance to present her character as

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16 This use of style indirect libre demonstrates both La Tour du Pin’s ironic opinion and her familiarity with writing styles. Italics are those of the author.
17 La Tour du Pin has the advantage of age and wisdom that a young Henriette-Lucy does not yet have. La Tour du Pin takes this opportunity to mention ironically her once intimidated regard for Frédéric. This diminishes neither La Tour du Pin’s nor Henriette-Lucy’s feelings for him, rather, it demonstrates an awareness of changes in perspective that take place over time.
an inexperienced girl on the threshold of womanhood. Much like the young men depicted in the Bildungsroman, Henriette-Lucy must pass through stages in order to reach adulthood.\(^{18}\)

From the virginal blue and white, La Tour du Pin places Henriette-Lucy in a different circumstance in which she is far from being the nervous ingénue. Henriette-Lucy once again uses clothing to control the situation and to become the focus of attention. Invited to a ball by the Duke of Dorset, Henriette-Lucy stages a fashionable protest against his wardrobe imperative:

\[\text{Au bas des billets d’invitation, il avait mis fort cavalièrement ces mots: } \text{Les dames seront en blanc}. \text{ Cette sorte d’ordre me déplut. Je protestai en me commandant une charmante robe de crêpe bleu, ornée de fleurs de la même couleur. Mes gants étaient garnis de rubans bleus, mon éventail de nuance semblable. Dans ma coiffure, arrangée par Léonard, se trouvaient des plumes bleues. Cette petite folie eut son succès. On ne manqua pas de me répéter à satiété: } \text{Oiseau bleu, couleur du temps}. \text{ Le duc de Dorset lui-même s’amusa de la plaisanterie en disant que les Irlandais avaient mauvaise tête}. \text{ (95-96)}\]

In this case, there is outward defiance in the choice of wardrobe. Nonetheless, Henriette-Lucy’s rebellion was not a success to modern standards because the Duke ultimately dismisses her as both amusing and Irish.\(^{19}\) She defied an order without punishment, but did not effect large-scale social change. This circumstance is evidence of her status as an exceptional woman. Historian Geneviève Fraisse defines the exceptional woman as “une figure traditionnelle du discours masculin; tolérée, voire admirée dans son originalité, elle ne trouble l’ordre public que pour

\(^{18}\) This is also seen in chapter four where I discuss the stages of life through which Henriette-Lucy passes.

\(^{19}\) Here, not only does Henriette-Lucy face gender discrimination, but also ethnic discrimination. The Irish component to her identity explains her inappropriate behavior and the English counterpart increases her worth as a member of proper aristocratic society.
mieux renvoyer à la règle; elle fascine par la transgression même qu’elle représente” (La raison des femmes 53). Not only does she protest the uniform for the evening, but also she mounts a calculated attack against it. Her anomalous status thus permits a certain amount of rebellious behavior without consequence. Her actions amuse without upsetting the balance of society’s propriety, yet La Tour du Pin demonstrates the place of women as lesser than that of men.

The blue dress is also important because it links Henriette-Lucy to the royal family and is yet another indicator of her privilege and ability to act more independently than other women do. Her relationship to the Bourbons is complex and she alludes to it frequently. La Tour du Pin is herself a key figure in French aristocracy and displays this in her memoir. In fact, this is not the only mention of blue attire. In the discussion of Henriette-Lucy’s journey to the Estates General of 1783, she includes the following anecdote: “J’avais un domestique attaché à ma personne, [...] Il portait ma livrée, que nous étions obligés d’avoir en rouge, bien qu’il fût gros bleu en Angleterre, parce que nos galons étaient absolument semblables à ceux de Bourbon. Si nos habits eussent été bleus, notre livrée aurait ressemblé à celle du roi, ce qui n’était pas permis” (54). If only for the color of her insignia, Henriette-Lucy would be royalty. In an interesting way, Henriette-Lucy’s English ancestry makes her more French and thus saves her from the type of harsh treatment suffered by others with foreign connections, for example, Marie-Antoinette. Rather than explicitly discussing her relationship with the royal family, La Tour du Pin uses metonymy to indicate Henriette-Lucy’s connections. In this case, the color blue represents royalty.

Connections to the royal family and admirers in France show a change in Henriette-Lucy. No longer the blushing bride, she is more comfortable in her own skin. If we consider the Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans to be a type of female Bildungsroman, she has completed
another stage in her growth process. She takes the next step in her fashion exploits while abroad. When her husband receives an appointment to La Haye in 1790, she becomes the trendsetter and darling of the moment: “J’avais apporté beaucoup de choses élégantes de France. Bientôt je devins fort à la mode. On cherchait à me copier en toutes choses. […]” (141). Her “Frenchness” makes her popular with Dutch locals for whom the elegance of her attire is the key to her success. Later, when the family flees to America, in 1794, she is again admired for her clothing, yet in this situation, the fact that she assumes American-style clothing is what endears her to the masses: “Une chose m’avait rendue tout de suite très populaire. Le jour où je m’établis à la ferme, j’adoptai, sans témoigner la moindre surprise de ma métamorphose, l’habillement porté par les fermières mes voisines” (216-17). It is interesting to consider these two episodes together because La Tour du Pin’s heroine commands the same level of admiration through opposing means. In Holland, she is “à la mode” because she remains French and stands out from the rest of the crowd; in America, she blends in with the Americans to gain popularity. La Tour du Pin thus reinforces Henriette-Lucy’s uniqueness as a heroine.

Henriette-Lucy’s chameleon-like capabilities allow her both to blend in with the crowd and put forth the image of a confident woman, afraid of nothing. Nonetheless, Henriette-Lucy’s vulnerability presents itself upon her return to Europe from America. The family arrives in Spain wearing their typical American clothing. In this Spanish episode her American clothing creates distress rather than appreciation:

jamais de ma vie je ne me sentis aussi embarrassée qu’à ce moment. […] Nos robes de couleur et nos chapeaux de paille attirèrent bientôt une foule immense

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20 Henriette-Lucy’s popularity in Holland is even more impressive lest one consider the timeframe. While Frédéric is appointed “ministre plénipotentiaire” (136) in December 1790, the family does not leave for Holland until October 1791 and departs La Haye in December 1792 because Frédéric was replaced as minister in March 1792 (141-46).
d’individus de tout âge et de tout état: des matelots et des moines, des portefaix et des messieurs, tout anxieux de voir ce qu’ils considéraient sans doute comme deux bêtes curieuses [...] Cette indiscrète curiosité nous décida tout d’abord, ma compagne et moi, à nous vêtir comme les Espagnoles. Avant même de nous rendre à l’auberge, nous allâmes donc acheter une jupe noire et une mantille, afin de pouvoir sortir sans scandaliser toute la population. (236)

Her discomfort at being on display forces her to make a snap wardrobe decision. Though she quickly regains control of the situation, this incident reinforces how little control Henriette-Lucy has. Just as the elaborate ball gowns reduce women to mere mannequins, the American clothing transforms Henriette-Lucy into a sideshow. The individual is again lost to the clothing she wears. It is also worth noting that the description La Tour du Pin provides is hyperbolic. Though people would likely take notice of women wearing clothing that did not conform to their code of dress, it is questionable to assume that it would go so far as to be scandalizing. The exaggeration makes it possible to turn a change of clothes into a heroic act.

Similarly, clothing speaks when Henriette-Lucy wants to remain silent. Upon the family’s return from England Henriette-Lucy must establish a certificate of residence in order to demonstrate that the family has never left France. Once “le certificat fut signé et revêtu de tous les mensonges nécessaires” (282), Henriette-Lucy proceeds to the mayor’s office to complete the formality. It is here that the mayor notices her English wardrobe and states: “Cela n’empêche pas que toutes les pièces de votre habillement n’arrivent de Londres” (282).

21 Though never placed on the list of émigrés, the La Tour du Pin do not necessarily want to call attention to their luck. They were able to avoid this difficulty because of the altered names used to acquire passage to America and England: “J’avais pris, deux mois auparavant, un certificat de résidence à neuf témoins sous le nom de Dillon Gouvernet. Il fallait maintenant aller chercher un passeport au nom de Latour, et éviter celui de Dillon, trop connu à Bordeaux. Je me décidai à
Lucy seeks to conceal her travels, her wardrobe does not lie. Here we again find her in the midst of danger and intrigue, which La Tour du Pin demonstrates explicitly through her character’s wardrobe rather than through her actions. Despite the fact the mayor realizes that she was most likely out of the country, she suffers no consequence. At this point in the text, she is a practiced adventurer and mistress of careful dressing able to escape, if but narrowly, difficult situations.

The practicalities of the clothing business are as important as the display of the clothes. Henriette-Lucy is able to make, repair, and wash clothing; and uses these skills to help the financial situation of her family. She first learns how to sew and wash as a child eager to learn everything and states: “je voulais tout voir et tout savoir; apprendre tous les ouvrages des mains, depuis la broderie et la confection des fleurs jusqu’au blanchissage” (49). Going one step further La Tour du Pin gives the impression that Henriette-Lucy foresees the importance of these skills to her future: “je trouvais le temps de ne rien négliger, ne perdant jamais un instant, classant dans ma tête tout ce qu’on m’enseignait et ne l’oubliant jamais […] C’est ainsi qu’avec la mémoire j’ai acquis une multitude de connaissances qui m’ont été singulièrement utiles dans le reste de ma vie” (49). Upon arrival in the New World, she learns of the death of her father-in-law, requiring mourning clothes. The money for new clothing is unavailable and she chooses to make them herself (196). Once established at her farm, she undertakes much of the work including “l’ouvrage qui [la] fatiguait le plus [qui] était le blanchissage” (229). The one-time darling of the court is also equal to the task of survival, and thus demonstrates the strength of the heroine who can adapt to any environment. On the return trip to France, and during her stay in England, she continues her work as a seamstress to provide for her family (234-35, 267). During
periods of exile, clothing is more important for its earning potential than for its ability to impress. Clothing as means of survival adds a new twist to Henriette-Lucy’s image. Not only can she wear it well, she repairs it well. This proves the strength of her character and marks the completion of another developmental stage.

Age introduces another function of dress, and its effects permeate both the Le Journal and La Tour du Pin’s personal correspondence. Often away from Paris in the years following the period documented in her memoir, La Tour du Pin calls upon her young friend Félicie de La Rochejacquelin, the daughter of author Claire de Duras, to run clothing errands. An example of such a request is as follows:

Ma chère Félicie, voici le nonce qui vous porte ma plus belle nippe dans ce petit paquet: c’est une robe que je voudrais faire teindre en noir, mais avec un soin incroyable car vous voyez qu’elle est très belle […] J’en suis très pressée et je vous prie de songer en la faisant refaire que j’aurai cinquante-sept ans le mois prochain, quoiqu’il soit vrai de dire que j’ai une taille de trente-six ans. Mais je ne veux pas montrer cette taille […] n’oubliez pas les considérations morales sur l’âge et l’existence de la personne qui doit porter [cette robe]. (Une dame… 397)

This excerpt is typical of the wardrobe commentary that continues in La Tour du Pin’s correspondence. Very similar to the treatment of clothing in the memoir, the descriptions contain not only practical necessities such as color and material, but also how well the dress suits its owner. Age dominates this passage through the citing of both actual and perceived age. La Tour du Pin claims to have the body to flaunt and does not look her age, but is bound by the propriety required of her years. This mandate is in opposition to previous imperatives that

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22 I will treat the correspondence in the same way I treat the memoir itself. In her letters she also adopts an authorial voice and creates a new persona in Henriette-Lucy.
encouraged the display of her figure. Clothing thus becomes a mask that reflects upon the person it covers. An indicator of age and morality, the black dress is a serious matter for La Tour du Pin. With age, there is less interest in trend setting than in presenting the appropriate moral image. La Tour du Pin, the mature author of the correspondence, and Henriette-Lucy, the young character in the memoir, meet here in the fashion arena, as they are both subject to its rules. Clothing can be, at times, more important than the person wearing it, but the person remains even when the wardrobe dwindles.

La Tour du Pin claims to have begun her memoir at age fifty, a period during which she was nostalgic for her lost youth. It is through this optic that the reader must view the detailed physical descriptions of a young Henriette-Lucy. In the opening paragraphs of the work, La Tour du Pin describes her battle with aging: “Mon cœur est encore si jeune que j’ai besoin de me regarder au miroir chaque fois pour m’assurer que je n’ai plus vingt ans. Profitons donc de cette chaleur qui me reste et que les infirmités de l’âge peuvent détruire d’un moment à l’autre” (35). Just as the wicked queen of Charles Perrault’s *Snow White* looked into her mirror, hoping to find the fairest of them all, so does La Tour du Pin. The difference in this gaze is that La Tour du Pin looks in the mirror to remind herself that she is old; it is not about comparison with others, but comparison with herself. Nonetheless, La Tour du Pin is far from embodying a wicked queen. The difference between the fairytale queen and La Tour du Pin is that she does not seek vengeance against those considered more beautiful than she; rather, she looks longingly to the past where her beauty lies. It is through writing that she is able to preserve herself. The warm memories of a beautiful past allow her to present the only rival worth mentioning, the younger and ever-so-slightly improved version of herself:
Une forêt de cheveux blond cendré était ce que j’avais de plus beau. J’avais de petits yeux gris, très peu de cils, une petite vérole très grave, dont je fus atteinte à l’âge de quatre ans, les ayant en partie détruits; des sourcils blonds clairsemés, un grand front, un nez que l’on disait grec, mais qui était long et trop gros du bout. Ce qui ornait le mieux mon visage, c’était la bouche, avec des lèvres découpées à l’antique d’une grande fraîcheur, et de belles dents. Je les conserve encore à soixante et onze ans.23 On disait que ma physionomie était agréable, que j’avais un sourire gracieux, et malgré cela, le tout ensemble pouvait être trouvé laid. Je dois croire que beaucoup de personnes avaient cette impression, puisque moi-même je considérais comme affreuses plusieurs femmes qui passaient pour me ressembler. Cependant, une grande et belle taille, un teint clair, transparent, d’un vif éclat, me donnaient une supériorité marquée dans une réunion, surtout au jour, et il est certain que j’effaçais les autres femmes douées en apparence d’avantages bien supérieurs. (60)

This head-to-toe description gives the reader an accurate physical image of the heroine already well distinguished by her manner and style.

While the description focuses on Henriette-Lucy, there is a nearly equal importance placed on those who may have occasion to observe her. Twice “on” comments her appearance.

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23 This comment makes clear the interference of La Tour du Pin within the text, but it also underlines the timeline discrepancies that exist. If La Tour du Pin wrote the memoir beginning in 1820, it is not unreasonable to assume that she would have begun with her youth and proceeded chronologically. The mention of her age, seventy-one, implies either that she intensely revised her work, which goes against her claim of a “simple story of her life”, or that she did not write in chronological order. More likely, this is a literary device shows itself here as it is much more romantic to begin a work at age fifty, on January first, rather than to admit the true date. This is no different than the staged prefaces of eighteenth century novels like Lettres d’une Péruvienne, Ourika, or Manon Lescaut.
and “beaucoup de personnes” form an opinion of her. She is equally as ugly as women who may resemble her though she remains superior to them. The delicate construction of this literary portrait leads the reader to see Henriette-Lucy initially as modest, yet despite her self-critique, Henriette-Lucy is the standard for beauty. The image created of Henriette-Lucy demonstrates a poorly masked effort to make La Tour du Pin live forever through her beauty. Certainly, the self-criticism plays into the conventional literary modesty employed by any autobiographical writers, but even this betrays La Tour du Pin’s truest intentions. The use of proslepsis, or the act of calling attention to something in detail while claiming to pass it over, communicates La Tour du Pin’s wish to present Henriette-Lucy as the most beautiful of them all. For example, the disclaimer preceding the description states: “Il ne sera guère avantageux sur le papier, car je n’ai dû ma réputation de beauté qu’à ma tournure, à mon air, et pas du tout à mes traits” (60), and provides an almost comical introduction to the list of “traits” that comprise Henriette-Lucy’s beauty. What she did not openly state previously becomes clear in this description; in any group, Henriette-Lucy is the main focus. Beautiful, well dressed, and impeccably educated, she is that of which heroines are made.

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Turning from the picture-perfect heroine, we face those who live in the shadow of Henriette-Lucy’s perfection. Decidedly, even descriptions of others are ultimately about Henriette-Lucy. Before describing herself Henriette-Lucy states: “Je n’ai jamais eu la moindre prétention de me trouver la plus belle, et j’ai toujours ignoré ce sentiment de basse jalousie dont j’ai vu tant de femmes tourmentées” (60). This proclamation condemning her own sex excludes

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24 Interestingly enough, when she sees her husband for the first time she remarks, “Je ne le trouvais pas laid, comme on me l’avait annoncé. Sa tournure assure, son air decisive me plurent au premier coup” (66-67). They thus make the aesthetically ideal couple.
her from any culpability despite the fact that she just stated “j’effaçais les autres femmes.” The issue of jealousy amongst women becomes increasingly interesting when we examine La Tour du Pin’s treatment of Marie-Antoinette:

Cette malheureuse princesse conservait encore alors quelques petites jalousies de femme. Elle avait un très beau teint et beaucoup d’éclat, et se montrait un peu jalouse de celles des jeunes femmes qui apportaient au grand jour de midi un teint de dix-sept ans, plus éclatant que le sien. Le mien était du nombre. Un jour, en passant dans la porte, la duchesse de Duras, qui me protégeait beaucoup, me dit à l’oreille: « Ne vous mettez pas en face des fenêtres ». […] Cependant elle [Marie-Antoinette] se montrait généralement très aimable à mon égard, et me faisait de ces compliments à brûle-pourpoint que les princes ont l’habitude de lancer aux jeunes personnes d’un bout de la chambre à l’autre, de manière à les faire rougir jusqu’au blanc des yeux. (77-78)

Here, Henriette-Lucy is “better” than the jealous queen and not even the queen minds. Not only does this contribute to the heroine worship of Henriette-Lucy, but it also functions to detract from Marie-Antoinette. Demonization of Marie-Antoinette was common, but it is important that La Tour du Pin paints Henriette-Lucy, a clear royalist, as willing to pit herself against the queen when it serves her own needs. Fictional Henriette-Lucy is able to take such stance where La Tour du Pin would have been unable to act in this somewhat impertinent manner. Marie-Antoinette thus becomes the villain to Henriette-Lucy’s heroine. The jealousy she scorns is seen in Marie-Antoinette’s behavior. Comments such as this provide insight into La Tour du Pin’s view of the world. Though she rightly admits the respect due the queen, she does not often liken herself or her character to Marie-Antoinette in terms of manner and appearance without
reinforcing the falsity of the comparison. In fact, she seeks to distance herself from the

*Autrichienne* whenever possible.

The relationship to the queen diminishes further the closer Henriette-Lucy gets to the
start of the Revolution. She is mistaken, to her peril, for the queen by a seemingly angry crowd
until a young boy recognizes the error stating: “la reine avait au moins deux fois l’âge de la

*jeune demoiselle* et était deux fois aussi grosse” (105). Age and size distance her from Marie-

Antoinette, while reinforcing the fact that she can be associated with those in power. She aligns
herself with the monarchy or other ruling body, shifting her allegiance with the shifts of power.
She remains as a vestige of the forever-lost aristocracy. La Tour du Pin presents Henriette-Lucy
as a desirable commodity and again reduces a person to object status.

Once Napoleon comes to power Henriette-Lucy becomes a desired asset because she
belongs to a romanticized aristocratic past. In turn, Henriette-Lucy’s image is elevated through
her association with the emperor. Her increased status and importance further bolster her
strength as the heroine. Though she expresses no desire to participate directly in the lives of the
emperor and empress, she does what is asked of her and takes advantage of the relationship to
present herself as powerful. La Tour du Pin again reinforces the singularity of her heroine who
is permitted behaviors not allowed other women. Again, her appearance and status as a former
lady-in-waiting are key elements in the definition of the relationship. Her first encounter with
Josephine takes place at the request of the empress:

Dès que Mme Bonaparte connut […] ma présence à Paris, elle désirait que je vinssse chez elle. Attirer à soi une femme, jeune encore, ancienne dame de la
cour, très à la mode, voilà une conquête, si j’ose le dire, dont elle était très
impatiente de se vanter au premier consul. […] De toutes façons elle fut fort
aimable, et je vis clairement que le premier consul lui avait donné le département des dames de la cour et confié le soin de leur conquête quand elle en rencontrerait. La tâche n’a guère été difficile, car toutes se sont précipitées vers le pouvoir naissant, et je ne connais que moi qui aie refusé d’être dame du palais de l’impératrice Joséphine. (281-82)

Henriette-Lucy understands the empress’ intentions. Aware of her singular and exceptional status, she would be a conquest for the empress. Her refusal is risky, but she declines to be complicit in Josephine’s machinations. Additionally, Henriette-Lucy distinguishes herself from the other women who accepted to become Josephine’s attendants.

Henriette-Lucy’s aesthetic value is an issue for Josephine. The empress’ examination of Henriette-Lucy demonstrates a jealousy that rivals that expressed by Marie-Antoinette: “Elle m’examina de la tête aux pieds, et son attention se porta surtout sur une grosse tresse de cheveux blonds qui entouraient ma tête et dont ses yeux ne pouvaient se détacher […] elle ne put s’empêcher de demander si cette tresse était bien faite avec mes propres cheveux” (282). Just as the encounter between Henriette-Lucy and Marie-Antoinette reflected the queen’s jealousy, so does Josephine’s fascination with Henriette-Lucy’s hair. In this way, Henriette-Lucy presupposes that Marie-Antoinette and Josephine are bound by the same rules of etiquette with respect to their subjects. Josephine cannot help but focus on Henriette-Lucy, first she cannot take her eyes away, and then she cannot stop herself from asking about the hair. Though Henriette-Lucy provides no commentary to this incident, it is clear that in saying nothing, she speaks volumes. Henriette-Lucy does not explain her hair, implying that it is likely “her” hair and that she knows how beautiful it is. Implicit is a judgment of Josephine as a jealous and lesser woman than she.
Henriette-Lucy also presents herself in contrast to Josephine with respect to the treatment they each receive from Napoleon. She explains that while he literally dictates the wardrobe for his own wife (300), he is much more indulgent with her. Her status is then elevated above that of the empress. Textually, this episode is interesting because the discussion is introduced when Henriette-Lucy describes of her appearance at a ball while all are in mourning for the King of Denmark’s death (299). Henriette-Lucy wears what she has on hand, a gray dress. Napoleon jokingly questions her sincerity because she is not in black and she responds: “Pas assez [affligée de la mort du roi], Sire, pour sacrifier le bonheur d’être présentée à Votre Majesté. Je n’avais pas de robe noire” (299). He happily accepts this explanation from Henriette-Lucy, though the implication is that he would not react to Josephine in the same manner. Subsequent to this exchange is the following account of the empress’ fear of not following her husband’s wardrobe mandates: “L’empereur […] avait pris le temps de dicter l’ordre des journées de l’impératrice dans le plus minutieux détail et prévu jusqu’à la toilette qu’elle devait porter. Elle n’aurait ni voulu ni pu en déranger la moindre particularité à moins d’être malade au lit” (300). Whereas Henriette-Lucy makes wardrobe decisions with the goal of first satisfying her own standards, Josephine fears straying even slightly from her husband’s ideals. This element of Napoleon and Henriette-Lucy’s relationship continues throughout the work and translates to her interactions with other powerful men. For example, Napoleon requests that Henriette-Lucy serve as a “dame d’honneur” for the visiting queen of Spain. Her service for the queen is minimal in comparison to the efforts she makes for the king, indicating yet another instance of deference to the male in power. She well establishes this pattern throughout the memoir in a variety of situations, from her own familial situations with the archbishop of Narbonne to her dealings with Talleyrand and Tallien. Her wardrobe and appearance can be compared to that of the most
powerful women, yet it is the relationship to their husbands or partners that is of most value to her. Clothing gains the notice of important men whose attention elevates her importance in society.

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Henriette-Lucy has a certain amount of control over her appearance, but the same cannot be said for the health of her body and that of others. On the surface, the body is an object to admire or to critique for La Tour du Pin, but she does not ignore the more practical side of bodily discussion: health, and in the case of women, pregnancy and related women’s health issues. The body becomes at times a flawed machine and La Tour du Pin does not hesitate to bring this to the reader’s attention. From perilous and often fatal accounts of childbirth to general weakness in constitution, the people, and particularly the women, who populate the Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans are likely to be found in or near a sick bed.

The memoir begins with the slow and painful consumptive death suffered by Thérèse de Rothe Dillon. Against seeming insurmountable odds, a young Henriette-Lucy is an even more spectacular figure because she witnesses the suffering of her mother and overcomes the trauma of the situation. At age twelve, she is aware of her mother’s ailments. A mention of Marie-Antoinette accentuates the gravity of Thérèse’s situation: “La reine vint la voir et tous les jours un piqueur ou un page était envoyé de Versailles pour prendre de ses nouvelles” (44-5). While Henriette-Lucy describes her mother’s illness a few pages earlier as “une humeur laiteuse [qui] la tourmentait” (41), the Queen’s interest demonstrates the severity of Thérèse’s condition. This serves again to associate Henriette-Lucy with royalty and to firmly establish her as the heroine. In opposition to the many ailing bodies, including that of her mother, she is nearly always in good health. As was the case with the clothing and appearance descriptions, Henriette-Lucy is
described through the condition of others. The illness of other characters demonstrates her health and strength. Sickness and fatigue do not prevent Henriette-Lucy, the heroine, from completing her necessary duties as wife, mother and general role model. In fact, the few times she does resign herself to relaxation, it is for the benefit of her unborn child, not for herself. This too contributes to the adoration of Henriette-Lucy as a perfect being, in this case accentuating her role as mother.

In the beginning of the memoir, the reader is privy to the short and tumultuous childhood that Henriette-Lucy experiences. Just as the clothing worn by a virginal bride changes with age, so does the body. Young Henriette-Lucy maintains little control over her body whereas an older Henriette-Lucy is in greater command of her body. Involuntary physical reactions betray the feelings of Henriette-Lucy in her youth. The first example takes place during the pre-wedding process. Her uncle receives a letter about the impending engagement and her body speaks for her: “L’abbé s’amusa malignement de ma rougeur et de mon trouble, et nous ne nous parlâmes plus de la soirée” (63). Her uncle witnesses the blush appropriate to a young woman who is thinking of her future husband. This mention implies the embarrassment of the virgin who has not yet begun to think about men. It reinforces the already established morality of which Henriette-Lucy is proud, and it demonstrates that others are aware of her irreproachable conduct as well.

The second situation during which Henriette-Lucy presents herself as a casualty of her own body is the first time Marie-Antoinette summons her, just before her marriage to Frédéric. She explains:

J’étais très timide, et lorsque cette disposition, qui rend si gauche, s’emparait de moi, elle me frappait comme d’immobilité: mes jambes ne me portaient plus, mes
membres étaient en catalepsie. Outre cette espèce de poltronnerie, probablement semblable à celle qui paralyse le soldat qui se déshonore dans une bataille, une autre particularité de mon caractère qui a duré toute ma vie, c’est l’horreur insurmontable que j’ai toujours éprouvée pour la fausseté et pour l’expression de sentiments que l’on ne ressent pas. […] Je me trouvai en présence de la reine sans savoir comment j’étais entrée. Elle m’embrassa et je lui baisai la main. Elle me fit asseoir à côté d’elle et m’adressa mille questions sur mon éducation, sur mes talents, etc., mais, malgré l’effort prodigieux que je faisais, je restais sans voix pour répondre. Enfin, voyant de grosses larmes couler de mes yeux, mon embarras finit par l’apitoyer et elle causa avec mon oncle et Mme d’Hénin. (70-71).

This is no longer the simple virginal blush, but the cowardice of a soldier who freezes on the battlefield. La Tour du Pin uses a military metaphor to emphasize Henriette-Lucy’s treasonous inability to manage her own body. Furthermore, a battle reference also suggests the struggle between Henriette-Lucy and Marie-Antoinette. In opposition to the queen, she is incapable of expressing false emotions, a more important issue than that of nervous jittering. Even with her inexperience, Henriette-Lucy is morally superior to the queen. Literally and chronologically speaking this episode is important because it occurs shortly before the entrance of Henriette-Lucy into the service of Marie-Antoinette. Once she becomes a lady-in-waiting to the queen, she visits Versailles on a weekly basis and exhibits none of the behavior described above. This anecdote, like that of the blush, describes Henriette-Lucy as the dutiful and long-suffering heroine who must gain experience before arriving at her final happiness in marriage. This
meeting of the women separates the first official meeting and the regular attendance at court and is necessary to a smooth transition into a more mature and composed body.

La Tour du Pin uses a physical reaction to a person to promote the emotional or moral strength of Henriette-Lucy yet again in the discussion of her American years. While in America, Henriette-Lucy is depicted as a lady bountiful of sorts who befriends the American Indians and her own slaves Prime and Judith. The embodies the idea of “noblesse oblige.” She provides for her family and welcomes travelers on several occasions. If this idealized image were not enough, she feeds fuel to the fire when she describes hyperbolically an incident that takes place with her neighbor’s dog:

Ma fièvre commençait à passer, les accès diminuait de durée, quand l’émotion causée par un acte de cruauté inouï commis par l’un de nos voisins, me la rendit plus forte que jamais. Cet homme possédait un beau chien de Terre-Neuve. L’animal m’avait prise en amitié et ne voulait pas quitter la ferme. J’eus beau le faire ramener tous les soirs chez son maître par Prime […] L’infortuné Trim, c’était le nom du chien, alla le [son maître] et le suivit hors de la cour. Au bout d’un moment, des hurlements affreux se font entendre. Judith et moi nous sortons en toute hâte, et nous voyons avec horreur que cet homme cruel avait attaché le malheureux chien par les quatre pattes au crochet du palonnier, et qu’il s’en allait au galop traînant la pauvre bête sur le chemin pierreux. Peu à peu les cris se perdirent dans le lointain, mais cette action m’avait si vivement émue que, deux heures après, j’étais reprise d’un accès de fièvre, le plus violent que j’eusse encore éprouvé. (219)
La Tour du Pin presents a situation in which Henriette-Lucy’s body reacts to another person in an undesirable way. Henriette-Lucy is almost free from the fever that has plagued her, but an act of animal cruelty reignites her blazing fever. Witnessing her neighbor’s cruelty thus causes her the most severe case of fever that she has ever experienced. While it is likely that emotional distress could have some effect on Henriette-Lucy’s health, it is just as likely that her fever had never subsided. She does not consider the probable medical justification, and provides the more romantic image of her body physically shocked by such a violent action. In this case, she does not desire illness, but her body responds otherwise. This also works to put Henriette-Lucy on a different level than those who surround her. She is clearly a better person than her neighbor who was able to murder an innocent and lovable animal. Again, La Tour du Pin uses Henriette-Lucy’s bodily reactions to demonstrate the mood of a situation. Though the focus of the discussion should be the suffering animal or the cruelty of her neighbor, Henriette-Lucy, a mere witness, becomes the center of attention.25

Henriette-Lucy is again the witness to the weakness of others in a situation where she is the most powerful. Seasickness is an illness that presents itself frequently to Henriette-Lucy and her family. While she herself does not suffer from this infirmity, her family does:

Mon mari ne quitta pas son lit pendant trente jours. Il souffrait horriblement du mal de mer et aussi de la mauvaise nourriture. Les seuls aliments qu’il supportait étaient le thé à l’eau et quelques morceaux de biscuit grillé, trempé dans du vin sucré. Pour moi, quand j’y pense après tant d’années, je ne conçois pas comment je pus résister à la fatigue et à la faim. Nourrice, et, de plus, âgée de vingt-quatre

25 We will return to this episode in chapter three to demonstrate the construction of slaves and slavery.
Her husband does not live up to the traditional standards of the man who takes charge of his family. Rather, Henriette-Lucy is the source of strength. While he remains in bed for thirty days, ill and unable to eat, she continues to serve her family, preparing their food and breastfeeding her youngest child. She marvels at her own ability to provide, proclaiming yet again her exceptional capabilities. Her age is a factor as well as her maternal condition, though these strengths are soon tested:

Personnellement, je souffrais beaucoup du défaut d’alimentation. Le biscuit avait acquis un tel degré de dureté que je ne pouvais plus le manger sans avoir les gencives en sang [...] Le manque de nourriture avait tari mon lait, et je voyais ma fille dépérir à vue d’œil, tandis que mon fils me demandait en pleurant une de nos pommes de terre dont il avait mangé la dernière depuis plusieurs jours. Cette situation était affreuse. La crainte de voir mourir de faim mes enfants ne me quittait plus. (185)

The physical effects to which she falls victim are minor in comparison to her bedridden husband and starving children. At worst, she suffers bleeding gums, but what bothers her more is the inability to provide for her children. She is more distressed by the suffering of her family than any physical impairment of which she is certainly victim. She reduces the importance of her physical suffering to focus on the suffering of her children and the strength of her character. Her selflessness is demonstrated by her reasonably good health. She exploits this quality again when describing a later boat trip from England to France. Frédéric and Marguerite, the maid, suffer from seasickness that leaves them “étendus comme les morts dans leurs lits” (275). Again,
Henriette-Lucy does not feel the adverse affects of boat travel and she continues to mend clothing brought to her by all on the boat. With the exception of the sailors, no one crosses the ocean as well as Henriette-Lucy, now a proven adventurer of the seas in addition to her other significant accomplishments.

Though impervious to seasickness, Henriette-Lucy does physically suffer while on the boats. Initially she experiences a case of dysentery when the boat is quarantined for a period of eight days during which she partakes of a great deal of fruit. She admits her fault in this seemingly minor illness, but still describes it as “la quarantaine faillit m’être fatale” (235). This depiction of the episode is nonetheless exaggerated because when she finally disembarks; her first action is to seek a clothing store. The anecdote seems to emphasize her youthful nature and her willingness to take responsibility for her own mistakes. Another instance of boat related injury results from the consequence of careless transfer from the boat to land. Deckhands are encouraged to assist her to shore, but rather than helpful this suggestion is “une recommandation qui faillit m’être fatale” (276). Similar to the dysentery above, there is no indication that she is in mortal danger. Nonetheless, she claims that she suffers the injury for the remainder of her life: “Je ressentis une violent douleur au côté droit, et depuis j’ai toujours été persuadée que je m’étais fait une lésion interne dans la région du foie. Les médecins n’ont jamais voulu reconnaître ce mal, mais il n’en est pas moins vrai que je n’ai cessé d’en souffrir à dater de ce jour et qu’à soixante-treize ans que j’ai aujourd’hui, j’en souffre encore” (276). In this case, Henriette-Lucy is not at fault, but takes an active role in her own diagnosis. She knows that which doctors are unable to verify. These episodes demonstrate that even when confronted with problems, Henriette-Lucy survives the sea. Her self-confidence and independence display her strength even while she is suffering.
Illness is an issue for Henriette-Lucy, but not in a crippling way. The bouts of fever that plague her do not prevent her from completing daily activities. She continues to work selflessly for her family: “Ces accès de fièvre, dont la durée variait entre cinq et six heures, nuisaient beaucoup, à ma besogne journalière. Ils m’affaiblissaient, m’enlevaient l’appétit, et, quoique je ne sois jamais restée couchée, ils me faisaient grelotter cependant par une chaleur de 30º et me rendaient incapable de tout travail” (213). This explanation is interesting because it is contradictory. While Henriette-Lucy does not stay in bed, she claims to be unable to work. Again, we see how her near super-human abilities allow her to be the true heroine in every situation. She presents as a motto: “j’ai toujours cru qu’on peut surmonter le mal quelqu’il soit, à moins qu’on n’ait une jambe cassée” (238), and often is at odds with her husband as to her health. While he fears for her condition, she rarely sees his concern as valid and continues her normal activities with very few exceptions.

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The sole exception to her disregard for Frédéric’s concern is pregnancy. Henriette-Lucy is determined to become a mother and is willing to do what it takes to accomplish the goal. From a young age, she shows an interest in children and is eager to have a family of her own. To prove this resolve she recounts an event that took place when she was only twelve: “Je m’amusais de ces enfants [cousins]. Mon plus grand bonheur était de les soigner, de les endormir, de les bercer. J’avais déjà un instinct maternel” (43). This romantic notion of maternal instinct and motherhood creates a further positive image for Henriette-Lucy. Not only does she set the trends in fashion and socialize with the elite groups of any society, she also hopes to become the ideal mother. Despite her feelings at age twelve, however, motherhood does not come easily to Henriette-Lucy. She suffers a number of miscarriages and five of her six
surviving children ultimately precede her in death. Maternity is, in fact, the area in which she shows the most fragility emotionally and physically. The most painful revelation of the memoir briefly describes the death of her daughter Séraphine: “Ma petite Séraphine nous fut enlevée par un mal subit, très commun dans cette partie du continent: une paralysie instantanée de l’estomac et des intestins, sans fièvre, sans convulsions. Elle mourut en quelques heures avec toute sa connaissance” (226). This unexpected tragedy transforms Henriette-Lucy; she turns to religion for the first time in her life. In presenting this sad account, she turns her misery and weakness into faith and strength. Though the episode is brief, it marks an important step for the heroine. She claims her vulnerability, but quickly converts it into religious devotion. Her ability to control her grief speaks to her strength as a person, an attribute that grows in importance throughout the memoir.

As a child, Henriette-Lucy witnesses both the physical and emotional difficulties involved in motherhood. She identifies pregnancy and delivery as major causes of her mother’s death: “Ma mère avait eu un fils, qui mourut à deux ans, et depuis cette couche elle avait toujours souffert. Une humeur laiteuse la tourmentait. Fixée sur le foie, elle lui ôtait tout appétit et son sang, desséché par le chagrin continu que lui causait ma grand’mère, s’alluma et se porta avec violence à la poitrine” (41). While a witness to her mother’s slow and painful death, Henriette-Lucy is not afraid of becoming a mother herself. She is in effect challenging her mother’s maternal ability. Implicit in the description of her brother’s death is the fact that Henriette-Lucy does give birth to a son who lives to be an heir, a feat that is unattainable for her mother. The importance of a son is further suggested when she discusses her father’s remarriage as a reasonable act despite her grandmother’s opposition: “on pouvait considérer pourtant

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26 I will revisit this episode in chapter three.
comme fort naturel que mon père eût le désir de se remarier dans l’espoir d’avoir un garçon” (54). Ultimately, Henriette-Lucy is a more successful mother than Thérèse. However, Henriette-Lucy’s goal is not necessarily to distance herself from or to best her mother; rather she likens herself to her mother as well.

The “humeur laiteuse” of which her mother suffers is similar to the possible “lésion” of which she suffers. Henriette-Lucy idealizes her mother and it is likely that she strives to be like her, even in physical illness. They both suffer emotionally in similar ways at the hand of Lucy Cary, mother to Thérèse and grandmother to Henriette-Lucy respectively. Lucy never believes in the poor health that victimizes her daughter and granddaughter; she believes both women to be faking their symptoms. Not long before her death, Thérèse begins coughing blood an action that her mother sees as “un calcul tendant à la soustraire à son autorité. Aussi fut-elle convaincue que ma mère avait feint ces crachements de sang pour ne pas aller à Hautefontaine” (41). Later, after Henriette-Lucy suffers a miscarriage her grandmother visits and demonstrates a similar reaction: “J’étais encore retenue dans mon lit par une extrême faiblesse; mais elle feignit de croire que c’était un jeu joué pour rester chez ma tante” (91-92). She paints a similar picture of herself and her mother when describing their relationships with Lucy, but the dysfunction goes much further between Lucy and Thérèse.

Henriette-Lucy never witnesses a positive mother-child relationship between her grandmother and mother. As an example, Henriette-Lucy explains that her mother approached Lucy to discuss financial affairs to which: “Ma grand’mère devint furieuse et une haine inconcevable, telle que les romans ou les tragédies en ont décrites, prit en elle la place de la tendresse maternelle” (37). Historian Alison Finch describes Lucy as “both a reality and a creature of fancy, […] one of those ‘mad matriarchs’ whom Gilbert and Gubar find in Jane
Lucy is an excellent foil for mother and daughter and Henriette-Lucy reaps the benefits of the comparison. Since Lucy is such a horrible person in the text, Henriette-Lucy and Thérèse become even more agreeable and more alike. Henriette-Lucy’s love and admiration for her mother does not preclude an implicit criticism of Thérèse’s interactions with Lucy. Though she saw her mother shrivel before her grandmother, Henriette-Lucy sees the dysfunction in the mother-daughter relationship and chooses later not to emulate it.

Whereas rebellion was not easy for Thérèse, Henriette-Lucy is much more capable in this area and rejects her grandmother’s matriarchal rule. She is unwilling to play into her grandmother’s games and remarks, “Quoi qu’il en soit, quand j’eus atteint l’âge de seize ans, et qu’elle vit ma taille dépasser la sienne, elle mit un certain frein à ces fureurs” (47). In this physically violent image of a woman we see that Henriette-Lucy is aware of her physical power and uses it to her advantage. A victim of her grandmother’s tyranny for many years, she jumps at the chance to turn the tables. However, the physical advantage is not her sole victory. Henriette-Lucy does what her mother never could and distances herself from her wicked grandmother. After her marriage, she effectively cuts ties with her grandmother for a number of years, never to fall back into easy company with her. The intellectual side of motherhood is not a mystery to Henriette-Lucy, though she had no model to follow, indicating yet another example of her exceptional capabilities. Unfortunately, the exceptionality does not carry over to the physical demands of maternity.

Maternity brings change to the lives other characters in the text as well. A striking example is found in Madame de Fontenay who would become Madame Tallien. When we first encounter de Fontenay she is described as a fairytale princess of incomparable beauty and charm:
Mme de Fontenay n’avait pas alors vingt ans. Aucun être humain n’était sorti si beau des mains du Créateur. C’était une femme accomplie. Tous ses traits portaient l’empreinte de la régularité artistique la plus parfaite. Ses cheveux, d’un noir ébène, semblaient faits de la plus fine soie, et rien ne ternissait l’éclat de son teint, d’une blancheur unie sans égale. Un sourire enchanteur découvrait les plus admirables dents. Sa haute taille rappelait celle de Diane chasseresse. Le moindre de ses mouvements revêtait une grâce incomparable. Quant à sa voix, harmonieuse, légèrement marquée d’un accent étranger, elle exerçait un charme qu’aucune parole ne saurait exprimer. (165)

The admiration for Madame de Fontenay approaches the level of admiration that Henriette-Lucy reserves for herself. This young woman who helps facilitate the Henriette-Lucy’s departure to America receives gratitude in the form of this very favorable illustration. The one negative element that persists resides in de Fontenay’s collaboration with Tallien: “Un sentiment douloureux vous pénétrait quand on songeait que tant de jeunesse, de beauté, de grâce et d’esprit étaient abandonnés à un homme qui, tous les matins, signait la mort de plusieurs innocents” (165-166). The life inhabited by the seemingly fairytale princess thus has the potential for a darker side and we see this, oddly enough, once she becomes a mother:

\[elle\ s’\textit{était trouvée dans l’obligation}\] d’épouser Tallien, dont elle avait un enfant.

La vie commune avec ce nouvel époux lui semblait déjà insupportable. […] Elle me conta qu’un soir, étant rentrée à une heure du matin, il eut un accès de jalousie tel qu’il avait été sur le point de la tuer. Le voyant armer un pistolet, elle prit la fuite, et ayant été demander asile et protection à M. Martell, dont elle avait sauvé

27 La Tour du Pin’s italics.
Madame Tallien finds herself far from the ideal marital situation that Henriette-Lucy boasts. The child that necessitates her marriage complicates her life in a perilous way and she finds herself a near victim to her violent husband. The fact that she is unable to find protection from a person she formerly protected speaks further to her new status as mother. If not for her pregnancy it is possible that she would continue to live her charmed life. Madame Tallien illustrates the danger and difficulty that accompanies pregnancy aside from the physical aspects and her story serves as a cautionary tale.

Pregnancy itself is never easy for Henriette-Lucy and she suffers at least two miscarriages before the healthy birth of Humbert. The difficulties that Henriette-Lucy faces while pregnant are in opposition to her normal modus operandi. She describes herself to be quite healthy and strong as a child: “J’étais très grande pour mon âge, d’une bonne santé, d’une extrême activité physique et morale” (49). However, this strength does not transfer to successfully carrying a child to term. In her youth, strength and health are standard, but once Henriette-Lucy marries, she suddenly experiences the health issues of an adult, pregnant woman. Claims of strength and innocence are appropriate for the young Henriette-Lucy, but as she grows older she must face the physical realities of adulthood. Consistent with the attacks of timidity experienced in her youth, Henriette-Lucy’s difficulties in pregnancy reinforce the distinction between life before and after marriage. Though she claims that her frequent problems with fever do not affect her daily life, they perhaps play a role in her pregnancies. With each miscarriage, she becomes increasingly weak and requires more time to recover. She attributes her first miscarriage to poor judgment at Versailles (91), but soon becomes pregnant again, only to
miscarry a second time, nearly dying in the process. She does not grow in strength, as she explains, “On m’avait ordonné les eaux de Forges, en Normandie, pour me fortifier, car ma dernière couche, où j’avais été si malade, m’avait laissé une grande faiblesse dans les reins, et l’on craignait même que je n’eusse plus d’enfants, ce qui me mettait au désespoir” (103). Her worst fears nearly come true, but less than a year after the near-fatal miscarriage Henriette-Lucy becomes pregnant and carries to term her son, Humbert.

Until Humbert is born, many of Henriette-Lucy’s acquaintances openly doubt her body and make her condition a public issue: “Mais j’étais restée d’une pâleur si effrayante, quoique je ne souffrisse pas beaucoup, qu’à ma vue des gens qui ne me connaissaient pas prenaient un air épouvanté […] Cependant j’avançais dans ma grossesse, qui ne paraissait pas et que tout le monde contestait” (125). The questions as to whether Henriette-Lucy is even pregnant demonstrate the importance of successful pregnancy. She admires other women who are mothers and strives to be one as well. While she shows that she is able to bear a child, her body is still a subject for concern. Due to her previous difficulty in carrying a child to term, she is not allowed to nurse Humbert even though she wished it: “On ne me permit pas de le nourrir, comme je le souhaitais, ma santé ayant été trop éprouvée dans les premiers mois de ma grossesse, et ma faiblesse étant encore très grande” (128). Though Henriette-Lucy recovers from the birth with no complications, she is not free from miscarriages and suffers at least one more before the successful birth of her daughter Séraphine. Her recovery time is markedly reduced after Séraphine, a fact that can be attributed both to her strength and to necessity. Fear of a “visite domiciliaire” motivates her recovery efforts and after only eight days, she is already taking walks (161). Her rapid recovery can be read as a sort of rebellion against the persecution of her family for this is the sole pregnancy from which she recuperates so quickly.
Henriette-Lucy suffers to bring each of her children into the world and she documents each birth in a similar way. Her courage through numerous miscarriages and difficult births displays her devotion to family and to her husband. Pregnancies fulfill a function similar to that of the dresses discussed earlier in that pregnancy becomes more important than the woman carrying the child. Henriette-Lucy feels both a social imperative and personal duty to have children, but she does not restrict her self-definition to motherhood. The bodily discourse in the novel volleys between maternal woes and fashion tips. These positions may likely be seen at odds, but this is not so for Henriette-Lucy. She claims her own body whether it be that of an expectant mother or that of a belle of the ball. In a world where very little can be controlled, La Tour du Pin uses writing to identify her heroine as a full person, body and intellect.

In the end, though appearance and health are important, La Tour du Pin values the intangibles in Henriette-Lucy. The skills she strives to learn help her to survive the greatest difficulties and maintain calm during chaos. Appearance and health are the intermediaries through which relationships are established, maintained, or broken. However, to leave the body with such a simplistic function would be careless. La Tour du Pin does not concern herself with these factors alone, but also endeavors to valorize that which is the best intellectually and morally. An episode recounted early in the text best explains the differing degrees of importance between mind and body:

A sept ans je chassais déjà à cheval une ou deux fois par semaine, et je me cassai la jambe, à dix ans, le jour de la Saint-Hubert. On dit que je montrai un grand courage. On me rapporta cinq lieus sur un brancard de feuillage et je ne poussai pas un soupir. Dès ma plus tendre enfance j’ai toujours eu horreur de l’affectation et des sentiments factices. On ne pouvait obtenir de moi ni un sourire ni une
Like many of the other stories in the memoir, this short anecdote describes much more than a fall from a horse. Immediately the reader is struck by the extraordinary abilities of such a young girl. She is not only an accomplished equestrian; she is an emotionally secure person. The imposition of the wisdom of an adult woman on a seven-year-old child does not make her statement any less revelatory. The vices she mentions do not tempt her, in fact, she would rather have a disfiguring scar than to be a more shallow person. What she values most is her mind and ability for self-control, yet she best expresses this in contrast with her body. This recurring theme dominates the memoir.

In conclusion, the body plays an integral role in the *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*. While La Tour du Pin does not intend to define a feminist project with her writing, she does just that. In her efforts to understand her own identity and to preserve her past for her child through Henriette-Lucy, she comments on the importance of women’s bodies and her own conception of her body. Peter Brooks describes the body as follows:

> Our bodies are with us, though we have always had trouble saying exactly how.
> We are, in various conceptions or metaphors, in our body, or having a body, or at one with our body, or alienated from it. The body is both ourselves and other, and as such the object of emotions from love to disgust. To psychoanalysis, it is the object of primary narcissism. To religious ascetics, it is a dangerous enemy of
spiritual perfection. Most of the time, the body maintains an unstable position between such extremes, at once the subject and object of pleasure, the uncontrollable agent of pain and the revolt against reason—and the vehicle of mortality (1).

Although the body can be an unstable unknown, La Tour du Pin does not see her body in this way. Her use of the body in her memoir both validates her existence as a woman and provides a role model for those who would read her work.
CHAPTER 3
MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MASCULINE

Henriette-Lucy’s body traverses the world adopting new appearances and accumulating new functions as they become necessary to survive, maintain, or improve social standing; produce an heir; or fulfill any other role that presents itself. As the main character and heroine of the narrative, she is the champion of the text, admired and respected by all of those who surround her. The other women serve as sources of comparison or resources for consultation; they can aspire to be like her or at least to decorate her shadow. Conversely, the men are relegated to strictly supporting roles. How do they contribute to the definition of the main character? In this chapter I will explore the representations of men created by La Tour du Pin and their impact on Henriette-Lucy as a character. The male presence in the text ranges from the characters who comprise Henriette-Lucy’s family to those known beyond the boundaries of La Tour du Pin’s narrative, most notably: Louis XVI, Tallien, Talleyrand, and Napoléon. In addition to these principal players there are numerous others who contribute to Henriette-Lucy’s story. The men are clearly strong in number, but not as much can be said for their development as individuals as success remains a foreign concept to them. They do seek it, but are never quite able to accomplish that which comes so easily to the nearly infallible Henriette-Lucy. In this way, we can begin to understand the memoir as a sort of women’s Bildungsroman wherein we see the triumph of one woman over the world she inhabits.

The driving issue is, nonetheless, the representation of men in women’s literature. In her article, “The Portrait of a Gentleman: Representing Men in (French) Women’s Writing,” Naomi
Schor posits: “there are, so to speak, ‘no images of men’ in women’s writing” because that writing is marked from the outset by a profound suspicion of the image and its grounding phallicism. Rarefaction, multiplication, pastiche, and disfiguration are some of the options to which the image, the male image, that is, is subjected in French women’s fiction” (130). The difficult depiction of men in women’s fiction translates easily into the realm of the women’s aristocratic memoir. In Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans La Tour du Pin calls the very existence and usefulness of men into question. I will use these generally categories provided by Schor to discuss the depiction of men in La Tour du Pin’s work. I will show that Schor’s proposed strategies apply, to varying degrees, to La Tour du Pin’s creation of the male image within the text. This is best demonstrated in breaking down the male characters into sub-categories, of which there are four: the modern man, the anomaly, the mal du siècle hero, and the anti-René. Schor’s proposed strategies can also be distributed amongst these four groupings. The modern man is rarefied; the anomaly is multiplied; the mal du siècle hero is an example of pastiche; and the anti-René embodies disfiguration. Schor’s suggested investigation of “the representation of the Other’s other” (114) becomes necessary for the comprehension of Henriette-Lucy as a character in La Tour du Pin’s text and provides insight into the use of gender and gender stereotyping in literature.

* * * *

“In the post-revolutionary society adumbrated between eighteenth-century worldliness and realism’s ‘world,’ a youth must still possess a woman to become a man. This conquest is not enough, however, and can even be harmful, for attachment to a woman keeps the mal du siècle hero locked within a domestic plot at a time when power is shifting to the public sphere, which is, increasingly, the province of men” (Waller 17).
Attachment to a woman, whether it be to a maternal or a wifely figure, leads to further loss of power within *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*. The men, all tied to Henriette-Lucy, have become negative examples of masculinity to the point of emasculation. In the world that La Tour du Pin creates, the male characters are inextricably tied to the heroine. Their definition depends on her as hers does on them. We will see a variety of negative representations of men who may demonstrate a potential for success, but never fully achieve it. The question can then be asked, as does Schor: Are there images of men in *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*? Certainly there are men present in the narrative, but their completeness is questionable, especially in contrast to Henriette-Lucy. It is only in a select few characters that we can begin to sense completeness, and even then, there is failure. These men belong to the first category delineated by Schor, rarefaction, and include a young neighbor of Henriette-Lucy, de Bar, and her son, Humbert. In the case of de Bar, there is a sense that Henriette-Lucy informs and forms his personhood, that she causes his ultimately tragic destiny. In terms of her sons, Henriette-Lucy’s input is variable. Humbert is very nearly a double of his father, and suffers tragically for it in the end. Her two other sons, Edouard and Aymar, do not fall into the same category as their brother. Edouard dies in infancy and thus never has the opportunity to become a “man.” Aymar, the official intended reader of the text, is not actually present within the narrative as he is too young to have been mentioned in any significant way within the chronological parameters of the story she tells. His situation is exploited more directly in her correspondence and it is he who falls outside of the aforementioned categories and presents the masculine ideal that cannot exist within the text as Schor contends. For this reason I will consider him after the other men in the text.
The first complete example of a modern men presents itself in the young de Bar. “Âgé de dix ans seulement lorsqu’il perdit son père […] il ne voulait rien faire, qu’il avait horreur des livres et ne témoignait de goût pour aucune carrière” (287). These are the terms that introduce the reader to a young de Bar, a neighbor of Henriette-Lucy’s in Bordeaux. At a loss as to what to do with him, his mother asks the help of Henriette-Lucy who nearly immediately sets to work on his transformation. In her words:

J’étais seule à arranger les livres dans la bibliothèque, il vint me trouver. Je lui demandai de m’aider. Il y mit un zèle et une intelligence qui me surprirent.

L’occasion était propice pour lui faire un peu de honte de son ignorance, puis je lui fis promettre de s’arracher à sa paresse, d’étudier, de lire. Je lui donnai des livres à emporter, en lui demandant de me faire de ces ouvrages des extraits que je corrigerais, sans en parler, même à sa mère. Il fut transporté de reconnaissance.

Quinze jours plus tard, Mme de Bar me dit que j’avais fait un miracle: son fils passait maintenant les jours et les nuits à écrire. (287)

The bit of shame that Henriette-Lucy causes in de Bar causes an almost instantaneous change that would be highly suspect in the real world. He welcomes the opportunity to write essays and becomes a near workaholic. After two months, she no longer feels qualified to be his instructor because he has surpassed her. To complete her involvement in his transformation / creation, she uses her connections to gain his entrance into the Naval Academy where he continues his success and writes to her to keep her informed. He even fully attributes his accomplishments to her explaining: “C’est votre ouvrage” (288). This statement says it all. By her will, de Bar in his polished and successful form exists. This ultimately calls into question his motivation for his achievements: Do they come from him or from Henriette-Lucy?
Despite the lessons learned from Henriette-Lucy and in the military, there is still something missing. He is still subject to collapse as will many of the other men we will encounter in the text. While he demonstrates a remarkable capacity for learning and change, there is still something lacking as exhibited in his unnecessary death: “Pour ne rien coûter à sa mère, il se nourrissait mal. La maladie vint; son sang, brûlé par l’étude et par les veilles, s’alluma. En quelques jours, le mal l’emporta, et la cruelle mission de l’apprendre à sa pauvre mère m’incomba. Il ne revint de lui qu’un petit étui de mathématiques” (288). Malnutrition caused by needless sacrifice ends his life. He seems not to have learned common sense with the rest of his lessons. It is interesting as well that the only thing that remains of him is his “étui.” His life is thus represented by the “étui,” a symbol for his misapplied lessons. Though he was inclined to take his book learning seriously, La Tour du Pin sends the message that it can be taken too far. He was given the principles by which to live, but not taught how to apply them well thus resulting in fatal consequences.

Not surprisingly the final word on de Bar becomes a word on Henriette-Lucy. It is she who encouraged his development and drove him to strive for more. Her interference could be seen as the cause of his death; however, it is not blamed on her as his success is attributed to her:

Le sentiment que j’avais fait naître en lui avait été le flambeau qui l’avait éclairé, mais en le dévorant. Sa mort me causa presque un remords, puisque sans mon intervention dans sa vie il aurait vécu paisiblement, dans son ignorance, il est vrai, mais enfin, il aurait vécu. Sa mère, tout en le pleurant, ne m’en a pas voulu pourtant d’avoir développé des facultés qu’elle laissait endormies. Que serait-il devenu sans moi? Sa vie eût-elle répondu à ce qu’elle promettait d’être par moi? (288)
Ignorance is not preferable to death for the woman who strives to learn whenever possible.
Significantly, Henriette-Lucy is only “presque” remorseful and quickly absolved by the
mourning mother. In fact, the criticism is reserved for Mme de Bar who, as we are reminded,
“laissait endormies [ses facultés].” The final conclusion here is that it is better to attempt an
education than to live unaware and unproductive; however, the attempt does not secure the
success. De Bar comes closer to completeness, but still stops short. His failure is not that of
Henriette-Lucy despite the role she plays because she releases him once he is in the Navy. In the
case of her sons, the release becomes more complex.

Humbert, the eldest of Henriette-Lucy’s children, is described as a young genius
throughout the narrative. Even as a very young child, he proves himself to be perhaps more
“complete” as a person than even his father. Consider, to start, the family’s flight to America.
Though Humbert is only four years old, his contribution during the difficult preparations and
crossing prove to be more helpful to his mother than the near inaction of Frédéric.
Demonstrating a shocking level of awareness, Humbert participates and comprehends fully the
severity of the Terror:

> mon fils, couché dans un lit voisin du mien, se leva sur son séant et m’appela.
> Grande fut ma frayeur, car je craignais qu’il ne fût malade. Je m’approchai
> aussitôt de lui. Alors, jetant ses petits bras autour de mon cou et collant sa bouche
> à mon oreille, il me dit: “J’ai bien vu papa, mais je n’ai rien dit à cause de ces
> méchants gens!” Ainsi la terreur, dans le bureau des passeports, avait agi même
> sur un enfant âgé de moins de quatre ans. (178)

With this description and others similar to it, the reader can easily be convinced of Humbert’s
extraordinary nature, and comes to expect great things from him. As a child, Humbert is
described as: “d’une intelligence singulière” (189) and even “très développée” (226). Bilingual at age five, he is also able to interpret for others in addition to being “d’une grande utilité” (234).

As an adult, he continues to take steps approved by his mother:

Humbert, désireux de se marier, préférait rester à Paris plutôt que de s’en aller comme préfet dans quelque petite ville éloignée de la France. Sa charmante figure, son esprit, ses manières, son instruction, lui ouvraient les portes des meilleures maisons de Paris, de tous les mondes. On le nomma lieutenant des mousquetaires noirs – nom provenant de la couleur de leurs chevaux. Cela lui donnait le grade de chef d’escadrons dans l’armée. (347)

Her pride in his achievements continues to lead us to believe that he is to be the successful man in the narrative. In a letter to her cousin in 1815 she explains that Humbert is with the king. “Il est à Gand avec le roi, disposé à faire tout ce qu’on voudra lui commander, et à bien le faire, car dans ce moment d’épreuves, il s’est montré aussi noble, aussi fort, aussi, homme que pouvait le désirer ma tendresse maternelle” (370). Here we still see the satisfaction in Humbert’s accomplishments, but the fact that he will do “tout ce qu’on voudra lui commander” is perhaps significant. Recalling the situation with de Bar, it is reasonable to consider the decision-making capacity of the young man. Here we may see the first hint of failure.

During the same period, Henriette-Lucy writes similar information to her daughter Charlotte: “Mon fils Humbert est heureusement dans les mêmes sentiments que son père. Il a été à Gand avec le roi et en est revenu avec lui, mais si la fidélité n’est pas un tort, elle n’est pas un titre, soyez-en sûre, ma chère Charlotte” (374). Though Henriette-Lucy states that “heureusement” Humbert is like his father, it is for this very reason that he suffers an unnecessary death. “Fidélité” is also questioned in this passage, again perhaps pointing to the
importance of independent thought. The fact that Frédéric, and Humbert like him, are associated so intimately with the Ancien Régime and all that it embodies, leads to the validation of a duel resulting in Humbert’s death. When presenting the prospect of a duel to Frédéric, Humbert describes it as if it were the situation of a friend when he is actually speaking of his own circumstance. Despite the fact that his opponent attempts an apology Humbert stands firm and dies for a fairly ridiculous reason. A peer had made a comment about his uniform and had thus insulted his honor. The fact that he set a duel into motion in accordance with his father’s advice demonstrates a misapplication of an expired code. Like de Bar, Humbert is an educated person, however, the execution of his training is flawed. With this tragic conclusion to his life, Humbert provides an interesting foil for his brother, Aymar, who will not and could not suffer the same fate because he represents a new time and set of values that are still in the process of definition. His case will be considered later.

* * * *

“The mal du siècle afflicts only certain men, certain mâles du siècle.

To read these works as stories of men rather than as embodiments of Man is to begin to see that the mal du siècle represents, precisely, the hero’s failure to be a “man” (Waller 11).

The variety of “mâles” who inhabit La Tour du Pin’s work include those who provide, as Waller says, “stories of men.” In terms of Schor’s theory, they are the anomalies and represent the one group of men who can even begin to rival Henriette-Lucy. These anomalous men appear for isolated moments and demonstrate a unique quality. They differ from the others in that they exhibit an ability to stand out that is similar to that of the heroine. The difference is seen in the limited nature of their greatness. Because these men appear rarely more than once in the text, their significance is based on the one extraordinary quality they possess. Unlike Henriette-Lucy, who is defined from a variety of perspectives, in numerous situations, and universally
extraordinary, the anomalous men have only fleeting moments of glory. These characters are also important in that they provide contrast to the other male characters in the text who surface more frequently. We will see that a character like the boat captain is presented as wiser than Frédéric, the heroine’s husband who should have a higher status. Duties that might logically be expected of family or men in power are often fulfilled by these seemingly marginalized characters who, in fact, become those who most challenge Henriette-Lucy because, like her, they exist in a space that is not traditional and is set apart from the rest of society.

The proliferation of this type of character perhaps points to a desire on La Tour du Pin’s part to demonstrate that greatness is possible in everyone, even where it is least expected. Within this group of anomalous characters the men can be classified into different groups as they fill different needs and roles for the narrative. A first grouping is composed of gender transgressive characters, embodied by her dance instructor and the doctor who learns to sew. There is a second group of anomalous men who fall easily under the heading of ethnically diverse. These men include her servant Zamore, her slaves in America, and the Native Americans she befriends on her New York farm. Issues of gender and ethnicity do overlap, but here I will be looking more specifically at how they seem to operate independently within the narrative.

In this chapter I focus on the stereotypical constructions of gender and the ways in which La Tour du Pin, as an author, violates these constructions. The men, in accordance with mal du siècle standards, are legitimately stripped of their masculinity in traditional form and Henriette-Lucy embodies a sort of super woman who maintains her feminine qualities while adding those elements typically bestowed upon men: power, strength, wisdom, etc. The author expressly sets these gender role reversals into motion though the fictional world presented in the narrative is
not very different from real societal gender standards. That is to say that while Henriette-Lucy seeks to have more strength or more power, her goal, as a character, is not to emasculate the men. The men in turn are not deliberately abandoning masculinity, but nonetheless do so. In this way, the real world, through the author, is imposing structures upon the characters. While this is largely the case throughout *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*, there are gender transgressions built into the narrative that take place at the character level. Henriette-Lucy finds herself first with a dance instructor who dresses as a woman to simulate the heroine’s introduction at court. The second situation arises when she is sequestered at Canoles with a doctor and teaches him to sew. In no way am I suggesting that men can neither dance nor sew without being feminized; however, the manner in which these situations are constructed reveals an interesting perspective on gender. These men contribute to Henriette-Lucy’s development in significant ways, while remaining on the margins, I suggest, because of the gender transgression that defines their presences in the work.

Before Henriette-Lucy is first presented at court, she is provided with a certain amount of training as to how she should act, what she should wear, and with whom she should interact. As a part of this training she has sessions with a dance instructor, M. Huart, who appears only once in the work:

> Je passai les deux matinées suivantes avec M. Huart, mon maître à danser. On ne saurait rien imaginer de plus ridicule que cette répétition de la présentation. M. Huart, gros homme, coiffé admirablement et poudré à blanc, avec un jupon bouffant, représentait la reine et se tenait debout au fond du salon. Il me dictait ce que je devais faire, tantôt personnifiant la dame qui me présentait, tantôt retournant à la place de la reine pour figurer le moment où, ôtant mon gant et
M. Huart, though the “maître à danser,” takes on two other identities: that of Marie-Antoinette and of the woman who would present Henriette-Lucy at court. The lines between the male and female identities become blurred, first due to the cross-dressing that takes place, but also in terms of the language. At the beginning of the fourth sentence, Huart is the “il” who dictates to Henriette-Lucy, but at the conclusion of the sentence he is also the “elle” who gestures. It is interesting that a performance of sorts is required and that explanation alone does not suffice. Further, constructing the scene with Huart playing the role of three people adds to the confusion, gender or otherwise. In the end one is left with a number of ideas as to the interpretation of the episode. While presented initially as an instructional performance, the lessons are also seen as “ridicule” and to be “une véritable comédie.” The acting-as-woman is acceptable because there is a purpose behind it. Huart does not choose to wear a “jupon” except with the express intention to represent a woman. His willingness to participate in such an act thus relies heavily on purpose rather than pleasure whether the performance be pedagogical or entertaining.

While forced to remain at Canoles, Henriette-Lucy finds herself in the company of a doctor who becomes both her teacher and student:

Il avait fait d’excellentes études dans son art, et, selon la règle que j’avais adoptée de ne jamais rejeter aucune occasion de m’instruire, j’en profitai pour apprendre beaucoup de choses en médecine et en chirurgie. Comme nous ne disposions d’aucun ouvrage traitant de ces matières, il me fit de vive voix un petit cours d’accouchement et d’opérations. En échange, je lui donnai des leçons de couture, de broderie et de tricot. Il était très adroit et ses progrès en travaux de ce genre
At Henriette-Lucy’s urging, lessons occur. Her desire to learn presents an opportunity for them both to acquire new knowledge. As a doctor, he is able to provide training, not specifically relegated to men’s power, especially as he teaches her about childbirth, but it is information that is typically known by men from the scientific perspective. It can be assumed that she is a good student, as she is always successful in achieving her goals. More interestingly, though, there is a commentary provided about the doctor’s ability to learn. Not only is he “très adroit” and does he make “progrès rapide,” he retains the skill and later reports back that she had saved him from boredom and had allowed him to produce useful goods. The gendered nature of this information exchange does better each person; however, it seems that his newfound knowledge must be justified. It seems that his ability to sew is acceptable because it has a purpose; this might not be so if he were making shirts and socks simply for amusement. On the other hand, it is not necessary to explain the benefits or necessity of Henriette-Lucy understanding further the science behind medical situations. While she might be lauded for seeking out a more developed educational status, no matter what the subject, the man is relegated to certain areas only. The doctor, then, is a stand out in that he is open to a traditionally women’s occupation. Like the dance instructor, his purposeful gender transgression creates an interesting comment on appropriate behaviors for men and women.

Gender differences become even more complicated when combined with ethnicity and nationality. La Tour du Pin creates a variety of characters who do not conform to the white,
aristocratic, European standard. Henriette-Lucy frequently interacts with those different than she and is thus presented as a pillar of tolerance and benevolence. Here, too, these characters who exist on the margins of their society are exceptional people. They are the most diligent workers, the most thoughtful givers of gifts, and some of the kindest characters in the text. Interestingly, the largest discussion of people of color takes place in the American episode during which time Henriette-Lucy is exposed to both Native Americans and her own slaves. In addition to those characters belonging to marginalized groups there are representatives from Henriette-Lucy’s white, aristocratic world who provide a perspective contrary to that of the benevolent heroine. These men do not serve as examples of anomalies, but demonstrate the stereotypical judgments made by the ignorant masses. Before she arrives in America, Henriette-Lucy does have a black servant, but aside from this example there are no other men or women of color who appear in the text. Zamore, her manservant, is treated no differently than other servants discussed in the text. He is trustworthy and executes his duties with “son intelligence accoutumée” (171). His color, then, does not dominate his definition within the narrative, though it is brought to the readers’ attention. Color becomes the distinguishing element exclusively for the American characters, marginalized in the fictional and real worlds both.

One of the first things that Henriette-Lucy does once the family establishes itself on a farm is to buy slaves. Though La Tour du Pin paints a rosy picture of the concerned and caring slave owner, Henriette-Lucy is a slave owner nonetheless, a status that is in itself a problem. Of course, like anything else done by Henriette-Lucy, she finds the most ideal slaves: “[brûlaient] d’être avec des gens nouveaux qui ne seraient pas uniquement guidés par des préjugés comme

29 The only exception to this is a Turkish ambassador with whom she sits at the banquet in his honor. He is very kind and even gives her gifts (251). Here she is chosen above any other woman present to lunch with him and thus is distinguished as a person open to other cultures as well as a favorite of Talleyrand’s.
son maître hollandais, lequel n’admettait pas que l’on changeât la moindre chose à des pratiques de cent ans” (204) or “quoique ne sachant ni lire ni écrire, n’en [tenaient] pas moins son compte avec une telle exactitude qu’il n’y avait jamais la moindre erreur” (207). When she acquires a married couple, they are described as: “d’excellents sujets, actifs, laborieux, intelligents. Ils s’attachèrent à nous avec passion, parce que les nègres, quand ils sont bons, ne le sont pas à demi. On pourrait compter sur leur dévouement jusqu’à la mort” (205). These problematic statements demonstrate a potential discomfort with the slavery issue. Describing people in the same way one could describe a loyal pet demonstrates a complication in Henriette-Lucy’s benevolence. The representation of slavery becomes even more difficult to untangle in that there are potential historical inaccuracies that plague the text. Nonetheless, these statements can also be seen as honest praise of those with whom Henriette-Lucy lives and works. Their exceptionality reflects positively on Henriette-Lucy and places them easily into the anomaly category, particularly considering that the first mention of slavery in the text describes the slave uprising in Albany that occurred in 1792 (192-93).

The depiction of slavery within the narrative provides an opportunity to reinforce the overwhelmingly positive attributes of both Henriette-Lucy and the slaves. This is made easier with a third-party character whose views contrast sharply with hers. Henriette-Lucy employs a tailor to make clothing for her slaves. This is his practical function, yet he provides a point of comparison with the more open character of Henriette-Lucy because he is unwilling to accept the slaves as equal beings: “Cet homme mangeait avec nous parce que c’était un blanc. Il aurait certainement refusé, si on le lui avait proposé, de manger avec les esclaves, quoique ceux-ci fussent incomparablement mieux vêtus et eussent de meilleures manières que lui” (228). This

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30 While La Tour du Pin writes that Henriette-Lucy and Frédéric free their slaves, this was not, in fact, a real possibility.
white man is less than the slaves, from Henriette-Lucy’s perspective, furthering the idea presented above in the discussion of Zamore. For her, color is not the greater issue though it may be for society at large. Nonetheless, the same treatment is not given to the Native Americans, even by the almost unbelievably open Henriette-Lucy.

Though Henriette-Lucy ultimately befriends and even defends the Native Americans to others, she remains ever so slightly uneasy with them. They remain an unknown that can never be fully understood and should thus be feared. The fact that they are independent and cannot be enslaved, thus freeing them from Henriette-Lucy’s direct control, provides solid roots for Henriette-Lucy’s uneasiness. At the same time they do contribute positively to Henriette-Lucy’s development. In fact, the concerns that she does show with respect to the Native Americans are actually unfounded in her personal experience. Her first reaction seems rather typical: “Je fus un peu surprise, je l’avoue, quand je rencontrai pour la première fois un homme et une femme tout nus promenants tranquillement […] Mais je m’y accoutumai bientôt” (201). When she first interacts with some of the Native Americans, her concern for the potential troubles with them are mentioned, for example: “On m’avait avertie de ne leur donner jamais de rhum, pour lequel ils ont une passion immodérée” (210), and further: “On m’avait raconté que les Indiens enlevaient quelquefois les enfants. Aussi lorsque je les voyais pendant des heures entières assis immobiles à ma porte, je me figurais qu’ils épiaient le moment favorable de prendre mon fils” (213). This is an interesting perspective in that she is, in this situation, subject to the influence of others. Her fear is unfounded and she ultimately recounts her positive experiences, but this is one of the few moments in the work where the heroine allows others to color her view.
The potential fear and discomfort with the “sauvages” are contradicted, nonetheless, in the interactions that La Tour du Pin constructs. The first significant contact takes place on her farm:

L’un des sauvages, au commencement des temps froids, m’avait demandé la permission de couper des branches d’une espèce de saule dont les jets, gros comme le doigt, ont de cinq à six pieds de long, en promettant de me tresser des paniers pendant la saison hivernal. Je ne comptais guère sur cette promesse, doutant fort bien que les sauvages fussent esclaves de leur parole […] Je me trompais, car la neige n’était pas fondu depuis huit jours que mon Indien reparut avec une charge de paniers. Il m’en donna six, enchâssés les uns dans les autres. Le premier, rond et fort grand, était tellement bien tressé que, rempli d’eau, il la retenait comme un vase de terre. (210)

Her doubts about the Native Americans are disproved with the generous gift. The superb nature of the workmanship distinguishes them from others and demonstrates a dedication from her perspective. It is also crucial that she realize that they are people of their word and she can begin to trust them, rather than give into the culture of fear surrounding them. Ultimately, experiences such as these lead to a positive comment on both Henriette-Lucy and the Native Americans she befriends. During a visit by an acquaintance of Frédéric’s, Henriette-Lucy is given the opportunity to defend her friends against the stunted thinking provided by the visitor from France, M. Novion:

Rien ne saurai peindre la surprise, presque l’effroi de M. de Novion, lorsqu’il vit sortir du buisson et venir à nous, en me tendant la main, un homme de grande taille, avec une bande de drap bleu, qui lui passait entre les jambes et venait se
fixer à un bout de corde roulée autour de la ceinture, pour tout vêtement. Son
étonnement s’accrut en voyant la familiarité de cet homme à mon égard et le
sang-froid avec lequel nous engageâmes, l’Indien et moi, une conversation dont,
pour sa part, il ne comprenait pas un mot. (212)

Here La Tour du Pin presents de Novion to be more savage in his beliefs than Henriette-Lucy’s friend Squaw John who is just out to help and potentially protect her from harm. Particularly interesting is de Novion’s question as to what would occur had he not been there: “J’aurais été tout aussi rassurée, répondis-je. Sachez même que si, pour me défendre de vous, je lui avais dit de vous lancer son casse-tête, il l’aurait fait sans hésiter” (212). Both men are then unnecessary to her and she is in control of them when they do enter her sphere. Novion here represents a negative manifestation of masculinity in that he is not open to new people. In the end, the interactions with the Native Americans serve as a commentary by La Tour du Pin on tolerance and the importance of remaining open to new situations, something that is demonstrated both by Henriette-Lucy and the people she meets. Tolerance and understanding are precisely what becomes necessary to Henriette-Lucy as she deals with the men who inhabit her daily life and who are not as extraordinarily anonymous as the men described here.

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“The frustrated and aimless hero has no adventures and the minimal narrative concentrates instead on the lyrical composition of his malaise and frustration. This tale of a vulnerable, sensitive, and disempowered hero rewrote the traditional fictions of idealized masculinity” (Waller 28).

In The Male Malady, Margaret Waller discusses the “plight” of the mal du siècle hero typified by Chateaubriand’s long-suffering René. The emotional and feminized hero presented by Waller is similar to the men who populate Henriette-Lucy’s familial life, particularly her father, Arthur Dillon, and her husband, Frédéric-Seraphin de La Tour du Pin. These two
characters are limited in the successes they will enjoy and are subject to comparison with the ideal manifestation of personhood, Henriette-Lucy. The roles of beloved father and object of affection define Arthur and Frédéric, respectively, and it is these positions that demonstrate the literary endeavor undertaken by La Tour du Pin because they express the effort made to create specific character types within the work. This being stated, it is important to recall that just as Henriette-Lucy is not La Tour du Pin, Henriette-Lucy and La Tour du Pin share neither the same father nor husband.31 Through these characters we see how Schor’s proposed use of pastiche as a method to construct men operates in La Tour du Pin’s text. Arthur’s and Frédéric’s exaggerated attributes and flaws point to those that define the mal du siècle hero and challenge his reinscription in literature as a powerful male in spite of feminization by the writer. In *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* the discussion of mal du siècle heroes works to emphasize Henriette-Lucy’s importance as a strong heroine who challenges the male-driven texts written at the time much in the same way George Sand and Germaine de Staël do.

Arthur, as Henriette-Lucy’s father and the first male figure to inhabit her world, should provide a safety net of sorts for his daughter. As described by Jane Miller in *Women Writing About Men*: “Fathers are important as protection, providers of status and money, as gentlemen, even leaders of the community, as representatives of the outside world, its ways and values, and potentially as models for the kind of men their daughters should be hoping to marry themselves” (58). Arthur is far from satisfying these obligations and actually provides a model against which Henriette-Lucy logically rebels. An examination of his initial introduction into the text disappoints readers. In terms of respect for the patriarchal order, Arthur is in the position to be the most revered of the men in the memoir, but this does not come to be. The introduction of

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31 For the purposes of this chapter, when I use the names Arthur and Frédéric, I am referring to the fictional characters. References to historical figures will be explicitly indicated.
Henriette-Lucy’s parents is dominated by a focus on the mother. La Tour du Pin devotes a number of pages to Thérèse’s beauty, popularity, relationships, health and ultimate demise.\textsuperscript{32} The only statement initially provided about Arthur is: “Ma mère avait épousé Arthur Dillon, dont elle était la cousine issue de germain. Elle avait été élevée avec lui et ne le regardait que comme un frère” (36). In contrast to the effusive description of the mother,\textsuperscript{33} Arthur is described as merely a cousin to Thérèse who, moreover, does not inspire romantic feeling in his wife. It is unclear from the information provided if the lack of romantic feeling is one-sided though the marriage is ostensibly one of convenience. It may thus be assumed that Arthur has feelings for Thérèse and could, in fact, be suffering from unrequited love. As explained by Waller, “The mal du siècle protagonist must suffer the consequences of choosing the wrong partner” (15). This demonstrates from the start that Arthur exhibits qualities of the mal du siècle hero.

At the same time, his feminized qualities are actually those that validate him: “the very qualities that make the hero’s masculinity suspect – sensitivity, tenderness, and vulnerability – are those that the heroine values” (Waller 16). It is thus in the realms of family and love that Arthur is allowed to succeed minimally, particularly in his marriage to Madame de La Touche. This too reinforces his status as a stereotypical mal du siècle male. The reason behind the marriage is singular, nonetheless, in Henriette-Lucy’s eyes and seen from a critical perspective: “On pouvait considérer pourtant comme fort naturel que mon père eût le désir de se remarier dans l’espoir d’avoir un garçon” (54) and further, “Mon père devait donc désirer un garçon” (55). Although Henriette-Lucy insists that she does not begrudge him a new family after her mother’s premature death, it is not clear that she wholly supports the decision, stating: “Sans

\textsuperscript{32} pp. 36-37, 41-45
\textsuperscript{33} “Elle était belle comme un ange et la douceur angélique de son caractère la faisait généralement aimer. Les hommes l’adorait, et les femmes n’en étaient pas jalouses” (36).
doute il eût été préférable qu’il choisît sa nouvelle épouse dans une des familles catholiques
titrées en Angleterre” (55). This plays into the framework explained by Jane Miller wherein,
“Not the least of the faults committed by fathers […] is the mistake they made in choosing a
wife, a familiar enough daughterly insight. That will resonate with the need for heroines to do
their own choosing” (51). While Arthur seems to be suffering due to his choice in women, he is
also subject to the inexplicable demands of love. Henriette-Lucy criticizes the provenance of her
stepmother-to-be, but at the same time minimally justifies the decision: “mais il n’aimait pas les
Anglaises et il aimait Mᵐᵉ de La Touche” (55). This speaks both to Arthur’s and to Henriette-
Lucy’s needs to choose and to marry for love as she too is soon to face the marital decision at
this point in the narrative.

Beyond the private sphere, Arthur is also presented in terms of his profession: “Il avait
trente-trois ans et était propriétaire d’un des plus beaux régiments de l’armée. […] Il avait une
belle capitulation qui lui donnait la faculté de sortir de France tambours battants et enseignes
déployées, lorsque son propriétaire le jugerait bon” (54-55). Here, he is largely reduced to
function rather than developed further as a whole character. The career focus is of particular
interest because it demonstrates male weakness in stereotypically masculine worlds of the
military and government. A particular instance during which Arthur and another masculine role
model, Henriette-Lucy’s uncle, the Archbishop of Narbonne, are both manipulated by a third
party, Lucy Cary de Rothe, Henriette-Lucy’s grandmother, arises with respect to the professional
status of both men. Desirous to be named governor in the Caribbean, Arthur hopes to receive the
support of his uncle, the Archbishop, because according to Henriette-Lucy, “il eût des droits
acquis à l’un ou l’autre de ces postes” (55). In the end outside intervention does dictate the
outcome: “notre oncle l’archevêque, dominé par ma grand’mère et poussé par elle, au lieu de
Though there are likely to be other reasons for which Arthur did not receive the post of his choice, it is important that Lucy, a woman, becomes the reason for his failure. She is able to easily emasculate both her brother and nephew in a successful demonstration of her own power. La Tour du Pin thus creates a situation in which the gender roles are reversed for the advantage of the woman. Lucy determines their futures though it requires that she meddle in affairs of the public sphere normally less available to women. Lucy replaces Arthur as the dominant role model for Henriette-Lucy and emphasizes his lack of ability to perform despite a seemingly obvious bias in his favor. Arthur may be better loved by Henriette-Lucy than the wicked grandmother, but this relates very little to his public success.

In addition to his failed bid for his preferred post in the Caribbean, Arthur is described as not even performing his duties as he should. In fact, Henriette-Lucy openly criticizes his decisions: “Mon père, qui commandait le corps d’armée établi au camp de Famars, entre le Quesnoy et Charleroi ne suivit pas l’exemple de M. de La Fayette….Je me suis toujours reproché de ne l’avoir pas été chercher pour le ramener de force avec moi à La Haye. Dieu en avait autrement décidé! Pauvre père! (145).” Arthur gives further evidence of his weakness and unimportance when he makes a decision that will ultimately result in his death. It is implied that his death could have been avoided had he been as astute as his daughter. As Miller explains: “These young women get little help or example from their elders, of either sex, and are often put precociously into the position of acting as advisers to their contemporaries or even their parents” (54). Though placed in the position to be advised, Arthur neither seeks nor considers his daughter’s opinion, thus fatally corrupting his authority.
The redemption of Arthur Dillon comes when Henriette-Lucy sees him, unknowingly, for the last time. It is not until this final goodbye to the heroine that the reader is privy to more information about Arthur, specifically his appearance and to a lesser degree, his personality:

La différence d’âge entre nous, à peine dix-neuf ans, était si faible qu’il paraissait être plutôt mon frère que mon père. Il avait le nez aquilin, une très petite bouche, de grands yeux noirs, les cheveux châtain-clair. Mme de Boufflers prétendait qu’il ressemblait à un perroquet mangeant une cerise. Sa haute taille, son beau visage, sa superbe tournure lui conservaient encore toutes les apparences de la jeunesse. On ne pouvait pas avoir de plus nobles manières, ni l’air plus grand seigneur. L’originalité de son esprit et la facilité de son humeur le rendaient du commerce le plus agréable. Il était mon meilleur ami, en même temps que le camarade de mon mari, qui ne parvenait pas à se déshabiter de le tutoyer. (152)

The reader learns that Arthur is younger than his years and that he is attractive. In this description, he becomes less of a father figure and more of a peer to Henriette-Lucy and Frédéric. This was not the case earlier in the text and one can speculate that the nature of Arthur’s death, in the midst of the Terror, encouraged this outpouring of affection by La Tour du Pin. Though this final description is positive, it says nothing to convince the reader of Arthur’s strength beyond being an enjoyable and attractive person to know. The announcement of his death a few chapters later is rather anticlimactic, though it does affect the heroine, “La mort de mon père m’affecta vivement, bien que je m’y attendisse depuis longtemps. Quoique je l’eusse bien peu vu depuis des années, je n’en avais pas moins la plus tendre affection pour lui” (192). The potential drama surrounding the death of a parent does not manifest itself and La Tour du Pin moves swiftly to another topic. Placing Arthur in opposition to Henriette-Lucy reveals a
dilemma “between modesty and obedience on the one hand and realistic and critical intelligence on the other” (Miller 54). The representation of Arthur in the text thus serves the dual purpose of exhibiting the presence of men and reinforcing the magnitude of Henriette-Lucy as the principal character of the work.

In the nineteenth-century text, the relationship between the father and daughter can serve as transitory to the husband-wife union. Miller explains that the father-daughter pairing “announces the nature of the compromise women make as they leave one sort of dependence for another, a compromise that enjoins on them a calculation and balancing of profit and loss as they juggle with the possibilities of love and comfort, of passion and the rewards for duty” (54). In terms of *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*, Henriette-Lucy experiences this transitional phase a bit differently. The absence of her own father does not reduce his role in her marriage, but perhaps affects her future behaviors with her spouse. Whereas the marital model provided by her parents was one of unrequited love and separation, she seeks the opposite circumstance for her own life. Frédéric, like Arthur before him, nonetheless, represents the impotent mal du siècle stereotype. At the same time, as the object of her affection, he is subject to a fairytale introduction into her life that further romanticizes and ultimately weakens his position as a character when juxtaposed with Henriette-Lucy.

Frédéric’s entrance into the text is more mystical than physical. He has not seen or been seen by Henriette-Lucy, yet, his presence makes an impact on the heroine. The initial commentary on Frédéric represents him as a dashing young hero who mysteriously and, in accordance with romantic destiny, enters Henriette-Lucy’s life. Though this may seem to undermine his designation as a mal du siècle hero, it actually serves to emphasize the division between the dashing libertine hero of eighteenth-century literature and the nineteenth-century
model based on René. As we will see, the latter characterization becomes that with which he can be most logically identified. The early period in the relationship between Henriette-Lucy and Frédéric exhibits a highly romanticized version of love at first sight and the fairytale union that is to follow. In this section the reader finds a different Frédéric from he who inhabits the rest of the text. Marriage is a pivotal moment in Henriette-Lucy’s life as is discussed in chapter one. This is clearly seen in the altered treatment of Frédéric by Henriette-Lucy once the honeymoon concludes. He becomes her own personal René over whom she reigns, meaning, he embodies the privileged male who cannot be successful. As Waller explains of the relationship between women and their René-like partners: “Whereas he adopts the culture’s narrow ideas about masculinity to his own detriment, she is generally more than willing to love a man who is, in society’s eyes, less than a “man.” Indeed, following the eighteenth-century sentimental tradition, a “feminized” man is a woman’s ideal” (16). Frédéric’s weakness then, fuels her love despite the seemingly antithetical situation. Although he is seen as less dashing and less romantic post-marriage, it doesn’t change Henriette-Lucy’s love for him. How then does the impotence manifest itself?

The episode that best demonstrates Frédéric’s emasculation by Henriette-Lucy is rooted in the family’s escape from the guillotine, the flight to and residence in America. Henriette-Lucy drives the entire action and La Tour du Pin gives her all of the credit at the expense of Frédéric. Henriette-Lucy gives birth to her second child and her husband goes into hiding. She is left in the care of family friends, though she is ultimately alone, in her words: “mon mari était en fuite, mon père et mon beau-père étaient emprisonnés, ma maison avait été saisie, et mon seul ami, M. de Brouquens, se trouvait en état d’arrestation chez lui. A vingt-quatre ans, avec deux petits

\[34\] See detailed discussion of the courtship episode in chapter one.
enfants, que devenir?” (161). Abandoned by all of the men who would be expected to protect her, she has no choice but to rely on herself. Frédéric is particularly guilty of abandonment as he is her husband and the person societally seen as responsible for her. It is she who sees an advertisement for a ship sailing to America and she who sets the plan into motion. When Frédéric finally comes out of hiding for the departure, he is disguised in “des habits de paysan qu’elle lui avait envoyés” (175). In addition to all of the other responsibilities she shoulders, she also needs to dress him. Once on the boat Henriette-Lucy feels a sense of relief, but acknowledges that she is the one who provided for it: “Assise en face de mon mari dont je conservais la vie, avec mes deux enfants sur mes genoux, rien ne me paraissait impossible” (180). La Tour du Pin reinforces the idea that Frédéric did nothing to accomplish this task except to follow his wife’s instruction.

The construction of the crossing narrative places Frédéric and Henriette-Lucy in opposition to one another. She is always the dominant figure and he is typically either ill or unavailable. Just as the boat is to leave shore guards board the ship and take the sheep that was to have been the family’s main source of food. It can be argued that Frédéric would not have been able to do anything to prevent this, but it is more important that La Tour du Pin places the emphasis on his absence: “Mon mari, déjà atteint du mal de mer, s’était couché” (181). While a simple statement, it questions his masculinity. Once the boat leaves the choppy waters, Henriette-Lucy tells us, “Mon mari s’en trouva mieux” (181). The rocky sea and devious soldiers gone, Frédéric reappears, suddenly better. His staying power is absolutely called into question. Further, the “feeling better” lasts only briefly because we are soon to learn that: “Mon mari ne quitta pas son lit pendant trente jours. Il souffrait horriblement du mal de mer et aussi de la mauvaise nourriture. Les seuls aliments qu’il supportait étaient le thé à l’eau et quelques
morceaux de biscuit grillé, trempé dans du vin sucré. Pour moi, quand j’y pense après tant d’années, je ne conçois pas comment je pus résister à la fatigue et à la faim” (182). Again, we see that while both characters are forced into the same situation, they do not have the same success within it. Frédéric is frail and feeble; Henriette-Lucy is presented as a martyr able to survive conditions nearly unfit for living.

As the trip continues, so develops Frédéric’s pathetic character. Not only is he absent when needed and unable to survive without great assistance from his wife, when he is present and active his contributions range from nearly fatal ideas to frivolous confrontations. Take as an example of the former, Frédéric’s suggestion that the family disembark in order to reach England rather than to continue to America:


Here, not only is Frédéric weak, but he has ideas that could lead to his certain death and perhaps that of his entire family. Interestingly, this episode is similar to the questionable decision made by Arthur that likely contributed to his death. Fortunately in this circumstance, the boat captain is more competent and does not buckle to Frédéric’s wishes. The juxtaposition of the cargo boat captain and Frédéric is striking in that the class difference should dictate that Frédéric be the more dominant figure. This is not so and degrades further Frédéric’s masculinity and authority. Henriette-Lucy is thankful to the captain, not her husband, for their survival. At no point does
Frédéric fulfill a productive role during the crossing from France to America. In fact, the narrative discredits and even scoffs at him. This is particularly interesting when we consider that these episodes are the first in which he participates directly. During the courtship phase, the couple was infrequently together, only able to exchange furtive glances. When he was just an attractive man dining at her home he could do no wrong; however, in more difficult situations he could only do wrong.

Consider the following episode wherein Frédéric becomes angry that Henriette-Lucy cuts her hair:

Un jour, après la rencontre de l’*Atalante*, je voulus me coiffer pendant que ma fille dormait. Je trouvai mes cheveux, que j’avais très longs, tellement mêlés que, désespérant de les remettre en ordre et prévoyant apparemment la coiffure à la *Titus*, je pris des ciseaux et je les coupai tout à fait courts, ce dont mon mari fut fort en colère. Puis je les jetai à la mer, et avec eux toutes les idées frivoles que mes belles boucles blondes avaient pu faire naître en moi. (184)

Anger at a haircut is frivolous when the family is on the brink of starvation and Frédéric himself continues to be completely bedridden due to his seasickness. It is not reported that he shows any concern for the procurement of food or water or for what is to be done upon arrival. Henriette-Lucy takes care of all of these considerations. Further, it demonstrates a potential lack of adaptability in Frédéric. By placing Henriette-Lucy and Frédéric in direct opposition over lost hair, La Tour du Pin establishes that while Henriette-Lucy is willing to let go of the “idées frivoles,” Frédéric still holds on. His ability to accept change is questioned and is shown to be nearly nonexistent in comparison with his wife’s flexibility. This carries over to the arrival in America and the decision about where to live. Though they are offered a farm near Boston,
Frédéric rejects the idea. Henriette-Lucy expresses a certain disagreement, stating: “Peut-être aurions-nous bien fait d’accepter. Mais mon mari voulait se rapprocher du Canada, où il aurait souhaité s’établir. Il parlait l’anglais avec difficulté, quoiqu’il l’entendit parfaitement, et la pensée que le français était, comme il l’est encore, la langue dont on se servait habituellement à Montréal, lui donnai envie de gagner le voisinage de cette ville” (190-91). Henriette-Lucy is again at an advantage. She is bilingual and thus unafraid of living in an English-speaking area. Frédéric again shows that he is less willing to adopt a new way of living.

Frédéric, while easily seen as the most important man to Henriette-Lucy, proves to be one of the most ineffective. His decisions are faulty and he is unwilling to change. It can be said that he is stuck in a past that no longer exists. The power and money that might have been his no longer exist. The access to easy employment and security are no longer possible. The fact that Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans is written from the perspective of the heroine makes it more difficult to hear the voice of the mal du siècle male, Frédéric. Instead, we see his weaknesses through the eyes of the work’s strongest character, Henriette-Lucy. Her love for him perhaps mediates the fact that he is a pathetic example of productive masculinity, but does not minimize the fact that he is emasculated. The heroine’s frustration with her husband is hinted at by La Tour du Pin, but she never creates a confrontational situation between the spouses. In this way it is suggested that he is neither worthy of the heroine’s effort nor capable of the challenge. The more aggressive nature of Henriette-Lucy is reserved for the men who actually do hold power, even if they are not always able to use it properly.

* * * *

“No matter how devious or cruel, no matter how many women suffer, the hero acts with impunity. In their libertine representations of the rites (and rights) of men, the libertine writers make no apologies for his privileges. Instead, this literature is a tribute to man’s mastery over the world, which he demonstrates by manipulating a series of women” (Waller 12).
Those men I term the anti-Renés or the more traditional libertine heroes are more likely to be seen as men in power or those assumed to have power. In *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*, there are number of important men that seem to fall into this category. Dominant in most situations, privileged, wealthy, appealing to women and men alike, these men would typically reign supreme in the works in which they are depicted. Louis XVI, Tallien, Talleyrand, and Napoléon occupy this seemingly privileged spot in La Tour du Pin’s work, but as we will see, they are, in fact, disfigured in their final representations. These men theoretically embody what Waller terms, “the new orthodoxy of virile and militarist masculinity” (2). I will show, nonetheless, that the power held by these men is easily and frequently appropriated by Henriette-Lucy. La Tour du Pin constructs situations in which Henriette-Lucy must encounter these men in power. Henriette-Lucy then is described as being fearful or anxious. Then, finally, when she is face-to-face with her “opponent” she universally has the upper hand and turns the situation to her advantage. In this way, even those who stereotypically intimidate others, regardless of gender, are reduced to ineffective power mongers. Again, we see that La Tour du Pin uses a stereotype, alters it in some way, in this case disfiguring them, and ultimately demonstrates the strength of her heroine. Henriette-Lucy must complete these trials in order to become a whole character.

The first man in power to enter the acquaintance of Henriette-Lucy is Louis XVI, a person, though king, who does not impress her greatly and, in fact, becomes a subject of harsh criticism:

C’était un gros homme, de cinq pieds six à sept pouces de taille, avec les épaules hautes, ayant la plus mauvaise tournure qu’on pût voir, l’air d’un paysan marchant en se dandinant à la suite de sa charrue, rien de hautain ni de royal dans le
maintien. Toujours embarrassé de son épée, ne sachant que faire de son chapeau, il était très magnifique dans ses habits, dont à vrai dire il ne s’occupait guère, car il prenait celui qu’on lui donnait sans seulement le regarder. (78)

This description is peculiar in that it frames the ruler of France as an oafish child uncertain of how to carry himself, to hold a sword, or even to dress. Further comments continue in the same vein: “Ce bon prince n’avait aucune dignité dans la tournure. Il se tenait mal, se dandinait; ses mouvements étaient brusques et disgracieux, et sa vue, extrêmement basse, alors qu’il n’était pas d’usage de porter des lunettes, le faisait grimacer. Son discours, fort court, fut débité d’un ton assez résolu” (99). We again see the disdain for the king. He is awkward and unattractive and even more damning, he has little to say. The derision is even more pronounced here as La Tour du Pin provides a much briefer, yet exceedingly more positive comment on the queen to follow this indictment of the king’s manner: “La reine se faisait remarquer par sa grande dignité” (99). His weakness in the face of Revolutionary uprising and his ineffectiveness as a ruler detract from his being constructed as a powerful male. He does serve as an example of how the mighty can fall and reinforces the notion that there are certain standards to be met, even as king. Not meeting these standards in La Tour du Pin’s fictional world results in ridicule and marginalization. While Henriette-Lucy’s interaction with and relationship to the king are minimal, they do place her in opposition to a man in power. This is especially important considering that she is still quite young, less than twenty years of age, when she spends time in the presence of Louis XVI. The character and authorial voice have very little to fear and see themselves as better than a man more commonly seen as the more powerful.35 The distance

35 It is also important to note that this commentary was written many years after the death of the king when it would be much safer to do so. The highly political nature of French society and La
between the royal encounter and the writing of the text could also play a role in the depiction of
the encounter. The early start La Tour du Pin gives Henriette-Lucy in this type of power
exchange paves the way for her more direct and often confrontational interactions with other
men including Tallien and Napoleon.

Tallien is the next powerful man to find a place in the text. He served as the Commune of Paris
and encouraged extreme punishments for counterrevolutionaries. He worked to spread the
Terror, but was ultimately renounced by Robespierre in 1794 and began the attack on him in the
Thermidorian coup. He lost power soon after he accompanied Napoléon to Egypt in 1798 and
lived out the remainder of his life in near obscurity. It was at the height of his power that
Henriette-Lucy encounters him. The heroine’s first meeting with him provides information on
them both, but serves to deconstruct the semblance of power held by the man. She goes to
request that he lift the sequestration placed on the family estate, le Bouilh, so that the family can
leave Paris. At the beginning of the episode she “n’osai[t] lever les yeux … serai[t] tombée sans
le soutien du marbre … balbutu[a] la demande” (166). The initial image that La Tour du Pin
constructs is that of a frightened and powerless girl who has no control over her own body
because she is so overpowered by the very idea of the man she is to speak with. While the
description of her frailty and weakness implies that the power is in his favor, this is not the end
result. Tallien offends her directly and threatens her family in an effort to intimidate her, but
achieves just the opposite reaction. While she does leave, it is not out of fear and she responds to
him with the following: “Je ne suis pas venue ici, citoyen, lui dis-je, pour entendre l’arrêt de
mort de mes parents, et puisque vous ne pouvez m’accorder ce que je demande, je ne dois pas
vous importuner davantage. En même temps, je le saluai légèrement de la tête” (167). In mere

Tour du Pin’s level of involvement with the power players are significant when assessing the
criticisms she makes and omits in her work.
minutes the trembling and babbling girl becomes a strong and aggressive woman and thus reverses the initial construct of the encounter. His reaction: “Il sourit, comme semblant dire: « Vous êtes bien hardie de me parler ainsi, »” (167) nonetheless, still challenges Henriette-Lucy’s status. The patronizing smile implies that he still believes he is the one in control; however, this idea is negated in her manner of departure: “Puis [elle] sortit par la porte par laquelle il était entré, sans rentrer dans le salon” (167). Not only does she leave, but she uses the door he used and she gets the final word even if it is nonverbal in nature. The opening of the scene relies heavily on the physical expression of Henriette-Lucy’s discomfort and her inability to speak. Her departure provides a direct contrast in that she has found a voice with which to make demands and is no longer projecting the image of physical insecurity. She leaves through the door used by Tallien rather than the entry she initially used. This demonstrates a shift in power, at this point a move towards equilibrium between the pair, but their story is not so easily resolved, continuing for years to come.

A few days later, Tallien makes a surprise visit while Henriette-Lucy is lunching with friends. At this point, she has made the decision to sail to America and has mentioned the idea to his mistress, Madame de Fontenay, who, in turn, spoke to Tallien. His arrival stupefies her friend M. de Brouquens and surprises Henriette-Lucy, thus reinforcing his power and the effect it has on others (171). It is made clear that his intention is to speak to her and to grant her the requisite passport and, at the same time, to demonstrate his authority. Similar to the preceding exchange between them, there is a volley for power that is not quite resolved, though, again, Henriette-Lucy holds her ground against the supposedly powerful Tallien. What becomes clearer as the interactions continue is that Tallien may not have the power he likes to demonstrate; La Tour du Pin constructs him as continually in need of proving his clout. His
opening statement becomes the continuation of their former encounter wherein he attempts to get the final word.

Tallien […] vint à moi, avec cette manière prévenante des seigneurs de l’ancienne cour, et me dit de la façon la plus gracieuse: “on prétend, madame, que je puis réparer aujourd’hui mes torts envers vous, et j’y suis tout à fait disposé.” Alors je me laissai fléchir et quittant l’air froidement hautain que j’avais d’abord pour en prendre un passablement poli, je lui expliquai qu’ayant des intérêts pécuniaires à la Martinique – la chose était presque vraie – je désirais y passer pour m’en occuper, et que je lui demandais un passeport pour moi, mon mari et mes enfants. Il répliqua: “Mais où donc est-il votre mari?” Ce à quoi je lui répondis, en riant: “Vous permettrez, citoyen représentant, que je ne vous le dise pas. –Comme vous voudrez”, fit-il gaiement. Le monstre se faisait aimable. Sa belle maîtresse l’avait menacé de ne plus le revoir s’il ne me sauvait pas, et cette parole avait enchaîné un moment sa cruauté. (172)

To begin, La Tour du Pin compares Tallien to “seigneurs de l’ancienne cour,” which is almost never a positive comment in this work as it indicates a desperate need to cling to the past, an idea that La Tour du Pin universally rejects for her characters. He is described as gracious, desirous of apologizing for his previous behavior, and even likeable. This false friendliness is countered with great efforts on Henriette-Lucy’s behalf to hide her aggression in an attempt to shift from “froidement hautain” to “passablement poli.” Further, she lies openly to him and refuses to answer the question as to the whereabouts of her husband. Just as in the prior conversation, Tallien struggles with Henriette-Lucy. The structure of the narrative also increases the interest in the section because in addition to the discourse attributed to Henriette-Lucy, the authorial voice
also provides the reader with further information that would not have been accessible to Henriette-Lucy in the moment. It is through this voice that we learn of Henriette-Lucy’s desire to present a façade of her own in dealing with Tallien, and the final comment that the reason he seeks to help her is because his mistress threatened to break with him if he did not. Though she refers to him as a monster and as cruel, Henriette-Lucy does not fear this man. He again attempts the playful and patronizing approach, but to no avail. In the end, it is she who gains the passport she seeks and he who was forced to submit to women.

Years later when Henriette-Lucy is again in Paris, she again encounters Madame de Fontenay, now Madame Tallien, and Tallien. In this episode, more insight is given as to Tallien’s personal character, specifically with respect to his wife:

elle s’était trouvée dans l’obligation d’épouser Tallien, dont elle avait un enfant. La vie commune avec ce nouvel époux lui semblait déjà insupportable. Rien n’égalait, paraît-il son caractère ombrageux et soupçonneux. Elle me conta qu’un soir, étant rentrée à une heure du matin, il eut un accès de jalousie tel qu’il avait été sur le point de la tuer. Le voyant armer un pistolet, elle prit la fuite […] Tallien vint un moment dans la chambre de sa femme. Je le remerciai assez froidement, et il me dit de compter sur lui en toute occasion. (252)

This interaction between the two women reveals the dominance of Tallien in one situation and his lack thereof in another. While prior conversations expressed a veiled malevolence, here, La Tour du Pin does not mince words, indicting Tallien for serious cruelties towards his wife. On the other hand, Henriette-Lucy, aware of his proclivity for violence, still responds to him “froidement.” In the end, they do have one more encounter during which he advises her to leave the country for her safety. This menacing and dominant figure becomes less so when placed in
opposition to Henriette-Lucy. While guilty of abuse of power and domestic violence, he caters to the whims of Henriette-Lucy thus elevating her power in relation to him and those who continue to fear him.

A constant struggle for power defines the relationship between Tallien and Henriette-Lucy and in the end there must be a “winner.” In this case, it is Henriette-Lucy. When we turn our attention to the final anti-René, Napoléon, the situation changes because we see an equilibrium and even exchange between Henriette-Lucy and the emperor that is not possible elsewhere. This is not to say that he is not disempowered by Henriette-Lucy, but that the manner in which it is done exhibits a certain amount of respect thus far absent from her interactions with other men. Henriette-Lucy is able to make demands upon Napoléon without fear and usually receives that for which she asks and vice versa. Napoléon does fall easily into this category of the disfigured libertine-type hero in that his behavior with respect to Henriette-Lucy is surprising considering the image that is typically presented of him. He sees her as a worthy “opponent” though does not demonstrate a need to prove himself in the way Tallien does. He does acquiesce to her wishes and treats her differently. It would be going too far to claim that La Tour du Pin emasculates the emperor, but she does present him in a way that undermines his power-mongering ways.

We see in the early relationship between Napoléon and Henriette-Lucy that she reverts to perhaps a younger behavior in that she is desperate to even see Napoléon, let alone meet him: “Le lendemain arrivait à la poste l’ordre de préparer les chevaux pour l’empereur. Cela me désespéra, mais je n’en fus pas moins empresseée de voir cet homme extraordinaire” (297). There is an urgency that surrounds Napoléon that does not exist in any other relationship. La Tour du Pin clearly paints Henriette-Lucy’s enthusiasm for the emperor, even when there is minimal
contact. Everything surrounding Napoléon becomes theatrical from a drive through the street to a business meeting. Once Henriette-Lucy has glimpsed the emperor for the first time, she returns home only to find out that he has requested her presence. Her feelings shift from the frustration of not having seen the emperor from the best visual advantage, to anxious excitement about being requested specifically by him.

The preparations for her appearance before Napoléon are swiftly handled and she finds herself soon before him. Again, though they have not yet spoken, even the announcement of his arrival “[lui] fit battre le cœur” (299). Once he begins his walk through the reception line, it becomes clear that she is of utmost importance:

Il commença par un bout et adressait la parole à chaque dame. Comme il s’approchait de l’endroit où je me tenais, le chambellan lui dit un mot à l’oreille. Il fixa les yeux sur moi en souriant de la manière la plus gracieuse, et, mon tour venu, il me dit en riant, sur un ton familier, en me regardant de la tête aux pieds: “Mais vous n’êtes donc pas du tout affligée de la mort du roi de Danemark?” Je répondis: “Pas assez, Sir, pour sacrifier le bonheur d’être présentée à Votre Majesté. Je n’avais pas de robe noire. – Oh! voilà une excellente raison, répliqua-t-il, et puis vous étiez à la campagne!” (299)

Here, though it is their first meeting he speaks in a “ton familier” after having been forewarned by his assistant that he was about to meet her. She is not wearing a black dress in accordance with the mourning for the king of Denmark, but he finds it charming and demonstrates his awareness of her situation. The entire episode is quite friendly and does not demonstrate anxiety in either one of the participants. The ease with which Henriette-Lucy speaks to the emperor after having been subject to “battements du cœur” indicates early on that he is willing to make
exceptions for her. He even includes her when making judgments about other women. As an example, the woman with whom he speaks makes an error in speech and “il regarda [Henriette-Lucy] comme voulant dire: “Que cette femme est bête!” (299). This also demonstrates lack of control by other women thus reinforcing the strength of Henriette-Lucy. Napoléon’s treatment of women, except for Henriette-Lucy, is presented by La Tour du Pin as controlling to the level of dictatorial. He is not beyond imposing the wardrobe and activities of his wife even when they are apart:

L’empereur, quoique ayant, comme on dit vulgairement, sur les bras toute l’Espagne et toute l’Europe, avait pris le temps de dicter l’ordre des journées de l’impératrice dans le plus minutieux détail et prévu jusqu’à la toilette qu’elle devait porter. Elle n’aurait ni voulu ni pu en déranger la moindre particularité, à moins d’être malade au lit. (300)

Even she is subject to his domination where Henriette-Lucy is not. He laughs when Henriette-Lucy wears gray rather than black and often charges her with the complete organization of events, such as her sister’s wedding and the visit from the Spanish monarchs. Josephine is given precise orders and seemingly fears deviating from them. Napoléon, like Tallien, seems to fall under a spell of sorts when dealing with Henriette-Lucy. She is thus able to claim some of their power and La Tour du Pin easily disfigures their status as men in absolute power.

The crowning moment of Napoléon and Henriette-Lucy’s relationship arrives when Frédéric is mistakenly removed from his position as prefect in Brussels. Concerned that there could be impediments to the marriage of her daughter Charlotte to Auguste de Liedekerke Beaufort, Henriette-Lucy goes directly to Napoléon to request that Frédéric be immediately given a new position. The entire episode is set in a very theatrical way. She sends a secret letter
to Napoléon, explains to her friend, Claire de Duras: “Je n’aime pas les petits moyens” (332),
and ultimately gains a meeting for the following day. Though requesting private audience with
the emperor would seem to be a stress-inducing situation, she remains nonchalant: “Cette
heureuse nouvelle [la réunion] ne troubla pas mon sommeil”(333). She furthers the explanation
stating: “C’était un événement assez important dans la vie qu’une conversation en tête à tête
avec cet homme extraordinaire, et cependant je déclare ici dans toute la vérité de mon cœur,
peut-être avec orgueil, que je ne me sentais pas le moindre embarras”(333). At this point, there
is no question as to Napoléon’s power and her need for his indulgence. The fact that La Tour du
Pin creates a situation in which her heroine recognizes that she should, perhaps, be deferent to
the emperor, yet is not, makes a statement about them both. He becomes less powerful and she
more so. Here, it is not as important that one triumph over the other, but that the power becomes
more equally distributed. The sharing of power is more significant because the male power in
question belongs to Napoléon.

The singularity of the situation is taken even further in the dialogue portion of the text:

Puis tout en parcourant de long en large ce grand salon où je le suivais marchant
à ses côtés, il prononça ces paroles – c’est la seule fois peut-être qu’il les ai
proférées dans sa vie, et le privilège m’était réservé de les entendre – :

– “J’ai eu tort. Mais comment faire?”

Je répliquai :

– Votre Majesté peut le réparer. (334-35)

This section of the story is significant in that it includes clear examples of both the character’s
and the authorial voice’s perspectives on Napoléon. Only Henriette-Lucy can hear the emperor
admit he was wrong. Only she can tell him that it can be corrected. His willingness to admit a
mistake to her demonstrates both a particular level of trust and comfort to concede power to another person. In this way, the typical representation of Napoléon as exigent and unilateral is disfigured and his authority called into question. The relationship between the two comes to a close in a similar way:

Il parcourut de yeux ces trois rangs de dames, parla à quelques-unes d’un air assez distrait, puis, m’ayant aperçue, il sourit de ce sourire que tous les historiens ont tâché de décrire et qui était véritablement remarquable par le contraste qu’il présentait avec l’expression toujours sérieuse et parfois même dure de la physionomie. Mais la surprise de mes voisines fut grande quand Napoléon, tout en souriant, m’adressa ces mots: “Etes-vous contente de moi, Madame?” Les personnes qui m’entouraient s’écartèrent alors à droite et à gauche, et je me trouvai, sans savoir comment, sur le rang de devant. Je remerciai l’empereur avec un accent très sincèrement reconnaissant. Après quelques mots aimables, il s’éloigna. C’est la dernière fois que j’ai vu ce grand homme. (336)

Napoléon seeks Henriette-Lucy’s approval while in public, thus raising her status amongst peers. She is again placed in a privileged position by La Tour du Pin and singled out. It is also interesting to consider her arrival before the emperor. The crowd parts ways and she finds herself face-to-face with Napoléon. This dramatic moment sets the scene for the final encounter between them and gives closure to the experience. La Tour du Pin is able to reinforce the anomalous element to Henriette-Lucy through her representation of Napoléon. Her singular relationship with Napoléon thus distances her further from the rest of the characters and minimizes the importance of the men in the text, those with tangible power, and those without.

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“Ton oncle [Aymar] a adopté ce qu’il croit être la ligne du devoir et de l’honneur… advienne que pourra… [Ayant tout sacrifié] il est aussi éloigné des intrigues que de concessions; c’est un preux des anciens temps. Je pense bien que ce n’est pas le moyen de faire fortune dans celui où nous vivons, mais comme le disait un cachet que tu avais : a man is never lost on a straight road” (La Tour du Pin 411).

In a letter written in 1833 to her grandson, Hadelin, Henriette-Lucy describes her brave son. He is the combination of “des anciens temps,” “où nous vivons,” and, implied, the future. For her, he becomes the hope for the future and the man that she had hoped to create through de Bar and Humbert. For though his inclusion in the narrative is limited, helpful information is provided about him in the edited correspondence included with the work. Aymar can then become the only success story in the work, precisely because he is absent from the work. La Tour du Pin can control the design of all other characters because the actual people upon whom they are based have finite lives. Aymar is the only character of any importance that survives both Henriette-Lucy and La Tour du Pin. In this way, he can embody the man who has yet to find his place in the world, fictional or otherwise.

Aymar, Henriette-Lucy’s youngest son and the intended reader of her memoir, becomes the rarest of men in the work. He stands out from the others because he is the only character that cannot be fully controlled by the author. As the only child to survive La Tour du Pin, Aymar poses a particular challenge to her as an author. A certain amount of liberty can be taken in framing the other men within the written text whereas Aymar exists literally as well as literarily and his ultimate demise or success represent the unknown future. The fictional Aymar is also subject to Henriette-Lucy’s rule, though he plays a minor role in the memoir itself as he is a child of nine in 1815, the year the memoir abruptly ends. He is best understood through the

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36 In this study I will consider the correspondence to be a part of the text and treat it in the same way in which I treat the journal itself because they are an exercise in the creation of a persona separate from that of La Tour du Pin.
correspondence between Henriette-Lucy and Félicie where his mother describes a person, for the first time, who is very similar to herself. In a letter to Félicie in 1824, the following description is provided:

Aymar va avoir dix-huit ans ; il se développe beaucoup ; il a de l’esprit, du jugement, du tact, de belles et nobles manières. Il n’est pas embarrassé de parler avec des gens qui lui sont supérieurs. Il aime les savants et les gens âgés, et sait tirer parti de tout pour son instruction. On le chargerait tout à l’heure d’une mission difficile au bout de l’Europe, que je serais sûre qu’il ne se tromperait pas d’un mot ou d’une idée. Il a le don de se faire aimer de tous ceux qui le connaissent quoiqu’on ne sache pas en quoi cela consiste, il est sûr que c’est une chose qui n’appartient pas à tout le monde.

Pour lui, cela vient de ce qu’ayant vécu toute sa vie avec des gens de tous les pays, il a contracté une tolérance universelle de manières, des coutumes et des usages. (390-91)

Thinking back to chapter one, it is very easy to see the similarity between Henriette-Lucy and her son. The woman who has to this point been incomparable meets her match. Interestingly enough, she does not take credit for his achievements like she does in prior scenarios and this binds them together. Living “avec des gens de tous les pays” and cultivating respect for “les savants et les gens âgés” can be directly attributed to his parents as it was their travel and social sphere that informed him. Part of the rarity in this circumstance thus becomes Henriette-Lucy’s willingness to give up the spotlight.
Whereas his brother Humbert disengages from the mother figure, primarily through his death, Aymar does not have this option. In a letter to Félicie written in May 1841 the heroine explains, “Pour moi, je n’ai de projets, comme tu sais, que ceux d’Aymar, sur lequel je ne veux pas exercer la moindre influence; là où il ira, je désire aller aussi” (430). Increasingly, Henriette-Lucy depends on her son because he is her closest remaining relative. In their correspondence it becomes clear that it is she who relies on him and not vice versa. His role as caregiver for his aging mother distinguishes him from all of the other men in the text. His life is still undetermined and there is a sense that Henriette-Lucy is giving him the power to claim it for himself as evidenced in the comment “je ne veux pas exercer la moindre influence [sur lui].” The rare male characters embodied by the young de Bar and Humbert who flirt with success, but do not realize it, find it in Aymar. Henriette-Lucy has no choice but to allow him to become his own person.

* * * *

The rare, multiplied, parodied, and disfigured men that populate *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* contribute to the definition of the ultimate heroine, Henriette-Lucy. The connections between the men then lie within their relationship to the heroine. The extraordinary and anomalous men who teach her to dance or provide her with medical knowledge allow her to pass that information on to her protégés, the rarity in this construction of literary men. She finds her strength in the relationships with those romantic and societally-deemed weak men, and is then able to survive the cutthroat realm of the power elite, that of Tallien and Napoleon. In the end, La Tour du Pin supports Schor’s claim that men’s images do not exist in women’s writing.

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37 It is important to note that at the time this letter was written, Henriette-Lucy was 81 years old.

38 Evidence of this trend can be found in the collection of their correspondence: Bertrand de Vivies, ed., *Une dame et deux rois du cœur* (Nimes: C. Lacour, 1996).
but not for the same reason the critic proposes. Schor maintains that “writing is marked from the outset by a profound suspicion of the image and its grounding phallicism” (131). While the image may have an element of the misogynist to it, here men’s images are called into question because they do not stand alone. La Tour du Pin’s male images serve to define the heroine and it is through her existence that they come to be. As Schor suggests, “the representation of men is bound up with the death of the image of man” (131). Here it is Henriette-Lucy who is reborn in their place.
CHAPTER 4
THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENT’S LITERARY SOUL

“We assume that the happenings of autobiography are more or less given, although the writer obviously selects among his memories and shapes them to his purposes. Events in autobiography, then, do not create character in the same way as events in fiction. Yet one may feel that the central character of an autobiography has created a self then written the book to validate the creation. The writing itself may constitute the creation” (Spacks 16).

In the introduction I introduced the idea that notions of genre permeate the text without directly attaching themselves to it in any permanent way. This complicates the discussion of *Le Journal’s* literary nature, but does not prevent it. To this end, some speculate that: “She [La Tour du Pin] was not only writing memoirs, she was also, unconsciously of course, writing a novel of family life” (Crosland 3). The complex debate between autobiography and fiction clearly has a place in this discussion; however, Shari Benstock resolves this somewhat in her work, *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women’s Autobiographical Writings*, in which she explains: “autobiography reveals the impossibility of its own dream; what begins on the presumption of self-knowledge ends in the creation of a fiction that covers over the premises of its construction” (11). The desire to produce a historical document with self as subject, then, can be nothing other than fiction. The fiction is honestly based in historical reality, but even against the will of the author the text itself takes over. We see, thus, that authorial intention is not the issue because it cannot be determined with any degree of certainty and, even if it could be identified, it would not necessarily transfer to the final product created by the writer. The style and treatment of the general thematic content, however, are significant in the establishment of a work as literary rather than as historical. In this chapter I will examine La Tour du Pin’s work
alongside comparable traditional literary texts in order to demonstrate that *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* is, in fact, a literary work.

* * * *

To set the tone for this undertaking it is helpful to return to the opening paragraphs of the text where we see the clear manifestation of a prologue:

Quand on écrit un livre, c’est presque toujours avec l’intention qu’il soit lu avant ou après votre mort. Mais je n’écris pas un livre. Quoi donc ? Un journal de ma vie simplement. Pour n’en relater que les événements, quelques feuilles de papier suffiraient à un récit assez peu intéressant; si c’est l’histoire de mes opinions et de mes sentiments, le journal de mon cœur que j’entends composer, l’entreprise est plus difficile, car, pour se peindre, il faut se connaître et ce n’est pas à cinquante ans qu’il aurait fallu commencer. Peut-être parlerai-je du passé et raconterai-je mes jeunes années, par des fragments seulement et sans suite. Je ne prétends pas écrire mes confessions ; mais quoique j’eusse de la répugnance à divulguer mes fautes ; je veux pourtant me montrer telle que je suis, telle que j’ai été.

Je n’ai jamais rien écrit que des lettres à ceux que j’aime. Il n’y a pas d’ordre dans mes idées. J’ai peu de méthode. Ma mémoire est déjà fort diminuée. Mon imagination surtout m’emporte quelquefois si loin du sujet que je voudrais poursuivre, que j’ai peine à rattacher le fil rompu bien souvent par ses écarts. Mon cœur est encore si jeune que j’ai besoin de me regarder au miroir pour m’assurer que je n’ai plus vingt ans. Profitons donc de cette chaleur qui me reste et que les infirmités de l’âge peuvent détruire d’un moment à l’autre, pour raconter quelques faits d’une vie agitée, mais bien moins malheureuse, peut-être,
par les événements dont le public a été instruit, que par les peines secrètes dont je ne devais compte qu’à Dieu. (35)

These first paragraphs present options for genre types and indicate directly that the written text is being seen through a filter, that of age. La Tour du Pin’s narrative voice openly admits a desire to produce an honest work, not necessarily her “confessions,” but a description of what she is and was. We see already the ambiguous nature of the narrative contrasted with the idea that in order to know oneself one should begin before age fifty. As readers we are faced with the question, how can an honest representation be made of someone who claims not to fully know herself, be it as a fictional character or live person? The trustworthiness of this authorial voice is then called into question. This prologue piques further interest as it mirrors to a large extent prefatory material from literary sources.

La Tour du Pin’s text particularly echoes sentiments expressed in the prefaces to those found in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Our first example comes from the preface, defined as such, of La Nouvelle Héloïse:

Tout honnête homme doit avouer les livres qu’il publie. Je me nomme donc à la tête de ce recueil, non pour me l’approprier, mais pour en répondre. S’il y a du mal, qu’on me l’impute ; s’il y a du bien, je n’entends point m’en faire honneur.

39 The first person statements made in the prefatory remarks made in both La Tour du Pin’s and Rousseau’s works should not be attributed to the author. Here again, Susan Lanser’s concept of the authorial voice is invaluable. This construction reflects the intersection of author, narrator, and character and takes into account the overlap in these identities. Again, as in earlier chapters, I will use the expression narrative voice to identify that identity and the author’s last name in reference to the author.

40 Rousseau is an obvious role model for her as Henriette-Lucy claims familiarity with his text: “La duchesse de Lauzun avait une bibliothèque très curieuse et beaucoup de manuscrits de Rousseau, entre autres celui de La Nouvelle Héloïse, tout entier écrit de sa main […] Je crois que tous ces manuscrits précieux, ainsi que toutes les éditions rares de cette collection, ont été portés à la Bibliothèque du roi” (88).
Si le livre est mauvais, j’en suis plus obligé de le reconnaître : je ne veux passer pour meilleur que je suis.

[…]

Ce livre n’est point fait pour circuler dans le monde, et convient à très peu de lecteurs. Le style rebutera les gens de goût; la matière alarmera les gens sévères; tous les sentiments seront hors de la nature pour ceux qui ne croient pas à la vertu. Il doit déplaire aux dévots, aux libertins, aux philosophes; il doit choquer les femmes galantes, et scandaliser les honnêtes femmes. A qui plaira-t-il donc?

Peut-être à moi seul; mais à coup sûr il ne plaira médiocrement à personne. (3)

The first similarity is that the narrative voices of both La Tour du Pin and Rousseau make clear that these works are not meant to be circulated. The work is deemed “peu intéressant” in La Tour du Pin’s case and it “convient à très peu de lecteurs” from the Rousseauian perspective. Further, La Nouvelle Héloïse is described as demonstrating a repellent style and questionable subject matter. Le Journal is characterized by disorganization, gaps in content, and poor writing method. Both acknowledge the presence of an audience, ranging from La Tour du Pin’s mention of “les événements dont le public a été instruit” and Rousseau’s concern that the work would please “peut-être à moi seul; mais à coup sûr il ne plaira médiocrement à personne.” The similarities are easily drawn between the two prefatory works, but there is one important divergence. While the narrative voice employed by La Tour du Pin hesitates to call the work a book, Rousseau’s does not. Though this may seem problematic, it is not, as both arrive at the same conclusion: that which is written is of poor quality and not suitable for public consumption. The fact that La Tour du Pin writes “un journal de [sa] vie simplement” and that
Rousseau freely admits to publishing a book does not matter in the end. The act of writing a text places them in the same category.

La Tour du Pin’s prefatory comments resemble even more closely those that Rousseau outlines in Les Confessions. That this be the case is not wholly surprising in that the type of writing being done is very similar. These first person texts based in reality belong to the autobiographical camp and, at the same time, share fictional qualities. The transformation that takes place in the writing process, particularly taking into account the amount of time elapsed between the events and their composition in textual format, creates an unavoidable editing and reframing of history. In this pairing we will see a marked insistence upon the importance of self and honesty and integrity of the author and the role of memory. Like La Tour du Pin’s text, Les Confessions does not provide a traditional preface; rather, it presents prefatory paragraphs, excerpted below:

Je forme une entreprise qui n’eut jamais d’exemple et dont l’exécution n’aura point d’imitateur. Je veux montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature; et cet homme ce sera moi.

[...]

41 Shari Benstock aptly explains the process involved in writing autobiographically in The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women’s Autobiographical Writings: “In definitions of autobiography that stress self-disclosure and narrative account, that posit a self called to witness (as an authority) to “his” own being, that propose a double referent for the first-person narrative (the present “I” and the past “I”), or that conceive of autobiography as “recapitulation and recall” (Olney 252), the Subject is made an Object of investigation (the first-person actually masks the third-person) and is further divided between the present moment of the narration and the past on which the narration is focused. These gaps in the temporal and spatial dimensions of the text itself are often successfully hidden from reader and writer, so that the fabric of the narrative appears seamless, spun of whole cloth. The effect is magical—the self appears organic, the present the sum total of the past, the past an accurate predictor of the future. This conception of the autobiographical rests on a firm belief in the conscious control of artist over subject matter; this view of the life history is grounded in authority” (19).
Que la trompette du jugement dernier sonne quand elle voudra; je viendrai, ce livre à la main, me présenter devant le souverain juge. Je dirai hautement: voilà ce que j’ai fait, ce que j’ai pensé, ce que je fus. J’ai dit le bien et le mal avec la même franchise. Je n’ai rien tu de mauvais, rien ajouté de bon, et s’il m’est arrivé d’employer quelque ornement indifférent, ce n’a jamais été que pour remplir un vide occasionné par mon défaut de mémoire; j’ai pu supposer vrai ce que je savais avoir pu l’être, jamais ce que je savais être faux. Je me suis montré tel que je fus, méprisable et vil quand je l’ai été, bon, généreux, sublime, quand je l’ai été: j’ai dévoilé mon intérieur tel que tu l’as vu toi-même. (3-4)

Again we see the obsession with honesty and fidelity to the past as it occurred. Les Confessions boasts an almost aggressive devotion to the honesty pact with the statement: “Je dirai hautement: voilà ce que j’ai fait, ce que j’ai pensé, ce que je fus. J’ai dit le bien et le mal avec la même franchise.” Not only will the facts be stated, but also they will be stated loudly and with equal force be they good or bad. The subject will be shown as both “méprisable et vil” and “généreux et sublime,” but most importantly, it seems, is the unveiling of the internal, “tel que tu l’as vu toi-même.” Whereas we are prepared to be witnesses to a less physically tangible unveiling in Les Confessions, there is a more physical manifestation in Le Journal. Though there is a certain “répugnance à divulguer [ses] fautes” it is imperative to show faithfully what the subject was and is. Included in this honesty vis-à-vis the reader is the open declaration of who the subject is to herself. This is revealed in reference to the mirror. In order to write truthfully one must admit one’s self. In this case a look in the mirror exposes the truth, laying bare the reality of the subject’s age in contrast with her sentiments, which to her seem those of a much younger person.
The questions of memory and its potential betrayal are connected to that of honesty. In *Les Confessions* any potential gap in truth is attributed directly to memory: “s’il m’est arrivé d’employer quelque ornement indifférent, ce n’a jamais été que pour remplir un vide occasionné par mon défaut de mémoire.” The same is true in *Le Journal* where we learn that: “Ma mémoire est déjà fort diminuée,” indirectly providing an excuse for a potentially selective or, at worst, inaccurate account. The importance placed on memory reminds us of the singular nature of the work. An account recalled from memory is unique in its manifestation, and both authors work to suggest the extraordinary and distinctive nature of their texts. Again we see a more direct presentation in *Les Confessions*: “Je forme une entreprise qui n’eut jamais d’exemple et dont l’exécution n’aura point d’imitateur,” and a more indirect approach in *Le Journal*: “Je n’ai jamais rien écrit que des lettres à ceux que j’aime.” These first-time efforts announce the revolutionary material that is to follow and, to this end, Rousseau, renowned for his venture into the literarily autobiographical sphere, presents a model for those to follow. La Tour du Pin does just this in *Le Journal*, walking the tightrope between history and literature and, as stated by Crosland, writing a novel of family life. Nowhere does this become more evident than in the American adventure presented in the center of the work. The structure set in place in the prefatory comments is easily recalled in chapter fifteen where we find the dramatic opening to the episode.

With Robespierre’s guillotine growing ever closer to the heroine and her family, a change of scenery becomes necessary. In chapter fifteen of *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* this occurs when Henriette-Lucy, with her family in tow, leaves France to become a picture-perfect farm resident of Schenectady, New York. On her farm she works alongside her slaves, trades with Quakers and Native Americans, and fabricates her own private label butter. The tale that La
Tour du Pin spins here demonstrates the exercise of her literary muscle and encourages the combination of history and literature. Here, in these seven chapters that comprise the American episode, the literary focus of La Tour du Pin’s work becomes especially discernable. This is not to say that there is not considerable evidence elsewhere in the work. The American episode can be so easily encapsulated and thus provides the perfect opportunity for close analysis with other literary works that take place in the “New World.” This episode also provides a more defined base for comparisons because of its content and brevity. An examination of *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* alongside the works of Daniel Defoe, François-René de Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and Jacques Delille will address literary tropes present in all of these works and will culminate in an alteration in *Le Journal*’s identification as a purely historical document. These literary comparisons will establish *Le Journal* as a literary work.

In a shift from the prologue to the introduction to the episode, we find Henriette-Lucy in revolutionary France where she is separated from her husband and fearfully living in seclusion:

"J’étais poussée à bout. Je voyais Bonie inquiet de mon sort. Plusieurs moyens de fuite avaient été reconnus impossibles. Tous les jours on exécutait des gens qui pensaient être en sûreté. […] Je passais les nuits sans sommeil, croyant, à chaque bruit, que l’on venait m’arrêter. Je n’osais presque plus sortir. Mon lait se tarissait, et je craignais de tomber malade au moment où je n’avais jamais eu plus besoin de ma santé, afin de pouvoir agir si cela devenait nécessaire. (169-70)"

In the opening paragraphs to the American episode we see an intense focus on that which is missing in the heroine’s immediate world. As such, thematically this passage is best defined in terms of lack and fear. There is a lack of patience, of comfort, of possibility for escape, of safety, of sleep, of freedom, of health. While the remedy does not seem clear, it is not entirely
out of the realm of possibility as it is suggested that if action were necessary Henriette-Lucy is still able to do so, despite her weakened state. The fear and desperation are cries for a solution, for bounty, for a better situation. In terms of the construction of a story, it is precisely in this way that it must begin. There is a clear crisis, yet a glimmer of hope remains. We are then not surprised to read a mere sentence later:

Mes yeux se portèrent machinalement sur un journal du matin qui était ouvert.


In a drastic shift the mood turns from fear and emptiness to limitless possibility. The immobility that is experienced moments earlier is replaced with quick action, so much so that it need not be explained. The movement in the scene is thus now transformed from an internal mental effort into an external physical action. The palpable drama and intensity of the potential for impending departure demonstrate that the answer to the current lack is relocation, in this case to America. This device is not unlike those found in other literary texts, for example Daniel Defoe’s Moll Flanders as we will see below.

Moll Flanders makes multiple trips to America for various reasons, but one particular circumstance proves to be quite similar to that of Henriette-Lucy:

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42 La Tour du Pin was bilingual and had access to reading materials in both French and English. She also directly mentions Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe in her work and thus it is not unreasonable to believe that she was familiar with Moll Flanders as well.
My Husband, to give him his due, was a Man of infinite good Nature, but he was no Fool; and finding his Income not suited to the manner of Living which he intended, if I had brought him what he expected and being under a Disappointment in his return of his Plantations in Virginia, he discover’d many times his inclination of going over to Virginia to live upon his own; and often would be magnifying the way of living there, how cheap, how plentiful, how pleasant, and the like.

I BEGAN presently to understand his meaning and I took him up very plainly one Morning, and told him that I did so; that I found his Estate liv’d upon the spot, and that I found he had a mind to go and live there; and I added, that I was sensible he had been disappointed in a Wife, and that his Expectations not answer’d that way, I could do no less to make him amends than tell him, that I was very willing to go over to Virginia with him and live there. (58)

Here, Moll and her current husband are struggling financially and thus limited in their accustomed lifestyle. To fill the monetary gap, they go, at her insistence, to America where they can expect a better life because, “how cheap, how plentiful, how pleasant” it will be to live there. Henriette-Lucy and her family also seek an improvement in their way of life; however, more important than financial security is personal safety and the possibility of being together as a family.

Leading up to the arrival in America, both heroines establish that someone will welcome them. The adventurous beginning slows once they step upon dry land in North America. Both groups have welcome parties in place to assure a pleasant arrival. In the case of Moll Flanders, she is welcomed by her mother-in-law and given access to the many amenities provided on the
well established plantation: “we arriv’d in *York River in Virginia*, and coming to our Plantation, we were receiv’d with all the Demonstrations of Tenderness and Affection (by my Husband’s Mother) that were possible to be express’d” (59). From this we can believe that the suffering experienced in England is now behind the heroine. While Henriette-Lucy does not have family, per se, in America, social conventions are able to create one for her. She conveniently extracts letters of introduction from her aunt, Madame d’Hénin, while still on the boat: “[J]’ai oublié de le dire, nous étions mouillés auprès d’un vaisseau qui attendait le vent, comme nous, et qui allait en Angleterre. J’adressai à la hâte quelques mots à Mme. d’Hénin, établie à Londres, pour la prier de nous écrire à Boston” (189). Inserted in the narrative, seemingly almost as an afterthought, the rushed letter provides Henriette-Lucy and family with contacts in America making the arrival all the more secure and pleasant. The family’s happiness is explained as follows: “On ne pouvait avoir un début plus heureux. Le soir de ce premier jour, nous nous trouvions installés comme si jamais aucune douleur ni aucune inquiétude n’avaient traversé notre vie” (189-190). The once they find the letters from Madame d’Hénin they are immediately provided with a new family: “nous trouvâmes un accueil aussi flatteur que bienveillant. Le général Schuyler, en me voyant, me dit: ‘Voilà donc que j’aurais une sixième fille’” (192). Henriette-Lucy, as Moll before her, is able to then take up a new life, leaving the horrors of the Terror, even if only momentarily, in the past. With the assistance of her newfound family Henriette-Lucy is able to reinvent herself once again, embodying the characters of the successful and unstoppable heroine.

As we have seen in previous chapters, great lengths are taken to frame Henriette-Lucy as the heroine of her own universe, but it is in the American episode that we begin to see her as a mythic figure. I would suggest that while La Tour du Pin claims that honesty is the goal of
Henriette-Lucy’s textual manifestation, the author is simply playing into familiar literary hyperbole. This element of the text is highlighted in the romanticized description of the main character. An interesting twist to this situation is that there are external texts that provide a base description for that which is found in Le Journal. In Jacques Delille’s epic poem “Le Malheur et la pitié,” published in 1802, nearly twenty years before La Tour du Pin claims to have started her work, describes a situation remarkably similar to that of Henriette-Lucy and her husband. The editor of Delille’s Œuvres complètes explains:

Dans le Quatrième Chant enfin, il a peint la pitié dans les temps de spoliation et d’émigration. Là se trouvent encore des idées générales de justice et de morale, opposées au despotisme et à la tyrannie. On lira dans ce chant un épisode intéressant par sa nouveauté: c’est l’histoire de deux jeunes époux qui, voulant fuir bien loin du spectacle douloureux de leur patrie opprimé et sanglante, se sont établis sur les bords de l’Amazone, y ont porté les arts et les productions de leur patrie; y sont devenus constructeurs, cultivateurs et fermiers. (70)

Disenchantment with France and fear of their “patrie opprimée et sanglante,” are precisely the reasons Henriette-Lucy and Frédéric flee to America to create their version of the utopia presented by Delille.

In Delille’s utopian America we see a traditional milkmaid version of Henriette-Lucy. This depiction among others is acknowledged in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans, creating an interesting intertextual situation. La Tour du Pin’s version of Henriette-Lucy then becomes a response to those provided by others. What does it mean then to compare La Tour du Pin’s Henriette-Lucy with that of another author? Here we will explore Delille’s version of Henriette-
Lucy, though, in truth, she was not the original object of his poetic creation. In an explanatory note the editor of Delille’s text describes the connection between Delille and La Tour du Pin:

Cet épisode n’est point fiction du poète ; une multitude d’émigrés français fondèrent des établissements semblables dans diverses parties de l’Amérique. On sait que Delille ayant lu ces vers dans une nombreuse société, apprit avec étonnement que M. et Mme. de Latour-du-Pin étoient les héros de cette histoire dont il se croyoit l’inventeur. Seulement le lieu de la scène étoit changé, et ce que l’auteur place sur les bords de l’Amazone se réalisoit sur les bords de la Delaware. (103)

The status enjoyed by the historically real Henriette-Lucy makes it possible for this fictional representation of her by Delille to exist. The stories of Henriette-Lucy that circulated widely in society work along with fictional depictions to create the mythic figure that she becomes in Delille’s and La Tour du Pin’s works. This image of Henriette-Lucy provides a framework for the woman we see in Le Journal.

Delille’s depiction of Henriette-Lucy traps her in the role of the peaceful milkmaid, calmly sitting with her animals:

Il entre, il aperçoit une blanche génisse ;
Une femme charmante, assise à ses côtés,
Exprimoit de son lait les ruisseaux argentés ;
Avec un air de nymphe, un habit de bergère,
Un maintien distingué sous sa robe légère ;
Tout l’étonne : du lis son teint a la fraîcheur,
Du lait qu’elle exprimoit ses mains ont la blancheur. (94)
What can be said of this milkmaid? Physically she is best described as white. She is seated next to the white cow, expressing the silvery-white milk, using her milky white hands, and looking on with her lily-white face. This blatantly suggests purity, that of the woman and, by extension, that of the environment in which she lives. That the internal focalizer, the newly arrived Frenchman, sees this quality above all others reinforces the importance of a fresh start and blank slate, and it is implied that this can exist only in the wilds of the New World whereas it is unattainable in the bloodied streets of France. The whiteness also implies a particular social standing, that of an aristocrat. Those belonging to the aristocratic class would have a lighter complexion because they do not perform tasks that would subject them to excessive or even moderate sun without shading. The importance of the woman’s aristocratic air is further bolstered by the mention of her “maintien distingué.” Status then, becomes a central focus of the description despite the fact that it would seem to be contrary to that of a simple country milkmaid.

The juxtaposition of the peasant’s clothing and the milking of the cow with the distinguished air and purely white skin is striking in that these two sides are not at odds. The suggestion then becomes that the two lifestyles are compatible. In this utopian fantasy, an aristocrat maintains her charm, grace and flawlessly white complexion despite the fact that she has become a farmer. In fact, she is presented as a superior farmer: “Nous sommes journaliers; mon épouse est fermière. / Le laitage du soir et celui du matin / Nous paroissent plus doux, présentés par sa main” (95). Not only does she milk the cows, but she in some way makes the milk better because she has touched it, yet another effect of her purity and its extension to her environment. Only in this fictional world can the aristocratic and farming classes blend together to create this ideal of feminine perfection. The question then becomes, what is behind this image
of a new, yet passive and traditional woman? To answer this question, we need only look to the Henriette-Lucy created by La Tour du Pin.

The passive and traditional woman described above is not the same as the strong and opinionated heroine who brought her family to America, narrowly escaping death during the Terror. La Tour du Pin’s Henriette-Lucy has taken control of situations and flirted with danger as opposed to her serene counterpart in Delille’s text. Does the whiteness and natural purity that comprise his version of Henriette-Lucy extend to that of La Tour du Pin or will we see yet another representation of an increasingly complex character? Consider first the mention made of Delille’s milkmaid in *Le Journal*:

> Une sorte de réputation romantique m’avait précédée à Bruxelles. Je la devais à mes aventures en Amérique, ébruitées par une note du poème de *la Pitié*, de Delille. Cette dame de la cour de Marie-Antoinette, sœur de l’archiduchesse si aimée de tous en Belgique, qui avait été, dans ces pays lointains, traire les vaches et vivre au milieu des bois, se présentait avec quelque chose de piquant qui excitait la curiosité. (308)

The romantic depiction that encapsulates Henriette-Lucy presents something that piques the curiosity of others. In this discussion of Delille’s poem we again see how social class becomes a prominent issue because curiosity is raised mainly due to Henriette-Lucy’s transgressive behavior and for no other reason. The cow-milking aristocrat who was once a lady-in-waiting for Marie-Antoinette is clearly of interest to those belonging to a continued elevated class status. She moves swiftly downward on the class scale in becoming a farmer and as such could become the object of ridicule as is suggested here. What then does La Tour du Pin do with the potentially problematic milkmaid description?
There is no comparable discussion of Henriette-Lucy’s pure and virginal skin tone in *Le Journal*, but there are other characteristics that can be compared with respect to clothing and implied work ethic. To begin in terms of physical appearance, as is discussed in chapter one, Henriette-Lucy is a chameleon who blends into her current environment. In this case it means to adopt the dress common to her country neighbors and acquaintances:

> Le jour où je m’établis à la ferme j’adoptai, sans témoigner la moindre de ma métamorphose, l’habillement porté par les fermières mes voisines: la jupe de laine bleue et noire rayée, la petite camisole en toile de coton rembrunie, le mouchoir de couleur, les cheveux séparés comme on les porte maintenant et relevés avec un peigne; en hiver, des bas de laine gris ou bleus, avec des mocassins ou chaussons de peau de buffle; en été, des bas de coton et des souliers. (216-17)

The metamorphosis earns her the respect of those in her circle, rendering her “tout de suite très populaire” (216), though she claims to think nothing of it. The suggestion that the transformation took place “sans témoigner la moindre de [s]a métamorphose,” could simply be an expression of false modesty, but it could signify that the clothing, while different, did not change the woman inside it who continues to and will always be a member of upper class society. Though she assumes a manner of dress similar to Delille’s milkmaid, there is an important distinction to be made. Whereas Delille’s maid had developed into an amalgam of an aristocrat in peasant’s clothing, Henriette-Lucy still seems to cling to the vestiges of her former life: “Je ne mettais de robe ou de corset que pour me rendre à la ville. Parmi les effets que j’avais apportés en Amérique se trouvaient deux ou trois habits de cheval. Je les utilisais pour me transformer en *dame élégante*” (217). The farmer and the “*dame élégante*” seem to maintain
separate identities, or at least appearances, in *Le Journal*. This first insight into the Americanized Henriette-Lucy demonstrates that Delille’s utopian ideal may not apply because appearance, yet again, becomes the central focus for the character.

The duke of Liancourt provides another example of the relationship between dress and class when he visits the farm. Henriette-Lucy states:

> Avait-il pris au sérieux ma jupe de laine et ma camisole de toile? Je ne sais, mais le fait est que c’est seulement quand il me vit paraître avec une jolie robe et un chapeau très bien fait quoique la marchande de modes ne s’y fût pas employé, et quand mon nègre Minck avança le joli wagon attelé de deux excellents chevaux porteurs de harnais luisants de propreté qu’il sembla commencer à comprendre que nous n’étions pas encore devenus tout à fait mendiants. (217-18)

It is not through distinguished bearing or pale complexion that Henriette-Lucy can be seen as an aristocrat, she wears her class affiliation literally on her sleeve. The appearance of fortune is most important here, though the real financial situation of the family only worsens with time. Use of the expression “mendiants” likens farming to begging, which is not the comparison Henriette-Lucy strives to create because she sees her farmer status as an elevated one. Further, Henriette-Lucy later prides herself on being a farmer. The blatant class warfare is awakened in the presence of other aristocrats, lying dormant when Henriette-Lucy is the only one of her status for miles around and as the character states: “J’étais la propriétaire d’une ferme de 250 acres. Je

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43 The fact that Henriette-Lucy is concerned with Liancourt’s perception of her is surprising when compared with the laudatory description he provides of her in his *Voyage dans les Etats-Unis d’Amérique fait en 1795, 1796, et 1797* : “Quand on sait ce qu’était une jolie femme à Paris, réunissant aux grâces de la figure, de la taille et de l’esprit, tous les talens, tous les moyens de succès, et qu’on voit cette jolie femme dans une petite ferme de cent acres, faisant elle-même son ménage jusques dans les plus petits détails, et menant cette vie nouvelle avec une simplicité, une gaîté qui pourrait faire croire même qu’elle lui plaît, on trouve une raison de plus d’aimer, d’admirer le caractère des femmes et des femmes françaises en particulier” (316).
vivais comme ceux qui en possédaient autant, ni plus, ni moins. Cette simplicité et cette abnégation me valaient beaucoup plus de respect et de considération que si j’avais voulu jouer à la dame” (228-29).

The vanity demonstrated above seems in contradiction with other behaviors that take place throughout the text. Take for example the work ethic espoused by Henriette-Lucy: “Personnellement, je résolus de me mettre en état de diriger mon ménage de fermière. Je commençai par m’accoutumer à ne jamais rester dans mon lit, le soleil levé” (197). Here, before being established at the farm, she announces her goal of managing the farm and even goes into training to do so. This declaration seems to be at odds with the clothing debate. Like the faithful milkmaid of Delille’s world, physical labor becomes standard for Henriette-Lucy and she largely enjoys it, priding herself on her capacity for such work. The work need not be pleasant in order for her to undertake it, as she mentions how tiring it is to do the laundry (229). Nonetheless, she finds a way to excel in the work; in this circumstance, ironing is her forte: “J’y excellais, comme la meilleure repasseuse” (229). Of course, it is explained that the reason she knows to iron so well is that in childhood she would often go to the laundry on the estate where “étant naturellement très adroite, [elle] en avait su bientôt autant que les filles qui [la] montraient à travailler” (229). Ironing, then, is less of a chore than a reliving of childhood memories when it was once play for her to do the work of the maids.

Work takes on a more romantic flair in addition to its practical necessity. Take for example this description of meal preparation: “J’étais dans ma cour, avec une hachette à la main, occupée à couper l’os d’un gigot de mouton que je me préparais à mettre à la broche pour notre dîner. Betsey n’étant pas cuisinière, on m’avait confié le soin de la nourriture générale, dont je cherchais à m’acquitter de mon mieux, aidée par la lecture de la Cuisine bourgeoise” (199).
Interestingly, the physical nature of this act is highlighted in the description. Henriette-Lucy holds a hatchet and is in the process of butchering meat. This is far from the world of pleasant conversations in Marie-Antoinette’s court, but neither is it the serene image of a milkmaid in the pasture. We learn that the burden rests upon her because the hired help cannot cook. The mention of *Cuisine bourgeoise* brings Henriette-Lucy back to a more civilized world because even though proud of her work, she still sees the need to qualify it. In this case, it goes beyond self-congratulation and explanation to relating the comments of others, namely Talleyrand who teasingly says to her: “On ne peut embocher un gigot avec plus de majesté” (199). This image of her in the yard and cutting meat with a hatchet amuses Talleyrand, but only encourages Henriette-Lucy to invite him to dinner. His teasing does not belittle the work she does, rather, it increases her worth because he deigned take the time to comment at all.

A final comment on the heroine’s image in America brings us back to Delille’s milkmaid. La Tour du Pin places her in the same position, though ever-so-slightly alters it:


The cottage butter industry that Henriette-Lucy creates is second to none. It is not only in vogue because she was associated with it, but also for its quality and presentation. Delille’s representation may milk the cows adding her special loving touch to the task, but Henriette-Lucy takes this many steps further. She involves molds and baskets and fine napkins, thus bringing
the aristocracy to the farm with her. In the end she earns money and the all-important status within the community. La Tour du Pin’s version of Henriette-Lucy, then, differs only slightly from Delille’s in the final analysis. The latter may live the pure and peaceful country life, but has no society with which to deal. The former represents what happens in the presence of others. Changing clothes and adopting new work habits do not transform Henriette-Lucy into a completely new self. She here becomes the combination of old world and new, likes to show, as Delille’s heroine did before her, “un maintien distingué sous sa robe légère” (94).

The discussion of labor leads us directly into the next area for analysis: slavery. As explained by Henriette-Lucy in Le Journal: “nous achetâmes un nègre, et cette acquisition, qui paraissait la chose du monde la plus simple, me causa un effet si nouveau que je me souviendrai toute ma vie des moindres circonstances de l’événement” (202). To define the purchase of slaves as the “chose du monde la plus simple” sets the tone for the treatment of slavery to follow and resembles that found in literary texts, such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s Paul et Virginie. While it is not surprising to the modern reader that such an act would be unique and memorable, it would not be for the same reasons listed by Henriette-Lucy or the women of Paul et Virginie, Marguerite and Madame de La Tour. The lives of the slaves depicted in these works seem largely happy and prosperous. Those belonging to the main characters are always well treated and provided for in any circumstance, belying the historical reality of slavery. Here it is particularly important to note the similarities in the admittedly fictional text, Paul et Virginie, and the memoir because the comparison of these texts demonstrates the fictionalization of history that operates within Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans.

There are certain characteristics that these authors highlight in the depiction of their slaves: the skill and intelligence they possess, their devoted marital relationships, their
emotional connection to their masters, and a troubling correlation between slave and dog. An overarching theme is that of normalcy. This aspect is perhaps the most difficult for the modern reader who may find it troubling to read details such as: “Je pense avec plaisir à ces braves gens. Après m’avoir bien servie, ils m’ont procuré, comme on le verra plus loin, ce que j’ai nommé, à juste titre, le plus beau jour de ma vie” (La Tour du Pin 205). The juxtaposition of praise and servitude is jarring, yet this becomes the standard attitude within the narratives. This tension first manifests itself in the descriptions of the individual slaves. In Paul et Virginie we are introduced to Domingue and Marie and in Le Journal we meet Minck, Prime, Judith, as well as her husband and daughter. In both texts the men are prized for their abilities and ingenuity, whereas the women are valued as wives. Take for example this presentation of Domingue: “Domingue, était un Noir yofol, encore robuste, quoique déjà sur l’âge. Il avait de l’expérience et un bon sens naturel. Il cultivait indifféremment sur les deux habitations, les terrains qui lui semblaient les plus fertiles, et il y mettait les semences qui leur convenaient le mieux. […] Il faisait tous ces ouvrages avec intelligence et activité, parce qu’il les faisait avec zèle” (110-11). His identity, according to this definition, is comprised of two features. Foremost, he is robust and able to work tirelessly in spite of his age. Additionally he is intelligent and enthusiastic. He knows where to grow the best crops and does so with zeal. In the end, he is reduced to a tool no different than those he uses in his work. His hard-working and sharp mind applies only to his work and the relationship with his master. We see a nearly identical description, this time of Prime, one of Henriette-Lucy’s slaves, in Le Journal: 

C’était un nègre de quarante-cinq à quarante-huit ans, ayant une très grande réputation d’intelligence, d’activité et de connaissances en agriculture. Il avait adroitement et justement calculé qu’avec des maîtres d’une condition élevée, mais
sans expérience, il deviendrait facilement le maître de la maison et l’homme nécessaire. Son esprit, véritablement supérieur, lui suggérait souvent des innovations dont le vieux Lansing ne voulait pas entendre parler. Il brûlait d’être avec des gens nouveaux qui ne seraient pas uniquement guidés par des préjugés comme son maître hollandais, lequel n’admettait pas que l’on changeât la moindre chose à des pratiques vieilles de cent ans. (204)

Here again the value is placed upon his “intelligence,” “activité,” and “connaissance en agriculture.” These are precisely the terms used to describe Domingue. Further flair is given Henriette-Lucy’s Prime, who is not only smart, but has promising plans for creative innovations. This could be seen as an improvement, yet this notion fails as his innovations would serve his master, not himself. These men, while described as sharp and active, are little more than useful bodies with positive attitudes. Nothing initially frames these men as people with relationships outside of the master / slave dichotomy. This does change, however, with the introduction of a wife.

In both texts, the men who are also slaves frequently have a wife attached. The women, in these cases, bolster the men’s symbolic value in that they demonstrate his respect for family values and erase potential for sexual improprieties. Consider, again, Domingue:

Il était fort attaché à Marguerite, et il ne l’était guère moins à Mme de La Tour, à la Négresse de laquelle il s’était marié à la naissance de Virginie. Il aimait passionnément sa femme qui s’appelait Marie. Elle était née à Madagascar, d’où elle avait apporté quelque industrie, entre autres celle de faire des paniers et des étoffes appelés pagnes, avec des herbes qui croissent dans les bois. Elle était adroite, propre, et surtout très fidèle. (111)
Here, the establishment of the respectful relationship between Domingue and the women in his life, begins with his mistress and ends with his wife. He is quickly rendered safe in the company of the women who populate his universe. The focus shifts to Marie, who is passionately loved by her husband, capable, clean, and faithful. These qualities, while positive, say nothing of her beyond her roles as wife and slave. La Tour du Pin provides a similar follow-up in her work:

La femme comme l’homme étaient d’excellents sujets, actifs, laborieux, intelligents. Ils s’attachèrent à nous avec passion, parce que les nègres, quand ils sont bons, ne le sont pas à demi. On pourrait compter sur leur dévouement jusqu’à la mort. Judith avait trente-quatre ans et était excessivement laide, ce qui n’empêchait pas son mari d’en être fou. M. de Chambeau leur organisa une chambre, réservée à eux seuls, dans le grenier, jouissance que leur ambition n’aurait jamais osé espérer. (205)

There seems to be an effort to equalize the values of men and women slaves, though this is quickly undone once Judith is described as “excessivement laide,” and thus inferior.\textsuperscript{44} That her husband loves her so well is a testament to his worth, not hers. The capacity for work and intelligence are again found on the list of desirable traits along with a happy, nuclear slave family life. The attachment and loyalty to their masters is also reinforced and the picture perfect master / slave relationship is complete. There is no question as to the power dynamic in this relationship nonetheless. The devotion and faithfulness directed toward the masters is not necessarily reciprocated.

\textsuperscript{44} As addressed in chapter one, beauty is of the utmost importance in \textit{Le Journal}. Those who do not possess it, no matter her or his position in society, suffer diminished value in the eyes of Henriette-Lucy. By extension, this applies equally to slave women in America.
Another quality attributed to slaves in both works is a tendency for overly emotional outbursts, particularly with respect to those who control them. This is not to say that they react when mistreated, but that they demonstrate highly improbable emotional reactions to express gratefulness or despair with respect to the women who control their lives. In *Paul et Virginie*, Virginie is confronted with and offers help to a fugitive slave who begs assistance. This elicits the following exchange: “Virginie la voyant rassasiée, lui dit : « Pauvre misérable ! j’ai envie d’aller demander votre grâce à votre maître ; en vous voyant, il sera touché de pitié. Voulez-vous me conduire chez lui ? – Ange de Dieu, repartit la Négresse, je vous suivrai partout où vous voudrez»” (125). In this impractical strategy to help a starved and mistreated slave, Virginie becomes a saving grace. The very notion that the woman who flees a cruel master would eagerly follow a young girl back to him is ludicrous, but can occur in a fictional world. The story becomes even murkier in its conclusion where the newly found Paul and Virginie are carried home by slaves who witness Virginie’s brave return of the slave woman: “quatre Noirs marrons des plus robustes firent aussitôt un branlard avec des branches d’arbres et des lianes, y placèrent Paul et Virginie, les mirent sur leurs épaules, et Domingue marchant devant eux avec son flambeau, ils se mirent en route, aux cris de joie de toute la troupe, qui les comblait de bénédictions” (137). Though the slave she helped lies chained and beaten on her master’s estate, Virginie is the heroine. Her praises are literally sung and she is given a parade. The improbability of this scenario speaks to a desire to mask the cruel nature of slavery in even its most humanitarian manifestations. The emotional outbursts seem out of place and inappropriate to those who are aware of slavery’s oppression.

*La Tour du Pin* demonstrates this same discomfort with the subject and perhaps overcompensates for the sensitive position which the main character elects to occupy, that of
slave ownership. Taking into consideration that the work was written more than twenty years after the events recounted, it is logical that it receive a literary gloss and resemble so closely a similar situation in Paul et Virginie. La Tour du Pin’s most emotionally charged slave-centric scene occurs upon the announcement of the family’s impending departure. Already aware that change is in the wind, the slaves hesitantly enter the room occupied by Henriette-Lucy for her announcement. Their reaction to her statement Henriette-Lucy’s plan to free them upon their return to France is nothing short of exaggerated folly:


Not only do they suffer from an emotional instability and failure to act in what might be named a more rational manner; they suffer physical impairment, even if only in the short-term. The trembling, tears, and immobility are only a precursor to the extraordinary dialogue that is to follow:

Nos braves serviteurs furent si stupéfaits qu’ils restèrent quelques secondes sans parole. Puis, se précipitant tous les quatre à genoux à mes pieds, ils s’écrièrent: Is it possible ? Do you mean that we are free? Je répondis: Yes, upon my honour, from this moment, as free as I am myself.
Qui pourrait décrire la poignante émotion d’un pareil moment ! Je n’ai rien éprouvé de ma vie d’aussi doux. Ceux que je venais de libérer m’entouraient en pleurant ; ils baisaient mes mains, mes pieds, ma robe ; et puis brusquement leur joie s’arrêta et ils dirent : « Nous aimerions mieux demeurer esclaves toute notre vie et que vous restiez ici. » (232)

The initial reaction seems reasonable and even likely. Stupefaction and interrogation are expected responses though the further detail that they rush to her feet reinforces the slave / master protocol that has always been in place. The symbolism of the slaves tearfully kissing the feet and hands of Henriette-Lucy liken her to royalty, or even further, to Jesus. It is an understatement to term the slaves’ wish that their ideal master stay with them an exaggeration. This phrase, however, permits Henriette-Lucy to remain the benevolent ruler of her universe and attempts to erase the potential stigma of her slave holdings. She continues to be morally irreproachable and the heroine of the text. This most beautiful day of her life (305), nonetheless, does not erase the harsh circumstance created by the slave system and La Tour du Pin’s text is not free from these harsh realities despite efforts to put a positive spin on the slavery element.45

A disturbing use of the slave motif overlaps with that of the use of animals in the texts, specifically, dogs. In both works there is a direct correlation between the life or treatment of a dog and that of slaves, which further dehumanizes a group with an already precarious status. In Paul et Virginie the family’s dog, Fidèle, along with Domingue, searches for the children, lost in the forest. The dog finds them after having been given their scent by the resourceful Domingue.

45 This is also an example of the use of tableau in narrative. David J. Denby explains this concept in Sentimenal Narrative and the Social Order in Franc, 1760-1820: “its function is to freeze narrative, to suspend temporal progression so that the set of forces which the narrative has brought together in a particular moment may be allowed to discharge their full affective power” (76).
Interestingly, Paul humanizes the dog is humanized through his exclamation: “c’est Fidèle, le chien de notre case. Oui, je reconnais sa voix” (135). It is not his bark, but his voice that is remarked by the children and it is further the dog who is given credit for the discovery: “Fidèle, toujours quêtant, m’a mené sur le morne de la Rivièrè-Noire, où il s’est arrêté encore, en aboyant de toute sa force [...] Enfin il m’a conduit ici” (136). Though it is Domingue who thinks to make use of the dog and then follows him “quatre bonnes lieues” from their home, it is only the dog that is lauded, never Domingue. Fidèle emerges again in the closing paragraphs of the text wherein the fates of the family members are presented. The dog appears in the same paragraph as Domingue and Marie with the description that “il était mort de langueur à peu près dans le même temps que son maître” (280). This in itself is not overwhelmingly problematic but for the fact that the paragraph describes only the two slaves and the dog. Additionally, the use of the term master that is common with respect to dogs and their owners, here, the term is extended to the relationship between Domingue and Marie and their masters, Marguerite and Madame de La Tour. The similar treatment given Fidèle and Domingue or Marie speaks to the acceptability of slavery at the time.

In Le Journal, written more than thirty years after Paul et Virginie, we see no change in the perspective on slavery. We have seen already that slave ownership is an acceptable norm for Henriette-Lucy and her family. Though she never mistreats her slaves and, in fact, works to help them, it does not change the mistress / slave relationship and does not alter the behavior of other slave owners. Judith, for example, was beaten to the brink of death (205) prior to her purchase by Henriette-Lucy. The humanization of the dog and dehumanization of the slave come into play in the form of a cautionary tale presented as a mere anecdote. One of Henriette-Lucy’s neighbors owns a dog that frequently finds his way to her house. He is returned daily by her
slave, Prime who “en allant coucher chez sa femme, passait devant l’habitation du propriétaire du chien” (219). If not tied up, the dog returns and Henriette-Lucy “ne savai[t] quel moyen employer pour l’obliger à ne pas quitter son maître” (219). Already we can see a correlation between the model behavior of Prime who leaves the property, with permission, always returning the next day, and Trim, the dog, who cannot be made to stay where he belongs and transgresses the boundaries set by his master. The story of Trim culminates in what can be assumed to be a bloody and painful death, perhaps similar to the treatment to which Judith was subject before changing owners:

L’infortuné Trim, c’était le nom du chien, alla le caresser et le suivit hors de la cour. Au bout d’un moment, des hurlements affreux se font entendre. Judith et moi nous sortons en toute hâte, et nous voyons avec horreur que cet homme cruel avait attaché le malheureux chien par les quatre pattes au crochet du palonnier, et qu’il s’en allait au galop traînant la pauvre bête sure le chemin pierreux. (219)

Trim’s final punishment is a result of his lack of compliance. The resistance to stay in where he belongs leads him ultimately to his death. The example made of the dog can be easily seen as a metaphor for the master / slave relationship. Those who choose not to comply, will, in the end, suffer a fatal consequence. The placement of this particular tale in the narrative is curious as Henriette-Lucy does not herself subscribe to the mistreatment of slaves, beyond the fact that she finds it tolerable to own people. We then can see an element of literary convention, standard to narratives focused on slavery such as Paul et Virginie.

In addressing the standard fare for an American tale, none can be complete without the friendly and frightening Native American. La Tour du Pin places a number of them in her text as friendly visitors who weave baskets and accept graciously her gifts of ribbon and old dresses.
Her description of the Native American falls in line with conventional literary models, specifically those presented by Chateaubriand in *Atala*. The characteristics assigned this group include a mention of: their ability to craft interesting goods of excellent quality, the effect alcohol may have upon them, and the danger they pose to those unlike them. While these qualities form the bulk of the Native American identity in *Atala* and *Le Journal*, there is one more that becomes crucial to their presentation: their willing adoption of a European perspective.

In *Atala*, Chactas is taken prisoner by another group of Native Americans and serves as an informant on their lifestyle and attributes much in the same way Henriette-Lucy does in *Le Journal*. One of the ways in which the Native Americans are distinguished from the other groups discussed is their innate ability to produce quality goods out of natural sources. In *Atala*, Chactas describes this attribute in Atala: “Atala me fit un manteau avec la seconde écorce du frène, car j’étais presque nu. Elle me broda des mocassines de peau de rat musqué avec du poil de porc-épic” (90-91). She capably provides him with necessary clothing when the couple escapes. While this may not seem extraordinary, when seen in comparison with Chactas’ abilities: “Tantôt je prenais soin à mon tour de sa parure. Tantôt je lui mettais sur la tête une couronne de ces mauves bleues […] tantôt je lui faisais des colliers avec des graines rouges d’azaléa” (91), we see that she is clearly more skilled than he. Her ability to give him basic necessities, such as clothing, is more important than the adornments he fashions for her. Chactas is also a Native American, but he does belong to a different tribe and had spent time with his Spanish father, Lopez. He is thus in the position of the observer, which by extension is that of the European. The juxtaposition of the two then becomes more compelling. Further, when they work together it is again Atala who has the upper hand: “Aidé des conseils d’Atala, je bâtis un
canot, que j’enduisis de gomme de prunier, après en avoir recousu les écorces avec des racines de sapin” (93). Implied here is that left to his own devices, Chactas would be unable to construct the canoe. It is only with her “conseils” that the task can be accomplished.

In *Le Journal* Henriette-Lucy observes a similar quality in the Native Americans she encounters and from whom she purchases various goods: “Nous avions fait l’acquisition de *mocassins*, espèce de chaussons de peau de buffles, fabriqués et vendus par les sauvages. Le prix de ces objets est quelquefois assez élevé, quand ils sont brodés avec de l’écorce teinte ou avec des piquants de porcs-épics” (201). The elevated price seems reasonable from her perspective as she respects the quality. In her first one-on-one communication with a “sauvage” she learns that basket weaving is a part of their repertoire and is highly impressed with the product she receives: “le premier, rond et fort grand, était tellement bien tressé que, rempli d’eau, il la retenait comme un vase de terre” (210). This becomes a defining feature of the Native Americans throughout the text.

A critique of the group as a whole comes in their relationship to alcohol and in the inherent element of danger they embody. Chateaubriand’s Native Americans fall victim to a drunkenness that prevents them from recapturing Atala and Chactas: “L’ivresse qui dure longtemps chez les Sauvages, et qui est pour eux une espèce de maladie, les empêcha sans doute de nous poursuivre durant les premières journées” (90). Interestingly, Atala uses alcohol against her own group in an effort to help the outsider, Chactas. This will grow in importance later in the discussion of the Europeanization of the Native American. In *Le Journal*, Henriette-Lucy is aware of the effect of alcohol upon the Native Americans, stating: “On m’avait avertie de ne leur donner jamais de rhum, pour lequel ils ont une passion immodérée. Je me gardais donc bien d’en donner à mes visiteurs” (210). The fear of the consequences of mixing Native Americans
and alcohol contributes directly to a more general fear of the usually helpful group. The useful goods and seeming helpfulness mentioned above do not diffuse the perceived lack of control they have when consuming alcohol. For this reason it is not surprising that there is a concern for personal safety with respect to the Native American population. In Atala, Chactas narrowly escapes being burned at the stake. Father Aubry is also subject to violence as is demonstrated by his mutilated hands (103), and later, by his death: “Il fut brûlé avec de grandes tortures” (137). The underlying potential for violence thus also informs the Native American identity. This genuine fear extends to Le Journal where Henriette-Lucy explains: “On m’avait raconté que les Indiens enlevaient quelquefois les enfants. Aussi lorsque je les voyais pendant des heures entières assis immobiles à ma porte, je me figurais qu’ils épiaient le moment favorable de prendre mon fils” (213). This curious “on” again reappears. Where does Henriette-Lucy’s information come from? It is unclear and never addressed in the work. The mere suggestion is enough to indict the group as a whole. There is no basis for the fear and judgment, yet the descriptors remain because there is nothing to negate the image. The tension between useful service and menace destabilizes the presence of the Native Americans within the text and makes their relationships with the non-Natives more complex.

In the same way that it was important to construct Domingue and Prime as family men who adore and are faithful to their wives in order to make them safe for those they served, it is equally necessary to make the Anglo / Native relationship more friendly. This is done in both of the texts by Europeanizing the Native Americans. In Atala, the penultimate Native American, Atala herself, is interestingly presented both as a native and European. Her case, of course, is special in that she has a European father and is thus actually part European. Her embrace of Christianity and idolization of her absent father inform the European side of her character. She
encourages Chactas to convert to Christianity and frequently criticizes the behavior of other Native Americans, as is demonstrated when she frees Chactas against the wishes of her group. Her excessive devotion to her mother’s memory and religion also subject her to Christian morals that are not present in the Native American society.

The situation is different in *Le Journal* because there is an Anglo society unsettled by the Native Americans. Though Henriette-Lucy coexists with the Native Americans we also see the real fear that she faces because of their presence. From Henriette-Lucy’s perspective, discussed in chapter two, the Native Americans may construct wonderful baskets, but they also may become intoxicated and kidnap her children. The desire to render the Native Americans safer occurs for Henriette-Lucy in the following way:

> Cependant, ces sauvages, à peine familiarisés avec quelques mots d’anglais, qui passaient leur été à courir de ferme en ferme, étaient aussi sensibles aux bons procédés, à une réception amicale, que l’aurait été un seigneur de la cour. Ils avaient bientôt compris que nous n’appartenions pas à la même classe que les autres fermiers nos voisins. Aussi disaient-ils en parlant de moi : *Mrs. Latour…from the old country…great lady…very good to poor squaw.* (211)

The respect that the Native Americans show Henriette-Lucy allows for a perceived mutual understanding. The insight into and respect for the social status of Henriette-Lucy and her family does compensate for the potential negatives. Describing the Native Americans’ behavior as courtly thus shifts the definition of the dangerous “sauvage.”

The savagery depicted in the wilds of the New World presents the possibility for religious conversion and redemption in both texts. In both *Atala* and *Le Journal* the death of a young girl sets a religious transformation into motion, though it is well before the sacrifice that religion
enters the narrative. In fact, we learn very early in *Le Journal* that Henriette-Lucy’s earliest relationship with religion is defined as a lack thereof:

> Mes plus jeunes années ont été témoin de tout ce qui aurait dû me gâter l’esprit, me pervertir le cœur, me dépraver et détruire en moi toute idée de morale et de religion. J’ai assisté, dès l’âge de dix ans, aux conversations les plus libres, entendu exprimer les principes les plus impies. Elevée dans la maison d’un archevêque, où toutes les règles de la religion étaient journellement violées, je savais et je voyais qu’on ne m’en apprenait les dogmes et les doctrines que comme l’on m’enseignait l’histoire ou la géographie. (35-6)

Religion, in this context, is hypocritical and nonexistent. In place of religion a young Henriette-Lucy is privy to depravity and perversion and thus forcefully states: “je n’avais reçu aucune instruction morale ou religieuse” (45). This conflict is not soon resolved for Henriette-Lucy as she does not fully reach a religious transformation until she is twenty-six. It is particularly shocking that even a childhood spent in the home of an archbishop does not result in a religious upbringing and the institutional structure of religion is thus challenged. If the home of the archbishop does not operate according to religious precepts, what is to be expected from others?

Chactas also lacks religion, though his lack is much different from Henriette-Lucy’s. In his case, this does not mean that he does not have a religion, but that he is not a Christian, a member of a European, and thus civilized, religion. Though he has the opportunity, he does not initially convert to Christianity when he lives with his adoptive father, Lopez. Chactas first reveals his perspective on European religion in describing his departure from Lopez: “Lopez finit par une prière au Dieu des Chrétiens, dont j’avais refusé d’embrasser le culte” (75). He further expresses his view when he first meets Atala and tells her “je n’[ai] point trahi les Génies
de ma cabane” (77). Chactas refuses to embrace Christianity out of devotion to “les Génies de [sa] cabane.” In this way, he negatively constructs Western religion. This is furthered in the depiction of Atala’s extremist beliefs. Her first statements in the text are: “Es-tu chrétien”? […] Je te plains de n’être qu’un méchant idolâtre. Ma mère m’a fait chrétienne […] Nous nous rendons à Apalachucla où tu seras brûlé” (77). Atala uses religion as a tool to elevate her status above that of the nonbelievers. This is further evidenced in her belief that her Christianity must separate her from non-Christians (79) and ultimately results in her death. The attitude that Chactas has of religion is further complicated because it is initially tied to his love for Atala and based on the religion itself. This conflict is evident during the first escape attempted by the couple when Atala despairs and Chactas witnesses her interpretation of Christianity:

[J]’ai conçu une merveilleuse idée de cette religion, qui dans les forêts, au milieu de toutes les privations de la vie, peut remplir de mille dons les infortunés; de cette religion qui opposant sa puissance au torrent des passions suffit seule pour les vaincre, lorsque tout les favorise, et le secret des bois et l’absence des hommes et la fidélité des ombres. Ah! qu’elle me parut divine, la simple Sauvage, l’ignorante Atala, qui à genoux devant un vieux pin tombé, comme au pied d’un autel, offrait à son Dieu des vœux pour un amant idolâtre ! Ses yeux levés vers l’astre de la nuit, ses joues brillantes des pleurs de la religion et de l’amour, étaient d’une beauté immortelle. (83)

In this passage Chactas warms to the idea of Christianity, but only because it is linked to Atala’s beauty amplified by her kneeling in the moonlight and the fact that religion will return her to a calm state. He further explains the contradiction that Atala represents during the final escape: “Les perpétuelles contradictions de l’amour et de la religion d’Atala, l’abandon de sa tendresse et
la chasteté de ses mœurs, la fierté de son caractère et sa profonde sensibilité, l’élévation de son âme dans les grandes choses, sa susceptibilité dans les petites, tout en faisait pour moi un être incompréhensible” (92-3). Christianity does not seem to make Atala’s life better; rather it complicates further the relationship between the couple. Both Chactas and Atala misunderstand religion yet they cling to it for a solution.

Though each narrative demonstrates lack and misunderstanding of religion this emptiness provides the possibility for transformation and that is precisely the turn taken in each work. In *Le Journal* we have already seen the use of slavery and Native Americans to construct an American narrative. The final component to this fictional construct relies heavily on a religious intervention that occurs when Henriette-Lucy’s young daughter, Séraphine, dies suddenly and thus upsets Henriette-Lucy’s momentarily calm existence. This brief anecdote describes a violent God whose ultimate goal is to reclaim Henriette-Lucy. She explains:

> Je me trouvais très heureuse de ma situation, lorsque Dieu me frappa du coup le plus inattendu et, comme je me l’imaginai alors, le plus cruel et le plus terrible qu’on pût endurer. Hélas ! j’en ai éprouvé depuis qui en ont surpassé la sévérité ! Ma petite Séraphine nous fut enlevée par un mal subit, très commun dans cette partie du continent. […] Ce cruel événement nous jeta dans une tristesse et un découragement mortels. (226)

The sudden death of Séraphine throws Henriette-Lucy into a religious crisis and mortal despair. However, God’s decision to take Séraphine from her family functions to reintroduce faith into the family. The need for faith is first seen in the lack of a Catholic priest in Albany. For this reason, Frédéric must undertake the final rites and burial of his child: “[Il] rendit lui-même les derniers devoirs à notre enfant et la déposa dans un petit enclos destiné à servir de cimetière aux
habitants de la ferme” (226). The responsibility for properly burying Séraphine thus falls to her parents. This forced participation strongly affects Henriette-Lucy and causes her to revisit the role religion plays in her life.

The death of Séraphine thus imposes religion on Henriette-Lucy and creates an image of an imposing and angry God. Yet again a powerful force confronts Henriette-Lucy, though in this instance she is transformed rather than transforming the other. She explains the process:

Presque chaque jour j’allais me prosterner sur cette terre, dernière demeure d’une enfant que j’avais tant chérie, et ce fut là, ô mon fils, que m’attendait Dieu pour changer mon cœur!

Jusqu’à cette époque de ma vie, quoique je fusse loin d’être impie, je ne m’étais pas occupée de la religion. Au cours de mon éducation, on ne m’en avait jamais parlé. Pendant les premières années de ma jeunesse j’avais eu sous les yeux les pires exemples. Dans la haute société de Paris, j’avais été le témoin de scandales si répétés, qu’ils m’étaient devenus familiers au point de ne plus m’émoover. Aussi toute pensée de morale était-elle comme engourdie dans mon cœur. Mais l’heure avait sonné où je devais reconnaître la main qui me frappait.

Je ne saurais décrire exactement la transformation qui s’opéra en moi. Une voix me criait, me sembla-t-il, de changer tout mon être. Agenouillée sur la tombe de mon enfant, je l’implorai pour qu’elle obtînt de Dieu, qui l’avait rappelée à lui, mon pardon et un peu de soulagement à ma détresse. Ma prière fut exaucée. Dieu m’accorda alors la grâce de le connaître et de le servir ; il me donna le courage de me courber très humblement sous le coup dont je venais d’être atteinte et de me préparer à supporter sans plainte les nouvelles douleurs
par lesquelles, dans sa justice, il jugerait à propos de m’éprouver à l’avenir. A
dater de ce jour, la volonté divine me trouva soumise et résignée. (226-27)
The passage begins with the admission that God intends her transformation as a consequence of
Séraphine’s death. She explains how she had become complacent in the face of immorality and
that she had been in need of motivation to change. The motivation is not in the form of a subtle
suggestion but a “Dieu [qui la] frappe du coup,” “main qui [la] frappait,” and “une voix [qui lui]
criait.” These violent intrusions into her life result in her changed perception. God shifts from
being a negative force that deprives Henriette-Lucy of her child, to one of comfort that helps her
to remain humble. This element in the American episode is compelling because it boasts the
only admission of submission and resignation by the heroine. The description of Henriette-Lucy
as “[se] courbant très humblement sous le coup dont [elle venait] d’être atteinte et de [se]
préparer à supporter sans plainte les nouvelles douleurs” does not match the heroine who takes
the initiative to bring her family to the New World, though it does fit into a literary trope of
redemption in the wilderness. There is a disconnect between the character we see up to and
following this particular episode and the character she becomes in the moment. For this reason
it provides an excellent example of literary innovation within Le Journal.

In Atala we also see tension in terms of the main character’s relationship to religion. As
we have already seen, this initially occurs in the conflict between native and European religions
and the application of these said religions to daily life. Like Henriette-Lucy, Chactas also suffers
the loss of a loved one and is forced to come to terms with the role religion plays in his life.
Here, the young woman, Atala, becomes the tool for Chactas’ religious transformation. When
the couple meets Father Aubry and explains their situation, Chactas is immediately encouraged
to embrace Christianity. Father Aubry explains: “J’instruirai Chactas, et je vous le donnerai
pour époux quand il sera digne de l’être” (102). Here, religion is the method by which Chactas can be with Atala. He does not seek religious conversion of his own accord. Nonetheless, he, like Atala before him, is charmed by the mysterious nature of the European religion. When he witnesses Father Aubry practicing his faith he describes it as such:

Nous nous mettons tous à genoux dans les hautes herbes; le mystère commence.

L’aurore paraissant derrière les montagnes enflammait l’orient. Tout était d’or ou de rose dans la solitude. L’astre annoncé par tant de splendeur, sortit enfin d’un abîme de lumière, et son premier rayon rencontra l’hostie consacrée, que le prêtre, en ce moment même, élevait dans les airs. O charme de la religion! O magnificence du culte chrétien! Pour sacrificateur un vieil ermite, pour autel un rocher, pour église le désert, pour assistance d’innocents Sauvages! Non, je ne doute point qu’au moment où nous nous prosternâmes, le grand mystère ne s’accomplit et que Dieu ne descendit sur la terre, car je le sentis descendre dans mon cœur. (107)

Christianity is thus presented as tied to nature and appeals to Chactas, though the impetus behind his interest still remains with Atala. When she chooses to sacrifice herself in the name of religion, Chactas is quick to reject “le grand mystère” that had touched his heart: “La voilà donc cette religion que vous m’avez tant vantée! Périsse le serment qui m’enlève Atala! Périsse le Dieu qui contrarie la nature! Homme, prêtre, qu’es-tu venu faire dans ces forêts?” (114). In Le Journal it was necessary for God to strike Henriette-Lucy before she eagerly converted and the same is true for Chactas, though his transformation is less immediate.
Chactas is particularly vulnerable with Atala on her deathbed and, as such, is open to her last request of him:

Tu auras recours à ce Dieu des infortunés dans les chagrins de ta vie. Chactas, j’ai une dernière prière à te faire. Ami, notre union aurait été courte sur la terre, mais il est après cette vie une plus longue vie. Qu’il serait affreux d’être séparée de toi pour jamais! Je ne fais que te devancer aujourd’hui, et je te vais attendre dans l’empire céleste. Si tu m’as aimée fais-toi instruire dans la religion chrétienne, qui préparera notre réunion. (123-24)

Though he is angry at the religion that deprives him of Atala he agrees to her final request stating: “Navré de douleur je promis à Atala d’embrasser un jour la religion chrétienne”(124). Unlike Henriette-Lucy, he does not immediately prostrate himself before God, even to satisfy Atala or Father Aubry. In fact, even as he recounts his story to René he has not yet converted and the land cries out to him: “Quand donc descendras-tu dans la tombe, et qu’attends-tu pour embrasser une religion divine?” (125). His response continues to be ambiguous: “O terre, vous ne m’attendrez pas longtemps: aussitôt qu’un prêtre aura rajeuni dans l’onde cette tête blanchie par les chagrins, j’espère me réunir à Atala” (125). His conversion does not take place until much later and the circumstances of the transformation are unknown. It is in the epilogue that we see the sole indicator of the change. Chactas is described as follows: “Chactas, qui avait reçu le baptême” (137). Though Chactas and Henriette-Lucy do not follow an identical path to religious redemption, the paths are similar. In Atala and Le Journal, we see the death of a young girl intertwined with religion in a redemptive effort. The sacrifice of these girls transforms the lives and worlds of those who survive them and at the same time redeems the native savagery that is so feared in the New World.
“Cette dernière [Lydia White] s’était prise pour moi d’une sorte de passion romanesque à cause de mes aventures d’Amérique” (La Tour du Pin 268).

The adventures in America create more than a romantic reputation for Henriette-Lucy. The American episode within Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans demonstrates the literary ambition of the author. In the narration of the “aventures d’Amérique” the line between historical documentation and literary endeavor are distorted. La Tour du Pin uses her knowledge of the literary world and incorporates it into her own story. It is not difficult to see the influence of fiction in her narrative. Through the optic of texts by Daniel Defoe, François-René de Chateaubriand, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and Jacques Delille the fictional quality of Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans becomes clear. Despite her claims to the contrary, La Tour du Pin proves to be a powerful literary force in her own right.
CHAPTER 5

CONTENDING WITH AGE: THE CYCLE OF LIFE

“I should like to advance the possibility of a mirror stage of old age, observing first that the image of the mirror dominates literary representations of the aged body. This is not surprising. The horror of the mirror image of the decrepit body can be understood as the inverse of the pleasures of the mirror image of the youthful Narcissus. As we age we increasingly separate what we take to be our real selves from our bodies. We say that our real selves—that is our youthful selves—are hidden inside our bodies. Our bodies are old, we are not. Old age can thus be described as a state in which the body is in opposition to the self, and we are alienated from our bodies.” (Woodward, Memory and Desire 104)

In Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans it is one such shocking mirror that gives readers a first look at Henriette-Lucy. In the opening paragraphs she explains: “Mon cœur est encore si jeune que j’ai besoin de me regarder au miroir pour m’assurer que je n’ai plus vingt ans. Profitons donc de cette chaleur qui me reste et que les infirmités de l’âge peuvent détruire d’un moment à l’autre, pour raconter quelques faits d’une vie agitée” (35). It is this statement that first brings the mirror stage to mind. While Henriette-Lucy feels as if she is still twenty years old, she must look at herself in the mirror to see that she is, in fact, aging. Her precarious position as a fifty year-old woman places her in danger of “les infirmités de l’âge” and mandates that she use well the time that remains for her. The insistence placed upon the youthfulness of her heart and the warmth that remains bring this comment to the corporeal level. The opposite of the young, warm body is most certainly the aged, cold, and therefore dead, body. With the chill of death lurking, Henriette-Lucy embodies the state described above by Woodward. A real awareness of the physical body is thus placed in opposition to intangible self-perception. This admission of a disconnect between the physical and real selves is unexpected because Henriette-Lucy is the one character who is free from the boundaries of age and time. There is a
contradictory combination of the past and present that complicates efforts to define Henriette-Lucy’s relationship with time. She faces the mirror stage of old age conflicted between the rejection and acceptance of the image she sees in the mirror. This admission of weakness is thus demonstrative of the second mirror stage.

The first confrontation with the mirror, however, is not in old age. Woodward explains Lacan’s concept of the mirror stage (of infancy) as follows: “the infant perceives the image of his body as a harmonious whole and ideal unity while simultaneously experiencing his body as uncoordinated. It is this discrepancy between the visual image of unity and the lived experience of fragmentation that gives rise to the ego and to the subject forever split, to joyful anticipation of wholeness in the future” (Memory and Desire 109). She further explains: “the mirror stage enacts the formation of the “I” before “it is objectified in the dialectic identification with the other, and before language restores to it …its function as subject”” (Memory and Desire 110-111). This stage is imbued with a hopeful focus on the future. Shari Benstock furthers the definition of this stage in The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women’s Autobiographical Writings:

The mirror stage marks a differentiation that is potentially frightening, a moment that cannot be recaptured through memory as such, a moment that hangs in a space that is neither dream nor fact, but both. The mirror stage marks both the exceptional and the common; it is a stage common to us all, but within our experience—and this experience exists outside and beyond memory—this stage marks us as exceptional, differentiated. (14)
The exceptionality that arises from the mirror stage is invaluable to the development of a person, or in terms of Le Journal, a character. The exceptional Henriette-Lucy thus becomes more like those who surround her as age and time cannot exempt her from all their rules.

When we turn to the mirror stage of old age we see that it is in direct opposition to the mirror stage of infancy. Woodward conceptualizes it as follows:

As in the mirror stage of infancy, in the mirror stage of old age the subject is confronted with an image. If he identifies with it he is transformed. In the mirror stage of infancy, the infant enters the imaginary. In the mirror stage of old age, the subject enters the social realm reserved for “senior citizens” in the Western world. But the point is that the subject denies this identification rather than embraces it. The mirror stage of old age is the inverse of the mirror stage of infancy. What is whole is felt to reside within, not without, the subject. The image is understood as uncannily prefiguring the disintegration and nursling dependence of advanced age. (Aging and Its Discontents 67)

This second mirror stage aptly describes the state in which Henriette-Lucy finds herself in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans. As such, the struggle between denying and embracing one’s identification as old structures the text. The exceptionality of the heroine is called into question as her age threatens to subsume her individuality and relegate her to the collective identity of the aged person. Age thus becomes central to the narrative because it is age that ultimately challenges and supports the exceptionality of the heroine. The tension created within the characters by age is expressed in a number of ways. In this chapter I will discuss the following aspects of time: the valorization of the age of fifty; the illustration of the life cycle:
infancy and childhood, young adulthood, adulthood, old age, and finally death; and the relationship between writing and aging.

* * * *

From the title, *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*, to the age of the author, to the numerous fifty year-old characters that populate the work, La Tour du Pin defines fifty as an age of knowledge, be it actual or assumed. In the opening paragraph the reader learns: “pour se peindre, il faut se connaître et ce n’est pas à cinquante ans qu’il aurait fallu commencer” (30). The implication that Henriette-Lucy may not be able to tell her own life story adequately at age fifty brings age into the narrative right from the start. What then has the heroine been doing if not getting to know herself? Here, the age of fifty is used as part of a narrative strategy, proslepsis, seen elsewhere in the text, in which Henriette-Lucy only claims she is unable to write when, in fact, she knows that she can and that she will. The image of the woman unknown to herself is deconstructed in the text itself a few pages later where Henriette-Lucy also maintains that: “Lorsque à cinquante ans je me retrace mes jugements de dix ans, je les trouve si justifiés que je vois la vérité de l’assertion, répétée par plusieurs philosophes, que nous apportons en naissant l’esprit et le jugement plus ou moins justes ou plus ou moins sains” (37). For this reason, fifty in itself gains significance. What does it mean to be fifty for Henriette-Lucy? Who is she at age fifty? And, perhaps most importantly who are others at this age?

The fact that Henriette-Lucy begins with a proclamation of her age, fifty, becomes more interesting when we encounter others of the same age in the text because we can begin to construct a definition of the age. The first of such encounters takes place soon after her marriage when she is pregnant and living with her aunt, the Princess d’Hénin. She is presented with an older circle of friends including her aunt’s lover, the chevalier de Coigny:
J’aimais beaucoup ce gros chevalier de nature gaie et aimable. Comme il avait cinquante ans, je causais avec lui le plus que je pouvais. Il me disait mille anecdotes que je retenais et qui amuseraient peut-être si je les racontais. Destinée à vivre dans le plus grand monde et à la cour, j’écoutais ses récits avec intérêt, car la connaissance des temps passés m’était très utile.

Les gens de l’âge du chevalier de Coigny, du comte de Thiard, du duc de Guines, figuraient au nombre de mes amis, sensibles qu’ils étaient au plaisir que je témoignais à causer avec eux. (89-90)

It is not unreasonable to expect that an inexperienced, seventeen year old Henriette-Lucy would want to learn as much as possible from those who have experienced the lifestyle that she is about to undertake, yet this remains only a secondary reason for her interaction with these older men. The sentence: “Comme il avait cinquante ans, je causais avec lui le plus que je pouvais” becomes the most significant of the passage. Certainly she sees the chevalier as likeable, entertaining, and a source of information, but it is due to his age that she speaks with him as much as possible. The notion that one should know oneself by age fifty then resurfaces with the chevalier. He knows himself and the world and is able to communicate that to Henriette-Lucy. Nonetheless, he serves as a role model and reliable educator, in large part, because he is of the appropriate age. These “gens de l’âge du chevalier de Coigny” are found elsewhere in the text as well.

Henriette-Lucy finds herself at a luncheon given by Talleyrand for the Turkish ambassador a decade after meeting the chevalier. She is hand-picked to eat with the ambassador who is: “un bel homme de cinquante à soixante ans, bien vêtu, comme les Turcs s’habillaient alors, et coiffé d’un énorme turban de mousseline blanche. Pendant le déjeuner, il fut fort galant, et j’achevai sa conquête en refusant un verre de vin de Malaga” (251). That the ambassador’s age factors into
his description is interesting in light of the emphasis placed on the age elsewhere in the text. Like the chevalier, the ambassador brings with him a certain status that is important and likely related to his age. The “Turk” is thus able to further Henriette-Lucy’s education and expose her to this exotic culture, in part, because he has reached age fifty. It is important to note that both the chevalier and the ambassador belong to a particular class in society that frames the construction of fifty through them. It can be assumed that the working class would have a much different definition of fifty, if, in fact, they lived to that age.

While the age of fifty has positive connotations, it can also be seen in a negative light. Woodward explains an applicable Freudian perspective: “Feeling old, which was associated with being old (the two need not be connected), was linked with a lack of productivity which is typically, and negatively, ascribed to old age in the West” (Aging and Its Discontents 27). This feared lack of activity seems to be the root of the aging evil, though it is only an association, not a certainty. An example of this association is found in the American episode when Henriette-Lucy is in the process of purchasing slaves. She becomes interested in buying a particular slave “de quarante-cinq à quarante-huit ans, ayant une très grande réputation d’intelligence, d’activité et de connaissances en agriculture” (204). Ultimately, she explains: “Nous l’achetâmes très bon marché à cause de son âge, car on n’était plus admis à vendre un nègre quand il avait dépassé cinquante ans” (204). Here, fifty becomes the indicator of a perceived decline in usefulness and moves the definition from the psychological and intellectual to the physical realm. This example is interesting because it demonstrates the difference in self-perception and those external perceptions. Prime, the slave, perceives himself to be able and intelligent, whereas the enforcers of the slave trade see an old man with diminished abilities. It is also important to acknowledge the racial factor that is also clearly at play in this episode. The age of those who purchase slaves
is not called into question and they are in the position to buy and sell slaves because of their race. For the privileged white class, age is not associated with physical ability in the same way. This points to the idea of stratification according to categories aside from the age fifty. That is to say, age is constructed differently according to the groups to which people belong as we have already seen in terms of class. Class and race are important categories, but the most significant grouping is provided in terms of gender.

The need to survive in society meets the age requirement and crosses gender lines at the same time. Woodward explains Freud’s perspective on the gender divide with respect to age: “Freud bluntly confirms our cultural tenet that old age is tolerated less in women than in men. Old age and desire: when the elderly (particularly elderly women) express desire, it is to be promptly dismissed on the grounds that it is querulous if not frivolous, certainly selfish and irrational” (Aging and Its Discontents 28). We see this in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans through the depiction of fifty-year-old women. In the same period when she met the chevalier de Coigny, Henriette-Lucy connected with older women as well: “je savais aussi combien il était important de se concilier les vieilles femmes, alors toutes-puissantes” (90). The motivation for establishing relationships with older women is different, yet it proposes a model for the young Henriette-Lucy. She does not seek information, but protection from the women. Though she would like them to respect her she seemingly keeps her distance from women in general because they do represent competition for her as we have seen in the first chapter. In terms of a definition of fifty, not only do we see the psychological aspect defined by the “femmes, alors toutes-puissantes,” but also a set of rules that identify physical characteristics associated with fifty year old women. The first example is found when Henriette-Lucy escapes Paris with the help of an acquaintance, Mme de Pontécoulant, who has a pass that allows her past the gates. As
Henriette-Lucy is with her newborn, Charlotte, she concocts a scheme to play the role of Mme de Pontécoulant’s wet nurse. Of course, this proves amusing because: “La pensée qu’à son âge – elle avait de quarante-cinq à cinquante ans – on la croirait, à la barrière, mère d’un enfant de huit mois, lui sourit” (254-255). The first physical drawback is thus the loss of the ability to bear children. This follows the Freudian construction of the association between age and decreased ability that Woodward suggests. Though a biological reality, this can be seen as the typical defeminization of women. Those women who can no longer bear children are lesser women. The ruse works and they pass through the gates. The guards allow them to pass and believe that the older Mme de Pontécoulant is a new mother, but they do not pay her much attention and dote on Henriette-Lucy, the soi-disant wet nurse. The implication is clear; age is unattractive in women, specifically at age fifty. In men, physical attractiveness does not matter. The chevalier was “gros” but “aimable” and the Turk, who is likely even older than Pontécoulant, is attractive. The association of unattractiveness and fifty is seen again in Mme Betz, who suffers not only from age and ugliness, but also from class inferiority: “Elle [Mme Betz] appartenait à la classe la plus minime de l’échelle sociale. Assez laide à cinquante ans qu’elle avait alors, elle pouvait cependant avoir été belle” (310). The message is no longer implied, but direct: fifty, in women, is equated with “rather ugly.” Ugliness, however, is not the final characteristic bestowed upon the fifty-year-old woman. In discussing her aunt, the Princess d’Hénin, she says the following: “J’étais encore jeune et rieuse. A vingt-huit ans comment aurais-je pu avoir la sévérité de maintien qui s’imposait aux cinquante ans qu’avait ma tante? Toute à la politique, la constitution qu’il fallait donner à la France seule l’occupait. Cela m’ennuyait à mourir” (264). The twenty-two years that separate Henriette-Lucy and her aunt also demonstrate the different perspective the women have on the world. While youth is associated with laughter, fifty denotes severity.
This is particularly important in terms of the age at which we meet Henriette-Lucy. Does she fail to meet the requirements of a fifty-year-old as explained above?

Though she does not reach age fifty in the *Le Journal*, Henriette-Lucy does in the correspondence. The authorial voice we hear in the text is that of a fifty-year-old. The age of the authorial voice does shift, nonetheless, because the book is written over a long period of time, beginning at age fifty. For the fifty year old Henriette-Lucy, physical appearance is complicated through fashion: “De fait, je ne sais plus comment on habille une femme de cinquante ans qui pourtant se lace et a une taille qui n’est pas déformée. Je trouve que tout ce qu’on me fait a l’air trop jeune et montre trop mes formes. Je ne puis parvenir à donner à ma taille un air de cinquante ans. Cela me désole, car je voudrais avoir l’air vieille dans la rue” (391). Contrary to the “other” women, Henriette-Lucy wants and needs to look older. Her conflict is not with an aging body, or ugliness, but with age-appropriate clothing. The aging of many of the characters who surround Henriette-Lucy is subject to a severe form of criticism, but she is exempt, as usual. Woodward explains this phenomenon in Proustian terms:

If (temporarily) blinding ourselves to our own aging may give us a kind of psychic reprieve, we must also be aware of the social consequences of perceiving the elderly as alien to ourselves. If our vision is fundamentally narcissistic, the way we look at others functions to protect ourselves. Those like Marcel who see themselves as on the threshold of old age deny full humanity to an aged person so as to preserve their own illusion of immortality. (*Aging and Its Discontents* 69)

Henriette-Lucy is able to remain young and beautiful and project negative qualities, such as ugliness, upon others. Even when she attempts to liken herself to the “others,” it is not to be believed. She continues her tirade on the difficulty in finding appropriate attire: “Songez, ma
très chère, à mes cinquante ans. Jamais je ne puis me faire de corset à mon goût. J’ai les hanches grosses, mais la taille, aux reins, est mince d’une manière disproportionnée et j’ai les reins si faibles que j’ai besoin d’être soutenue au ventre et au derrière […]” (391). She may have “hanches grosses,” but she is still “mince.” Though this physical description is less flattering, it is nothing close to the critiques made of others. Further, the critique is deconstructed in a later letter, at age fifty-six in which she says: “J’en suis pressée et je vous prie de songer en la faisant refaire que j’aurai cinquante-sept ans le mois prochain, quoiqu’il soit vrai de dire que j’ai une taille de trente-six ans. Mais je ne veux pas montrer cette taille [n’oubliez pas les considérations morales sur l’âge et l’existence de la personne qui doit la porter]” (397). Here, her figure is that of a thirty-six year old. The implication is that she has retained a remarkable level of attractiveness that sets her apart from the others. Fifty then designates a variety of qualities dependent on membership in an individual group, whether it be class, race, or gender. The next question becomes, what happens before and after this age?

* * * *

In addition to being a state of mind, aging is a biological phenomenon and a social construction. To subjective or personal age we must add social age, which is mediated by chronological age (how many years old we are) and biological age (the state of health of the body)” (Woodward, Aging and Its Discontents 149).

The biological and social constructs, ultimately constraints, that Woodward mentions provide the basis for the rules that govern the age-specific behaviors and concerns that are detailed in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans. Though fifty may be the most prominent age in the text the authorial voice, La Tour du Pin, and the character, Henriette-Lucy, delineate a system of aging and age-appropriateness that includes the entire lifespan. As usual, Henriette-Lucy enjoys an anomalous status that allows her character to operate outside of these boundaries while at the same time defining them. I see aging in five stages in Journal d’une femme de
cinquante ans: infancy and childhood, young adulthood, adulthood, old age, and death. I will examine the constructs of aging in order to address the following questions: what is the process of aging? what are the benchmarks to be achieved and who can reach them?

The first age-explicit stage consists of infancy and childhood. In Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans this is typically a difficult period marked by trauma and fear for survival. Henriette-Lucy proclaims from the first chapter “je n’ai pas eu d’enfance” (37), repeating it a mere five pages later: “Comme je l’ai dit plus haut, je n’ai pas eu d’enfance” (42). This repetition is intended to highlight her missing and miserable childhood and, from her perspective, the restatement is merited. This depiction of her childhood as lacking and rushed provides us with a negative image of the stage. Age thus has an impact on even the youngest children who are often rushed into adulthood too soon. As explained in chapter one, the complexities of Henriette-Lucy’s family situation hastened her entry into adulthood. The death of her mother when Henriette-Lucy was only twelve necessitated this instantaneous aging process. Further examples of a difficult childhood are provided later in Henriette-Lucy’s own children, particularly her two eldest: Humbert and Séraphine. Both are subject to the dangerous flight to America during a politically unstable period. The family leads a fairly turbulent lifestyle that makes it difficult to be children. Survival is even an issue as two of her children die while the family is in exile. Séraphine ultimately dies of a mysterious illness in America and Edouard dies a few years later in England. Children in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans are on the whole a vulnerable group in terms of survival just as they were in society generally at the time. As already mentioned, pregnancy and childbirth were not easy for Henriette-Lucy. She had two miscarriages and two of her children died before age three. Her mother suffered the
death of her brother when he was two and her daughter, Charlotte, also loses a child of only eight months (352).

Childhood is not defined only in terms of lack or mortality rate. Education becomes another important factor for children, especially exceptional youths like Henriette-Lucy and her children. When not suffering at the hands of a wicked and unjust grandmother, Henriette-Lucy is busy learning. As she explains: “A douze ans mon éducation était très avancée. J’avais lu énormément, mais sans choix. Dès l’âge de sept ans on m’avait donné un instituteur […] je voulais savoir toutes choses, depuis la cuisine jusqu’aux expériences de chimie que j’allais voir faire par un petit apothicaire” (42). The educational possibilities seem boundless for a young Henriette-Lucy who is allowed access to all of the information she wishes. The desire to learn extends past the traditional subjects taught by a tutor into the arena of housework: “Je voulais tout voir et tout savoir; apprendre tous les ouvrages des mains, depuis la broderie et la confection des fleurs jusqu’au blanchissage et aux détails de la cuisine” (49). All of this preparation serves Henriette-Lucy well, as we have already seen. She explains, “je trouvais le temps de ne rien négliger, ne perdant jamais un instant, classant dans ma tête tout ce qu’on m’enseignait et ne l’oubliant jamais […] C’est ainsi qu’avec la mémoire j’ai acquis une multitude de connaissances qui m’ont été singulièrement utiles dans le reste de ma vie” (49). The self-awareness of the young girl could be surprising but for the hurried arrival into adulthood. Education, even from a very young age, thus defines success later in life. Thirst for knowledge in children becomes a necessary component to childhood for Henriette-Lucy. Her own daughters demonstrate a strikingly similar approach to knowledge:

Charlotte avait alors onze ans et demi. Très avancée pour son âge, l’envie de tout apprendre la dévorait. Elle se mit à feuilleter tous les dictionnaires géographiques
sur la Belgique, à examiner les cartes du pays, et quand son père qui la connaissait
bien, arriva et qu’il la questionna sur le département de la Dyle, elle en savait déjà
tous les détails statistiques. Quant à la petite Cécile, déjà bonne musicienne à huit
ans, et sachant bien l’italien, sa première question fut de demander si elle aurait
un maître de chant à Bruxelles. (306)

There is seemingly no limit to the knowledge her children want to acquire. From geography to
music and language they become the perfect recreation of their mother and further solidify the
connection between education and childhood.

In addition to the standard information covered by tutors and that learned through
observation and participation in the daily household operations, foreign language acquisition is
particularly important to Henriette-Lucy and her family and a crucial element in childhood
development. Henriette-Lucy was taught English, first by the gardener’s wife who used
Robinson Crusoe as their main text, and then by a formal “femme de chambre élégante que l’on
fit venir exprès d’Angleterre” (43). Later, language acquisition is a key component to her own
children’s successes; for example, Humbert is compared to an interpreter at age six upon the
family’s return to France from America: “[le capitaine du bateau] trouva tout de suite un
interprète très intelligent dans mon fils qui, quoique âgé de six ans seulement, lui fut d’une
grande utilité” (234). The idea that a six-year-old can serve as an appropriate interpreter is
amusing, yet it reinforces the power of knowledge, specifically in terms of language. Humbert is
not alone in his linguistic genius though it is impressive that at age five and a half “il parlait
parfaitement l’anglais et le lisait couramment” (226). All of the La Tour du Pin children learned
at least English if not also Italian or other languages. Henriette-Lucy’s youngest daughter,
Cécile, is described as “sachant bien l’italien” at age eight (306) and Aymar is described as
multilingual from the age of twelve possessing “l’avantage de parler toutes les langues que l’on parle en Europe, excepté le russe et le polonais” (395). Language is tied to the survival imperative discussed above. Henriette-Lucy and her family are forced into exile twice and frequently moved in and out of various European countries. The ability to speak the language of the countries they inhabit contributes positively to the quality of life and, because language is introduced during childhood, what they have learned as children directly impacts their adulthood.

The final important aspect of language acquisition centers on the relationship between teacher and student. Henriette-Lucy is happy with her initial English instructor, the gardener’s wife. Further she is very happy with the choice of text, Robinson Crusoe, admitting, “j’étais passionnée pour ce livre” (42). We see how Henriette-Lucy is satisfied with this informal format for her English lessons that fulfills her needs. It is, in fact, her mother who wishes to have a new tutor to improve even more quickly Henriette-Lucy’s English skills. Despite the assumed professionalism of this second tutor, not even mentioned by name in the text, Henriette-Lucy finds her unacceptable even as a child of eleven:

Ma femme de chambre anglaise ne m’entretenait jamais que de frivolités, de toilettes, de succès. Elle me parlait des conquêtes qu’elle avait faites et de celles que je pourrais faire dans quelques années. Elle me donnait des romans anglais; mais, par une singularité dont j’ai peine maintenant à me rendre compte, je ne voulais pas lire de mauvais livres; je savais qu’il y en avait qu’une demoiselle ne devait pas avoir lus et que, si on en parlait devant moi et que je les connusse, je ne pourrais pas m’empêcher de rougir. (44)

This categorical rejection of the tutor and her methods and morals makes a statement about the importance of the manner in which content is taught, not just the content in itself. It is also made
clear that the student should be an active participant in the educational process. Implied by this critique of the English tutor is that even a very young Henriette-Lucy is able to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate teaching. A further indication of her literary aptitude is evidenced in her assessment of “mauvais livres,” used by her proper English tutor, and of Robinson Crusoe, used by her first and more informal tutor. This demonstrates awareness not only of language, but of literature as well. The commentary on Robinson Crusoe is of particular interest because it echoes the accolades given Robinson Crusoe by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his work, Emile ou de l’éducation. Rousseau describes Defoe’s work as such: “Puisqu’il nous faut absolument des livres, il en existe un qui fournit, à mon gré, le plus heureux traité d’éducation naturelle. Ce livre sera le premier que lira mon Emile; seul il composera durant longtemps toute sa bibliothèque, et il y tiendra toujours une place distinguée” (238-239). Henriette-Lucy thus likens her education to that Rousseau proposes for Emile. The association with a Rousseauian tradition elevates further the importance of education within Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans.

Henriette-Lucy illustrates the difficulties of childhood and youth and thus contradicts the standard beliefs about youth. Youthfulness is typically framed as the most significant period of the life cycle coveted by those who find it just beyond their grasp. Youth, while fleeting, is sought after for the associations society as a whole perceives in youthfulness. Woodward further explains the value of youth: “Youth is defined as private property, which in the West has been constructed as a natural right. Youth is thus understood as giving one the right to be seen and heard […] If youth is natural, in the sliding economy of age, old age is unnatural and perhaps by extension, even unlawful” (Aging and Its Discontents 149). If youth bestows the right to exist, it then becomes important to hold on to it for as long as possible. For this reason, when children
do transition out of childhood they enter young adulthood. This period precedes full-blown adulthood and offers an opportunity to embrace the joyful and seemingly carefree pleasures of youth. Strikingly, the least amount of attention is devoted to this stage of the life cycle in *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*. The reason for this can be understood from the perspective that it is not the young who necessarily value youth. Youth is more highly prized by those who are no longer young because of the positive associations that accompany youth: intelligence, strength, power, etc. It is not the realities of youth that are important, but the perception one has of it that matters. This fleeting stage of young adulthood demonstrates that which all desire and at the same time raises the question, why?

According to Henriette-Lucy’s text young adulthood occurs in the mid-teen years and lasts through the early twenties. Using her life as the standard model, this is the age at which Henriette-Lucy officially leaves childhood behind. Age sixteen is significant in terms of both physical and emotional development. In relationship to her grandmother’s control over her she explains: “quand j’eus atteint l’âge de seize ans, et qu’elle vit ma taille dépasser la sienne, elle mit un certain frein à ces fureurs” (47). The implication here is not that she could and would physically dominate her grandmother, but that she is at a stage wherein she can expect to be treated well. It is also at this age that she finds her future groom and prepares for her presentation at court. As further support of her preparedness for adulthood we read from Henriette-Lucy: “Je n’étais plus une enfant. Mon éducation avait commencé de si bonne heure que j’étais à seize ans comme d’autres à vingt-cinq” (58). She is able, as the unattainable ideal, to experience the freedom of young adulthood and demonstrate the maturity of a later period concurrently. It is important to note here that while youth is desirable for those who are beyond
it, adulthood is appealing to the young. It is clear that in terms of age it is impossible for these characters to be pleased with the age they are in.

At the same time, young adulthood is a period of adjustment and transition that is marked by new experiences, such as marriage and children, and new responsibilities, such as attendance in court, participation in social life, and work. The result of these changes can and does overwhelm the person living them, however less importance is placed on the gravity of these issues. Worries are minimal and pleasure seeking is prioritized. At age nineteen Henriette-Lucy explains: “les choses imprévues ne me déconcertaient guère” (101) and she reinforces: “et alors commença une série de fêtes, de bals, de soupers et de divertissements de toute espèce qui convenaient parfaitement à mes vingt et un ans” (141). In contrast with the struggle for survival she deals with as a child and the worries that she begins to face outside of her teens, young adulthood is a happy yet brief period where Henriette-Lucy comes into her own and approaches life from a less serious perspective.

Another example of young adulthood can be seen in Henriette-Lucy’s daughter, Charlotte. In her we see a reflection of her mother and the typical characteristics of a person of this age:

Agée, à cette époque, de seize ans, elle était très grande, et, sans être jolie, avait l’air éminemment distingué. C’était une noble demoiselle dans toute l’acception du terme. Son esprit à la fois vif et raisonnable, sa compréhension, sa mémoire avaient été au-devant du maternel intérêt avec lequel je m’étais consacrée à son éducation. Quoique déjà fort instruite, sa passion d’apprendre la dominait à un tel point qu’il fallait lui ôter ses livres et lui enlever le moyen d’avoir de la lumière la nuit, sans quoi elle aurait lu ou écrit jusqu’au jour. Cependant on ne pouvait lui
reprocher aucune pédanterie, aucune prétention. Elle était gaie, originale sans être moqueuse. Les qualités de son cœur surpassaient encore celles de son esprit. Charitable par religion, serviable pour tous, elle ne laissait échapper aucune occasion d’être utile. Ses manières étaient si aimables et si séduisantes qu’on ne lui en voulait pas de sa supériorité. (330)

Charlotte, in this description, is the epitome of the young adult, aptly named by Henriette-Lucy, a “noble demoiselle.” Overwhelmingly the message is that the young adult who lives a happy existence causes no problems for those she encounters. She is intelligent and reasonable, and most importantly, inoffensive. It is important to note the continued emphasis on education. Charlotte, though already quite educated, seems almost obsessed with learning, just like her mother. Though education is of key importance in childhood, this emphasis seen in young adulthood indicates that Henriette-Lucy sees learning is an ongoing process to be valued throughout the life cycle.

*Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* provides more detailed descriptions of young adult women than young adult men. The same types of behaviors are seen in young men, but they seem to come less naturally to them, according to Henriette-Lucy. A good example can be seen in the young de Bar discussed in chapter two. He was forced into embracing his own education and betterment by his encounter with Henriette-Lucy. He was then able to experience the happiness that young adulthood brings. Other young men, such as Humbert, Henriette-Lucy’s son, and Frédéric, her husband, pass through this stage with more difficulty than the women who surround them as we saw in chapter two. Frédéric suffers from a questionable reputation and Humbert never leaves young adulthood and dies in an unnecessary duel. This is suggestive of yet another gender divide that reinforces my contention in chapter two that it is difficult to
represent men in *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*. This brief and seemingly contradictory stage in life serves as a passage to adulthood; though this is not to say that adulthood is the equivalent of old age. Evolving into adulthood from young adulthood is the next step in the life cycle.

Adulthood begins dramatically for Henriette-Lucy as she explains: “mon mari était en fuite, mon père et mon beau-père étaient emprisonnés, ma maison avait été saisie, et mon seul ami, M. de Brouquens, se trouvait en état d’arrestation chez lui. A vingt-quatre ans, avec deux petits enfants, que devenir ?” (161). This is quite a change from the balls and suppers mentioned above. We can glean from this text that the marked difference between young adulthood and adulthood, for Henriette-Lucy, can be found in the newfound severity of life. In her construction of adulthood, the age ranges from the early twenties to the textually significant fifty. It is during this period that Henriette-Lucy is twice exiled from France and encounters political, financial, and even social instabilities and ruin. This is not to say that happiness is not present as she also gives birth to children, develops her friendship with Napoleon, and sees her children grow; however, it is during this period that youth begins to slip away.

As youth slips from the fingers of La Tour du Pin’s characters their health is also called into question. Consider as an example Mrs. Renslaër, an acquaintance made in America:

_Mme Renslaër était une femme de trente ans, parlant bien le français qu’elle avait appris en accompagnant son père au quartier général des armées américaines et françaises. Elle était douée d’un esprit supérieur et d’une faculté de jugement peu commune des hommes et des choses. Depuis des années elle ne sortait plus de sa maison, où la retenaient, souvent clouée pendant des mois sur son fauteuil, une_
santé détruite et les atteintes d’un mal qui l’ont conduite au tombeau quelques années après. (195)

Confined to her bed due to an unnamed illness, this thirty-year-old woman represents the negative potential of the transition into adulthood. Despite her superior wit and judgment she is held at a distance from the rest of society, meeting her death before age forty. Her story can serve as a cautionary tale that reminds the reader that life is uncertain and that the life span was short at the end of the eighteenth century. Textually this passage is interesting because it demonstrates the entire life cycle. We first discover that she learned French when accompanying her father on visits to the French and American armies, underlining yet again the importance of language and education, particularly in childhood. Her wit and judgment are not only well developed, but “peu commune” and serve as an indication of the success and happiness often found in young adulthood. It is here, nonetheless, that the characterization takes a turn. The next sentence begins, “depuis des années,” and implies the heaviness of time that has passed. The lack of specificity contributes to the weight of the passage of time. The remainder of the description spirals quickly into the final life stage, death. The fact that she is no longer able to leave her home due to poor health is not a happy circumstance, but could be viewed from the perspective that she is still living and involved with people. This is not, however, the manner in which Henriette-Lucy presents her story. Emphasis on the negative overwhelms the remainder of the description. It is not enough to say that “elle ne sortait plus de sa maison,” it is intimated that she is “souvent clouée pendant des mois sur son fauteuil.” This harsh characterization of her time spent in respite states that she is literally nailed to her chair for months. This violent depiction of her daily life emphasizes an unknown period of suffering that can only lead to death. Illness and death loom and she is “conduite au tombeau quelques années après.” It does not take
long for the child who learned French while following her father to meet a violent and tragic
death before age forty. This story, nestled within the American episode, at which time Henriette-
Lucy is in her mid- to late twenties, demonstrates a fear of aging that marks the entire text. The
ultimate message provided here is that adulthood is not safe and is uncertain.

The confinement of Mrs. Renslaër is not the only example of a “woman in the attic.”46 Henriette-Lucy’s mother-in-law, Cécile-Marguerite de La Tour du Pin, provides yet another example of the woman as captive. As was the case of Mrs. Renslaër this captivity begins to be associated with age. The message is that as women age they should be hidden from society. As married adults women lose agency over themselves and are open to mistreatment by their husbands. This cautionary tale of women’s adulthood works alongside that provided in Mrs. Renslaër’s story; it explains that gender alone can incarcerate a woman. Unlike Renslaër, Cécile-Marguerite does not have a complex medical explanation for her confinement, in fact, there are few details given to describe her living situation and the reason for it. The limited account that Henriette-Lucy provides is as follows:

Mme de La Tour du Pin, fille de Mme de Monconseil, aînée de quinze ans de la princesse d'Hénin, sa sœur, avait eu la plus mauvaise conduite. Elle était enfermée dans un couvent d’où elle ne sortait presque jamais depuis vingt ans. Son mari lui payait une modique pension, mais ne la voyait pas. Ils n’étaient pas séparés juridiquement. On avait voulu éviter le scandale d’une enquête légale.

(63)

46 Here I refer to Sandra M. Gilbert’s and Susan Gubar’s study of nineteenth-century English women writers, explained by the authors as a study of a tradition embodied by: “images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves” (xi).
Illness is not given as a reason for her confinement nor does it seem that it is self-chosen. Further, there is a sense that her husband, Jean-Frédéric, is to blame; that it is his decision that places his wife in seclusion. This can be seen in the relationship between Mme. de Monconseil, Cécile-Marguerite’s mother, and Jean-Frédéric. Henriette-Lucy describes the tension as follows: elle [Mme. de Monconseil] ne jouissait pas d’un grand crédit sur son gendre, le comte de La Tour du Pin, avec qui elle avait eu des démêlés fort désagréables” (63). The implication is that the disagreements are about the treatment of Cécile-Marguerite. The above description of the situation supports this assumption as it can be inferred that the “mauvaise conduite” to which she is subjected is at the hands of Jean-Frédéric and that it is he who causes her to be “enfermée dans un couvent.” He is the active character while she is continually framed as passive. This is further demonstrated in the details surrounding Cécile-Marguerite’s infrequent excursions outside of the convent. Henriette-Lucy describes them as follows: “M. de La Tour du Pin avait permis que Mme de La Tour du Pin sortît de son couvent de loin en loin pour s’installer pendant quelques mois à Tesson auprès de son père. Mais cela n’est arrivé que deux ou trois fois en quarante-cinq ans” (64). Jean-Frédéric permits her movement, though this only occurs three times in forty-five years. She is allowed to appear at her son’s wedding, but only because Jean-Frédéric wants it: “Mme de La Tour du Pin avait été autorisée par lui à paraître quelquefois chez son père, et, à l’occasion du mariage de son fils, M. de La Tour du Pin voulut bien aussi qu’elle fût présente. Elle éprouva un grand plaisir à se retrouver, parée, dans un beau salon ” (70). Again, it is only because Jean-Frédéric authorizes her presence that it is possible. It can be assumed that it is for social appearances rather than any real desire to see his estranged wife that Cécile-Marguerite is allowed this outing. The great pleasure that she feels at being a part of the wedding celebration further demonstrates her lack of agency in her own life.
Cécile-Marguerite’s story intimates that women are not at risk of confinement only because of their health, but also just because they are women. Additionally, the mental capacity of the woman is called into question as there is no physical reason for her imprisonment. The element of risk in adulthood becomes more severe for women because they may have no control over their own lives once married. No reasons are given for Cécile-Marguerite’s confinement other than her husband’s volition. She does not elect to live her life in a convent and we see that her mother quite possibly disagrees with the decision though she is unable to do anything about it. The gendered nature of confinement becomes clear when we look to Cécile-Marguerite’s father, who also leads a confined existence: “M. de Monconseil, à l’âge de quarante ans, par une circonstance que je regrette vivement de ne pas savoir, quitta le service et se retira dans sa terre de Tesson, en Saintonge. Il s’y établit et n’en sortit plus jusqu’à l’âge de quatre-vingt-dix ans qu’y il mourut, après une vie édifiante et admirable” (64). Here it is immediately clear that he chooses his isolation: “il quitta,” “il se retira,” “il s’y établit.” Though in confinement, he is active and exercises agency over his life. Even his death becomes edifying and admirable, whereas the same value is not placed on a woman’s life. Adulthood is thus constructed on a binary system of active life on one end and confinement on the other.

What can be said of Henriette-Lucy during adulthood? Again, as the heroine, she is exempt from the ravages that this stage in life can bring. Her choices are flawless and serve as the unattainable models for others in the text. One such example is found when she is suddenly summoned to a social function by Napoleon. She explains: “Heureusement, j’avisai une jolie robe de satin gris. J’y mis quelques ornement noir, un bon coiffeur arrangea des rubans noirs dans mes cheveux, et cela me sembla aller fort bien pour une femme de trente-huit ans qui, soit

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47 The only explanation provided by Henriette-Lucy is the ambiguous “mauvaise conduite” which remains undefined in the text.
dit sans vanité, n’avait pas l’air d’en avoir trente” (299). One could expect a flustered response to such an occasion, yet Henriette-Lucy is ever in control. Despite the lack of ideal garments, she easily makes do with a gray dress she has on hand and presents the perfect picture of a thirty-year-old woman, though she is nearly a decade past the age. Unlike Mme Renslaër, she can quickly prepare for an event on a moment’s notice without fear of being “nailed” down at home. We begin to see that Henriette-Lucy is not only concerned with her physical appearance and the judgments that could be made about it, but also the comments that could stem from her behavior as an aging woman. While at the celebration of Napoleon’s marriage to Marie-Louise she explains, “Il me fit compliment sur ma promptitude et me demanda si je comptai danser. Je répliquai que non, parce que j’avais quarante ans. A quoi il se mit à rire, en disant : « Il y en a bien d’autres qui dansent et qui ne dévoilent pas leur âge comme cela” (320). Henriette-Lucy is not only prompt, but aware of her age and the appropriate behaviors associated with it. This is in direct contrast to the new empress, Marie-Louise, who, as Henriette-Lucy explains, “pourrait bien avoir des raisons pour n’avoir pas dansé” (320). This critique of Marie-Louise refers to an earlier action taken by her when she was first married. Upon their arrival in Compiègne, the emperor and empress went directly to bed though numerous guests expected to dine with them. The suggestion of sexual impropriety falls directly upon the empress. Henriette-Lucy reports that according to her sister the young bride, Marie-Louise, “avait présenté à l’empereur une permission ou déclaration signée de l’archevêque de Vienne, attestant « que le mariage par procureur était suffisant pour que l’on pût se livrer à la consommation sans plus de cérémonie ” (317). Her inability to dance is thus explained as a potential pregnancy, the direct result of the hastened consummation of the marriage. The juxtaposition of Henriette-Lucy and the empress place Henriette-Lucy at a clear advantage. Despite the age and status difference Henriette-Lucy
knows her place and is comfortable with it unlike the seemingly more privileged Marie-Louise. Here we see the element of judgment that begins to show with age. Woodward explains:

The social codes of dress and behavior in relation to old age are strict and confining. Act your age, children are told. Many adults will survey the behavior of those older and, ever alert to infractions of the rules note in conspiratorial, gossipy tones (which construct a comfortable correct “we” and marginal “they”) that her hair is too long for her age, her dress is too short, his hair too dark, her makeup too gaudy. (Aging and Its Discontents 150)

As old age looms Henriette-Lucy expresses greater concern for issues of clothing and behavior. We will see that in her case, conspirators are hardly necessary because she sets the standard for behaviors and dress.

Unlike the transition from young adulthood to adulthood, even more risk is present in the shift to old age. As we have seen above, old age begins for Henriette-Lucy at age fifty. While that means different things to different groups dependent on race, gender, and social status, nothing changes the designation of old age. It is here we return once again to the mirror stage of old age. As Woodward explains:

In the mirror stage of old age, one is libidinally alienated from one’s mirror image. If the psychic plot of the mirror stage of infancy is the anticipated trajectory from insufficiency to bodily wholeness, the bodily plot of the mirror stage of old age is the feared trajectory from wholeness to physical disintegration. The affect associated with it is one of despair, not joy. And the hostility toward others which is associated with the mirror stage of infancy is now reflected back

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48 Henriette-Lucy is not happy with Napoleon’s decision to marry Marie-Louise and she explains that she will not comment on the situation, but merely report what others had said (316).
upon oneself as well as projected onto others. Aggressivity […] is intensified and now directed back upon oneself: this aging body is not my self. (Aging and Its Discontents 67)

It is not just coincidence that judgment is associated with old age; within the confines of Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans it becomes a necessary element for survival. The only way to distance oneself from aging is to project age onto others. This is frequently demonstrated by Henriette-Lucy who can only see the flaws in many of the elderly people she encounters.

As seen above, visible old age in women is unacceptable. In Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans we see this best demonstrated in the character of the “Old Squaw.” Henriette-Lucy meets Old Squaw during her American adventure and while she respects her, she also fears that which she represents: old age. Consider the following description of Old Squaw:

Une vieille femme est toujours, même dans la vie civilisée, une chose fort laide. Que l’on se figure maintenant la Old Squaw, femme de soixante-dix ans, à la peau noire et tannée, qui a passé sa vie entière le corps nu exposé à toutes les intempéries des saisons, la tête couverte de cheveux gris que le peigne n’a jamais touchés; ayant pour tout vêtement une sorte de tablier de gros drap bleu et une petite couverture de laine – effets qui ne sont remplacés que lorsqu’ils tombent en guenilles; – la couverture jetée sur les épaules et attachée, les deux pointes sous le menton, au moyen d’une broche de bois, d’un clou ou d’une épine d’acacia. Eh ! bien, cette femme, qui parlait assez bien l’anglais, aimait la parure avec fureur. Tout lui était bon pour cela. Le bout d’une vieille plume rose, un nœud de ruban, une vieille fleur, la mettaient de bonne humeur. Lui permettait-on en outre de se regarder au miroir, on pouvait se flatter qu’elle était favorable à vos couvées et à
vos vaches, que votre crème ne tournerait pas et que votre beurre aurait une belle couleur jaune. (211)

The first word used to describe Old Squaw, and old women in general, is ugly. This disdain fits in well to what we have seen above in the description of fifty-year-old women. The use of the term “old” and lack of age specificity add to the derogatory construction of women. What we see in Old Squaw ultimately becomes a caricature of woman in old age. She becomes the exaggerated image of what it means to be an elderly woman: ugly, gray-haired, disheveled, dirty, in rags, lacking in standards, and something to be feared. Old Squaw is an interesting model in that she is not European. In this way, the mystical and dangerous powers associated with her are extended to old women in general. Henriette-Lucy thus succeeds in greatly distancing herself from old age because she can see much less of herself in someone who is not even of the same ethnicity as she. This further applies to Old Squaw’s reaction to the mirror. Unlike Henriette-Lucy, she wants to see her reflection and is not troubled by the reflection of an old woman. She is not subject to the mirror stage of old age in the same way that Henriette-Lucy seems to be. The Native American cultural norm with respect to aging values old age and establishes it as a positive development whereas the European ideal Henriette-Lucy espouses dictates the opposing view.

The line between author, character, and authorial voice are again blurred once we begin to examine Henriette-Lucy in old age. Throughout the text there are numerous authorial interventions pertaining to age that disrupt the chronology of the narrative. An example of this is found very early in the text when the authorial voice boasts of her excellent teeth, proclaiming: “Je les conserve encore intactes à soixante et onze ans” (60). Here as in other places we see that Henriette-Lucy’s experience of old age is superior to that of most other characters in the text. In
In this case, she is comparing her teeth at age seventy-one to those she had at age sixteen. This comment proves that she has withstood the test of time; she is still young if only through her teeth. These interventions are not limited to merely physical characteristics, as an example we learn from the authorial voice: “Je trouve, mon cher fils, qu’il est déjà assez singulier qu’ayant six mois accomplis de ma soixante-quatorzième année, j’aie conservé un aussi fidèle souvenir de toutes les choses qui me sont arrivées!” (302). This is a crucial statement in that it contradicts directly the fears of age voiced at the opening of the text. According to this statement from chapter twenty-seven Henriette-Lucy does not need to fear “les infirmités de l’âge [qui] peuvent détruire” (35). Whether fifty or older Henriette-Lucy belongs to a category unto herself. She is not the Old Squaw or any of the other old women she encounters, her old age reflects what her entire life has, perfection and excellence.

Throughout the text we have seen very few exceptions to Henriette-Lucy’s perfection. It is only in the correspondence that we begin to see any cracks in the façade. As an extension of the narrative, the commentary she gives here is treated in the same way. In typical fashion, Henriette-Lucy stands strong even approaching her seventy-seventh birthday, stating:

j’ai assez le vol de la jeunesse, me souvenant que j’ai été jeune moi-même et qu’on n’a pas besoin d’être grognon parce qu’on est pauvre et vieille, ce qui est assez repoussant déjà sans y ajouter d’être maussade et exigeante. Et, soit que j’eusse le pressentiment du jour où j’atteindrai ce n° 77 qui va m’arriver dans deux mois, soit que j’aie été souvent fort ennuyée par des vieux grognons, je me flatte, si Dieu me prête vie, d’avoir acquis la coquetterie de la vieillesse. (443)

Her juxtaposition of youth and old age achieve her goal of only highlighting her successes both in youth and in old age. She is able to remember her youth fondly and appreciate that she is in a
different stage. She, in contrast to others, knows how to be “vieille” and rather than being a “grognon” has found the “coquetterie de la vieillesse.” In this way, she remains active and is able to hold on to her youth. Despite these strong assertions, Henriette-Lucy too faces difficulties with aging and explains: “La vieillesse ne me tient encore que par les talons où j’ai des douleurs (de goutte, je crois, ou de rhumatisme) qui me rendent la marche pénible et désagréable. Du reste, je me porte très bien; et mes cheveux ne veulent pas décidément devenir blancs; j’ai deux bandeaux qui ne seraient pas déplacés sur un front de trente ans: cela est presque ridicule” (440-41). The physical realities of aging begin to touch Henriette-Lucy’s life, nonetheless, she can still hold on to the perception of youth. Though she explains that she walks with difficulty, this is diminished because she has hair that refuses to age. The tension between youth and age are thus seen on even the smallest level, strands of hair. Further hardships faced in old age have less to do with the body: “J’ai beau me couvrir d’eau glacée tous les jours, cela peut me rendre propre, mais ne me rendra pas jeune. Encore, si j’étais riche ! mais être pauvre et vieille, et vouloir que je ne sois pas un fardeau, je crois que c’est trop exiger de la nature humaine” (430). Despairing her weakened status as poor and old, she finally reveals her disdain for aging and acknowledges that it happens even to her. Nonetheless, youth is regretted in this context because of the financial advantages it represents for her. Money, as Henriette-Lucy explains, is significant in old age. Her impoverished status brings her closer to the caricature image provided by Old Squaw and threatens her heroine status. Finally, in this passage we begin to see what it means to age and become dependent on others. Her greatest desire is not to become a burden to another.

This brings us to another important aspect of aging: the audience who witnesses it. Henriette-Lucy is accustomed to playing the role of the audience and surveying the elderly who
come her way. This changes once she herself ages. She first addresses this with respect to her close friend and correspondent, Félicie: “je m’étonne qu’une personne jeune aimable, distinguée comme vous, conserve à une vieille et morose personne comme moi, une amitié si constante et si fidèle” (388). Though this is likely to be a rhetorical strategy employed to receive a compliment from her friend, it does demonstrate the fact that the young perceive the old in a particular way. Old age is not associated with fun and happiness, but with sadness. In her friend she knows she has an ally, but what do others see in her? Henriette-Lucy sees Félicie’s father and writes of the encounter to her friend:

Il est tout surpris de ce que je ne suis pas décrépite et de ce que j’ai des dents. Il s’écrie en me regardant en face: « Quelle sérénité, quelle tranquillité dans cette figure! » Ah mon Dieu, ce n’est que sur l’enveloppe que tout cela est si uni mais seulement il n’y a qu’à s’entendre sur les causes du chagrin; moi je ne souffre que dans mon cœur; dans mes goûts, dans ma vanité, dans mes souvenirs d’affluence, je ne trouve rien à quoi je puisse songer plus d’une seconde; mais ne pas voir ceux que j’aime, voilà où est ma douleur. (417)

Henriette-Lucy’s reactive response to a compliment demonstrates her awareness of self and her discomfort. She proves herself to be aware of the other’s gaze and is no longer certain that the compliments given her are real. Here, she also reminds us that age is not just appearance. The negative effects of time cannot all be seen.

Another important element of old age is seen in its direct relationship to youth. The elderly become children again in the eyes of those who witness them. Their judgment and abilities are called into question and the perception is that they are in a process of regression. For this reason, the interaction between children and the elderly is significant. In Journal d’une
we see two such examples involving Henriette-Lucy’s children. Both situations occur when the family is in England 1797-1799 and both specifically exclude Henriette-Lucy, the adult, from the interaction. The very young and the elderly become members of the same group and are considered equals. The first contact is between Humbert and his great-great-uncle at their first meeting and is described by Henriette-Lucy:

Puis, voyant mon fils, [l’archevêque] l’embrassa également à plusieurs reprises. Lui ayant adressé plusieurs questions en anglais et en français, l’enfant répondit avec une hardiesse et une perspicacité qui charmèrent mon oncle. Comme il me demandait de l’emmener avec lui dans une maison, située à peu de distance, où il allait tous les matins se faire électriser pour sa surdité, je craignais un peu qu’Humbert ne voulût pas l’accompagner; mais au contraire, l’enfant répondit sans hésiter qu’il irait volontiers with the old gentleman. (260)

In this brief encounter we are able to quickly see just how well paired the old gentleman and the young boy are. The archbishop is quick to kiss his young nephew and invite him on an outing. Humbert, in return, responds boldly to his uncle’s inquiries and easily decides to accompany him to the neighbor’s home. These actions and responses demonstrate the level of comfort between the two and place them in direct opposition to Henriette-Lucy who demonstrates only fear and surprise. She becomes the outsider of the trio and Humbert and the archbishop thus form their own group.

Age is a divisive factor in this situation. Henriette-Lucy is excluded from the interaction, in part, due to her age. Her evaluation of the old and the young places her outside of their company in this circumstance and bring them together. Her membership in the “adult” category causes her to privilege her position over the others. In this case, the critique falls upon the
archbishop more harshly than upon Humbert. Humbert accompanies his great-great uncle “volontiers” and “sans hésiter,” whereas the archbishop only requests the company. The fear the Henriette-Lucy feels thus becomes a veiled pity for the elderly man who risks rejection. At the same time, she fears that Humbert will inappropriately reject the old gentleman. In assuming the worst of both parties Henriette-Lucy strengthens their bond.

The relationship between Humbert and his great-great-uncle is not the only example of a cross-generational friendship. Humbert befriends another older gentleman, the family’s neighbor. Henriette-Lucy is again excluded from the association. There is an element of presumed safety and comfort in these relationships between the young and the old that permits them to take place. Henriette-Lucy is neither young enough nor old enough to participate in these particular interactions though she serves as the witness to them and in doing so, strengthens the status of adults in opposition to the very young and old. She describes the situation:

Un jour, j’entendis mon fils en conversation avec l’alderman, arrivé depuis peu pour passer l’été dans sa belle maison proche de la nôtre. Quelques instants plus tard Humbert vint me demander la permission d’aller voir le monsieur, qui l’en avait prié. Y ayant consenti, il se rendit chez notre voisin, dont je n’ai pas su le nom, et qui le questionna sur nous, sur ma solitude, sur mes gouts etc. Cette conversation fut accompagnée d’un bon luncheon de gâteaux et de fruits. Depuis lors, le bienveillant alderman, personnellement je ne l’ai jamais vu, nous envoyait sans cesse une petite corbeille des plus beaux fruits de ses serres, tantôt for the young gentleman, tantôt for the young lady. Puis il fit aménager, dans la partie de sa cour qui longeait la grille mitoyenne, un support en gradins sur lequel on disposa et entretint des pots contenant les fleurs les plus odorantes. Cette
galanterie anonyme et mystérieuse dura tout l’été. Humbert ne manque pas de retourner souvent chez l’aimable voisin. Il se promenait dans son jardin, dans ses serres, visitait sa bibliothèque. Mais jamais cet original ne vint me voir, jamais il ne tourna les yeux de mon côté quand il traversait la cour, et je n’ai jamais connu de lui que l’odeur de ses tubéreuses, de ses violettes et de son réséda. (271-72)

Here again we see a relationship that is not completely understood by the heroine. Henriette-Lucy allows her son to befriend the alderman, but she herself is not admitted to the relationship. In her description of the situation she mentions repeatedly that “[elle] n’a pas su le nom,” “[elle] ne l’a jamais vu,” “jamais cet original ne vint [la] voir, jamais il ne tourna les yeux de [son] côté quand il traversait la cour, et [elle] n’a jamais connu de lui que l’odeur de ses tubéreuses…” At the same time, Humbert returns frequently to the neighbor’s home and has full access to this man who remains “anonyme” and “mystérieuse” to Henriette-Lucy. The same conclusion can be drawn here as can be drawn from Humbert’s relationship with the great-great-uncle. Henriette-Lucy, as the outsider, defines the relationship between the older man and young boy as something other than adulthood, the stage she occupies at this moment in the narrative.

The concluding stage of Henriette-Lucy’s self-created life cycle is death. In Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans this is a particularly important discussion because our heroine lives forever, escaping that to which all others are subject. Death has haunted the text from the beginning with the deaths of Henriette-Lucy’s parents and children to the deaths of acquaintances during the revolutionary period and the natural deaths of those she loved most, particularly her husband Frédéric. According to Woodward: “How old our parents were when they died (and of course how they died) works strongly in our psychic imagination, casting shadows on our foreboding of our own deaths” (Aging and Its Discontents 35). These deaths
thus have an important effect on Henriette-Lucy’s relationship to age. She alone survives most of those she knows with the exception of those to whom she speaks through her work, her son, Aymar, and her grandchildren. Reaching a stage in her life where death is imminent, Henriette-Lucy contemplates what it means to be near death. Woodward explains: “the mirror our culture holds up to the elderly contains the feared image of death” (Aging and Its Discontents 66). This is the image that Henriette-Lucy has been running from throughout her work. It is here that it finally catches up to her.

Though death is what Henriette-Lucy ultimately fears we have seen how common an occurrence it is in her life. Within the narrative she avoids direct discussion of any of the deaths that touch her life beyond remarking that they take place. As we have seen it is in the correspondence that follows Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans that we begin to see more of Henriette-Lucy’s feelings about aging and death. To this end, though she does not address her own mortality in so many words, the following commentary she makes on the departure of her granddaughter seems very similar to a discussion of death:

Les séparations sont sérieuses, à mon âge, celle qui m’attend encore me pèse cruellement sur le cœur –je crois que je la sentirai plus que je ne le crois. Cette petite est devenue une amie, une compagne, avec laquelle je causais de tout, je sens qu’elle va me manquer horriblement, plus que je ne lui manquerai peut-être si elle trouve ce qu’elle va chercher dans son pays…Allons, j’aime mieux ne pas parler de cela, car je ne remédierais à rien ; je suis comme les chats : quand ils souffrent, ils vont tout seuls dans un coin du grenier. (429)

In this letter to her friend Félicie de la Rochejacquelin, dated 8 May 1841, she expresses her despair at separation from her granddaughter in such terms that it is difficult not to see it as a
commentary on death. Because she will no longer see Cécile frequently, it is almost as if she is experiencing a death. The separation weighs upon her and is indescribable. Henriette-Lucy feels the pain more strongly than Cécile and she elects not to speak of it. Classic repression allows her to circumvent mourning her loss. The most compelling portion of this excerpt, however, is the reference to the cats. Suffering is meant to be done alone, in isolation. It is not too long a leap to realize that this has implications for her own death. The statement that cats “vont tout seuls dans un coin du grenier” when they are suffering explains the behavior of dying cats. In likening herself to the cats, Henriette-Lucy makes a direct comment on her own death. The difficult feelings she first describes in terms of Cécile’s departure are feelings she does not want for others. If she dies alone, heroically, she becomes the martyr who has spared the suffering of those she leaves behind. This construction of death fits perfectly into the character that has been composed through the narrative and is appropriate to the heroine who would suffer it.

Death, nonetheless, cannot be planned and Henriette-Lucy does not control her ultimate demise. In Rohan-Chabot’s biographical work about the Marquise de La Tour du Pin, he provides an excerpt of a letter written by her son, Aymar, that describes her death:

Le malheur que j’attends depuis longtemps et qui depuis quelques jours était imminent m’a frappé ce matin à sept heures et demie. Ma pauvre mère a cessé de vivre sans douleur, sans agonie. Elle a rendu à Dieu cette belle âme qui était vraiment son image sur la terre. Il y aurait de l’égoïsme à regretter une fin qui a mis un terme à une existence si tourmentée dans ces derniers temps, mais quels que soient les raisonnements de l’esprit, il n’empêche pas le cœur d’être cruellement déchiré. Je ne sais ce que deviendra ma vie, mais, pour le moment je
ne pense pas quitter Pise de longtemps. Je m’y suis tellement accoutumé à la tranquillité que tout autre lieu m’effraye. (249-50)

In life, Henriette-Lucy was not able to slink off in isolation to spare her loved ones, Aymar feels the pain that she so often felt throughout her life. Death takes control from Henriette-Lucy and allows us to see another’s perspective. In death Henriette-Lucy would find peace and this is the only comfort to her son.

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“Exister, pour la réalité humaine, c’est se temporaliser: au présent nous visons l’avenir par des projets qui dépassent notre passé où nos activités retombent, figées et chargées d’exigences inertes. L’âge modifie notre rapport au temps; au fil des années, notre avenir se raccourcit tandis que notre passé s’alourdit.” (de Beauvoir 2: 131)

The idea that time dictates existence is a driving force in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans. This concept frames the work and leads to an unresolved conclusion at the end of an unfinished journal. Whether coming to terms with the deaths of those she loved, attempting to accept the ravages of time on her body, or determining the appropriate behavior for the aging, the once young Henriette-Lucy faces the unavoidable challenge proposed by time. The heroine is no longer simply the innocent and naïve bride eager to marry or the exilée farmer with her own private label butter. Aging requires her to reevaluate her status and condition in life. As we begin to look at the aging Henriette-Lucy, though, it becomes apparent that age has been the main focus all along. Time becomes a character unto itself, plaguing the lives of the heroine and those who inhabit her world. Trapped in a body that begins to fail her, Henriette-Lucy reinvents herself in her memoir and revisits the past before it grows too late.

The complex narrative structure of Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans that can be likened to that of A la recherche du temps perdu is not the only similarity between La Tour du
Pin’s and Proust’s works. In fact, the voices in these texts are confronted with a similar opponent, time. A combination of cherished memories and shortened futures fuels the tension in the textual present. Kathleen Woodward explains in Aging and Its Discontents the narrator Marcel’s struggle with age and how it conflicts with his desire to write:

As he [Marcel] is confronted face to face with his advancing age, he is assailed by new doubts and despairs that he will ever finish the very work he has now resolved to complete. Long wishing to begin in earnest his literary career, Marcel finally feels ready to do so. But the fact of his age (he is around fifty and has always been sickly) depresses him, and he quite understandably worries that he may die before he finishes his work. Is it or is it not too late? Marcel’s rendezvous with what he understands to be his destiny at the reception is a contradictory combination of hell and paradise, danger and pleasure. It is a combination, never perfect union, because Marcel himself is split in terms of his relation to time. The ecstatic psychic moments of what he calls perfect knowledge of the past recaptured, of indeed, youth – connect his past with his present, giving him a sense of a productive future. His new and grim knowledge of old age, however, threatens to separate him from that ideal union of past and present, projecting him into a future aborted by age. (53-54)

We have already seen many of the “perfect” and “ecstatic” moments that Henriette-Lucy recaptures from her past, but we will begin to see how time haunts the text, affecting even these moments of perfection. The idea that aging poses a challenge to the would-be writer is of

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49 I use the expression voice here due to the complicated narratological nature of both works. As already discussed in chapter one, I have chosen to use Susan Lanser’s concept, the authorial voice, to describe the narratological machinations of La Tour du Pin’s text.
interest in a discussion of La Tour du Pin because she too expresses concern about the completion of her work, stating in a letter to her close friend Félicie de la Rochejacquelin in 1841: “Pour te plaire j’écris beaucoup dans le livre rouge mais je n’y ai encore que seize ans, et je m’en sens tellement davantage, que j’ai peur de ne pas aller jusqu’au bout de l’histoire” (428)\(^{50}\). She never finishes the work, thus realizing the circumstance that Marcel fears. Another factor to consider in terms of a productive future is the fact that the reader will never see Henriette-Lucy’s future in the text. The unfinished text ends in 1815, well before the death of the author in 1853. The future is rendered unknown and the potential for productivity can thus be questioned. As we have seen in chapter two, the idea of a productive future is imposed on Aymar, the only character/person to survive the heroine/author. Aymar as a representation of the future usurps the place of his mother in that he is able to accomplish what she cannot. He can outlive Henriette-Lucy.

The delicate balance between “danger and pleasure” is present throughout La Tour du Pin’s work in the subtle references made by the authorial voice and in the construction of aging and dying characters. The ecstatic and the grim moments contribute to the production of the ideal character that has been discussed in previous chapters. While there is a palpable discomfort with aging in Henriette-Lucy’s character, there is also the exceptional heroine who lives her life fearlessly. The supporting characters are, once again, subject to rules from which Henriette-Lucy is exempt. In this case Henriette-Lucy typically exhibits only the best attributes of youth and old age whereas others fall victim to the negative and even fatal aspects of age and time.

\(^{50}\) Here, again, is an example of the unresolved writing timeline. While the opening page boasts the date 1 January 1820, the year La Tour du Pin was to turn 50, this letter problematizes said date in its implication that in 1841, 21 years later, La Tour du Pin was still in the opening chapters of the memoir.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

“What is it that I’ll want from you? Not love: that would be too much to ask. Not forgiveness, which isn’t yours to bestow. Only a listener, perhaps; only someone who will see me. Don’t prettify my thought, whatever else you do: I have no wish to be a decorated skull. But I leave myself in your hands. What choice do I have? By the time you read this last page, that – if anywhere – is the only place I will be” (Atwood 521).

What is it that any writer desires upon creating a work? Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin* gives us an idea of the complexity of the issue. The writer desires to be seen and to be remembered, but must leave herself in the hands of her readers because that is where she will remain. The closing lines to Atwood’s novel express fittingly what La Tour du Pin could have meant when she wrote: “Quand on écrit un livre, c’est presque toujours avec l’intention qu’il soit lu avant ou après votre mort. Mais je n’écris pas un livre. Quoi donc? Un journal de ma vie simplement” (35). She claims to leave simply “un journal de [sa] vie,” but as we have seen, simple is the last word to describe her work. The Marquise de La Tour du Pin, writing in the early nineteenth century, maintains that her textual efforts are not produced for general consumption, but for herself. In her view, this “selfish” writing will allow her to be brutally honest, even when she would prefer to ignore or to change her past actions: “Je ne prétends pas écrire mes confessions; mais quoique j’eusse de la répugnance à divulguer mes fautes, je veux pourtant me montrer telle que je suis, telle que j’ai été” (35). As readers, we are thus encouraged to readily accept as truth all that is to follow in her memoir. Though it may be tempting to enter into this contract, one must always keep in mind that the lines between truth and fiction can be blurred, particularly when writing of self.
As this dissertation has shown, *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans* is a work of imagination that goes beyond the historical facts and events it presents. In *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*, Patricia Meyer Spacks explains the role that the imagination plays in literature:

people remember less than they think they do, [they] imagine part of what they believe they remember, and [they] are unable to distinguish, in such contexts, between memory and imagination. Imagination, then, both helps to create developed subjective identity and testifies to that identity in the same way that memory does. To read an autobiography is to encounter a self as an imaginative being. (19)

The imagined being created in Henriette-Lucy is a fictionalized version of La Tour du Pin and, as Spacks suggests, achieves identity as an object of her own imagination (20). La Tour du Pin uses the female body, constructions of masculinity, literary tropes, and the life cycle to define her imagined “self,” Henriette-Lucy. The historical reality is stripped away to reveal a literary core at the heart of *Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans*: “Selfhood and consistent identity, whether by sheer illusion-making or through collaboration with experienced actuality, is the underlying obsession and final achievement of the literary imagination in both of these related genres [autobiography and fiction]. It provides the ground on which the complex relationship of subjective vision and verifiable truth enacts itself” (Sparks 315). This ground wherein subjectivity and truth coexist is thus the locus of the women’s aristocratic memoir. The blurred line between fiction and reality becomes inhabitable rather than the border between two absolutes.
Henriette-Lucy, always able to survive the situation she is in, becomes the ideal inhabitant of the space between fiction and reality. In a letter to her close friend, Félicie de La Rochejacquelin in 1833, Henriette-Lucy explains:

J’ai toujours dit que je mettais mes facultés dans des tiroirs pour les en tirer au besoin; quand il a fallu ouvrir le tiroir de la dame, de l’ambassadrice, j’ai fermé celui de la bonne femme; maintenant j’y retrouve tout ce qui m’est nécessaire dans ma nouvelle position—et j’ai parfaitement oublié le reste et sans le moindre vestige de regret ou de murmure, en me souvenant de ce mot du valet de chambre de Mme. de Tessé: « V’la qu’est comme v’la qu’est », qui renferme autant de résignation que de bonne humeur. (414)

Her carefully categorized abilities take her far in the confusing realm that she inhabits. The “tiroirs” of her mind and memory allow her to access her prior experiences while she constructs her present and future. In this way Henriette-Lucy exists between fiction and reality and between identities. In Women’s Lives: The View from the Threshold Carolyn Heilbrun uses the term liminal to describe such women: “liminality is the condition of moving from one state to another under conditions which are, by definition, unstable” (35), and further, that “to contain irreconcilable opposition is, as I shall suggest, to be a woman in a state of liminality” (37). She bases her definition of liminality and of “threshold people,” on that delineated by anthropologists Victor Turner and Tom Driver in their book Liberating Rites: “they [threshold people] are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate status and position in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Driver 158). Henriette-Lucy moves between fiction and
reality, the Old World and the New, wealth and poverty, gain and loss. She is, as Heilbrun asserts, a liminal figure.

Henriette-Lucy’s liminality is seen throughout La Tour du Pin’s work and has become a driving force of this dissertation. La Tour du Pin creates the complex character, Henriette-Lucy, who serves to relive the author’s memories. In the first chapter I presented a character study of the heroine, Henriette-Lucy, a woman who is larger than life. Her beauty is unparalleled, her ability to endure physical hardship is beyond compare, and her devotion to motherhood is beyond reproach. The women who surround Henriette-Lucy are reflections of misused potential because despite their best efforts they could not find themselves in Henriette-Lucy’s position. She sets the standard for the other women to aspire to; yet, she makes it clear that their best efforts will never be good enough. This notion transfers to the men that Henriette-Lucy encounters as well. In chapter two I addressed the difficult manifestation of masculinity within the text. Using Naomi Schor’s contention that it is impossible for images of men to appear in women’s literature, I illustrated the specific struggles the male characters faced. Whether defined by a limited element of their being, disfigured through subjugation by Henriette-Lucy, parodied in their actions, or erased in spite of their efforts to succeed, these men cannot be seen as complete characters. Their existences define Henriette-Lucy and depend on her for survival within the narrative.

The universe that La Tour du Pin creates for Henriette-Lucy lies in the threshold between reality and fiction and, at times, the physical location changes. The heroine’s flight to America provides an interesting opportunity for textual analysis and to define some of the literary aspects of the work. In chapter three it became clear that the imaginary is at work in Journal d’une femme de cinquante ans in spite of the historical foundations to the narrative. The liminal status
of Henriette-Lucy is further exploited in her travels to the New World. Jacques Delille used her adventure to create a highly romanticized description of the heroine and La Tour du Pin does the same. An examination of the American episodes alongside literary treatments of a similar situation demonstrates the fictional world that La Tour du Pin creates for her heroine. The blurring of memory and imagination create a world comparable to that of Chateaubriand’s Chactas and Atala, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s Paul and Virginie. The world built by Henriette-Lucy and La Tour du Pin, though fictional, does exist within a construct of time. The relationship between memory, imagination, and aging became clear in chapter four. Henriette-Lucy, despite her exceptional, liminal status is still subject to the effects of time. Within the text we see that aging and time consume the narrative and are a constant focus for both the authorial voice and the character. The line between the historical figure, the Marquise de La Tour du Pin, and the fictional character, Henriette-Lucy, is fluid. Through Henriette-Lucy, La Tour du Pin is able to recreate the life she lived or hoped to have lived. The mirror does not lies upon consultation and the authorial voice repeatedly intervenes to remind the reader of the passage of time.

In writing from a threshold location La Tour du Pin claims an identity. Spacks elaborates upon the decision to claim this locale:

Real life, as I have already suggested, seldom manifests such orderly and revealing patterns as one finds in its literary renditions. Action of the sort I have been describing belongs to literature; it belongs ultimately, as Frye would argue, to myth. To turn lives into words—whether those words claim to render fiction or fact—involves some act of the mind that discovers the logic of happenings in memory or imagination, although such logic seldom emerges in immediate
experience. Putting a life into words rescues it from confusion, even when the words declare the omnipresence of confusion, since the act of declaring implies dominance. (21)

The confusion that overwhelms both the fictional and the historical realities is thus reconciled through the writing process. When she writes “un journal de [sa] vie, simplement” La Tour du Pin strives to take control of her life, past, present, and future. Her memory and imagination create a space for her in the literary realm.
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