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STENDHAL: A STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY

**Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts,
University of Glasgow,
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

by

James G. Shields

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To my parents
John and Lena Shields

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SYNOPSIS

A review of critical opinion past and present demonstrates the degree to which Stendhal is perceived as the exponent of a clearly defined philosophical tradition. Generations of scholars have lent support to the assumption that Stendhal made his own the mechanistic materialism of Hobbes and the hedonistic utilitarianism of Helvétius, whilst rallying to the sensationalist Ideology of Destutt de Tracy. The contention of this study is that such a view has been too uncritically endorsed, and that the definition of Stendhal as a 'philosopher' calls for substantial revision. Stendhal is not a philosopher properly so called, namely one engaged in sustained argument; rather he is a philosopher in the popular sense of an intellectual, who brings philosophical concepts to bear upon a range of human, social and moral issues, and who addresses these concepts more from committed standpoints than detached reflection. The revision which the thesis attempts is, similarly, not a philosophical argument; it proceeds by documenting the concepts in question and by examining afresh the treatment which they receive in Stendhal's writings and in the accounts of his commentators.

Placing Stendhal broadly within the intellectual context of his age, the thesis examines his reaction to contemporary philosophers and his perception of his own role as an expounder of ideas (Chapter I). Stendhal's conception of Philosophy as a discipline is considered in relation to his literary ambitions; for there is early evident in his writings a dichotomy between the philosopher and the artist which would re-emerge much later in the composition of his novels (Chapter II). Among the first and most compelling questions which Stendhal calls upon philosophy to resolve is the perennial problem of free will and determinism. While affinities with eighteenth-century radical philosophy are identified, these are shown to be confounded by a quite orthodox conception of human motivation and moral responsibility (Chapter III).

The thesis forsakes the common tendency among scholars to accept at face value Stendhal's professions of philosophical allegiance, and seeks instead to measure these against the notes, diaries, letters, and later published writings which attest to his philosophical development. Hobbes, Helvétius and Tracy provide instructive case studies, demonstrating the gulf that exists at times between the philosophy which Stendhal reads and his *reading* of it. The difficulty which Stendhal encounters in adhering faithfully to the most fundamental precepts of these thinkers calls into question the depth of his intellectual commitment to them, while it reveals an ineradicable attachment to the conventional definition of man with which such philosophers took issue. The thesis provides the first critical analysis of Stendhal's reading of Hobbes and of the philosophical treatise which he drafted thereafter in 1804 (Chapter IV). This abortive treatise evidences both a serious misunderstanding of Hobbes's philosophy and a failure by Stendhal to break free of traditional dualist categories in his reasoning on human nature — a problem which will be apparent again in his reading of Tracy, and which has been overlooked by those many critics who readily annexe Stendhal to the latter's school of thought.

A very different case is presented by Stendhal's reading of the physiologist P.-J.-G. Cabanis. Here he would discover a whole new perspective on man as a living, organic entity. Through the reading of Cabanis, first in 1805, then, more notably, in 1811, Stendhal's conception of human nature undergoes a critical development. The thesis seeks to provide the first detailed account of this much neglected philosophical influence, exploring in particular Stendhal's debt to the notion of indwelling physiological determinants such as temperament. Stendhal's earlier writings, with their abstract representation of human nature and their mechanistic overtones, are heavily indebted to eighteenth-century rationalism. Through the influence of Cabanis, he comes to embrace a much more concrete definition of man in which the role of the body is preponderant and in which human nature is held to be

indissociable from Nature in its widest sense (Chapters V and VI). The physiological determinism of Cabanis furnishes Stendhal with a new means of understanding himself and those around him. It legitimates the notion that human beings do not share, as Helvétius had claimed, a common fund of potentiality, but that they are intrinsically different in their characters and aptitudes. The effect of this idea upon Stendhal's philosophical, moral, aesthetic and political outlook would be far-reaching.

It is no misnomer to describe what Stendhal derives from Cabanis as a 'naturalistic' philosophy of man. Yet the term sits ill with a novelist so unconcerned to portray the 'natural', material world in any detail. Stendhal is considered, therefore, in relation to the aims and methods of the later Naturalist movement and in the light of Zola's critical assessment in particular (Chapter VII). The problem of integrating philosophy into the novel as Stendhal conceived of it is examined, and distinctions are drawn between the fictional art in which his 'naturalism' is muted and the range of other writings in which it is given full expression.

Nowhere is this aspect of Stendhal's thought more in evidence than in his studies of Italy. Here Stendhal's determinism — racial, geographical, social, historical — is most vividly articulated. Yet the Italy which he rediscovers in 1811, and from which he subsequently fashions his Italian ideal, is as much the fruit of invention as of observation. Stendhal's Italian is a persona who owes much to the reading of Cabanis and of whom some striking adumbrations are to be found in the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. Inescapable in this context are the notions of human sensibility and energy. More than the 'moral' qualities for which they have been taken almost without exception by critics, these are shown to have firm roots in the physiological conception of man derived by Stendhal from Cabanis (Chapter VIII).

Dissenting from what has become an established critical tendency, the thesis insists not upon the permanence of Stendhal's thought, but upon its signal evolution. A broad consideration of Stendhal's philosophical development invites the conclusion that his thought progressed far beyond the philosophy which is articulated in his early writings (Chapters IX and X). Stendhal's definition of man is indebted at the outset to the optimistic philosophy of the Enlightenment and Revolution; from this he would graduate to a much more pessimistic view of the human condition. The transition from a generic conception of Humanity to a cult of the individual 'self', while it is essential to the relativism of Stendhal's later aesthetic and moral outlook, betokens a fundamental revision of his earliest philosophical principles. The fatalistic perspective in which Stendhal comes to view human nature testifies to no apostolic succession in the line of Helvétius, Tracy and Cabanis, but to a definitive break with the whole reformist ethic of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues*.

REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Where the titles of Stendhal's works have not been given in full, they are abbreviated as follows:

Corr, I, II, III: *Correspondance* (Pléiade, 3 vols.)
JL, I, II, III: *Journal littéraire* (3 vols.)
H de P, I, II: *Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (2 vols.)
CA, I, II, III, IV, V: *Courrier anglais* (Le Divan, 5 vols.)
Chron., I, II, III, IV, V: *Chroniques pour l'Angleterre* (Grenoble, 5 vols.)
Rossini, I, II: *Vie de Rossini* (2 vols.)
Mém sur Nap.: *Mémoires sur Napoléon*
Vie de Nap.: *Vie de Napoléon*
VHMM: *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase*
Mél. journ.: *Mélanges: journalisme*
Mél. peint.: *Mélanges: peinture*
Mél. litt.: *Mélanges: littérature*
Mél. pol/hist.: *Mélanges: politique/histoire*
M de T, I, II, III: *Mémoires d'un touriste* (3 vols.)
R et S: *Racine et Shakespeare*
S d'E: *Souvenirs d'égotisme*
HB, I, II: *Vie de Henry Brulard* (2 vols.)
OI, I, II: *Œuvres intimes* (Pléiade, 2 vols.)

Unless otherwise specified, the above relate to the Cercle du Bibliophile edition of Stendhal's works. The novels and short stories are cited not under their respective titles, but as part of the two-volume Pléiade edition, *Romans et Nouvelles* (abbreviated *Romans*); likewise the Italian travelogues, which are cited in the Pléiade edition, *Voyages en Italie* (abbreviated *Italie*).

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Stendhal's thought. Few indeed are those commentators who do not have some occasion to rehearse the classic definitions of Stendhal as a 'man of the eighteenth century', a votary of Ideology, a defiant materialist and exponent of hedonistic utilitarianism, a faithful advocate of Helvétius and Destutt de Tracy. The most cursory review of Stendhal scholarship would throw into relief a number of recurrent terms, among which 'rationalism', 'sensationalism', 'Ideology', 'materialism', 'determinism', 'utilitarianism', would have a privileged place. While critics may not agree upon Stendhal's merits as a thinker, the above terms mark out clearly the ground upon which the question has long come to be addressed.

The reason is not far to seek. As Stendhal's notebooks, diaries and letters attest, he early declared allegiance to a philosophy which he is held to have espoused with unflinching conviction throughout his life. It is one thing, however, to assume a philosophical posture; quite another *philosophically* to sustain it. We are concerned in this study to examine a number of the definitions that have been commonly applied to Stendhal's thought, and to seek out some of the reasoning which informed his philosophical orientation. By what means, and to what extent, did he rationalise the principles which underpinned his philosophy? Did he always observe the logic of what those principles implied? How did he perceive the role of the philosopher, and to what degree does he keep faith with those thinkers whose influence he underwent?

The problems posed by such questions are many. Stendhal's thought is ambivalent and resistant to easy categorisation. 'Of all the great French writers,' affirms F.C. Green, 'Stendhal is least amenable to synthetic treatment.'¹ The purpose of this thesis is to attempt no such treatment of Stendhal's thought; nor is it to endeavour to bridge the distance between divergent critical readings of it. Our objective is rather to concentrate upon a number of important questions which are central to any consideration of Stendhal's philosophy and which, we submit, stand in need of reassessment.

We begin by considering Stendhal within the intellectual context of his age, and by reviewing the critical opinion upon which his reputation as a thinker rests. Our intention is to demonstrate that, whatever the diversity of opinion over Stendhal's achievement as a 'philosopher', there is unanimity in placing him squarely within a well defined philosophical tradition. To acknowledge as much, however, is to come at once against a difficulty: For Stendhal's thought is often taxed with being unsystematic and with lacking a rigorous consistency. While there may be evidence aplenty in Stendhal's writings to support such a charge, the question must be considered in its wider context.

If Stendhal grew to manhood in an age when the *esprit de système* had fallen from grace, he took up his pen at a time when synthetic and idealistic rationalism was not only creeping back into vogue, but was finding new and potent allies in a revived marriage of convenience between Church and Crown. Between the observation-based empiricism of the sensationalist tradition and the contemplative rationalism of a new generation of 'systematists', Stendhal saw a choice of near-Manichæan proportions. It is our contention that, in signalling the unsystematic nature of Stendhal's thought, critics have taken insufficient account of what he himself understood by systematic reasoning, and of the extent to which his writings reveal a quite conscious effort to *avoid* being deemed 'systematic' in the presentation of his ideas.

This is not to resolve, however, the problem which is thereby posed for assimilating Stendhal to a particular 'school' of philosophy. Central to this question is the time-honoured definition of Stendhal as heir to the radical materialist philosophy of thinkers such as Helvétius and d'Holbach, and acolyte of that group of intellectuals who have become known as the 'Idéologues' and who are adjudged to have provided a conduit from the eighteenth-century *philosophes* to later nineteenth-century positivism. From the earliest, critics have affirmed the importance — for good or for ill — of such influences upon Stendhal's intellectual development. From acknowledging Stendhal's affinities with the Idéologues to reserving a place for him in the history of French philosophy, moreover, has been but a short step for many of his commentators. The appraisals of Hippolyte Taine and Paul Bourget in the latter half of the nineteenth-century set the tone for succeeding generations of critics, who identified in Stendhal the exponent of a sensationalist philosophy running from Condillac to the Idéologues and their later nineteenth-century successors. François Picavet's classic study of the Idéologues, to cite but one example among many, provides a striking demonstration of this readiness to annexe Stendhal to the philosophy in question. All of Stendhal's writings, from the novels through to *De l'Amour* and the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, declares Picavet, 'nous montrent un disciple, même un successeur et un défenseur, *mutatis mutandis*, des idéologues.'²

The qualification notwithstanding, to claim as much is to invite consideration of Stendhal as a vehicle for the aims, precepts and methods of a whole philosophical tradition. The antecedents of Ideology, while they may be 'as old as Epicurus',³ find their most influential expression for the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the sensationalist epistemology pioneered by Locke and Condillac. Going further than either of the latter, the Idéologues sought to develop a thoroughgoing sensationalism predicated upon a monistic definition of man as a being determined solely by his physiological organism and its interaction, through sense-experience, with the environment. The annexation of Stendhal to this school of thought and all it implies has

not only gained widespread and enduring currency: it has assumed the status of a self-evident truth. 'The connection between Stendhal and Idéologie has so often been pointed out,' asserts Gilbert Chinard, 'that it would be superfluous to call attention to it.'⁴

Such a statement bears witness to what has become a very real problem in the approach to Stendhal's thought. For it is all too easy for definitions to petrify, discouraging scholars from going over ground which, it is assumed, has been amply covered already. Acknowledging Stendhal's association with Ideology in his scholarly study of the later French Enlightenment, Sergio Moravia cuts short his discussion of the question with the remark: 'Ma il rapporto di Stendhal con gli *idéologues* è cosa troppo nota perché occorra insistervi ancora.'⁵ Yesterday's inquiry thus becomes today's presupposition. The problem is not new. Nor is it restricted to Stendhal's *rappports* with the Idéologues specifically. In the *Avant-propos* of his early study, *Les Idées de Stendhal*, Jean Méliá had no hesitation in concluding that, given the range of influences at work upon his thought from the earliest, Stendhal 'ne pouvait être que matérialiste.'⁶

However apparently conclusive the evidence for such an assertion, it articulates a view of Stendhal which has never been subjected to critical scrutiny. Instead, it has proved something of a *locus classicus* amid a body of scholarly opinion which holds the nature of Stendhal's philosophical allegiance to be, in its fundamental principles at least, beyond question. Even those many commentators who, after the fashion of Léon Blum, insist upon a 'romantic' counter-tendency to the philosopher in Stendhal, cast no doubt upon his *intellectual* adherence to the precepts of the Idéologues and their eighteenth-century predecessors.⁷ For them, as for Jean Théodoridès, Stendhal remains a confirmed disciple of Ideology, 'un matérialiste convaincu, dans la lignée des "philosophes" du siècle des Lumières.'⁸

Burnished by succeeding generations of critics, such definitions, then, have become the common coinage of Stendhal scholarship. Yet we may ask: what is the precise nature of the debt which Stendhal contracted to the mechanistic materialism and sensationalist psychology that are so commonly held to have been his philosophical stock-in-trade? The question, far from being otiose, is one which becomes all the more apposite in view of the now established tendency among critics to take Stendhal's philosophical orientation for granted. For it is only when one proceeds from easy generalities to a more detailed consideration of Stendhal's thought that the problem which we have intimated above becomes fully apparent. We may cite as a single illustration of this problem Sergio Moravia when he writes of Stendhal: 'Appassionato di Hobbes, devoto ammiratore di Helvétius e di d'Holbach, leggerà e rileggerà più volte

i testi degli *idéologues*.⁹ Though it finds endorsement in much of the scholarship which devotes consideration to Stendhal's thought, such a description of the latter as a devotee of Hobbes and d'Holbach is highly misleading. For Stendhal's 'passion' for Hobbes, inspired as it was by an erroneous reading of the latter's philosophy, was assuredly a thing of the past by 1806. And if his admiration for d'Holbach may be *assumed*, it is certainly not borne out by the textual evidence available. Across the whole range of Stendhal's writings, there is barely a reference to the author of the *Système de la nature*, and, surprising though this may be, there is no clear indication that Stendhal ever undertook even the most perfunctory reading of this philosopher.

Upon such grounds alone, the case for some reappraisal of Stendhal's thought can be made. It becomes the more compelling, however, when one considers those thinkers whom Stendhal *did* read and for whom he *does* reserve his sustained admiration. If there is much in Helvétius and Destutt de Tracy which explains their appeal for Stendhal, there is much, too, which must make us question the range and depth of that appeal. There can be little doubt that Stendhal is indebted to these thinkers for a number of strong and enduring philosophical principles that he would make his own. Yet, taken as a whole, the concept of man propounded by Helvétius or Tracy bears decidedly little resemblance to the concept of man which awaits us in the pages of Stendhal. Nothing, it seems, could be further removed from the vital, dynamic, *energetic* self that is so much an object of admiration for Stendhal than the mechanistic-materialist man posited by Helvétius. What meaning might be assigned to the notions of 'energy', 'genius', 'generosity', even 'character' itself, within the definition of man as an inert product of his environment, a *tabula rasa* with no inherent dispositions, activated solely by external stimuli and incapable of seeking anything but his own material gratification? How might the intrinsic qualities and predispositions that define the human being of extraordinary cast, the exceptional individual, be accounted for within Helvétius's conception of a humanity cut from a common cloth to a common standard?

Nor could anything be less suited to accommodate Stendhal's concepts of 'passion', 'reason' or 'will' than the simple 'faculté de sentir' postulated by Tracy. One could not embrace in all their scope the subtle hues and rich complexities of human consciousness while subscribing to the crude, reductionist equation between thought and sensation upon which the whole edifice of Ideology was founded. The distinction between reason and passion itself, a distinction much present in Stendhal's construction of human nature, is conjured away by a doctrine which admits of no substantive discrimination between the cognitive and affective realms in man. The more such a distinction could be effaced, the more the traditional concept of a rational faculty presiding over the thoughts and wishes of the individual would be undermined, as would any obscurely conceived realm of 'heart' — or, *a fortiori*, 'soul' — invested

with functions arising neither from the body nor from the intellect. If the mind is but a blank slate upon which sense-experience leaves its impressions, if it has no active principle by which to galvanise itself into thinking or willing, then this has radical implications for the character psychology and moral accountability of human beings. Man could be seen at last for what he is: a determined material being in whom the notions of moral conscience and free will, no less than those of divine revelation and an immortal soul, would be exposed as so much illusion.

Such considerations, while they may appear *prima facie* to echo some of Stendhal's most cherished principles, in fact suffice to call into question the very foundations of his debt to the environmentalism of Helvétius or the sensationalism of Tracy. While Stendhal lends his endorsement *in principle* to the rationale which they expound, he will prove recalcitrant in his adherence to just those concepts which it was the intention of Helvétius and Tracy to abolish. Stendhal, it is true, sets out resolutely down the path traced by these philosophers, finding in the sensationalist basis of mind, the pleasure-pain calculus, the self-interest theory, and the utilitarian ethic, important keys to moral and social man. But he could not be satisfied for long with the essential *passivity* upon which such concepts were predicated. The 'will', for Helvétius as for Tracy, is a *process*, not an *initiative faculty*: a *result*, not a *cause in itself*. How could this passive, mechanistic conception of human determination be squared with Stendhal's insistence upon a self-motive *faculté de vouloir*? This is but one of the questions which impresses itself upon the reader who passes from the *Elémens d'idéologie* and *De l'Esprit* to what is often, in Stendhal, a quite radically different conception of human nature. For as with the 'will', so with the 'mind' in general. The shift from the definition of all mental operations — cognitive, affective and volitional alike — as mere modified sense-impressions, to a view of the mind as an independently defined, self-directing set of faculties, opens up at times an unbridgeable gulf between Stendhal and his 'mentors'. Through a fundamental change in emphasis — from passivity to activity, from determinism to spontaneity, from a self bereft of autonomy to a self with power to arbitrate over its thoughts and desires, from a monistic definition of man to a quasi-dualistic view of mind and matter, head and heart — Stendhal will visit distortions upon the most fundamental of the precepts which he holds from Helvétius and Tracy both. It would be a peculiar reader of the *Vie de Henry Brulard* who would come away with the impression of a vacant human nature, an indefinitely malleable 'self' determined in its every least thought, desire and mode of being by influences from without. Yet this denial of a permanent, substantial 'self' was the very starting-point for Helvétius. It would require a no less peculiar reading of *Le Rouge et le Noir* or *Lamiel* to discover therein a faithful restatement of the theory that the will is no prime mover but a purposeless receptacle of determined stimuli, an essentially passive instrument awaiting activation by forces beyond itself. Yet such is the principle

upon which Tracy rests his refutation of volition as a free moral agency in man.

These brief preliminary observations, in arguing the need to bring a critical eye to bear upon Stendhal's reading of the philosophy with which he is associated, anticipate a number of the questions which it is our purpose to address in this study. To what extent does Stendhal's thought square with the definitions that have been affixed by posterity to his name? What is the precise nature of the materialist philosophy that has been so readily ascribed to him by succeeding generations of critics? To what degree do his writings provide a faithful articulation of the precepts — sensationalist, deterministic, utilitarian — that are central to the philosophy of the *Idéologues* and of their eighteenth-century predecessors? Such questions, though necessarily broad in their purview, are only part of what must be considered in any study of Stendhal's thought. For there is a Stendhal who predates the reader of the *Idéologues*, just as there is a Stendhal who will go beyond the bounds of what is endorsed by Destutt de Tracy and his compeers. We propose not to study Stendhal as an *idéologue*, but to consider Ideology as part of the broader philosophical development which he underwent. In so doing, we wish to challenge the widely held view that Stendhal early forged a philosophy to which he would owe unfaltering allegiance throughout his writing life. It is our contention that Stendhal's philosophical education stretches far beyond the point at which it is customarily halted by critics who contrive to discover in the young Henri Beyle all the essential elements of his later philosophy.

Detailed attention will be given to Stendhal's earliest philosophical ideas as he records them in his notebooks, diaries and letters. We shall examine in this context the philosophical treatise which he undertook to write in 1804. Though it has been largely consigned to obscurity by Stendhal scholars, the *Filosofia Nova* furnishes a valuable insight into his mind during this early period. The most significant point about this ill-conceived philosophical venture, we shall argue, is its failure; for it demonstrates some of the difficulties which Stendhal encountered in handling the precepts of a philosophy that he is generally held to have espoused with ease. In this respect, we contend, Stendhal's reading of the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, provides a compelling corrective to his reputation as a philosophical 'materialist'.

By considering in detail Stendhal's early philosophical endeavours, we are better placed to measure the substantial development which his thought was to undergo. Whatever Stendhal's reputation as a disciple of Hobbes, Helvétius and Tracy, it is clear that he became alive to the shortcomings of each in turn. For they did not provide a complete account of human nature in all its range and diversity. On this question, the importance of a quite different philosophical preceptor will emerge. The influence of the physiologist P.-J.-G. Cabanis upon Stendhal has been seriously neglected by scholars.

Yet Cabanis, as we shall seek to demonstrate, furnishes some of the most crucial ingredients in Stendhal's conception of human nature. At its most primitive, Stendhal's philosophy rests upon a highly abstractive and somewhat archaic notion of man, as a being actuated by the lofty forces of passion and reason, and able, through a judicious exercise of the latter, to exert control over his character and conduct. In the writings of Cabanis, by contrast, Stendhal would discover a whole new definition of man as a physical organism subject to the determining influences of temperament and of the wider natural environment. Though he would hold throughout to his division of man into heart and head — a factor which bedevils from the earliest his concepts of materialism and determinism alike — the implications of his reading of Cabanis were to be far-reaching. In the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, Stendhal discovers what Hobbes, Helvétius and Tracy had failed to provide: a means of accounting for man as a concrete, living entity.

In this sense, it will be important to draw a distinction between the metaphysical, mechanistic materialism of Hobbes and the physiological 'materialism' of Cabanis. Such a distinction is called forth by the fact that so many assessments of Stendhal's thought appear to rest on the assumption that the thinkers whose influence he underwent merely retail versions of the same philosophy, and that to align Stendhal with one is to align him with all. This is far from being the case. The distinctions that obtain between such thinkers as Hobbes, Helvétius, Destutt de Tracy and Cabanis shed important light upon Stendhal's philosophical predispositions and evolution. To define Stendhal as a 'materialist' is insufficient, where it is not misleading. To describe him as a disciple of Hobbes is quite erroneous. Stendhal is best defined, we shall argue, when we abandon the attempt to make him fit the mechanistic mould of earlier materialist philosophy and recognise in his thought a combination of influences, not least among them the psycho-physiological naturalism of Cabanis and the conception of Nature advanced by the developing physical sciences in the early nineteenth century.

Yet the term 'naturalism', with all its connotative accretions, appears fraught with contradiction when applied to a writer so unconcerned to portray the 'natural', material world in any detail. We consider, therefore, the disparity that exists between the naturalistic philosophy to which Stendhal holds in principle and his conception of the novel. The refusal to translate his materialist and determinist leanings unambiguously into the novel raises questions which invite us to consider Zola's ambivalent appreciation of Stendhal. Despite what the latter might hold in principle to be the influence of *race*, *milieu* and *moment*, his conception of the novel, we argue, militated against the obtrusive presence of 'philosophy'. We attempt to take some account of the conscious choices which Stendhal confronted on this question, and we consider a number of ways in which determinism may be seen to be at work, through suggestion,

in his novels.

If Stendhal's 'naturalism' is muted in his novels, it finds unhindered expression across the range of his other writings. The influence of Cabanis is to the fore not only in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, but in other works, from *Rome, Naples et Florence* through *De l'Amour* to the *Promenades dans Rome* and the *Mémoires d'un touriste*. Stendhal's private diaries and letters, his biographical and autobiographical writings, too, are infused with the physiological notions derived from Cabanis. We draw attention, in this respect, to the importance of the year 1811, which saw the coincidence of Stendhal's reading of Cabanis with his real discovery of Italy — a 'discovery' in which there is a substantial element of invention. Central to our interest here, the questions of energy and sensibility are considered from a physiological point of view, an aspect which has been neglected by scholars, who have tended to define such concepts in purely moral terms. The energetic, passionate, *natural* Italian is, in part at least, we contend, a construct of Stendhal's imagination who owes much to Cabanis and of whom we find some clear prefigurations in the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*.

The final chapters of the thesis seek to provide a broad overview of Stendhal's philosophical development. From the optimism of his early years, an optimism resting upon the notion of a common humanity susceptible of improvement through education and legislation, he gravitates towards a much bleaker and more fatalistic view of the human condition. The relativism and individualism that bulk so large in Stendhal's aesthetic and moral outlook owe much, we argue, to his diminished faith in the possibility of any real community of interest or experience among men. From the ideal of a universal humanity to a cult of the exceptional individual, from an endeavour to mathematise the study of man to a celebration of the irrational, imponderable, 'anarchic' element in human nature, the transition can be traced through Stendhal's private and published writings. The effect of such a transition upon his social and political philosophy is measured against the buoyant civism of his early years. Stendhal's loss of faith in the moral and political reformism of thinkers such as Helvétius and Cabanis, far from attesting his place within the tradition which Ideology sustains, foreshadows his effective renunciation of the *idéologue* ethic, with all its considerable debt to the notions of human perfectibility and social regeneration.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *Stendhal* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1939), Preface, p. vii.
2. *Les Idéologues. Essai sur l'histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, religieuses, etc. en France depuis 1789* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1891), p. 491.
3. G. Chinard, 'A Neglected Province of Literary History', Introduction, E. Cailliet, *La Tradition littéraire des Idéologues* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1943), p. 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
5. *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo. Filosofia e politica nella società francese (1770-1810)* (Bari: Laterza, 1968), pp. 28-29. Cf. E.J. Talbot, who cites the *Idéologues* as an important influence on Stendhal's thought, only to conclude: 'Stendhal's readings of these ideologues can be and has been thoroughly documented' (*Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics* [Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 1985] p. 77).
6. *Les Idées de Stendhal* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1910), p. 12.
7. See L. Blum, *Stendhal et le beylisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, n.d.), pp. 159-162, 171-181 *et passim*. Cf. H. Delacroix, *La Psychologie de Stendhal* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1918), pp. 68-69; P. Jourda, *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930), pp. 1, 96-98; W.H. Fineshriber, *Stendhal, The Romantic Rationalist* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1932), pp. 39-57; P. Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974), vol. I, pp. 7, 283-284; Cailliet, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-152, 212, 259-260; R. Alter, *Stendhal* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980), pp. 28, 64-65.
8. *Stendhal du côté de la science* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1972), p. 279.
9. *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo*, p. 28.

CHAPTER I

STENDHAL AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF HIS AGE

Perceptions of Stendhal as Philosopher

i. Early Criticism: The Polarisation of Opinion.

The question of Stendhal as a thinker has long exercised the minds of his commentators. In the first major study of Stendhal's thought, published in 1868, Albert Collignon presented his subject as nothing less than a 'pionnier philosophique', forging across the range of his writings 'le vaste ensemble d'une philosophie'. Proclaiming Stendhal the forerunner of a new intellectual generation, Collignon defined him unstintingly as 'un penseur profond, un observateur pénétrant, philosophe fort instruit, logicien rigoureux et original.'¹ While it contrasted with the tenor of much of the criticism which had greeted Stendhal's writings during his lifetime and in the years immediately following his death, Collignon's encomium found a resonance in others of his generation. Foremost among these was Hippolyte Taine, who, in the Introduction to *l'Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, hails Stendhal as a philosopher ahead of his time.² Emile Zola, too, discerned in Stendhal a thinker of some stature, at once a man of the eighteenth century and a precursor of the later nineteenth. Reserving for him a place in the van of the Naturalist movement, Zola deemed Stendhal the link between 'la conception métaphysique du XVIII^e siècle et la conception scientifique du nôtre.'³ As the apologist of the *roman expérimental* put it, 'Stendhal appliquait en philosophe des théories que nous tâchons aujourd'hui d'appliquer en savants.'⁴

Zola's assessment, like that of Taine before him, provides something of a landmark in the appraisal of Stendhal as a philosopher-novelist, much as Balzac's review of *La Chartreuse de Parme* serves as an early landmark in the appreciation of Stendhal as a literary technician.⁵ What distinguishes Zola from Taine in his praise of Stendhal is the point at which he chooses to rest his case. For he stops some way short of Taine's eulogistic appraisal of Stendhal as the 'naturaliste' and 'physicien' who had opened the way towards an understanding of 'les causes fondamentales' — 'les nationalités, les climats, les tempéraments.'⁶ Zola's criticism, indeed, was that Stendhal had been *too* philosophical, too rationalistic, taking insufficient account of *race, milieu* and *moment* as determining factors in man's character and destiny. Stendhal's was 'une étude purement philosophique et morale de l'homme considéré simplement dans ses facultés intellectuelles et passionnelles, et pris à part dans la nature.'⁷ The world according to Stendhal, Zola concluded, was incomplete as a result; it was, he judged, 'de l'humanité quintessenciée par un procédé philosophique.'⁸

Despite their different emphases and quite divergent conclusions, Taine and Zola rested their respective assessments, like Collignon, upon a genuine regard for Stendhal as a thinker. It is as a thinker, too, that the latter would appeal to Paul Bourget, who, in his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*, gives due praise to the literary artist in Stendhal, adding:

Mais sous l'artiste il y a un philosophe, et même le philosophe domine sans cesse. La faculté souveraine de cette pensée en mouvement réside dans l'invention d'idées générales.⁹

'C'est un philosophe et c'est un idéologue,' insists Bourget, for whom Stendhal is both a philosopher in his own right and the legatee of an established philosophical tradition.¹⁰ Though such favourable appraisals were penned at a time of renascent interest in Stendhal, he had early been recognised as an insightful and original thinker. In a fine obituary article published in January 1843, Auguste Bussière had put the case with cogency, presenting Stendhal as a thinker who, the critic claimed, 'a eu plus d'idées enfin qu'il n'en faut pour planter une bannière à soi dans le champ de l'invention et tenir état de chef d'école.'¹¹ The point is echoed in an article of 1846 by Hippolyte Babou, who, for all his mandatory recognition of Stendhal's 'aspérités blessantes', ascribes an incisive rationalism — 'un esprit froid, étendu, sensé, raisonneur' — to this 'terrible logicien'.¹²

Such a perception of Stendhal was to gain widespread and enduring currency among future generations of commentators.¹³ It is one thing, however, to acclaim Stendhal as a thinker; quite another to define with precision what we are to understand by this. The point is not an idle one. We argued in our Introduction that a consensus has crystallised around the question of Stendhal's philosophical orientation. Yet if we confront a number of the passages in which his thought is discussed, we are presented with some apparently radical discrepancies. While M.E. Carcassonne rehearses the classic definition of Stendhal as 'un héritier du XVIII^e siècle rationaliste, plein de confiance dans l'efficacité des idées claires et des théories bien ordonnées', Robert Adams can point with equal conviction to the same Stendhal's mockery of intellectual systems in general, his debunking of 'rationality itself'.¹⁴ In view of Stendhal's long-established reputation as a philosopher and *idéologue*, we may be surprised in turn to find Alain Girard contending that 'l'absence de toute préoccupation philosophique ou religieuse apparaît comme un des traits marquants de son œuvre'.¹⁵ While J.-C. Alciatore argues that Stendhal, from the earliest, 'se révèle métaphysicien', H.-F. Imbert ascribes to him 'le plus beau mépris voltairien pour tout ce qu'il est commode de ranger sous la rubrique "métaphysique"'.¹⁶ What, then, are we to make of George Brandes when he grandly proclaims Stendhal 'the metaphysician among the

French authors of his day, as Leonardo was the metaphysician among the great painters of the Renaissance'?¹⁷

At issue here, as a fuller reading of the critical appraisals in question attests, is not any fundamental divergence in the interpretation of Stendhal's thought, but rather a simple failure in each case to clarify the sense of the terms by which it is designated. We are confronted at the outset, therefore, with the problem of defining, in broad terms at least, the philosophy to which Stendhal held in the first decades of the nineteenth century. While we shall have occasion to consider in some detail Stendhal's understanding of the term *philosophie* itself, the terms 'metaphysics' and 'rationalism' owe much of their sense — and much of their ambiguity in the instances cited — to a long association with aprioristic, speculative philosophy and deductive-rationalist (as opposed to inductive-experimentalist) thought.¹⁸ In the case of a mind so ill-disposed as Stendhal's to the subtleties of philosophising *in vacuo*,¹⁹ the terms must be handled with care. Stendhal himself defines *la métaphysique*, in a letter of 1806, as '*la connaissance des moyens que nous avons pour connaître ce qui nous environne, et de l'action de ces moyens*.'²⁰ It is this epistemological sense which Alciato and Brandes clearly have in mind when declaring Stendhal a 'metaphysician' after the fashion of Helvétius and Condillac.²¹ Though the term would retain this respectable sense for Stendhal,²² it harbours a much more incriminating connotation when applied to that philosophy for which he would never tire of arraigning German thinkers, and none moreso than Immanuel Kant: 'cette métaphysique rêveuse et brumeuse,' as he puts it, 'qui passe chez nos bons voisins pour de la philosophie.'²³ This, broadly, is the sense in which Girard, Imbert and Adams employ their terms when they affirm Stendhal's sweeping disregard for 'philosophy', 'metaphysics' and even 'rationalism' itself.²⁴

Whatever the ambiguities and apparent contradictions that are thrown up by the foregoing, Stendhal's thought must be recognised to have little in common with philosophy in any contemplative or strictly rationalistic sense. Nowhere is he concerned with the first principles or final causes which take the philosopher into the realms of abstruse speculation: his 'metaphysic' is *this-wordly*; it begins and ends, as J.-C. Alciato observes, with '*la connaissance de l'homme*'.²⁵ If by 'philosophy' we understand the wrestling with such traditional metaphysical problems as the existence of God or the immortality of the Soul, then we shall find little that is philosophical in Stendhal. Denied outright as a foregone conclusion, such concepts have a place in his reasoning only insofar as they provide strongholds against which to deploy a philosophical militancy that draws its impetus as much from what it denies as from what it affirms. To posit a world free of supernatural causation is, of course, to make an enormous statement from the outset. In sweeping aside so much of the traditional

stuff of philosophical inquiry, Stendhal might be accused of as much presumption and prejudice as he denounces in those 'metaphysicians' whom he is tireless in berating.²⁶ But one could not, he held, gain any sure knowledge of man and man's world without first dispensing with that whole body of presuppositions and gratuitous hypotheses — rationalistic, supernatural, theological — that had for so long bedevilled the philosopher.²⁷ Stendhal may, in keeping with the age from which he issues, make of Reason the *summum bonum*, the ultimate guarantor of truth and moral well-being alike. His whole intellectual animus is, however, directed against a particular tradition of rationalism which, ascribing to the mind a place and function apart within the human economy, constitutes the very antithesis of the sensationalist school to which he early professes allegiance. Paul Bourget, in endeavouring to define the contours of Stendhal's thought, takes account of this essential consideration. 'Beyle n'est pas seulement un philosophe,' insists Bourget,

c'est un philosophe de l'école de Condillac, d'Helvétius et de leur continuateur, Destutt de Tracy. Il a subi, jusque dans les moelles, l'influence du sensualisme idéologue, qui est celui de ces théoriciens. Avec eux, il attribue à la sensation l'origine de toute notre pensée. Avec eux, il résout dans le plaisir tous nos mobiles d'action et tous nos motifs. Poussant ces premiers principes jusqu'à leur extrême conséquence, il considère que le tempérament et le milieu font tout l'homme. Sa métaphysique sommaire le rend implacable pour les subtiles inventions de l'idéalisme allemand, comme elle le rend féroce sur l'article de la religion.²⁸

Writing in 1914, Léon Blum echoes much of Bourget's assessment. 'Comme Helvétius et comme Condillac,' affirms Blum, Stendhal 'est empiriste, sensualiste et rationaliste; comme eux, il met la sensation à la base de toute connaissance; comme eux, il forme l'idée de sensations contrôlées et généralisées; comme eux, tout en limitant le rôle de la raison au classement logique de l'expérience, il croit à sa toute-puissance sur la nature.'²⁹ In Blum's wake, W.H. Fineshriber makes a similar judgment. Drawing 'the principles of his rationalism' from Condillac, Helvétius, Cabanis, Montesquieu and Destutt de Tracy, Stendhal is, according to Fineshriber, 'an empiricist and a sensualist' who despises 'the vague uncertainty of all metaphysics.'³⁰ The same notion is pushed further still by F.C. Green, according to whom Stendhal represents 'the extreme limit attained by the anti-Cartesian revolt inspired by Locke early in the eighteenth century and pursued by two generations of *sensualistes*.'³¹

Such recognition of Stendhal's status as a thinker and of his place within a broader philosophical tradition is not restricted to the claims of a faithful few. In his *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle*, J.-P. Damiron wrote of the Idéologue movement that it had found its physiologist in Cabanis, its metaphysician in Tracy and its moralist in Volney.³² To this distinguished group, a number of scholars would come in turn to annexe the name of Stendhal. François Picavet, in his classic

study of the Idéologues, devotes serious consideration to Stendhal as a *porte-parole* of the movement. Schooled in Cabanis, Tracy, Helvétius and Hobbes, Stendhal is, according to Picavet, a full-fledged disciple and a continuator of the Idéologues.³³ A distinguished professor of philosophy like Picavet, Henri Delacroix, too, reserves a place for Stendhal in the annals of the discipline. Delacroix goes so far indeed as to express the hope that his study, *La Psychologie de Stendhal*, if it has little to offer the Stendhalian, might prove of benefit 'aux historiens de la philosophie.'³⁴ Admitted thus to the ranks of philosophical respectability, Stendhal has found his place reserved in studies of the school of thought with which his name is associated. C.H. Van Duzer, in his *Contribution of the Idéologues to French Revolutionary Thought*, rehearses the view of Stendhal as a mind 'shaped' and 'moulded' by 'Ideologic influences'. Borrowing the earlier formula of Paul Arbelet, Van Duzer considers Stendhal to be 'the "novelist, psychologist and critic" of the Ideologic doctrines.'³⁵ No less does Emile Cailliet, in *La Tradition littéraire des idéologues*, acknowledge the *idéologue* in Stendhal and credit him as one of the leading lights of the movement. 'De même que Condorcet devient l'historien de l'Idéologie,' contends Cailliet, 'Stendhal va s'instituer son romancier, son essayiste et son critique.'³⁶ In his *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period*, George Boas, while likewise ascribing Stendhal's turn of mind to the influence of Ideology, goes further still. Though he might be said to 'belong to the ideological tradition,' argues Boas, Stendhal is, in his psychological analysis and his admiration for energy, 'more than an Idéologue.'³⁷

As such endorsements clearly demonstrate, Stendhal is seen and respected by a substantial body of informed opinion as a thinker and as a continuator of the philosophical tradition to which he has been assimilated. It is largely, indeed, through the ministrations of Stendhal that Ideology has acquired what limited place history has seen fit to accord it.³⁸ The thought would have been a curious one for that group of intellectuals who, meeting in the salon of Destutt de Tracy in the 1820s, observed the portly figure of this dilettante author on their fringes.³⁹ It would, in fact, be a number of years before the world of philosophy itself was to pay any kind of tribute to Stendhal as a thinker — and then the compliment was to come not from Hippolyte Taine alone, but from another and more redoubtable, if not altogether unlikely, source.

Friedrich Nietzsche, whose enthusiastic appreciation of Stendhal is well documented, was to find something of the fellow philosopher in him.⁴⁰ 'Wer hat recht?', writes Nietzsche in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 'Kant oder Stendhal?'⁴¹ The question relates to Stendhal's definition of beauty as '*une promesse de bonheur*' and provides Nietzsche with a means of assailing the notion, not only in Kant but in Schopenhauer too, that beauty affords disinterested pleasure.⁴² The point is a significant one, for it underlines Nietzsche's readiness to accord Stendhal a meaningful

— if polemically expedient — place within Philosophy. 'That he should play off Stendhal here not only against Kant, whom he has always despised, but also against Schopenhauer,' observes W.D. Williams, 'shows the magnitude of the impression made on him.'⁴³

The magnitude of the impression made upon Nietzsche by Stendhal is manifest in a number of similar instances. In *Ecce Homo*, it is as a thinker of great insight and perception that Nietzsche upholds Stendhal, 'mit seinem vorwegnehmenden Psychologen-Auge, mit seinem Tatsachen-Griff.' Here, he claims, was an '*ehrlicher* Atheist', one of a rare breed among the French.⁴⁴ Though the German philosopher happened late upon Stendhal, the latter would remain, as W.D. Williams notes, one of 'the happiest discoveries of Nietzsche's life', cherished to the end as 'a defiant philosopher of energy.'⁴⁵ In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, it is, significantly, to Stendhal that Nietzsche looks in order to substantiate his contention that the term 'philosopher' should not be reserved for bookish writers of philosophical treatises. The definition of the philosopher, Nietzsche argues, should be extended to accommodate those 'free-spirited' thinkers of whom he cites Stendhal as exemplar.⁴⁶

Appreciations of Stendhal the 'philosopher', however, were not always to be so generous. Writing at the turn of the century, René Doumic would declare Stendhal's to be 'une philosophie fort courte. C'est celle qu'on pouvait attendre d'un homme qui tenait Helvétius pour le plus grand des philosophes.'⁴⁷ In similar vein, Edouard Rod contends that the 'ensemble de croyances, d'idées et d'opinions' which make up Stendhal's thought 'est assez peu logique, et constitue une pauvre "philosophie".'⁴⁸ Stendhal's misfortune, Rod asserts, 'fut de prendre cette "philosophie" au sérieux', consigning himself thus to 'le cercle étroit de ses certitudes négatives et stériles.'⁴⁹ Writing half a century before Doumic and Rod, Elme Caro had gone further than both in denouncing the exiguity of Stendhal's philosophy. 'Toute sa philosophie,' as Caro has it, 'se réduit à cet axiome fondamental: le plaisir pendant la vie, le néant après.'⁵⁰ Such assessments are curios of a particular type of literary criticism which thrived in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Stendhal criticism in this early period was often too polemical in its intent, too concerned with moral sanction to provide any objective appraisal of the author's thought. Bernard Weinberg stresses the degree to which early critical assessments of Stendhal were non-literary in character, taken up as they were 'with the philosophy and, still more definitely, with the moral attitude of the author.'⁵¹ Thus, for Caro, Stendhal is a 'fanfaron de vices', whose philosophy is nothing short of 'la corruption rédigée en axiomes, formulée en dogmes.'⁵² Among the most unsparing of Stendhal's early critics, Caro was a tireless opponent of the atheistic materialism with which the latter was associated and a champion of the idealistic

philosophy in whose name Emile Faguet would in turn engage the impious author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*.⁵³ Faguet, indeed, echoes Caro's charge against Stendhal, denouncing the same 'fanfaron de vices' as 'un sceptique, puis un contempteur et un ennemi de toute morale.'⁵⁴

These broadsides of moral censure were part of an intellectual, religious and political reaction against an Enlightenment and Revolutionary philosophy which was seen to have passed on much of its charge to the positivism of the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁵ A number of critics insist upon Stendhal's role as a conduit from the *philosophes* through to the later Positivist and Naturalist movements. 'Stendhal, qui reçut à son arrivée à Paris le coup de foudre de M. de Tracy,' writes Albert Thibaudet, 'reste le féal des idéologues, et c'est de sa main que Taine prend non pas à vrai dire le flambeau philosophique, mais le bougeoir d'argent du XVIIIe siècle.'⁵⁶ Others are less parsimonious in their assessment of Stendhal's contribution in this respect. '[Des] Philosophes et des Encyclopédistes aux Idéologues, et de ceux-ci, par l'intermédiaire des Stendhal et des Taine, aux Positivistes de 1860 et aux Naturalistes de 1880, la chaîne resté tendue,' writes Emile Cailliet, echoing the earlier judgment of Pierre Martino.⁵⁷ Matthew Josephson likewise attributes to Stendhal the merit of having handed on 'the torch of the Enlightenment at a time when the rationalistic tradition was in danger of dying out.'⁵⁸

Not all of Stendhal's commentators, however, saw this achievement as being quite so creditable. Though it has long been commonplace to refer to Stendhal as a 'man of the eighteenth century', the designation had decidedly disparaging connotations in the hands of some of his earliest critics. René Doumic is characteristic of this tendency when he defines Stendhal as '[un] sensualiste, un athée, un épicurien à la mode du XVIII^e siècle finissant, mais chez qui l'imagination a reçu l'ébranlement de la gloire napoléonienne.'⁵⁹ A more censorious note still is struck by Barbey d'Aurevilly, who, in his essay of 1856, had launched a spirited assault against what he deemed 'un esprit si particulier, souillé par une détestable philosophie au plus profond de sa source.'⁶⁰ For the mordant polemicist of the *Revue du monde catholique*, Stendhal is

ce dernier venu du XVIII^e siècle, qui en avait la négation, l'impiété, l'analyse meurtrière et orgueilleuse, qui portait enfin dans tout son être le venin concentré, froidi et presque *solidifié* de cette époque empoisonnée et empoisonneuse à la fois...⁶¹

Such attacks *ad hominem* were long to be a feature of Stendhal criticism.⁶² In 1876, the inauspiciously named Charles Bigot published a less than sympathetic portrait of Stendhal as 'une conscience malade', a self-proclaimed reprobate liable to deprave the morals of a younger generation.⁶³ Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, in breaking his lance

against the new Realist school in 1886, deploring in turn the 'influence désastreuse' of a Stendhal who, he declares, 'ignore volontairement le mystère qui subsiste par-delà les explications rationnelles, la quantité possible du divin.'⁶⁴ The publication of Stendhal's *Journal* by Casimir Stryienski and François de Nion in 1888 was the occasion for a tirade of acerbic criticism which saw Stendhal dubbed variously a 'matérialiste à outrance', a 'sceptique endurci', a 'vilain monsieur', an 'écrivain malsain' and 'un méchant homme, d'une méchanceté systématique'.⁶⁵

Nor was it necessary for Nietzsche to insist upon the esteem in which he held his 'defunct friend'⁶⁶ in order for parallels to be drawn between the two. The early twentieth century saw a marked tendency among Stendhal's critics to seize upon the alleged affinities between the creator of Julien Sorel and Nietzsche. 'Toute la philosophie de Nietzsche est dans Stendhal,' declares Jean Méliá, according to whom the same 'culture du moi' passes intact from Stendhal to the German philosopher.⁶⁷ Writing in 1911, Méliá echoes Emile Faguet, who had earlier remarked: 'On pourrait considérer Stendhal comme le premier des Nietzscheens, si le premier des Nietzscheens n'était pas Voltaire.'⁶⁸ Ernest Seillière, James Huneker, Horace B. Samuel, Lytton Strachey,⁶⁹ all retail in turn the same view of Stendhal as 'a prophet of that spirit of revolt in modern thought which first reached a complete expression in the pages of Nietzsche.'⁷⁰ Even Léon Blum, in his highly sympathetic study, feels constrained to give expression to the same idea:

En dépit de toutes les différences, le beylisme repose sur une vue analogue à celle de Nietzsche. Certaines idées sont nourriture de maîtres et les autres pâture d'esclaves.⁷¹

It is against this background that Pierre Sabatier, in his *Esquisse de la morale de Stendhal* published in 1920, would recognise in Nietzsche 'un disciple de Stendhal, avec sa théorie du surhomme et de l'amoralisme.'⁷² Sabatier goes considerably further than a number of his fellow-critics, placing Stendhal at the fountain-head of 'une éthique nouvelle' and discerning a 'communion d'idées' between his thought and that of 'nombre d'écrivains, comme Schopenhauer et Nietzsche, des moralistes de l'histoire comme Taine, des romanciers, comme Mérimée, Zola ou Wilde.'⁷³ Thus it is, writes Sabatier, that, 'ardemment opposé au principe chrétien,' Stendhal's guiding principle of the self surrendered to its primitive impulses 'va devenir la loi de toute une génération de philosophes et de moralistes.'⁷⁴

Heady criticism indeed. Yet such was the gravamen of the charge brought against Stendhal by a number of critics in the first decades of the twentieth century. *Le beylisme* became now a term redolent of unbridled individualism and social domination. Here, it was held, was a philosophy forged from Helvétius and the

Idéologues, and turned to the service of a practical ethic which threatened to subvert the moral order. Stendhal's philosophy had been denounced from the first as an intellectual posture; never had it been presented quite so insistently as a danger to the social fabric. The new hysteria with which critics sought to combat Stendhal was in direct proportion to his growing popularity among the reading public and to the increased critical currency which his works were enjoying both in France and abroad. While Sabatier went so far as to descry 'une si dangereuse fermentation' of *beylisme* among the masses, Jean Carrère, reserving for Stendhal a place of honour in his 'index' of reprehensible thinkers, *Les Mauvais Maîtres*, found an object of acute concern in the 'fanatiques admirations' which the latter's writings had spawned.⁷⁵ Even the faithful Pierre Jourda, in his *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes* of 1930, feels constrained to insist upon the 'tendances dangereuses de sa morale',⁷⁶ while endeavouring to 'absolve' Stendhal, as he puts it, of a predisposition towards theories which seem at best 'démoralisantes', at worst 'anarchiques'.⁷⁷

ii. Later Criticism: The 'Systematic' Criterion

This brief review of early criticism serves as a useful introduction to the study of Stendhal's thought. For it demonstrates that, whatever the diversity of opinion over his merits as a thinker, and whatever the polemical tones in which his name was invoked, there was broad agreement from the earliest in according Stendhal his place within a well defined philosophical tradition. All of the foregoing assessments attest clearly to one thing: the store which was set — from Taine, Zola, Collignon, Bourget and Nietzsche, through to Caro, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Faguet, Rod and others — by the philosophy that was held to underpin Stendhal's writing.⁷⁸ This philosophy was construed in different ways and to different ends, leaving Stendhal scholarship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries divided, broadly speaking, into two irreconcilable camps: those who were in sympathy with the aims and methods of the *philosophes* and Idéologues, and those who championed the reaction of a new age against them.⁷⁹ Though it is perhaps comprehensible in this light, it is nonetheless remarkable that, almost a century after Stendhal's death, so little had been done to provide any full and objective account of his thought. While devotees were selective in what they praised, detractors made virtually no attempt to go beyond the most superficial condemnation. The charge that Stendhal was an atheistic materialist of eighteenth-century persuasion, that he was, in the words of René Doumic, 'un élève docile de Condillac, d'Helvétius, du baron d'Holbach, de Cabanis et de Tracy',⁸⁰ precluded the need, it was clearly felt, for any detailed consideration of his thought.

The middle and later decades of the twentieth century have witnessed a more objective response to the question of Stendhal's philosophy. Less concern with the ethical implications of 'Beylism' as a practical code of conduct has permitted a more balanced appreciation of Stendhal's capacities as a thinker. For when one strips away the moral and political considerations which so determined the response of commentators in his own century, one is able to turn to the more essential question of how Stendhal's thought hangs together as an intellectual whole. On this question, the verdict has not always been a favourable one. As early as 1919, Paul Arbelet, while being far from unsympathetic towards his subject, divined in Stendhal an 'esprit simpliste' and a dearth of ideas.⁸¹ Stendhal's thought, Arbelet suggests, 'est, comme un théorème de géométrie, satisfaisante seulement dans ses bornes étroites.'⁸² Arbelet, curiously, feels no need to square this with the contention, advanced elsewhere in the same study, that Stendhal is both a 'philosophe' and an 'idéologue'.⁸³ Robert Adams, in his *Stendhal: Notes on a Novelist*, supports the apparent contradiction in Arbelet's view, describing Stendhal as a 'philosophical novelist' whose 'abstract ideas were few and almost spectacularly limited.'⁸⁴ Emile Cailliet, too, echoes Arbelet's remarks, adding the qualification (as Arbelet himself had done) that, if Stendhal's store of ideas was strictly limited, he held nonetheless with tenacity to those few 'points fixes' which afforded him his intellectual bearings.⁸⁵

While in each of these cases the recognised limitations of Stendhal's philosophy do nothing to diminish its perceived coherence, other commentators have been less restrained in acknowledging the disjointed character of Stendhal's reasoning. What emerges most clearly, in fact, from the assessments of those who have sought to arrive at some synthesis of Stendhal's philosophy, and who have been served in this by the publication of a substantial body of private writings, is the extent to which his ideas are deemed to lack a rigorous internal consistency, to be, as Erich Auerbach puts it, 'erratic, arbitrarily advanced, and, despite all their show of boldness, lacking in inward certainty and continuity.'⁸⁶ On this point, admirers and detractors alike have found common cause. 'Peu philosophe,' wrote Emile Faguet, Stendhal 'n'a pas su ramener ses tendances à un système.'⁸⁷ Stendhal was 'anything but a systematic writer,' argues in turn Michael Wood. 'He loved the *metaphor* of the system, the image of a clean, ordered, properly explicable world. But it was only the metaphor he loved.'⁸⁸ Manuel Brussaly goes further, deeming Stendhal 'incapable of maintaining a thesis',⁸⁹ while for Victor del Litto the latter remains throughout 'réfractaire aux idées générales.'⁹⁰ As Del Litto puts it, Stendhal 'n'a jamais eu du philosophe ni la pénétration ni la puissance de raisonnement ni l'esprit de système.'⁹¹ A similar interpretation is advanced by Georges Blin, who finds Stendhal 'inapte à toute gestion méthodique de sa pensée.' For all the acuity of the latter's philosophical insights, argues Blin, 'il manquait à un

rare degré du génie dialectique et du sens des ensembles.⁹²

It would be difficult, certainly, to exonerate Stendhal from the charge that his thought is unsystematic, that he was, as Lytton Strachey put it, 'too capricious, too unmethodical, in spite of his *lo-gique*, ever to have framed a coherent philosophy.'⁹³ It is a point that is pithily, if somewhat savagely, expressed by the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset, when he opens his essay 'Amor en Stendhal' with the assertion: 'Stendhal tenía la cabeza llena de teorías; pero no tenía las dotes de teorizador.'⁹⁴ Such estimable opinions notwithstanding, however, we must be cautious in selecting the criteria by which Stendhal's thought is to be judged. For a love of paradox and mystification, a penchant for the ironic sally and the arresting turn of thought or phrase, a readiness to play defence and prosecution alike in the setting forth of argument,⁹⁵ do not conduce to the sustained dialectic of the consummate philosopher. It has been said of Friedrich Nietzsche that his thought does not readily lend itself to generalisation, that his 'entire output is characterized by what may be called, at best, flashes of consistency.'⁹⁶ Without going quite so far, the same might well be argued of Stendhal, whose aphoristic turn of mind and strong sententious reasoning so appealed to the German philosopher.⁹⁷

Such a superficial comparison, while open to serious objection, does beg the question of the relationship between philosophy and systematic reasoning. The problem is one which Geoffrey Strickland acknowledges when he argues that Stendhal 'was not himself a systematic thinker or rather did not have a system to offer — which is different from saying that his thought was lacking in coherence, depth or consistency.'⁹⁸ Though it is not our intention here to consider the full implications of this judgment as it relates to Stendhal, the qualification which it introduces is apposite. For the assessments cited above depend for their validity upon what we understand by 'systematic' reasoning; they depend, too, and not least, upon what Stendhal *himself* understood by such. The fact is that, of all the questions which give rise to the introspection of the self-conscious author in Stendhal, none exercises him more than the nature of his philosophical convictions and the manner in which these should be expressed through his writings. In this sense, it is important to recognise that the critical assessments which we have considered make a common point with which Stendhal himself would not have taken issue. For he would have been the first to acknowledge the strict limitations of his thought as a 'philosophical' enterprise. 'Par instinct', he reflects in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, 'ma vie morale s'est passée à considérer attentivement cinq ou six idées principales, et à tâcher de voir la vérité sur elles.'⁹⁹ This reduction of his whole intellectual life to a handful of 'idées principales' is highly significant. For Stendhal makes no claim to *range* in his thought. His concern is, by his own avowal, nowhere that of the synthesist. 'Comme j'ai toujours creusé les

mêmes idées depuis,' he notes, reflecting on his youth again in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*,

comment savoir où j'en étais alors? Le puits avait dix pieds de profondeur, chaque année j'ai ajouté cinq pieds, maintenant à cent quatre-vingt-dix pieds comment avoir l'image de ce qu'il était, en février 1800, quand il n'avait que dix pieds?¹⁰⁰

The charge by Stendhal's critics that his reasoning is 'unsystematic' stands to be balanced against remarks such as these. The evidence is that Stendhal, far from considering it ungenerous, would quite have assented to the suggestion that his thought escapes the constraints of any rigorous dialectic. In his latter years as in his youth, Stendhal considered that too many questions remained unanswered, too many doubts undispelled, for him to be able to subscribe to any neatly ordered, 'systematised' view of the world. In a letter written to his sister Pauline in August 1804, Stendhal makes a telling point:

Voilà, ma chère Pauline, quatre pages de philosophie que je viens d'écrire sur du papier à lettres, au lieu de les mettre sur mon cahier. J'avais besoin de trouver une vérité nouvelle, et voilà le chemin pour y parvenir: beaucoup d'exemples. Dès qu'on s'en écarte, on tombe dans les systèmes, on rêve, et ceux qui vous écoutent se moque [*sic*] de vous.¹⁰¹

This is the triumph of the self-proclaimed empiricist over the rationalist. For Stendhal, there was something distinctly *un-philosophical*, something intellectually fraudulent about 'systematic' reasoning. Truth could not be bent to accommodate any rationalistic model of reality, but could be founded only on the bedrock of experience and observation. 'La philosophie de Condillac invoque sans cesse l'expérience,' Stendhal would write in the *New Monthly Magazine* of May 1825.¹⁰² Those thinkers, by contrast, who — 'sous le nom de *systèmes de philosophie*' — banish experience in favour of *a priori* hypotheses, are fit at best to produce 'des romans'¹⁰³ Stendhal's scornful dismissal of Schlegel in the margin of the latter's *Cours de littérature dramatique* is typical of such judgments: 'L'auteur admet une philosophie indépendante de la raison ou de l'expérience. C'est tout dire.'¹⁰⁴

Throughout his life, Stendhal retained the same deep-rooted suspicion of 'systematic' reasoning as a preserve of charlatans and an instrument of dogmatism and sophistry. His especial disdain was reserved for what he labelled the Germanic and Greek traditions, with their 'systèmes prétendus philosophiques qui ne sont qu'une poésie obscure et mal écrite.'¹⁰⁵ In this, Stendhal echoed the sentiment of *philosophes* and *Idéologues* alike. For his allegiance lies from the earliest with those currents of empirical philosophy which denounced 'systematic' reasoning as sterile and retrogressive.¹⁰⁶ Hostility to systems had been, as F.L. Baumer observes, 'a hallmark of eighteenth-century philosophy.'¹⁰⁷ Destutt de Tracy, in founding the new 'science

of ideas', was no more sparing than his forebears in denouncing the '*gens de l'école*' and 'sectateurs de certains systèmes philosophiques.'¹⁰⁸ The latter were in turn to find an implacable opponent in Stendhal.¹⁰⁹

Though Ideology might be accused of having abolished one type of system only to erect another in its place,¹¹⁰ it found its guiding spirit in a relentless opposition to the *esprit de système* and a cult of observation and 'fact' that was to have realigned philosophy and science on a new path towards truth.¹¹¹ Nowhere, as Sergio Moravia argues, were the new ideals more in evidence than in the medical sciences as they developed from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, and in particular under the impetus of such philosopher-practitioners as P.-J.-G. Cabanis and Philippe Pinel.¹¹² The rediscovery of Hippocrates provided a rallying point for the developing science of physiology and an icon around which the new spirit of empiricism crystallised its ideal.¹¹³ As Aram Vartanian observes, the 'ideal philosopher — whom La Mettrie and Cabanis alike strove to personify for their contemporaries — became the *médecin-philosophe*.'¹¹⁴ The point is an important one. For in a footnote to one of the chapters on temperament which appear in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Stendhal in turn gives a glimpse of what he considers to be the sole enduring model of philosophical integrity:¹¹⁵

C'est aux médecins idéologues, et par conséquent véritables admirateurs d'Hippocrate et de sa manière sévère de ne chercher la science que dans l'examen des faits, qu'il faut demander justice de tous ces jugements téméraires sur lesquels Paris voit bâtir, tous les vingt ans, quelque science nouvelle. *Facta, facta, nihil praeter facta*, sera un jour l'épigraphe de tout ce qu'on écrira sur l'homme.

To this, he adds the further note:

On jugera de tous ces poèmes en langue algébrique, qu'en Allemagne un pédantisme sentimental décore du nom de systèmes de philosophie, par un mot: ils ne s'accordent qu'en un point, le profond mépris pour l'*empirisme*. Or, l'*empirisme* n'est autre chose que l'expérience.¹¹⁶

This call for a knowledge founded on fact rather than on speculation is one of the pillars of Stendhal's intellectual world. 'La vraie science,' he writes to his sister Pauline in 1811, 'en tout depuis l'art de faire couver une poule d'Inde jusqu'à celui de faire le tableau d'*Atala*, de Girodet, consiste à *examiner*, avec la plus grande exactitude possible, les *circonstances des faits*.'¹¹⁷ The remark is significant; for it displays the same faith in a universal method which informed the whole Ideological enterprise and acted as a unifying principle across the disciplines of philosophy, science and medicine in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is clear from *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* that, for Stendhal, the whole of modern science and philosophy find their common model in the empirical method pioneered by Francis Bacon.¹¹⁸ For all

the superficiality of Stendhal's remarks on Bacon, the latter wins his respect as 'un vrai philosophe', 'l'un des plus grands hommes des temps modernes',¹¹⁹ who rescued philosophy from centuries of obscurantism by making experience — or *facts* — rather than *a priori* hypotheses — or *systems* — the basis of knowledge.¹²⁰

Francis Bacon, if he was in reality little more than a name to Stendhal, embodied an empiricism which, by the eighteenth century, had become enthroned as a philosophical ideal.¹²¹ The primacy of fact and observational data, for which 'experiment' became both a method and a short-hand term, was to be, as Paul Hazard puts it, 'la puissance bienfaisante qui fera s'écrouler les temples du faux.'¹²² The ideal was a lofty one, and the use to which Stendhal put it was, as we shall see, fitful. What matters for our purpose here, however, is that Stendhal should have leapt with such a will to the support of the empiricists' cause. For, from the outset, he sought — in principle at least — to draw the whole of his rational sustenance from the same elixir, what he would come to describe colourfully as 'le jus des faits.'¹²³ In this clearly defined philosophical rationale, it can be argued, lies the source of his abiding predilection for *le petit fait vrai*.¹²⁴ '*Fatti, fatti: des faits, des faits!*', he exclaims to his sister Pauline in a letter of August 1804, enjoining her to furnish him with insights into the female world. 'J'ai besoin d'exemples, de beaucoup, de beaucoup de faits.'¹²⁵ To the same Pauline he had observed as early as January 1803: 'Hors la géométrie, il n'y a qu'une seule manière de raisonner, celle des faits.'¹²⁶ This latter remark recalls a journal entry of 16 December 1802, in which Stendhal had noted quite simply: 'Le raisonnement par les faits est, ce me semble, le meilleur de tous.'¹²⁷

Nor would the criterion of philosophical rectitude vary with time. It is by the same standard precisely that Stendhal will praise Napoléon in 1818 for having been 'philosophical', not in any 'metaphysical' sense of the term, but because '[il] jugeait par les faits.'¹²⁸ Such, too, will be the yardstick applied to that model of empiricism, Hippocrates, who, in the margin of Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des lois*, is lauded by Stendhal for having recognised that 'toute vue générale, qui n'est pas un résultat précis des faits, n'est qu'une pure hypothèse.'¹²⁹ In 1831 still, in a letter to Adolphe de Mareste, we find an insistence on the primacy of fact that echoes closely the letters despatched some three decades earlier to Pauline Beyle. 'Ecrivez-moi toutes les nuances des faits,' Stendhal urges his friend:

Il est important [...] de connaître les nuances des faits. [...] Ne négligez aucune nuance. Tout est dans les nuances.¹³⁰

What is interesting in this latter example is that 'fact', once held by Stendhal to be the atom of truth, has itself been *atomised*. Facts are, it is now suggested, too crude in

themselves to yield any meaningful truth; for that, one must descend further into the details — or, in Richard Coe's fine expression, the 'momentous minutiae'¹³¹ — of experience. As truth, ever elusive, takes refuge in smaller particulars and more arcane circumstance, this 'sectaire du "petit fait" isolé', as Georges Blin dubs him, would have recourse to 'l'épluchement progressif des *nuances*'.¹³² Thus, as Lucien Leuwen recounts the tale of his electoral mission to Blois and Caen, we will be reminded, through the mouthpiece of his father, of Stendhal's diminished faith in bare *fact* as a means to truth:

Plus de détails, plus de détails, disait-il à son fils, il n'y a d'originalité et de vérité que dans les détails...¹³³

Empirical Doubt and Rational 'Faith': Philosophies in Conflict

Whatever the practical difficulties of achieving truth in detail, Stendhal never wavered in his contention that observation and experience alone could serve as a basis for sure knowledge. Indissociable from this empirical insistence on fact was the advocacy of a 'methodical doubt' which should evacuate the mind of all preconception and prejudice, leaving it ready to assimilate only those truths that were ratified by experience. Stendhal's writings from the earliest ring with a quasi-Cartesian injunction to doubt:

Faire l'inventaire de son savoir de temps en temps, et se reprocher tout ce qu'on croit.

Ne se déterminer jamais *quia magister dixit*, mais voir les raisons qui convainquaient le maître.

Ne croire que ce que j'aurai vu moi-même.¹³⁴

His letters to Pauline read at times like a sceptic's handbook:

Ce que je te recommande, c'est [...] de ne rien croire sans examen.

N'ayez aucun préjugé, c'est-à-dire ne croyez jamais rien parce qu'un autre vous l'a dit, mais parce qu'on vous l'a prouvé.

Tout homme qui croit, parce que son voisin lui dit: *Croyez!* est un butor.¹³⁵

Though in Stendhal's case this methodical doubt — this '*doute philosophique, état habituel du sage*'¹³⁶ — is, as we shall argue, little more than a posture, a rhetorical imperative, it serves as an essential principle in his division of philosophy into the warring camps of sound reason and charlatanism. In Stendhal's conception of

philosophy, the place of doubt is always reserved.¹³⁷ Thus, in the *Promenades dans Rome*, he will remark upon Camuccini's *Incredulity of Saint Thomas*: 'je suis toujours surpris que ce grand acte de philosophie soit représenté dans les églises.'¹³⁸ Stendhal's judgment of Descartes is especially interesting in this regard. For he upholds the value of Descartes's *method*, while throwing out the whole *philosophy* in whose service it was deployed.¹³⁹ 'On a vu Descartes,' he writes in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'désertter une méthode sublime, et, dès le second pas, raisonner comme un moine.'¹⁴⁰

Such a judgment was, of course, as caricatural as it was banal, the common coinage of *philosophes* and *Idéologues* bent on abolishing the Cartesian division of man into material and mental realms, as part of a broader assault on innate ideas and the incorporeal soul.¹⁴¹ Yet contained here, too, is the substance of Stendhal's charge against 'system-builders' in general. For the problem inherent in philosophical systems is, according to Stendhal, that they come to rely more upon *faith* than upon *reason*; as such, they are seen as an impediment to, rather than an instrument of, intellectual progress. 'La philosophie allemande a toujours une petite chose qu'elle vous prie de croire,' he notes in a copy of the *Promenades dans Rome*. 'Quand vous lui aurez accordé cette grâce, elle expliquera tout.'¹⁴² In a footnote of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, Stendhal provides one of the best illustrations of his views on this whole question, together with an illuminating glimpse of what he recognised as the source of his own much vaunted empiricism:

J'ai honte de donner si peu de profondeur à certains examens; le pédantisme à la mode fait applaudir les phrases vagues sur ce qu'on appelle la philosophie; mais l'on est moins indulgent pour l'analyse des faits particuliers. Je supprime, par respect pour l'opinion, un parallèle entre le caractère des Bolonais et celui des bons habitants de Milan. Deux cents de ces petits examens partiels mettraient à même quelque grand philosophe tel qu'Aristote de comparer le caractère des peuples du Midi et celui des peuples du Nord. Diderot appelait cela commencer par le commencement. Ce n'est que par des monographies de chaque passion du cœur humain que l'on pourra parvenir à connaître l'homme; mais alors tout le monde rira des phrases louches de Kant et autres grands philosophes spiritualistes. La métaphysique est si peu avancée parmi nous, que l'on en est encore à l'ère des systèmes: voyez les progrès de la physique et de la chimie, depuis que l'on a laissé les systèmes à MM. Azaïs et Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. En fait de *logique*, les jeunes Français arrivés dans les salons depuis la Restauration sont bien moins avancés que la génération formée dans les *Ecoles centrales*. Il faudra revenir à ces Ecoles dès que nous serons délivrés des jésuites.¹⁴³

Instructive in a number of particulars, this passage serves as a profession of faith, offering a glimpse of the conflict as Stendhal perceived it in the mid-1820s between the progressive, enlightened, analytical philosophy of the empiricists and the rationalistic revival ushered in by Kant and taken up in France by such figures as Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard and Victor Cousin.¹⁴⁴ Stendhal's own articulation of the analytic principle, with the two hundred 'petits examens partiels' which he advocates here as an

exemplary philosophical method, raises, however, a number of questions. For one might legitimately ask at what point, and indeed *how*, individual facts which are themselves subject to caution — 'Il ne faut jamais généraliser le fait dont on tire une conséquence'¹⁴⁵ — become fused into a compound basis for valid general conclusions. The problem is adumbrated in an amusingly paradoxical maxim which Stendhal coins — unwittingly, one suspects — in an early notebook that is replete with like sententiæ: 'Toute maxime générale ayant du faux, c'est un mauvais genre d'écrire que les maximes.'¹⁴⁶

Stendhal nowhere addresses the question in a manner which resolves — or even, indeed, fully rationalises — the problematic transition from the particular to the general; but it is clear here, as it is elsewhere, that he viewed the accession to truth as a process of accretion, 'l'examen patient des détails' serving as the first stage in 'la lente acquisition des vérités générales.'¹⁴⁷ Stendhal's declared approach is everywhere that of the observer, nowhere, as we have noted, that of the synthesist. In this sense, he embraces what Charles Frankel and Owsei Temkin identify as the guiding spirit of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues* alike.¹⁴⁸ Knowledge begins with particular facts, not with general laws and principles. In 1804, Stendhal had defined knowledge quite simply as a 'grand nombre d'expériences.'¹⁴⁹ Some twenty years later, in an article for the *London Magazine*, we find precisely the same notion advanced — in praise of the newly founded Académie de Médecine in Paris — by a Stendhal for whom the science of physiology had by then assumed an essential place in the study of man:

Cette Académie a été fondée pour vérifier le principe suivant: la plus haute philosophie, la logique la plus impeccable sont souvent impropres à découvrir la cause d'un phénomène physique constaté chez un ou même chez dix individus. Observez le même phénomène dans dix mille individus et la vérité devient immédiatement évidente.¹⁵⁰

It is against this scrupulously empirical principle that Stendhal sets his philosophic *bêtes noires*. While ironic sallies against 'Kant et autres grands philosophes spiritualistes' are a common enough feature of his repertoire, German philosophy was a province of which Stendhal appears to have had little first hand knowledge and which he was content to view — and to dismiss — from afar.¹⁵¹ Much, if not all, of his criticism of thinkers such as Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant is founded on a predisposition against what he perceives as a certain *type* of rationalistic philosophy that is inimical to his own broadly held principles. Hence the near-Manichæan terms in which, as a reviewer for the British liberal press in the 1820s, he judges the current state of philosophy in Europe.¹⁵² If Bacon and Locke stand as symbols of what is most commendable in philosophy, respect for individual fact and the gradual accumulation of experiential knowledge, they find a worthy foe for Stendhal in Immanuel Kant. It is not

just, as Geoffrey Strickland suggests, that Stendhal found the German philosopher 'unreadable';¹⁵³ it is that the whole tradition of rationalism for which Kant's name stands is anathema from the outset to this advocate of Helvétius, Tracy and Cabanis.¹⁵⁴ The incriminating features of Kant's philosophy as Stendhal perceives it are many: his obscurity, his idealism, his admission of innate ideas, his defence of intuitive, *a priori* perceptions, his style.¹⁵⁵ There is also — and this should not be undervalued — a very important *political* dimension to Stendhal's judgments in this context. 'On sait assez que toutes les rêveries de Kant, Steding et Cie sont à la lettre renouvelées des Grecs,' he writes in 1818:

Toute cette philosophie est dans Platon et est fondée sur une sainte horreur pour l'*expérience*. Le parti *ultra* protège beaucoup cette philosophie...¹⁵⁶

Such a remark, for all its brevity, affords a glimpse into what might be considered the substratum of Stendhal's philosophical world. His relentless denigration of German philosophy — 'la risée de l'Europe'¹⁵⁷ — and of Kant as its prime exponent, reflecting as it does the spirit of the Idéologues, is in large part a rearguard action against an idealism which had in fact gained considerable ground under the increasingly favourable conditions of the Empire and Restoration.¹⁵⁸ In his study of Destutt de Tracy, Emmet Kennedy emphasises the important link between politics, philosophy and morality during the early years of the nineteenth century. 'The religious revival, which accompanied the emergence of the Napoleonic Empire,' he writes, 'found its philosophical counterpart in the nascent philosophical spiritualism, which stressed nonmaterial cognitive faculties, irreducible to simple sensation.'¹⁵⁹ Napoleon's Concordat with Rome had, already in 1802, done much to smooth the path of a rehabilitated Catholicism which had the 'secular millenarianism' of the Idéologues in retreat some time before Stendhal rallied to the latter's cause.¹⁶⁰

The point is an important one. Stendhal's ready espousal of the anti-systematic, anti-idealistic philosophy of the eighteenth-century sensationalists and Idéologues not only defines his philosophical stance from the first: it also *dates* it. For if the nineteenth century was to be anything, it was, as D.G. Charlton observes, to be an 'age of systems', and one in which the climate of opinion would lean heavily towards a revived religious sensibility.¹⁶¹ Metaphysical and theological systems might, as Owsei Temkin argues, have been 'denounced as loudly during the 1790s as was the political tyranny of the kings';¹⁶² but between the last years of the eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth stretches a gulf that belies the short span of time by which it is marked. Defining the 'spirit' of any age is a notoriously hazardous business; it is safe to say, however, that Stendhal's boyhood and manhood were lived out in periods of a vastly different philosophical temper. If one had to await the Restoration for the stirring

eloquence of a Victor Cousin, one did not have to look beyond 1802 for *Le Génie du christianisme*, or 1803 for the suppression by Napoleon of the *Classe des sciences morales et politiques*, the bastion of Ideology at the heart of the *Institut National*.¹⁶³ Though Robert Adams's description of Stendhal as a 'philosophical anachronism' admits of some qualification,¹⁶⁴ it underlines clearly the outdated nature of the latter's allegiance to a tradition of thought which was condemned to increasing disfavour in a climate of secular and religious reaction. The early decades of the nineteenth century are described by William Coleman as 'an era of acute spiritualism in religious belief and systematic idealism in metaphysics.'¹⁶⁵ In his philosophical leanings, Stendhal cannot be divorced from the historical and intellectual context of his age — *not* because he articulates what we might define as the spirit of that age, but because he evinces, from the earliest, a concern, as Philippe Berthier puts it, to 'se définir *contre* le contexte ambiant':

C'est précisément dans les toutes premières années de l'Empire que l'on relève cette attitude résolument anti-obscurantiste et philosophiquement militante: il est patent qu'il s'agit pour lui de se fortifier intérieurement contre un déferlement de religiosité dont l'origine est trop claire et porte un nom, celui de Chateaubriand.¹⁶⁶

The passage from *Rome, Naples et Florence* which we cited earlier is particularly significant in this respect. For it furnishes one of the rare occasions when Stendhal invokes his schooling quite so explicitly as the major formative influence on his intellect and as the abandoned model to which French education should return.¹⁶⁷ While denouncing the current climate of philosophical degeneracy as he saw it, Stendhal would hold doggedly still, in the 1820s, to his hope of a new age of enlightenment founded on the demonstrable truths of the developing sciences. The progress that had been marked in physics and chemistry — since 'systems' were abandoned in favour of observation and experiment — was only the beginning, he argued, of a scientific and philosophical revolution which would re-establish man's knowledge on a new and unshakeable base:

La vraie philosophie française, celle qui est claire, celle qui est fondée sur l'expérience, celle qui fut enseignée par Condillac, Cabanis, de Tracy; celle dont les pauvres Allemands se plaignent qu'elle les blesse *jusqu'à l'âme*, parce qu'elle les ridiculise; celle qui, avant trente ans, sera physiologiquement prouvée par les travaux anatomiques de MM. Magendie, Gall et Flourens; cette vraie philosophie triomphera des obscurités boursouflées de Kant, de Steding, de Proclus, et même des *niaiseries* que l'illustre *poète* Platon et son traducteur, M. Victor Cousin, ont habillées d'un si beau langage.¹⁶⁸

The equation that is established here between physiology and 'true philosophy' is in line with Stendhal's ultimate conviction that the study of human nature had to take as its starting-point the study of man as a *physical* entity.¹⁶⁹ The refusal of the '*Kanto-Platoniciens*' and '*Cousinistes*'¹⁷⁰ to take account of this most fundamental

consideration lent weight to the criticisms tirelessly levelled against them by Stendhal. Advance in the moral sphere, he held, was intimately linked to advances in the physical and natural sciences. Long in advance of Ernest Renan, Stendhal would proclaim science to be the 'religion' of the nineteenth century.¹⁷¹ It can be clearly observed, he writes scoffingly in the *New Monthly Magazine* of September 1824, that

à la suite des découvertes électriques de Franklin et de l'usage des paratonnerres, aucun habitant un peu éclairé de Paris ou de Londres, quand il entend le tonnerre ou voit un éclair, n'éprouve plus cette "peur mêlée de respect" que M. Constant nomme *sentiment religieux*.¹⁷²

Clarity: The Cardinal Virtue

There was a further, and closely related, reason why Stendhal took up arms against the 'systematists'. The eighteenth century had done much to demystify philosophy, to make it a function of reason and good sense — and, increasingly, of science — rather than an impenetrable province of arcane speculation. It is towards this conception of philosophy that Stendhal leans in the first decades of a century which, he saw too clearly, was witnessing the return of the philosophical fashion towards realms from which the *philosophes* and Idéologues had sought to wrench it.¹⁷³ Stendhal's journalistic writings of the 1820s provide in this sense a valuable, if highly partisan, commentary on the changing philosophical trends in Restoration France, and in particular on the conflict between what Emmet Kennedy describes as 'the two most important philosophical schools in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century',

between Anglo-French sensationalism and German idealism, between over-confident eighteenth-century French rationalism and the doubting critique of reason, between nineteenth-century physiological psychology and a pure psychology, between an "ideological" or unitary conception of the moral and political sciences and Kantian dualism of pure and practical reason.¹⁷⁴

Such, in essence, was the philosophical conflict in which Stendhal found himself an observer and occasional, if peripheral, participant. In the latter capacity, he provides an interesting example of what Kennedy describes as the 'use made of Kant in France'.¹⁷⁵ For Kant's name alone provided the ground upon which battle could be joined between the apostles of the new metaphysics and their philosophical opponents, the dwindling circle of Idéologues under the ægis of Destutt de Tracy.¹⁷⁶ That it *was* a battle, Stendhal leaves us in no doubt when, in 1827, he defines philosophy as a Republic at war with itself, 'divisée en deux factions, la faction matérialiste et la faction spiritualiste'.¹⁷⁷

What Stendhal condemns above all in philosophical 'systems' like that of Kant is the studied obscurity which, he claims, is required to sustain their credit. The contributions to journals such as the *London Magazine* and *New Monthly Magazine* constitute a relentless tirade of abuse against a type of philosophising for which Stendhal's synonyms are far from generous: 'mystères', 'doctrines chimériques', 'sottes boutades', 'rêveries', 'spéculations idéales', 'vagues fantaisies', 'obscurités boursouflées', '*niaiseries*', 'un tas énorme d'absurdités'.¹⁷⁸ Stendhal's objective throughout is to explode a mystique which has no place in philosophical reasoning and to reduce the latter to its simplest, most readily apprehensible expression. Clarity is the cardinal virtue of the philosopher. 'Rien ne soutient un philosophe comme une langue forcément claire,' he writes, in a damning appreciation of Kant for the British press in 1822.¹⁷⁹ 'Celui qui n'est pas capable de se faire entendre,' he insists elsewhere, in an article on Helvétius, 'ne vaut pas d'être cru.'¹⁸⁰ Of the darling of the French spiritualist revival, Victor Cousin, Stendhal writes disparagingly in the *New Monthly Magazine* of January 1823: 'son système manque d'une des qualités foncières de la philosophie: à savoir le sens commun.'¹⁸¹

For Stendhal, philosophy should be capable of being framed within simple terms. Logical reasoning, he wrote to his sister Pauline in 1802, if conducted in a spirit free of prejudice, 'serait la chose du monde la plus facile.' For the science of logic, he goes on, 'n'est autre chose que l'art de raisonner.'¹⁸² What is significant here is less the terms of the rather meaningless equation 'logic = reason' than the expression around which the equation is constructed. For the repeated use of the formula 'ne ... que' in this context — 'la philosophie, qui n'est que le bien-raisonné'; 'l'empirisme n'est autre chose que l'expérience'; 'toute science ne consiste qu'à voir les circonstances des faits'; 'le génie n'est qu'une plus grande dose de bon sens' — is evidence of Stendhal's desire to reduce the most apparently exacting mental activity to a straightforward exercise conducted by way of simple rules accessible to all.¹⁸³ His enthusiasm for Ideology is due in no small measure to the fact that the reasoning which sustains it is deemed by Stendhal to be *comprehensible*. 'Je lis avec la plus grande satisfaction les cent douze premières pages de Tracy aussi facilement qu'un roman,' he notes in his diary on 1 January 1805.¹⁸⁴ 'La science qui nous occupe', he writes in an 'Ideology lesson' to Pauline on the same day, 'cet épouvantail si terrible aux tyrans, cette science si détestée des charlatans de toutes les espèces, est la chose du monde la plus enfantine, la plus simple.'¹⁸⁵ What was true, moreover, of Tracy's *Idéologie* would hold good for his *Logique*, a work which Stendhal, in a letter of 19 November 1805, records he is reading 'avec autant de plaisir, et autant de facilité que jadis *Roland le furieux*.'¹⁸⁶ Nor, he thought, would this 'science of ideas' be more difficult to implement than it was to comprehend. 'Les règles que Tracy prescrit,' he notes in his diary of 12 December

1805, '[...] sont si simples que je puis fort bien tâcher de les mettre en pratique.'¹⁸⁷

The distinction between clarity and obfuscation remains fundamental throughout Stendhal's appreciation of thinkers and of the theories which they expound. In the *New Monthly Magazine* of May 1826, he divides philosophy into two broad schools, the intelligible and the unintelligible:

M. Victor Cousin a l'honneur d'avoir introduit en France la philosophie mystique et visionnaire du sentiment. Cette philosophie étant obscure par définition plaît mieux au gouvernement et au clergé que la philosophie de Condillac que tout le monde comprend.¹⁸⁸

In a subsequent article for the same review, Destutt de Tracy is praised in like terms for having expounded — 'd'une façon on ne peut plus claire' — the thought of Locke and Condillac.¹⁸⁹ Nor is clarity in such matters to be equated with simplicity. Tracy's works, Stendhal elsewhere contends, 'sont les ouvrages les plus profonds et les plus clairs de la langue française sur la formation des idées, l'art de les exprimer et la façon de conduire le raisonnement.'¹⁹⁰

Philosophy which was not transparent in its basic tenets, which was not susceptible of easy illustration, was not worthy of the name. In his diary of December 1805, Stendhal enters a curious remark which raises questions about the criteria on which were based his early philosophical convictions. 'Maintenant,' he reflects, 'il faut que j'approfondisse un ancien jugement qui n'est, je crois, qu'une idée de Condillac admise comme vraie sur la recommandation de mon orgueil, uniquement parce que je la comprenais...'¹⁹¹ Though the 'uniquement' is disconcerting, the remark serves to underline the premium which Stendhal placed from the outset on clarity and simplicity in the expression of ideas. This emerges again from a diary entry of June 1807, in which we find Helvétius's *De l'Homme* lauded in the following terms: 'Je trouve plus dans un de ses chapitres que dans des volumes des autres, et énoncé plus clairement, et mieux prouvé.'¹⁹² In the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, it is precisely these qualities which will prompt Stendhal to recall of a notable passage from Helvétius's other major work, *De l'Esprit*: 'moi, je comprenais parfaitement la façon dont Helvétius explique Régulus, je faisais tout seul un grand nombre d'applications de ce genre...'¹⁹³ The clarity with which Helvétius expounds his philosophy is a point upon which we find Stendhal insisting oncé more in the draft of an article entitled '*De l'Etat de la philosophie à Paris en 1827*':

Helvétius perfectionné par Jérémie Bentham a fort bien expliqué ce qui se passe dans le cœur de l'homme passionné, ou simplement agité par des désirs; ce qui se passe dans le cœur de Régulus lorsqu'il quitte Rome pour retourner à Carthage...¹⁹⁴

These latter examples are significant not only for the model of philosophical clarity which they represent. The legendary tale of Regulus — with its insistence on self-interest as the motivating force even in the most apparently altruistic of actions — is of central importance to Stendhal's view of human nature.¹⁹⁵ With this in mind, we find the essential qualities of the true philosopher nowhere better defined by Stendhal than in the response which he drafted (but never published) in 1829 to some unsparing criticisms that had appeared in Duvergier de Hauranne's review of the *Promenades dans Rome*. In the review, published in *Le Globe* of 24 October 1829, Stendhal had been taken to task as an outmoded disciple of Helvétius, 'un écrivain mauvaise tête qui ne ménage personne et qui ne respecte rien.'¹⁹⁶ Stung by the suggestion that he is 'un suranné partisan d'Helvétius',¹⁹⁷ Stendhal's response is to draft several pages under the ironic title '*Philosophie transcendente*',¹⁹⁸ in which he recounts the anecdote of a certain Lieutenant Louaut in an endeavour to demonstrate the simple axiom that all human actions are motivated by an irresistible impulsion towards pleasure and away from pain. Stendhal defies the 'Eclectic' school of philosophy to provide an explanation, other than the enlightened self-interest upheld by Helvétius and Jeremy Bentham,¹⁹⁹ which would account for Louaut's heroism in diving into the Seine to rescue a drowning boatman. He then goes on to make a telling point in defence of the hard-nosed cynicism of which he might be accused in attributing thus the noblest of human actions to self-interest:

[...] la philosophie allemande cherche toujours à émouvoir le cœur et à éblouir l'imagination par des images d'une beauté céleste. Pour être bon philosophe, il faut être sec, clair, sans illusion. Un banquier qui a fait fortune a une partie du caractère requis pour faire des découvertes en philosophie, c'est-à-dire *voir clair dans ce qui est*; ce qui est un peu différent de parler éloquentement de brillantes chimères.²⁰⁰

It is a fitting irony that the one philosopher to have appreciated this definition should have been Friedrich Nietzsche, who cites it admiringly in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.²⁰¹ *Sec, clair, sans illusion*. Such are the qualities demanded of the philosopher, qualities which Stendhal had early recognised as a corollary of the 'esprit de commerce, qui compte tout et ne s'enthousiasme de rien',²⁰² and which he would later incarnate in the figure of that disabused republican and accomplished Epicurean, Leuwen père.²⁰³ Such qualities would find a ready model for Stendhal in the 'geometric spirit' of the Abbé de Condillac — 'le sec Condillac',²⁰⁴ as Stendhal dubs him — and in the Idéologue movement of which he was a forerunner.²⁰⁵ 'Je ne doute aucunement,' writes Stendhal in the *London Magazine* of March 1825, 'que d'ici vingt ans, grâce aux preuves physiologiques des vérités exposées par Condillac et son école, la France ne donne au monde le système philosophique le moins alourdi d'erreurs qui ait jamais encore été exposé.'²⁰⁶

The *least* encumbered by error: the wording is significant. For it brings us back squarely to Stendhal's view of 'systematic' thought. No philosophical theory should be considered proof against falsehood; the best one can hope for is to minimise the errors that may find their way into even the soundest reasoning. 'Souvent il se glisse un peu de faux dans les meilleurs préceptes...' Thus Stendhal in a notebook entry dating from September 1803.²⁰⁷ The whole history of human thought and the course of man's intellectual advancement — together with that of his future progress — were founded for Stendhal on the gradual, painstaking and often piecemeal eradication of falsehood. Stendhal's scepticism nowhere becomes the self-defeating '*Ne pas conclure*' of a Flaubert; but one must, he urged, be ever on the watch against complacency, ready at every moment to call into question and, where necessary, to revise one's convictions.

From Theory to Practice: The Authorial Posture

The foregoing pages provide a very general introductory review of the context within which Stendhal defined his philosophical direction. It was one thing, however, to cherish a theory; quite another to put it into practice. As a would-be philosopher-playwright, Stendhal required from the outset some method for ordering and making sense of the world around him, for imposing meaning upon the disparate data of observation and experience.²⁰⁸ C.W. Thompson points rightly to the 'tour tout systématique' which is evident in the mind of the young Stendhal, and which finds early expression in his love of mathematics and quest for a rigorous philosophical method of inquiry.²⁰⁹ 'Je suis dans le plus haut de la philosophie', writes Stendhal in August 1804, 'profiter du moment pour me faire un système.'²¹⁰ If his writings were to be readily comprehensible for a future audience, he recognised the need to present and develop his thoughts in a systematic order, 'pour plaire au vulgaire dont l'esprit faible est soulagé par là. Que tout soit disposé par ce système qui, comme *classification*, est bon éternellement.'²¹¹ Stendhal, however, remains fully alive to the connotations of the term in question, as is evidenced by the following journal entry from August 1803: 'Toute espèce de système annoncée rend méfiant le lecteur judicieux, il craint qu'on ne plie les faits au système.'²¹² Thus, amid the notes for his planned philosophical treatise in 1804, he resolves: 'Donner tout ce que je pense de bien, non point comme une suite ou une preuve de mon système, mais comme une chose qui m'est prouvée par le sentiment.'²¹³ Nor is there any contradiction between his search for some 'systematic' means of interpreting and representing reality, on the one hand, and the denigration of 'systematists' which he sustains with such a will, on the other. For even the most cherished of his theories were to be no more than

provisional guides, means of ordering and classifying his view of the world, which would remain open to doubt and to contrary evidence. If the *esprit de système* was always to be shunned, the *esprit systématique* did have its place.²¹⁴

Such was the principle from which Stendhal early derived a sense of intellectual probity that was to remain with him. The ambivalence expressed in these instances, between the *need* for rational method and the *limits* within which such method should be contained, was to be a feature of his later writings. In no work does Stendhal come closer to framing a 'systematic' argument than in *De l'Amour*. 'Il est difficile,' writes Léon Blum, 'de pousser plus loin la présomption systématique.'²¹⁵ Yet in no work — and this is the point which Blum wholly overlooks — does Stendhal do more to undermine the very ideas which he sets forth. A striking illustration of this is to be found in Chapter XXVIII, where Stendhal depicts a certain feminine grace as the fruit of a monarchical régime. The intimate relationship between the government of a society and the sensibility of its members was a notion close to Stendhal's heart and one which he never tired of expounding, both in his private and in his published writings. In the case in question, however, he is willing to place his whole theory at risk in order to take account of what appears to be anomalous evidence. Having evoked that 'délicatesse féminine' which, it is suggested, is a preserve of monarchical society, Stendhal goes on:

Cependant, même dans les républiques du moyen âge, je trouve un admirable exemple de cette délicatesse, qui semble détruire mon système de l'influence des gouvernements sur les passions, et que je rapporterai avec candeur.²¹⁶

Stendhal cannot reconcile his theory with the possible objection to it that is raised here; but he is at pains to demonstrate that intellectual scruple forbids him to duck the issue or pretend that it poses no problem.

Again in *De l'Amour*, we find rehearsed another of Stendhal's favoured themes, that of the sharply contrasting influence on the human character of the temperate climes of the south (the home of love, energy and passion) and the harsher climates of the north (the home of cant, vanity and emotional sclerosis). Yet, as he now observes, more women kill themselves for love in Paris than in all the towns of Italy. He concedes:

Ce fait m'embarrasse beaucoup; je ne sais qu'y répondre pour le moment, mais il ne change pas mon opinion.²¹⁷

Unchanged Stendhal's opinion may be; but he is only too aware of the apparent objection to his theory that has been thrown up. On yet another occasion, in a fragment dealing with the poet Robert Burns, Stendhal cites an example which, as he

acknowledges, appears to be at odds with his general principle. While classifying the Scots poet as 'un génie romain', he concedes that 'Edimbourg est à la même latitude que Moskou, ce qui pourrait déranger un peu mon système des climats.'²¹⁸ Even in outlining one of the fundamental principles of *De l'Amour* — the existence of four distinct types of love — Stendhal is anxious to avoid distorting a complex reality through over-adherence to his theory. No sooner, therefore, has he established his four recognisable categories of love than he goes on to undermine the whole basis of his contention. The figure of four, he suggests, is arbitrary and provisional; one might as readily speak in terms of eight, or even ten, types of love. One might, in fact, go much further still. 'Il y a peut-être autant de façons de sentir parmi les hommes,' he ventures, 'que de façons de voir...'²¹⁹

De l'Amour, though it provides a number of telling examples, is far from exceptional in this respect. Across the range of his writings, one finds the same refusal by Stendhal to force his ideas irretrievably into a single mould. So it is, for example, with the celebrated definition of Romanticism which he would erect, in *Racine et Shakespeare*, into a first principle of aesthetic good sense. Here again we find a Stendhal who, for all his posture of theorist and his clarion defence of the nascent French Romantic movement against the tyranny of the Classical aesthetic, is careful to avoid replacing one yoke with another. *Le romantisme* may, as he contends, be defined for all as 'l'art de présenter aux peuples les œuvres littéraires qui, dans l'état actuel de leurs habitudes et de leurs croyances, sont susceptibles de leur donner le plus de plaisir possible';²²⁰ but there operates even here an ultimate principle against which no movement, school or theory has redress. 'Le bon goût,' in the final analysis, 'c'est mon goût.'²²¹ The point is brought home with emphasis in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*:

Mais Racine ne plût-il qu'à un seul homme, tout le reste de l'univers fût-il pour le peintre d'Othello, l'univers entier serait ridicule s'il venait dire à cet homme, par la voix d'un petit pédant vaniteux: "Prenez garde, mon ami, vous vous trompez, vous donnez dans le mauvais goût: vous aimez mieux les petits pois que les asperges, tandis que *moi* j'aime mieux les asperges que les petits pois."

To which Stendhal adds the peremptory conclusion:

La préférence dégagée de tout jugement accessoire, et réduite à la pure sensation, est inattaquable.²²²

The latter example may appear to be at some remove from our original point. It demonstrates clearly, however, that theories must capitulate for Stendhal before the reality of human experience. In none of the cases cited does he presume to provide an answer for the objections and attenuations which can be brought against his theories. On the contrary, such apparent contradictions are sought out, embraced, flaunted even,

as though they served as some ultimate guarantor of the author's integrity. 'Quelquefois j'entre en doute de mes idées les plus fondamentales,' avows the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*.²²³ In the later edition of the same work, Stendhal evokes the happy disposition of the Milanese, but prefaces his explanation of this with a caveat to his reader: 'Ce qui précède est évident, l'explication qui suit n'est que probable.'²²⁴ Nor would the suspicion of 'theories' that is paraded by such remarks diminish over time. As the author of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* will put it, 'l'expérience seule répond à tout; la théorie n'est qu'un rêve.'²²⁵

This ostentatious scorn for hermetically sealed certitudes is a defining feature of Stendhal's writing which, in his more flippant moments, is carried to the point of parody. 'Comme je ne suis pas ici pour faire l'éducation des niais,' we read in his notes for a second edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'je saute mille conséquences qui pourraient servir de preuves...'²²⁶ Elsewhere among the same notes, he declares more flatly still: 'je ne chercherai pas à prouver cette singulière assertion.'²²⁷ The attitude to which such remarks give expression in 1818 will be evident in the second published edition of the work some years later. There, for example, we find it asserted that the Roman is superior to the other peoples of Italy, and, potentially, to all the peoples of Europe. 'C'est ce que je prouverais facilement,' Stendhal concludes, 's'il me restait assez de place. Si cette brochure a une autre édition, je donnerai dix anecdotes prouvant l'assertion qui précède.'²²⁸

This recurrent undermining of authorial convention, for all its irreverent humour, has a serious underside. For it demonstrates Stendhal's refusal to push his ideas beyond a certain point, to forge the critical link between observation and 'proof'. In a letter to Adolphe de Mareste dated 1 December 1817, the author of the recently published *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817* writes revealingly of that work: 'j'ai toujours rempli mon but, qui était de ne pas parler comme auteur.'²²⁹ This remark, with its measured emphasis, reveals something of Stendhal's perception of himself vis-à-vis his subject and his reader both. For, in renouncing the prerogative of the scient author, Stendhal demonstrates the self-consciousness with which he views his role as a purveyor of ideas. The letter to Mareste is in tune with those many occasions when he appeals to his reader's scepticism, or indulgence, in the face of the arguments which he sets forth. In the chapters on temperament which are adapted from Cabanis for *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, the same attitude is clearly displayed. Invoking the authority of medical science, Stendhal describes the moral characteristics which attend upon a given physiological make-up. Here again his conclusions arise from what has all the appearance of a systematic argument; yet he is careful to stop short of promoting this to the status of a proven 'theory'. 'Tout ce que j'avance,' he protests, 'c'est qu'on trouvera souvent ces circonstances physiques à côté de ces dispositions morales.'²³⁰

The authorial posture that is struck here finds parallels throughout Stendhal's writings. The distinction between what might be called 'contingent' truth and 'necessary' truth, between observed fact and reasoned principle, remains an important one. On a visit to Saint Peter's in the *Promenades dans Rome*, Stendhal takes the opportunity to air his views on art and architecture, and to discourse on the wider social context of which these are an expression. Here again, however, he is at pains to parry in advance any charge of theorising:

Je prie le lecteur de se souvenir que je ne fais que l'office d'*avocat général*; je propose des *motifs de conviction*. J'invite à se méfier de tout le monde et même de moi. L'essentiel est de n'admirer que ce qui a fait réellement plaisir, et de croire toujours que le voisin qui admire est payé pour vous tromper.²³¹

A similar spirit is in evidence on those occasions when Stendhal strikes an interrogative rather than an affirmative posture. 'La constitution des Anglais peut expliquer leur énergie,' he observes in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*; 'mais comment expliquer la vivacité des cochers russes (moujiks) que nous prîmes à Moscou?'²³² The penchant of the Italian for religion, he muses in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'tient-il à la race d'hommes ou à la fréquence des tremblements de terre et des orages qui, en été, sont vraiment faits pour inspirer la terreur?'²³³ The answer in these instances, as in others, is conspicuous by its absence. Far from being embarrassed by inconsistencies and unanswered questions, Stendhal delights in drawing the reader's attention to them. Considering the lack of stable judgment which he takes to be a feature of the female mind, the author of *De l'Amour* readily concedes: 'Il faut qu'il y ait là quelque loi générale que j'ignore.'²³⁴ In the *Vie de Rossini*, he writes in similar vein:

Il y a donc quelque circonstance inconnue et pourtant nécessaire dans l'ensemble des mœurs de la belle Italie et de l'Allemagne. Il fait moins froid dans la rue Le Peletier qu'à Dresde ou à Darmstadt. Pourquoi y est-on plus barbare? Pourquoi l'orchestre de Dresde ou de Reggio exécute-t-il divinement un *crescendo* de Rossini, chose impossible à Paris? Pourquoi surtout ces orchestres savent-ils accompagner?²³⁵

The emphatic repetition of the interrogative form here gives evidence of what seems a conscious effort to undermine the role of the author as the expounder of clearly formulated 'truths'. For all Stendhal's ostensibly well defined notions about man and society, for all his long-held beliefs about the conditions that give rise to the flowering of genius and artistic creativity, he admits to being quite at a loss when it comes to accounting for the proliferation of talent which flourished in that brief historical moment known as the Renaissance. 'Pourquoi la nature, si féconde pendant ce petit espace de quarante-deux ans, depuis 1452 jusqu'en 1494, que naquirent ces grands hommes, a-t-elle été depuis d'une stérilité si cruelle?' asks the historian of Italian painting. 'C'est ce qu'apparemment ni vous ni moi ne saurons jamais.'²³⁶

As in Montaigne, so in Stendhal, concludes Geoffrey Strickland, 'the interrogative cast of mind proves to be incompatible with systematic thought — that is, thought which seeks to demonstrate its consistency by defending itself against all possible objections...'²³⁷ The greatest objection to Stendhal's thought, it might be added in the light of the foregoing, is Stendhal himself. For there is an *advocatus diaboli*, or, as he puts it in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, a 'parti contraire', which stands ever ready (or so, at least, he would have us believe) to challenge his received ideas.²³⁸ Auguste Bussièrè, as early as 1843, recognised here an essential feature of Stendhal's philosophical outlook:

Ce serait être infidèle envers les idées de l'auteur que de vouloir les réduire à une rigoureuse déduction logique, et donner à cette philosophie légère des allures d'école que l'auteur a eu surtout à cœur de lui épargner.²³⁹

It is in this sense, one might argue, that Robert Adams's description of Stendhal (though it rings too categorical still) finds some endorsement. 'He was,' asserts Adams, 'totally uncommitted; absolutely unfinal; responsive to experience in a way more fluid than logical categories can ever quite grasp.'²⁴⁰ While such an assessment takes no account of the degree to which Stendhal, for all his show of open-mindedness, remains entrenched in a number of *idées fixes*, it does recognise his concern to eschew any suggestion of authorial omniscience in favour of a much vaunted philosophical doubt.

The net effect of all of this is to reaffirm the primacy of observation over theory, and to suggest that truth itself is protean, defined as much at times by exception as by rule, and always perceived from a *particular point of view*.²⁴¹ 'Je ne prétends pas dire ce que *sont* les choses, je raconte la *sensation* qu'elles me firent,' insists the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*.²⁴² Nor is he loath to draw attention to the possible consequences of such subjectivism: 'L'auteur a besoin de toute l'indulgence du lecteur; souvent on trouvera des contradictions apparentes, [...] et même des fautes plus graves.'²⁴³ 'Truth', it is suggested in such instances, is not an *objective* criterion, ratified by all: it is for each of us to forge his *own* truth from the raw materials of observation and reason. There is evident in Stendhal, as Michel Crouzet notes, 'un souci appliqué de nier les limites entre les vérités de chaque bord', to place himself at a crossroads where various 'truths', or partial truths, may commend themselves to his — inescapably subjective — eye.²⁴⁴ Thus, he protests, he does not purport to represent views in which his reader can readily acquiesce; 'mais je me manquerais à moi-même, si je ne disais pas ce qui me *semble* vrai.'²⁴⁵ In the *Vie de Henry Brulard* this important qualification comes again to the fore, in a manner which brings home clearly Stendhal's readiness to belittle his own contribution to any objectively defined vision of 'reality':

Je supplie le lecteur, si jamais j'en trouve, de se souvenir que je n'ai de prétention

à la véracité qu'en ce qui touche *mes sentiments*; quant aux faits, j'ai toujours eu peu de mémoire.²⁴⁶

This distinction between subjective and objective fact is highly significant. All truth, it is clear, is not susceptible of definition by the same means. As Stendhal would write in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'chaque science a un degré de certitude différent'²⁴⁷ — and the 'science of man', of all sciences, is the least subject to precise verification. 'Moral' truth is, as we read in a letter from Stendhal to François Arago dated 3 April 1836, 'difficile à mettre en équation.'²⁴⁸ In an entry penned in his diary some thirty years earlier, Stendhal had in fact sketched out what he considered to be a fundamental distinction within the nature of truth itself. 'Ne jamais oublier', he had noted, 'que les vérités morales ne sont point susceptibles de démonstrations comme celles qui regardent des propriétés appréciables en nombre exactement.'²⁴⁹

Any means of looking at the world which took consistency as its ultimate guarantor was, it is repeatedly suggested by Stendhal, destined to founder in falsehood. Theories, doctrines, 'systems' exist not because of, but in spite of, the reality they purport to represent. That Stendhal held unswervingly, obdurately even, to a number of ideas formulated in his youth, that he showed himself less than open at times to the arguments that could be levelled against these, we shall have ample occasion to confirm. Yet he never relinquished *in principle* the 'methodical doubt' which we have sought to illustrate. On the contrary, as Stendhal advanced in years, he became increasingly convinced that even the finest methods were too crude to establish any reliable hold on truth. 'J'ai écrit dans ma jeunesse des biographies (Mozart, Michel-Ange) qui sont une espèce d'histoire,' he would reflect in 1834. 'Je m'en repens. Le vrai sur les plus grandes comme sur les plus petites choses me semble presque impossible à atteindre, du moins un vrai un peu détaillé.'²⁵⁰ This remark, penned on a copy of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, bespeaks the scepticism of a Stendhal who, having tried his hand at a whole gamut of literary genres, had turned to the novel as the sole remaining means whereby an author might 'atteindre au vrai'. 'Je vois tous les jours davantage,' he reflects in the same marginal note, 'que partout ailleurs c'est une prétention.' Read in conjunction with these remarks, a passage from the *Promenades dans Rome* takes on a somewhat fuller significance. On a tour of the Castel San Angelo, Stendhal describes the magnificent fireworks display which marks the feast-days of Saints Peter and Paul and which, he informs us, dates back in its conception to Michaelangelo. Here, however, he stops short, adding the brief but telling paragraph:

Je me garderais d'en jurer. On frémit quand on songe à ce qu'il faut de recherches pour arriver à la vérité sur le détail le plus futile.²⁵¹

In a letter of 24 November 1805, François Bigillion had reproached his young friend Henri Beyle for an intellectual capriciousness which, he claimed, prevented the latter from attaining any firm grip upon reality. 'Toi, Henri, tu as beaucoup vu, réfléchi, mais d'après les autres, car à chaque nouvelle lecture, tu changes de façon de penser.'²⁵² The remark must have struck home in a young man only too aware of the contradictions in his reasoning and of his inability consistently to view the world within the same perspective.²⁵³ In a notebook entry of August 1803, the same Henri had gone so far as to declare himself beset by 'un pyrrhonisme inquiétant'.²⁵⁴ Some three decades later, we find a Stendhal who, by his own avowal, is no less susceptible to the vagaries of his reason. While it does little justice to what consistency there *is* in Stendhal's thought, a remark made in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, prefaced by all of the foregoing, might be read as a final denial of any 'systematic' basis to his reasoning, the ultimate statement in empirical agnosticism. As a rule, declares this self-styled Pyrrhonist, 'ma philosophie est du jour où j'écris.'²⁵⁵

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. *L'Art et la vie de Stendhal* (Paris: Baillière, 1868), pp. 403, 515; 397.
2. *Introduction à l'Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, ed. H.B. Charlton (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1936), p. 54.
3. 'Stendhal', in *La Critique stendhalienne de Balzac à Zola*, ed. E. Talbot (York, South Carolina: French Literature Publications Company, 1979), p. 246.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 261. 'Sa formule n'est point encore la nôtre,' Zola goes on, 'mais la nôtre découle de la sienne.' Zola's article on Stendhal first appeared in 1880 in the *Messenger de l'Europe*, to be published subsequently in *Les Romanciers naturalistes*.
5. In 1864, Taine published a much fuller appraisal of Stendhal in the *Nouvelle Revue de Paris*. Balzac's review of *La Chartreuse de Parme* had, of course, appeared in the *Revue parisienne* in 1840. Both can be found, along with Zola's essay, in Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 15-68, 209-231, 233-267.
6. *Introduction à l'Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, p. 54. On Taine's declared affinities with Stendhal, see J.-T. Nordmann, 'De Taine à Stendhal', *Romantisme*, 14^e année, no. 46 (1984), pp. 105-118.
7. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 240.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
9. *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (Paris: Plon, 1901), vol. I, p. 282.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 298. On Bourget's appraisal of Stendhal as a philosopher, see pp. 277-308 *passim*.
11. 'Henri Beyle (M. de Stendhal)', in Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 71.
12. 'Du Caractère et des écrits de Henri Beyle', *ibid.*, pp. 111, 112, 139.
13. Among the earliest twentieth-century critics to endorse this perception of Stendhal, see A. Chuquet, *Stendhal-Beyle* (Paris: Plon, 1902), p. 474; J. Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), pp. 313-315; A. Paupe, *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal* (Paris: Champion, 1914), pp. 176-177; P. Martino, *Stendhal* (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1914), p. 316.
14. M.E. Carcassonne, 'La période héroïque du beylisme', *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, 31^e année (1930), pp. 600-601; R. Adams, *Stendhal: Notes on a Novelist* (London: Merlin Press, 1959), p. 76.
15. *Le Journal intime* (Paris: PUF, 1963), p. 290.
16. J.-C. Alciatore, *Stendhal et Helvétius. Les sources de la philosophie de Stendhal* (Geneva: Droz; Lille: Giard, 1952), p. v; H.-F. Imbert, *Stendhal et la tentation janséniste* (Geneva: Droz, 1970), p. 126.
17. *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (New York: Haskell House, 1975), vol. V: *The Romantic School in France*, p. 206.
18. See on this point A. Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes: A Study of Scientific*

Naturalism in the Enlightenment (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), pp. 140-141, 148-149, 167 ff.

19. For a discussion of Stendhal's understanding of the term *philosophie*, see below, Chapter II. M. Crouzet rightly stresses 'le refus (philosophique) de philosopher' which Stendhal would cherish in Ideology, 'une philosophie qui nie en être une': 'elle est la seule philosophie, et n'est pas une philosophie, dit-elle.' See *Raison et déraison chez Stendhal. De l'idéologie à l'esthétique* [hereafter referred to as *Raison*] (Berne: Peter Lang, 1983), pp. 31-32, 34, 280. A similar point is made by H. Levin, who notes that 'Tracy's philosophy encouraged no one to be a philosopher. Its effect was rather to discourage metaphysical abstraction, to stimulate detailed consideration of specific cases' (*The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists* [New York: Oxford UP, 1966], p. 104).
20. *Corr*, I, 273. (For abbreviated titles of Stendhal's works, see the preliminary key.) Cf. the definition which appears in an earlier letter dated 11 May 1804: 'Métaphysique. — Description de la génération et des lois de l'intelligence et de la volonté' (*Ibid.*, I, 94). The same definition is to be found in a notebook entry of 9 July 1804 (*JL*, II, 10). On the source of this definition, see the conflicting remarks of V. del Litto (*Ibid.*, II, 499 n.) and J.-C. Alciatoire ('Stendhal et Lancelin', *Modern Philology*, vol. XL, no. 1 [1942], p. 82).
21. While Alciatoire's whole thesis is concerned with Stendhal's debt to Helvétius, Brandes (p. 217) signals 'his direct intellectual descent from the severely rational sensationalistic philosophers of the eighteenth century', foremost among whom he cites Helvétius and Condillac.
22. See, for example, *CA*, II, 144; III, 215, 444; *Italie*, 448-449 n.
23. *CA*, II, 195-196. Cf. *Italie*, 953. On the various senses of the term 'metaphysics', see the chapter 'What Is Metaphysics?' in J.G. Brennan, *The Meaning of Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 199-237. See also on this question, as it relates more specifically to the philosophy of Stendhal's day, B. Plongeron, 'Nature, métaphysique et histoire chez les Idéologues', *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, vol. V (1973), pp. 375-412; H. Gouhier, *La Jeunesse d'Auguste Comte et la formation du positivisme*, vol. I: *Sous le signe de la liberté* (Paris: Vrin, 1933), pp. 132-139.
24. It is worth noting that the philosophy of 'Ideology' which exerted such an appeal for Stendhal owed its name in part to Destutt de Tracy's rejection of the discredited term 'metaphysics', which was held, as E. Kennedy observes, to denote 'everything which Enlightenment philosophers considered beyond the purview of reason' (A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution: *Destutt de Tracy and the Origins of "Ideology"* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1978], pp. 45-46). See also on this point G. Madinier, *Conscience et mouvement. Etude sur la philosophie française de Condillac à Bergson* (Louvain and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1967), p. 47; H. Barth, *Truth and Ideology*, trans. F. Lilge (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 2, 8, 13; H.B. Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XLV (1959), pp. 200-201; F.M. Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal* (Paris: Nizet, 1956), p. 16.
25. *Stendhal et Helvétius*, p. v.
26. See below, in Chapter IV, our discussion of Stendhal's materialism.
27. The success with which Stendhal *does* dispense with unwanted presuppositions in his philosophical reasoning is debatable. See below, Chapters III and IV.

28. *Op. cit.*, pp. 282-283.
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 160.
30. *Op. cit.*, p. 42.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 49.
32. See J.W. Stein, *The Mind and the Sword* (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 182 n. 9.
33. *Op. cit.*, pp. 489-492.
34. *Op. cit.*, p. 1.
35. *Contribution of the Ideologues to French Revolutionary Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), pp. 128-129.
36. *Op. cit.*, p. 136. Cailliet devotes extensive consideration to Stendhal, deeming him 'le romancier de l'Idéologie' (p. 140). See in particular pp. 136-152.
37. *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), pp. 67-68.
38. On Ideology as a neglected province in the history of philosophy, see Cailliet, pp. 24-26; Chinard, Introduction, *ibid.*, pp. 1-23; Van Duzer, pp. 12-16; G. Gusdorf, *La Conscience révolutionnaire: les Idéologues* (Paris: Payot, 1978), pp. 21-38. On Stendhal as a disciple of Ideology, see, in addition to sources already cited, E. Kennedy, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. CLXXI (1977), p. 233; "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XL, no. 3 (1979), p. 361.
39. On the Salon de Tracy as frequented by Stendhal, see Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 269-282; G. Chinard, Introduction, *De l'Amour* by Destutt de Tracy (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1926), pp. xl-xliii.
40. References to Nietzsche relate, unless otherwise stated, to the *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta, 7th ed. (Munich: Karl Hanser, 1973). It is above all as an observer of the human mind that Stendhal appeals to Nietzsche, who, in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Werke*, II, pp. 603, 722), hails him as the last of the great psychologists.
41. *Ibid.*, II, p. 846.
42. See on this point A. Guth, 'Nietzsche et Stendhal', *Stendhal et l'Allemagne*, ed. V. del Litto and H. Harder (Paris: Nizet, 1983), pp. 202-203.
43. *Nietzsche and the French: A Study of the Influence of Nietzsche's French Reading on his Thought and Writing* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 134.
44. *Werke*, II, p. 1088. It is significant that Stendhal is cited here in the company of Taine and Hegel, with whom he compares favourably in Nietzsche's eyes. The three names appear together elsewhere, alongside that of Condillac (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Werke* [Munich: Musarion, 1920-29], vol. XVII, p. 350). In a letter of March 1885, we find Nietzsche ranging Stendhal with the Abbé Galiani and Montaigne, as the writers who most engage his intellect (*Werke*, III, p. 1231).

45. *Op. cit.*, pp. 134, 166.
46. *Werke*, II, p. 603. Nietzsche endorses in particular Stendhal's contention that the successful banker exhibits qualities required of the philosopher, most notably a proven ability to 'voir clair dans ce qui est.' See below.
47. *Hommes et idées du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 1903), pp. 123-124.
48. *Stendhal* (Paris: Hachette, 1905), p. 72.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
50. 'Stendhal: Ses Romans', in Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 176.
51. *French Realism: The Critical Reaction, 1830-1870* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), p. 11. Weinberg provides a useful review (pp. 9-25) of the criticism which appeared during Stendhal's lifetime and in the years immediately following his death. See also E. Talbot, 'Perspectives sur la critique stendhalienne avant Bourget', *Stendhal Club*, 20^e année, no. 78 (1978), pp. 343-355.
52. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 187, 175.
53. *Politiques et moralistes du dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1900), 3^{ème} série, pp. 14-15.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. vii, 4. On Faguet's assessment of Stendhal as it relates to *Le Rouge et le Noir* in particular, see C. Liprandi, *Au cœur du 'Rouge': l'Affaire Lafargue et 'Le Rouge et le Noir'* (Lausanne: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1961), pp. 172-179.
55. See Cailliet, pp. 154-163, 279-283; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 334-339; Delacroix, pp. 71-81; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 24, 32-34; Gouhier, *passim*; G. Lichtheim, 'The Concept of Ideology', *History and Theory*, vol. IV, no. 2 (1965), pp. 166-170. On the Second Empire as 'a time of unusually strident debate', and one which saw 'intellectual conservatism more firmly entrenched' against the growing prestige of the sciences, see D.G. Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France During the Second Empire, 1852-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 11-23. It was a period in which Stendhal's polemical value was to come into its own.
56. Cited by Cailliet, pp. 83, 154.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 212, 210. See also p. 279: 'Destutt de Tracy influence Stendhal et celui-ci communique à Taine le feu sacré...' Cf. Chinard, Introduction, *ibid.*, p. 10: '[...] from the Idéologues of the period 1800-1820 to the "positivistes" of 1840, then to the naturalists of 1880, there is no interruption and no missing link; the chain is continuous.'
58. *Stendhal, or The Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Doubleday, 1946), p. 222. The same is suggested by Plongeron, p. 376.
59. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
60. 'Stendhal', in Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 203.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 199. Such criticisms notwithstanding, Barbey was far from being wholly inimical to Stendhal. See *ibid.*, pp. 197-198; Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, pp. 332-333.

62. Cf. Sainte-Beuve's admonishment of Taine, whom he accuses of judging Stendhal *solely* by his works (Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, 180-181)!
63. 'Etudes: Henri Beyle', *Le Courrier Littéraire*, 10 November 1876. For the more censorious among Stendhal's critics, no terms were strong enough to denounce this self-styled 'monstre d'immoralité', as Mérimée dubbed him ('Notes et souvenirs', in P. Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu* [Paris: Stock, 1931], p. 208).
64. 'De la littérature réaliste, à propos du roman russe', *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 May 1886.
65. Prince de Valori, 'Stendhal — au sujet d'un livre récent', *Le Figaro*, 27 September 1888; A. de Pontmartin, 'Vilain Monsieur!', *Le Gaulois*, 30 September 1888. The appearance of *Lamiel* in the following year was greeted in similar fashion, prompting F. Boissin to publish a ringing condemnation of the 'impiété basse', the 'athéisme glacial' and the 'matérialisme polisson' of 'cet affreux Stendhal' ('Notices bibliographiques', *Polybiblion*, 15 April 1889).
66. See C. Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée* (Paris: Bossard, 1920), vol. I: *Les Précurseurs de Nietzsche*, p. 235.
67. *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 353.
68. *Op. cit.*, p. vii. Faguet goes on: 'Stendhal croit à la force comme d'autres croient au droit et n'est pas éloigné de considérer l'énergie même criminelle, comme la seule vertu de l'homme.'
69. See E. Seillière, *Le Mal romantique. Essai sur l'impérialisme irrationnel* (Paris: Plon, 1908), pp. 189, 271, 317-318, 337-338; J. Huneker, *Egoists: A Book of Supermen* (London: Werner Laurie, 1909), pp. 17, 42, 47, 64; H.B. Samuel, 'Stendhal: The Compleat Intellectual', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. XCIV, no. dlix (1913), pp. 78, 80, 81; L. Strachey, *Books and Characters French and English* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922), p. 275.
70. Strachey, *loc. cit.*
71. *Op. cit.*, p. 163.
72. *Esquisse de la morale de Stendhal d'après sa vie et ses œuvres* (Paris: Hachette, 1920), p. 101.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 100.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 97. Amongst the many descriptions of Stendhal as a precursor of Nietzsche, see Green, p. 236; Josephson, pp. 343, 349; J. Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français* (Paris: Gallimard, 1931), p. 110; E. Goodheart, *The Cult of the Ego: The Self in Modern Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 53, 59; E. Rey, Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, xcvi. Though the parallel between Stendhal and Nietzsche has been much evoked by critics, no proper comparative analysis of the two authors has been undertaken. To the dated and partial studies of C. Andler (*Op. cit.*, pp. 233-259) and L.-R. Guibert ('Stendhal et Nietzsche en communion spirituelle', *Revue Germanique*, 21^e année [1930], pp. 105-111) can be added more recent, though equally partial, studies by M. Muller ('Stendhal entre Condillac et Nietzsche', *Aurea Parma*, LI [1967], pp. 282-288; 'Stendhal et Nietzsche', *Stendhal Club*, 10^e année, no. 38 [1968], pp. 167-180) and A. Guth ('Nietzsche et Stendhal', *Stendhal et l'Allemagne*, ed. Del Litto and Harder, pp. 197-204). In his 'Etat

présent des études stendhaliennes', H.-F. Imbert points to this surprising lacuna in Stendhal scholarship (*L'Information littéraire*, XXXI^e année, no. 5 [1979], p. 207). See, by contrast, R. Adams's suggestion (p. 139) that the passages in Stendhal which argue a 'distinct intellectual affinity' with Nietzsche are 'the exact minimum necessary to make a plural verb.' Nietzsche, we must assume, was the better judge on this matter.

75. See Sabatier, p. 3; Carrère, *op. cit.* (Paris: Plon, 1922), pp. 83-94 [p. 94]. For a comparison with early Anglo-Saxon criticism, see Huneker; Samuel; Strachey; A.A. Paton, *Henry Beyle (De Stendahl): A Critical and Biographical Study* (London: Trübner & Co., 1874). On the reception of Stendhal's writings during this period, see also H. Clewes, *Stendhal: An Introduction to the Novelist* (London: Arthur Barker, 1950), pp. 9-13.
76. *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes*, pp. 96, 98, 99, 122.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
78. There were, of course, exceptions. F. Wey, in his review of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* (*La Presse*, 10 July 1838) mocks the work's 'profondes pensées politico-théo-philosophiques', while T. Muret's review of *La Chartreuse de Parme* (*La Quotidienne*, 24 July 1839) dismisses the author's Voltairean turn of mind, 'ce vieux et étroit philosophisme peu digne d'un écrivain distingué.' In general, however, critics, whether favourable or hostile, paid Stendhal the not inconsiderable courtesy of taking his thought seriously.
79. Stendhal criticism, as described by J. Mélia in 1911, was a 'jeu de bascule' between praise and denigration (*Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 364). See also on this point Martino, pp. 308-309.
80. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
81. *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. iii.
82. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
84. *Op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
85. *Op. cit.*, pp. 259-260. Cf. Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. iii.
86. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. W.R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974), p. 459.
87. *Op. cit.*, p. vii. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 11: 'Il était très peu philosophe, presque incapable d'idées générales.' One can compare here A. Bussière, who, for all his praise of Stendhal, deems him a 'dilettante philosophant' rather than a 'véritable philosophe' (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 93). Cf. L. Ratisbonne, who declares of Stendhal: 'c'est un observateur piquant, qui regarde souvent de très près, mais jamais de très haut, ce n'est pas un vrai philosophe' (Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 325).
88. *Stendhal* (London: Elek, 1971), p. 23. For I. Howe likewise, Stendhal 'is not a systematic thinker' ('Stendhal: The Politics of Survival', in *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. V. Brombert [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962], p. 79). See in similar vein M. Turnell, 'Novelist-Philosophers—XI: Stendhal—I', *Horizon*, vol. XVI, no. 90 (1947), p. 58.

89. *The Political Ideas of Stendhal* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1975), p. 16. Brussaly is echoed in this assessment by M.G. Brown, who asserts baldly: 'Sans doute ce n'est pas par ses idées que Stendhal vivra, et celles-ci pourraient être négligées, si l'artiste n'avait écrit *Le Rouge et le Noir* et *La Chartreuse de Parme*' (*Les Idées politiques et religieuses de Stendhal* [Paris: Jean-Renard, 1939], p. 7).
90. Preface, *JL*, I, xvi.
91. *Ibid.*, xix. 'La dialectique n'est pas le fort de Stendhal,' argues Del Litto in his article 'Aux sources de l'énergie stendhalienne' (*Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, no. 110 [1986], p. 100). Cf. H. Delacroix's assertion (p. 4) that Stendhal 'a écrit, sinon un traité, du moins des fragments d'idéologie.'
92. *Stendhal et les problèmes de la personnalité* [hereafter referred to as *Personnalité*] (Paris: Corti, 1958), p. 523. Stendhal's forte, according to Blin, lies not in 'la police de l'unité', but rather 'dans l'infailible aperçu du détail et dans la saisie péremptoire du "trait"' (pp. 523-524). This view is echoed by M. Crouzet, who signals in turn 'l'incapacité beyliste à articuler méthodiquement et à construire avec la moindre patience un ensemble ou un procédé logique' (*Raison*, p. 908 n.).
93. *Op. cit.*, p. 274. Cf. P. Bourget's attempt, in assessing Stendhal's thought (p. 337), to turn a perceived failing into a virtue: 'Son incohérence est un de ses charmes. Elle témoigne de son entière bonne foi.'
94. *Obras Completas*, vol. V (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1970), p. 563.
95. 'La vérité n'est jamais d'un seul bord chez lui,' writes M. Crouzet in an essay on Stendhal's politics. '[...] C'est l'adversaire qui le conditionne, et chaque parti est à son tour le parti adverse' ('L'Apolitisme stendhalien', *Romantisme et politique, 1815-1851. Colloque de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud* (1966) [Paris: Armand Colin, 1969], p. 221).
96. M. Boulby, 'Nietzsche and the *Finis Latinorum*', *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, ed. J.C. O'Flaherty et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 226.
97. See Williams, *Nietzsche and the French*, *passim*.
98. *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974), p. 89. Cf. M. Josephson's contention (p. 82) that Stendhal's thought from an early age amounts to 'an incomplete, unordered, but essentially consistent "system"'. R. Vigneron is of a similar mind, discovering in Stendhal's thought an 'ingénieux système' ('Beylisme, romantisme, réalisme', *Modern Philology*, vol. LVI, no. 2 [1958], p. 104). See also in this regard H. Martineau, *L'Œuvre de Stendhal. Histoire de ses livres et de sa pensée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1951), p. 20.
99. *HB*, I, 30.
100. *Ibid.*, II, 279-280.
101. *Corr*, I, 143.
102. *CA*, I, 129. 'La philosophie allemande,' Stendhal goes on, 'proscrit l'expérience et en appelle sans cesse au sens intime.' Cf. *JL*, III, 288: 'Pure philosophie allemande, c'est-à-dire déraison.' On Stendhal's summary condemnation of German philosophy, see J. Félix-Faure, *Stendhal lecteur de*

Mme de Staël. *Marginalia inédits sur un exemplaire des 'Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française'* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1974), pp. 31-32.

103. CA, I, 329.
104. *JL*, III, 290. For the proximity between Stendhal's attitude as expressed here and the later positivist ideals of empiricism and relativism, see Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France During the Second Empire*, pp. 5-11.
105. *De l'Amour*, II, 25. Cf. Stendhal's ironic assault in the manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen* on 'l'Allemagne, ce pays admirable, centre de toute vraie philosophie' (*Romans*, I, 1396). See on this question Delacroix, pp. 78-79 n. 3.
106. 'Un mot résume tout,' observes M. Crouzet of Stendhal's posture in this regard, 'le mot "système", appliqué péjorativement, et dans un esprit tout condillacien, et plus encore, voltairien, aux "romans" philosophiques, édifiés par les esprits brumeux ou trompeurs, parmi lesquels il range les Grecs, Descartes, les Allemands, les Ecossais, les Cousiniens, tous ceux qui de son temps même pensent encore comme si l'"ère des systèmes" durait encore' (*Raison*, p. 36).
107. *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600-1950* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), p. 208. See also P. Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. II: *The Science of Freedom* (London: Wildwood House, 1979), p. 193; C. Frankel, *The Faith of Reason: The Idea of Progress in the French Enlightenment* (New York: Octagon, 1969), pp. 44-45, 90-94. Even a work as radical as Helvétius's *De l'Esprit* could fall victim to the charge of being too rationalistic, too *systématique*. See D.W. Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 165, 168, 190-193; D.G. Creighton, 'Man and Mind in Diderot and Helvétius', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. LXXI, no. 4 (1956), p. 716; Frankel, p. 91.
108. *Elémens d'idéologie* (Paris: Lévi, 1825-27), vol. III i: *De la Logique*, Discours préliminaire, p. 64. See on this point Kennedy, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', pp. 233-234; G. Rosen, 'The Philosophy of Ideology and the Emergence of Modern Medicine in France', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. XX (1946), p. 331. What held for philosophy held also in the sciences. See, for example, R.W. Burkhardt, 'Lamarck, Evolution, and the Politics of Science', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. III, no. 2 (1970), pp. 283, 286, 292; O. Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. XX (1946), pp. 10-35; E.H. Ackerknecht, 'Elisha Bartlett and the Philosophy of the Paris Clinical School', *ibid.*, vol. XXIV (1950), pp. 43-60; S. Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. LXXXIX (1972), pp. 1089-1151.
109. 'Les rêveurs que l'on appelle communément les philosophes grecs,' Stendhal writes in 1818, 'bâtirent mille systèmes plus bizarres les uns que les autres sur la nature de leur intelligence, avant d'avoir seulement examiné les opérations de cette intelligence. C'est un homme qui veut parler littérature et qui ne sait pas lire' (*JL*, III, 84). Cf. CA, III, 408-414.
110. See on this point Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 40, 48, 132, 139, 150, 313, 337; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 128-129; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 31-34.
111. On the various senses of the term 'système' as employed in eighteenth-century philosophical discourse, see Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 167 ff.

112. See 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle.'
113. *Ibid.*, pp. 1098-1105. On the doctor as supreme philosopher, see P. Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle: De Montesquieu à Lessing* (Paris: Boivin, 1946), vol. I, pp. 188-189.
114. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. CLV (1976), p. 2150. See also on this question Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 617; D.L. King, *L'Influence des sciences physiologiques sur la littérature française, de 1670 à 1870* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929), pp. 83, 118.
115. Stendhal's admiration for the medical practitioner would come into its own only when he had progressed from a highly abstract to a much more concrete conception of man. By the time he came to write *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, he had undergone the very significant influence of Cabanis, who provided him with some means of accounting for human experience and character in *physiological* terms. The debt contracted to Cabanis in this respect is one which has never been measured by Stendhal scholars. It is a question to which we shall devote attention in the later chapters of this study.
116. *H de P*, II, 64. See on this point J.-C. Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Pinel', *Modern Philology*, vol. XLV, no. 2 (1947), p. 123; King, pp. 124-126.
117. *Corr*, I, 604. Empiricism for Stendhal denotes not only scientific experimentation but random experience and intelligent observation. For the quasi-scientific sense in which he would conceive of his early literary enterprise, see below, Chapter III.
118. See *H de P*, I, 248-249. Stendhal does not appear to have read Bacon, or indeed to be acquainted with any but the most rudimentary facts about this philosopher, whom he confuses on occasion with Hobbes and whom he berates as an unprincipled scoundrel in his private affairs (*HB*, II, 49, 251; *JL*, III, 184). It is evident, however, that what significance Bacon has for Stendhal (and the same could be said, with some qualification, of John Locke and David Hume) lies not in the substance of his philosophy or science, but in his celebrated *method*. Cf., for Locke, *Corr*, I, 171; II, 132; *Italie*, 441; *Rossini*, II, 264; and, for Hume, *Corr*, III, 403; *JL*, III, 83; *M de T*, II, 404.
119. *JL*, III, 79, 184.
120. See *JL*, III, 261: 'Les œuvres philosophiques d'Aristote, Platon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz: poèmes ennuyeux faits par de grands génies. Bacon seul a conservé de l'utilité.' See also *Corr*, I, 93.
121. See on this point Gay, pp. 18, 23, 146, 159-160, 560; Plongeron, pp. 376-378. On Bacon's importance as a model for Ideology, see Van Duzer, pp. 19-20; Lichtheim, p. 168.
122. *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, p. 37.
123. *JL*, III, 136.
124. See on this question Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 306-320; King, pp. 124-126. Cf. V. del Litto's remarks on Stendhal's reading of Volney, in *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal. Genèse et évolution de ses idées (1802-1821)* (Paris: PUF, 1959), p. 351.
125. *Corr*, I, 144.

126. *Ibid.*, I, 45. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 165: 'il n'y a dans le monde que les faits de certains.'
127. *JL*, I, 32. Cf. the letter to Pauline Beyle dated 30 January 1803: 'Je m'en vais te prouver cela par des faits, c'est la meilleure des vérifications' (*Corr*, I, 51).
128. *JL*, III, 135. Stendhal adds, significantly: 'et quoique notre gouvernement actuel soit cent fois plus libéral que le sien, la France a été moins heureuse en 1818 et 1814 qu'en 1800-1812.'
129. *Ibid.*, III, 257.
130. *Corr*, II, 214.
131. 'Stendhal, Rousseau and the Search for Self', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (1979), p. 42.
132. *Stendhal et les problèmes du roman* [hereafter referred to as *Roman*] (Paris: Corti, 1958), p. 82. Cf. on this question Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 317-328; J.-P. Richard, 'Connaissance et tendresse chez Stendhal', *Littérature et sensation* (Paris: Seuil, 1954), pp. 28-29. It is interesting to note the evolution of Stendhal's thought on this question. In his earliest writings, he had sought merely to identify, label, define the passions; some twenty years later, he will declare that each in turn requires a whole monograph to be devoted to it. See *Italie*, 448 n. Cf. *JL*, I, 65-66, 82-85, 97-101, 159, 175, 240, 243-244.
133. *Romans*, I, 1275.
134. *JL*, I, 31, 127, 458.
135. *Corr*, I, 54, 62, 48. See also *JL*, I, 92, 123, 130, 237, 239, 258, 294, 339, 366, 402, 403; II, 18; *Corr*, I, 4, 129. Compare, however, the injunction to Pauline in the letter of 14 February 1805: 'crois en mon expérience' (*Ibid.*, I, 178).
136. Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 188. Stendhal is ever anxious to eschew — and to be *seen* to eschew — the *esprit de système*, and to place himself instead, as Crouzet puts it (p. 189), 'dans la tradition de "l'esprit d'examen".'
137. See on this question Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 443-445; *Roman*, pp. 121-122.
138. *Italie*, 704.
139. 'Descartes a fait preuve de génie au moins dans un de ses ouvrages: le *Discours sur la méthode*. Il a malheureusement abandonné, au cours de ses autres écrits, sa propre méthode pour arriver à la vérité et il s'est égaré dans des spéculations dérégées et des théories insoutenables' (*CA*, II, 166). Cf. *ibid.*, V, 209-210: 'Le seul des ouvrages de Descartes qui soit lisible de nos jours est l'admirable *Discours sur la Méthode*.' See in this regard Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 447-448.
140. *H de P*, II, 337. On the methodical doubt which Stendhal so esteemed in Descartes, see J.L. Watling, 'Descartes', *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, ed. D.J. O'Connor (New York and London: Free Press [Macmillan] 1964), pp. 175-179.
141. See Cailliet, pp. 92, 104; Van Duzer, pp. 29-30, 36-37; Frankel, 30. P. Gay (p. 146) describes Descartes as a 'cardboard hero or, far more often, cardboard villain' for the *philosophes*. For a concise discussion of Cartesian dualism, see Watling, pp. 182-186.

142. *Italie*, 1699 n. For further developments on this theme, see *ibid.*, 826; *H de P*, II, 27-28 n. 1.
143. *Italie*, 448 n.
144. See, for example, *CA*, II, 30-31, 143-144, 166-167, 193-196; III, 214-215, 408-414, 443; IV, 330-337. On the place of Victor Cousin in the French philosophy of the period, see D.G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815-1870* (London: Oxford UP, 1963), pp. 96-106; 'Victor Cousin and the French Romantics', *French Studies*, vol. XVII, no. 4 (1963), pp. 311-323. On Stendhal's judgment of Cousin, see A. Hoog, 'Un intercesseur du romantisme: Victor Cousin vu par Stendhal', *Problèmes du romantisme*, ed. M. Levaillant (Lille: Faculté des Lettres; Paris: Corti, 1951), spec. issue of *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, fasc. 62-63 (1951), pp. 184-200.
145. *JL*, I, 361; *Corr*, I, 109.
146. *JL*, I, 304.
147. *CA*, II, 144.
148. See Frankel, pp. 16-17, 44-45 *et passim*; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 31-32.
149. *JL*, I, 367.
150. *CA*, V, 182. On the Académie de Médecine, see Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 138-139.
151. On the 'robuste incompréhension' which Stendhal shows for German philosophy, see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 238-245. Much of Stendhal's aversion to Kant in particular is aired in the article 'Exposé du système de Kant', published in the *Paris Monthly Review* of June 1822. See *CA*, I, 327-331; *Chroniques pour l'Angleterre*, ed. K.G. McWatters and R. Dénier (Grenoble: Publications de l'Université des Langues et Lettres de Grenoble, 1980), I, 125-132.
152. 'Les Allemands, marchant sur les traces de Leibnitz, attaquent Condillac et Tracy, successeurs de Locke (*CA*, III, 62); 'MM. Cousin et Royer-Collard [...] visent à anéantir les vérités établies par Locke, Condillac, Tracy, Cabanis et Bentham' (*Ibid.*, III, 443). Cf. *ibid.*, I, 129; II, 191; III, 214-215, 409-410, 424; IV, 330-333. It is in his journalistic writings of the 1820s that Stendhal's commentary on contemporary philosophy is at its most caustic. The opposition that is here evoked between Ideology and German idealism is only one in a whole series of antitheses — fact versus system, doubt versus credulity, Bacon and Locke versus Kant, relative versus absolute, material versus spiritual — upon which Stendhal's philosophical world is predicated. Reason takes its definition, in the first instance, from what it *opposes*. It is, as M. Crouzet rightly points out, 'anti-spéculative', 'anti-théologique', 'consolation', 'contre-poison', 'remède', 'tonique', 'antidote', 'refus' (*Raison*, pp. 34, 105, 195, 371). Hence Stendhal's perception of himself as a 'chargé de mission', a 'croisé du vrai', an 'idéologue [qui] affirme dans la mesure où il nie' (*Ibid.*, pp. 219-220, 371). It is useful in this regard to recall that it was primarily as a *negator* that Stendhal was denounced by many of his earliest critics. See above the judgments of Rod, Caro, Faguet, etc.
153. *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, p. 37.
154. For a highly readable account of the philosophy which Stendhal so derided in Kant, see B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*

(London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1982), pp. 675-690.

155. See respectively *CA*, I, 328; *Italie*, 129, 208, 780; 826, 900; *Corr*, I, 773; *Italie*, 253-254 n., 826; 448 n. For Destutt de Tracy's opposition to Kant on similar grounds, see Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 117-120.
156. *Ibid.*, 253 n. Cf. *CA*, II, 166-167. The close relationship between politics and philosophy in the period is underlined by D.G. Charlton, who writes: 'Both conservatives and reformers assumed that ideas govern history, that political order can only be built upon philosophical order, and consequently the yearning for a more stable society transmitted to philosophical dispute a sense of urgent, practical significance' ('French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *France: A Companion to French Studies*, ed. D.G. Charlton [London: Methuen, 1972], pp. 243-244).
157. *CA*, IV, 31.
158. 'L'influence de d'Alembert, de Diderot, de Voltaire et du baron d'Holbach a porté trop loin la mode de l'irréligion dans la haute société. Aussi cette mode fut-elle remplacée par la renaissance de la doctrine des idées innées et par toutes les absurdités que Locke et Condillac avaient chassées du domaine de la métaphysique' (*Ibid.*, III, 214-215).
159. *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 112. On the relationship between Ideology, morality and politics, see *ibid.*, pp. 75-111; "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', pp. 353-368; Van Duzer, pp. 43-83; Cailliet, pp. 165-210; Boas, pp. 1-22; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 42-45, 95-99; Moravia, *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo, passim*. The manner in which this relationship found its reflection in the literature of the day is discussed by R. Fargher, 'The Literary Criticism of the "Idéologues"', *French Studies*, vol. III, no. 1 (1949), pp. 53-66.
160. See Kennedy, "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx.' Stendhal's diary entry of 9 December 1804 bears witness to the final stage in this process. Of Napoleon's coronation by Pius VII he writes acidly: 'Je réfléchissais beaucoup toute cette journée sur cette alliance si évidente de tous les charlatans. La religion venant sacrer la tyrannie, et tout cela au nom du bonheur des hommes. Je me rinçai la bouche en lisant un peu la prose d'Alfieri' (*OI*, I, 156). See on this point Moravia, *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo*, pp. 570, 575. On the rehabilitation of Catholicism at the expense of 'philosophy', see *ibid.*, pp. 502-551; Van Duzer, pp. 151-154; Cailliet, pp. 256-272; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 81-82, 95; M.S. Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980), pp. 5-6 *et passim*; 'Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', *Studies in the History of Biology*, vol. II (1978), p. 4; Charlton, 'French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', p. 256; Fargher, pp. 59-61. On the Catholic reaction as a factor in the failure of the pioneering Ecoles Centrales, see Van Duzer, pp. 131-134.
161. See *Secular Religions in France*, pp. 1-12, 24-37; 'French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', pp. 247, 256-270.
162. 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', p. 31.
163. See Cailliet, pp. 256-259; Van Duzer, pp. 162-163; Boas, pp. 19-22.
164. *Op. cit.*, p. 72. See below, Chapter V, on this question.
165. *Biology in the Nineteenth Century: Problems of Form, Function, and*

Transformation (New York: John Wiley, 1971), p. 121.

166. *Stendhal et Chateaubriand. Essai sur les ambiguïtés d'une antipathie* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 107. The militant spirit of Stendhal's early philosophical propensities finds some echo in Crouzet's description of Ideology as a philosophy of 'refusal', leading Stendhal in turn to engage in a 'mission d'être indéfiniment l'opposition' (*Raison*, pp. 33-34, 39).
167. The same is implied by Stendhal as early as July 1804, in letters to his sister Pauline. See *Corr*, I, 127, 129, 130. Cf. *HB*, I, 135, where the Ecoles Centrales are recalled as '[l]'admirable ouvrage de M. de Tracy'. On the steps to be taken to offset the 'éducation viciée' by which this system is supplanted, see *Corr*, I, 282. It has been frequently observed that Stendhal's experience in the Ecole Centrale of Grenoble placed him in a unique generation of Frenchmen. See Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 240; Martino, p. 9; Cailliet, pp. 137-140; Van Duzer, pp. 128-129; Fineshriber, p. 13; Josephson, p. 33; Alter, p. 31; Strickland, p. 21. See also on this important point R. Giraud, 'Stendhal — The Bridge and the Gap between Two Centuries', *The Unheroic Hero in the Novels of Stendhal, Balzac and Flaubert* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1957), p. 54; G. May, *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977), p. 74. For a detailed discussion of Stendhal's schooling (with his views on the Ecoles Centrales as 'le plus beau temps de l'Instruction publique'), see Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 235-311. See also V. del Litto, *La Vie de Stendhal* (Paris: Editions du Sud, 1965), pp. 43-57; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 45-47; Moravia, *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo*, pp. 366-369. On the Ecoles Centrales as an educational (and political) experiment, see R.R. Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity: Education and the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985), pp. 242-257; 'The Central Schools of the First French Republic: A Statistical Survey', *The Making of Frenchmen: Current Directions in the History of Education in France, 1679-1979*, ed. D.N. Baker and P.J. Harrigan (Waterloo, Ontario: Historical Reflections Press, 1980), pp. 223-247; L. Pearce Williams, 'Science, Education and the French Revolution', *Isis*, vol. XLIV (1953), pp. 311-330; F. Vial, *Trois siècles d'histoire de l'enseignement secondaire* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936), pp. 71-153; J. Kitchin, *Un journal "philosophique": La Décade (1794-1807)* (Paris: Minard/Lettres Modernes, 1965), pp. 179-192; J. Fayet, *La Révolution française et la science, 1789-1795* (Paris: Rivière, 1960), pp. 355-373; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 84-97; Van Duzer, pp. 106-114, 128-142, 155-162.
168. CA, IV, 399. For an indication of the extent to which Stendhal is in tune here with the ideals of the Idéologues, see Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology.'
169. See below, Chapters V to X.
170. CA, III, 411. On 'ces Cousinistes contempteurs de la philosophie que Condillac a fondée sur l'expérience,' see *ibid.*, IV, 330-337. See also Hoog, 'Un intercesseur du romantisme: Victor Cousin vu par Stendhal.'
171. CA, II, 429. See on this point F.W.J. Hemmings, 'Zola pour ou contre Stendhal?'; *Les Cahiers naturalistes*, vol. VII, no. 19 (1961), p. 108. Cf. Renan's remarks some quarter of a century later: 'La science est donc une religion; la science seule fera désormais les symboles; la science seule peut résoudre à l'homme les éternels problèmes dont sa nature exige impérieusement la solution' (cited by Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France During the Second Empire*, p. 107).
172. CA, II, 193-194. See also on this point *ibid.*, IV, 26-27.
173. 'La plupart des jeunes hommes qui ont fait leur éducation sous le régime

impérial entre 1800 et 1814 méprisent Condillac et admirent M. Royer-Collard' (*Ibid.*, III, 443).

174. A *'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 120. For the state of philosophy in France as perceived through Stendhal's eyes at the height of this period, see, amid many such examples, *CA*, II, 143-145; III, 214-215. Cf. D.G. Charlton's definition of the nineteenth century as 'a time of fierce ideological conflict leading to an ever extremer polarization of attitudes as between Catholics and freethinkers, spiritualists and materialists, right-wing conservatives and left-wing reformers and socialists' ('French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', p. 247). See also on this question F.P. Bowman, 'Illuminism, utopia, mythology', *The French Romantics*, ed. D.G. Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), vol. I, pp. 76-112.
175. A *'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 117. As M. Crouzet observes, the same was true, conversely, for Helvétius, of whom 'le nom même va devenir un défi' (*Raison*, p. 134). When Stendhal comes to read Helvétius, the latter is already outmoded; 'mais il demeure l'objet d'une hagiographie philosophique, qui chez les épigones de la *Décade* le canonise comme un sage et un politique' (*Ibid.*, pp. 134-135).
176. See Picavet, pp. 77-79; Kennedy, A *'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 117-120.
177. *Mél. Journ.*, 206. The remark is from an article on Victor Cousin published in *Le Constitutionnel* of 30 October 1827. On Stendhal's supposed authorship of this article, see V. del Litto and H. Martineau, *ibid.*, 348-349 n. Cf. *CA*, III, 424: '[...] nos jeunes philosophes qui sont en guerre avec Condillac et Cabanis ferment les yeux aux faits...'
178. See respectively *CA*, II, 31; 167; III, 409; 410; 215; IV, 399; I, 328.
179. 'Exposé du système de Kant', *ibid.*, I, 328; *Chron.*, I, 127.
180. 'Pensées sur la philosophie d'Helvétius', *CA*, I, 301; *Chron.*, I, 85. On clarity as 'la valeur suprême du Beylisme', see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 372-385. For the ambiguities which underlie this ideal of clarity, see *ibid.*, pp. 387-394, 396 ff.; Richard, 'Connaissance et tendresse chez Stendhal.' For further consideration of this question, see below, Chapter IV.
181. *CA*, II, 30. From his earliest dramatic projects, *Les Deux Hommes* and *Letellier*, Stendhal had focused his ambitions upon a demonstration of the true philosopher as the enemy of obscurity and charlatanism: 'N'est-il pas le meilleur possible dans mon plan que la philosophie, qui n'est que le bien-raisonné, conduise toujours au bonheur, et qu'elle y arrivât n'étaient les complots des méchants; et quels méchants? Les anti-philosophes' (*Theatre*, I, 284). On these two early projects, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 107-114, 261-270, 380-382; Alter, pp. 67-69.
182. *Corr*, I, 36-37.
183. See *Théâtre*, I, 284; *H de P*, II, 64 n. 1b; *ibid.*, I, 179; *JL*, I, 19. On the many applications of this reductive formula, see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 418-420, 430-431. On 'simplicity' as 'an essential touchstone of validity' for the *philosophes*, see Frankel, p. 17.
184. *OI*, I, 169.
185. *Corr*, I, 171. The fundamental precept of Ideology — that all our ideas are derived from the senses — becomes in fact the very model of clearly

demonstrable truth. Lamenting the niggardliness of his allowance in his diary of January 1805, Stendhal first rails against his father then, by way of justification, adds: 'Si quelqu'un s'étonne de ce jugement, il n'a qu'à me le dire, et, partant de la définition de la vertu, qu'il me donnera, je lui prouverai par écrit, aussi clairement qu'on prouve que toutes nos idées arrivent par nos sens, c'est-à-dire aussi évidemment qu'une vérité morale puisse être prouvée, que mon père à mon égard a eu la conduite d'un malhonnête homme... (OI, I, 190).

186. *Corr*, I, 248.
187. *OI*, I, 363.
188. *CA*, III, 62-63.
189. *Ibid.*, III, 215.
190. *Ibid.*, III, 409. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 328.
191. *OI*, I, 363.
192. *Ibid.*, I, 477.
193. *HB*, II, 323. Cf. Helvétius, *De l'Esprit* (Amsterdam: Arkstée & Merkus, 1758), vol. II, disc. III, ch. 22, pp. 120-122.
194. *Corr*, II, 132. In *De l'Amour* (II, 108), Stendhal will write similarly of 'la vertu philosophique qui explique si bien le retour de Régulus à Carthage...'
195. In addition to the examples cited above, see *De l'Amour*, I, 151; II, 171-172; *CA*, I, 303-304; IV, 28-29; *OI*, I, 490. For variations on this important theme, see *Corr*, I, 47; *JL*, II, 11-12.
196. See Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, pp. 69-71; Martino, p. 296; F. Rude, *Stendhal et la pensée sociale de son temps* (Paris: Plon, 1967), p. 177.
197. See *JL*, III, 412 n.; *De l'Amour*, II, 437 n.
198. *JL*, III, 178-186. Stendhal adds in parenthesis: 'Ce titre est une plaisanterie; je chéris trop la clarté pour commencer par une obscurité. Le vrai titre serait: *Helvétius et M. Cousin ou des motifs des actions des hommes*.' Cf. the 'Pensées sur la philosophie d'Helvétius' published in the *Paris Monthly Review* of April 1822 (*CA*, I, 301-304; *Chron.*, I, 83-89).
199. See on this point Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 115-116.
200. *JL*, III, 185.
201. *Werke*, II, p. 603.
202. *OI*, I, 343.
203. See Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, pp. 64-65, 105. It is instructive to compare the qualities required, according to Stendhal, for an appreciation of *De l'Amour* (II, 266-267): 'Ainsi les gens à argent et à grosse joie, qui ont gagné cent mille francs dans l'année qui a précédé le moment où ils ouvrent ce livre, doivent bien vite le fermer, surtout s'ils sont banquiers, manufacturiers, respectables industriels, c'est-à-dire gens à idées éminemment positives.'
204. *JL*, II, 13.

205. On the Condillacian model of reasoning which Stendhal so admired, see I.F. Knight, *The Geometric Spirit: The Abbé de Condillac and the French Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1968), pp. 17-51.
206. CA, IV, 402.
207. JL, I, 256.
208. See Stendhal's recollection, in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* (II, 295), of the 'théorie intérieure' which he early contrived to articulate in his one ill-starred attempt to write a philosophical treatise. On this project, see below, Chapter IV.
209. *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1982), p. 21. Cf. V. Brombert's assertion that Stendhal would never quite lose 'le goût des "systèmes" et de la tactique cérébrale' ('Stendhal lecteur de Rousseau', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, fasc. 92 [1958], pp. 463-464). See also on this point Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur* (Lille: Giard, 1975), p. 41.
210. JL, II, 88.
211. *Ibid.*, I, 462.
212. *Ibid.*, I, 219.
213. *Ibid.*, I, 321. The 'philosophy' for which Stendhal coins the term *beylisme* in a number of letters and diary entries of 1811 and 1812 is referred to on occasion as a 'system' (*Corr*, I, 626-627; *OI*, I, 810). It is clear, however, that this denotes a practical *modus vivendi*, 'un système de morale pratique' (F. Vermale, 'L'élaboration du beylisme', *Le Divan*, 29^e année, no. 213 [1937], p. 273), the very antithesis of those sterile intellectual constructs which Stendhal berates elsewhere under the same name.
214. On the distinction which the *philosophes* had drawn between the two, see Frankel, pp. 44, 76, 90-91.
215. *Op. cit.*, p. 194.
216. *De l'Amour*, I, 128.
217. *Ibid.*, I, 224 n. 1.
218. *Ibid.*, II, 216.
219. *Ibid.*, I, 16.
220. *R et S*, 39.
221. JL, II, 385 n. 1.
222. *H de P*, I, 264. Cf. *Corr*, I, 1062: 'chacun a le bon goût, s'il parle sincèrement.' This remark finds an echo in the *Vie de Rossini* (II, 83): 'Des gens qui aimeraient passionnément une mauvaise musique, seraient plus près du bon goût que des hommes sages qui aiment avec bon sens, raison et *modération*, la musique la plus parfaite qui fut jamais.' The point rings out more clearly still from *De l'Amour* (II, 137): 'chaque homme, s'il veut se donner la peine de s'étudier soi-même, a son *beau idéal*, et il me semble qu'il y a toujours un peu de ridicule à vouloir convertir son voisin.'

223. *Italie*, 42.
224. *Ibid.*, 379.
225. *M de T*, I, 41.
226. *Italie*, 253.
227. *Ibid.*, 259.
228. *Ibid.*, 586.
229. *Corr*, I, 881; *Italie*, 1438.
230. *H de P*, II, 42. Stendhal's measured terms here suggest that he has in mind the criticisms which he voices elsewhere of Cabanis's readiness to draw general conclusions from isolated evidence. See *OI*, I, 195, 879, 889 n.
231. *Italie*, 700.
232. *H de P*, II, 51.
233. *Italie*, 920.
234. *De l'Amour*, I, 107.
235. *Rossini*, I, 252.
236. *H de P*, I, 30-31. Cf. the portrait of Gilles de Retz in the *Mémoires d'un touriste* (I, 475): 'Quels furent les motifs, quelles furent les nuances, non seulement de ses actions atroces, mais de toutes les actions de sa vie qui ne furent pas incriminées? nous l'ignorons. Nous sommes donc bien loin d'avoir un portrait véritable de cet être extraordinaire.'
237. *Op. cit.*, p. 265.
238. *HB*, II, 256.
239. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 81.
240. *Op. cit.*, p. xviii.
241. 'Une herbe parlait à sa sœur: "Hélas! ma chère, je vois s'approcher un monstre dévorant, un animal horrible qui me foule sous ses larges pieds; sa gueule est armée d'une rangée de faux tranchantes, avec laquelle il me coupe, me déchire, et m'engloutit. Les hommes nomment ce monstre un mouton." Ce qui a manqué à Platon, à Socrate, à Aristote, c'est d'entendre cette conversation' (*H de P*, II, 3-4).
242. *Italie*, 360 n.
243. *Ibid.*, 430 n. '[...] ce voyage n'est donc qu'un *recueil de sensations*, où les doctes pourront relever mille erreurs.'
244. 'L'Apolitisme stendhalien', p. 223.
245. *Italie*, 500.
246. *HB*, I, 173. As R. Girard puts it, 'le vrai Stendhal répugne au didactisme' (*Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* [Paris: Grasset, 1961], p. 136).

247. *Italie*, 666.
248. *Corr*, III, 201. This remark can be seen in some sense as a capitulation by Stendhal to the failure of his initial ambition to 'appliquer les mathématiques au cœur humain' (*JL*, I, 155). Cf. *De l'Amour*, II, 188: 'Il n'y a qu'une très petite partie de l'art d'être heureux, qui soit une science exacte...'
249. *OI*, I, 198. This did not, of course, prevent Stendhal from attempting elsewhere, in his earliest writings notably, to frame just such moral truths in the most exact language of which he could conceive, that of mathematics. See below, Chapter III.
250. *JL*, III, 186.
251. *Italie*, 853. Cf. Stendhal's judgment of history as little more than 'une fable convenue' (*Ibid.*, 657). The same idea finds expression in *H de P*, II, 99.
252. *Corr*, I, 1143.
253. See, for example, *JL*, I, 470; II, 184, 255.
254. *Ibid.*, I, 229.
255. *S d'E*, 41. See also *ibid.*, 4: 'mes jugements varient comme mon humeur.' Cf. Stendhal's reported remark to Lamartine: 'Je crois seulement que je ne crois à rien' (Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 93).

CHAPTER II

THE FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Setting the Parameters

The preceding chapter, while it anticipates questions which will be developed in the course of this study, serves a number of functions. Placing Stendhal broadly within the intellectual context of his age, it establishes the grounds upon which his reputation as a thinker rests and examines an aspect of his writing which has largely escaped the attentions of his critics. Not only does Stendhal make no pretence of setting forth a systematic philosophy: he is tireless in his endeavour to fight shy of all that might betoken an *esprit de système*. Both Arthur Chuquet and Michael Wood have the merit of recognising Stendhal's readiness to call into question theories which he holds dear.¹ They are, however, notable exceptions amid a body of critical opinion which has tended to measure Stendhal by the very standards of 'consistency' which he himself so ostentatiously calls into question as a means of apprehending truth in all its diversity.²

That critics should deny Stendhal this consistency whilst at the same time proclaiming him a *philosophe* in the mould of Helvétius, or an *idéologue* after the fashion of Tracy, raises the question, it might be argued, of their *own* consistency. For if the Idéologues sought to achieve anything, it was, for all their arraigning of the term itself, to *systematise* the study of human nature and codify a new ethic for man and society³ — in Tracy's case, to encapsulate all philosophy, a whole education, in several volumes.⁴ 'Au moyen de trois volumes de Tracy, qu'on pourrait facilement réduire à un,' writes Stendhal excitedly to his sister Pauline on 22 March 1806, 'tu es dispensée à jamais de lire Aristote, Locke, Condillac, etc., etc., Port-Royal, le Père Buffier, etc., etc., etc.'⁵ While the terms of such a recommendation may seem the more extravagant when measured against Tracy's ultimate achievement, they do articulate one of the central aspirations of a philosophical programme that was truly encyclopædic in its scope. 'Il ne s'agit de rien de moins,' as Bernard Plongeron observes, 'que de promouvoir une civilisation républicaine regroupant la philosophie, la politique, l'économie, l'éducation, les arts et même les sciences exactes.'⁶ We need scarcely insist upon the extent to which the range and embraciveness of such pretensions contrast with what we have seen to be the self-avowed limitations of Stendhal's own philosophical enterprise.

These are not, however, the only problems that are raised by the preceding chapter. The perception of Stendhal as an acolyte of Ideology and heir to an

eighteenth-century philosophical tradition has, as we have said, become one of the undisputed commonplaces of Stendhal scholarship.⁷ To consign Stendhal thus to a specific niche, however, to make of him the exponent — *disciple, successeur, défenseur, inspirateur, précurseur*⁸ — of a particular current or movement, is to neglect a more general but no less important area of inquiry. Ever since the studies of Léon Blum and Henri Delacroix, it has been customary to discern in Stendhal the uneasy coexistence of a rationalist and a romantic.⁹ What these and subsequent studies of a similar nature¹⁰ fail to account for, however, is a deep and enduring ambivalence to philosophy *itself* which confounds any such facile schematisation. For, as our discussion in Chapter I suggests, there is no single definition of Reason or of the Philosopher that may be set against the Romantic in Stendhal. *La philosophie* had many avatars: it could be 'haute', 'grande', 'sublime', 'bonne', 'véritable', 'vraie'; it could equally be 'mauvaise', 'fausse', 'abominable', 'rude', 'vaine', 'prétendue', 'aride', 'misérable', 'ridicule', 'saugrenue', 'rêveuse', 'mélancolique', 'mauvaise et grossière'.¹¹ Philosophy can be considered as the guarantor of truth and intellectual integrity, just as it can be 'folle à mourir de rire'.¹² There is a philosophy that is a branch of mathematics, another that partakes of science and medicine, yet another that is amenable to art. There is a philosophy, too, that is vivifying, part of the very definition of human happiness, of that much vaunted 'art de marcher au bonheur' — another that is, as the hapless protagonist of *Le Rouge et le Noir* will discover, 'de nature à faire désirer la mort'.¹³

All of this raises questions which have been addressed only tangentially by scholars who devote consideration to Stendhal's philosophical development.¹⁴ Yet they are the starting-point for any appreciation of his abiding concerns in this most important domain. What value did Philosophy itself, as a discipline, hold for Stendhal? How did he perceive the role of the Philosopher? Where do the boundaries between Philosophy and Art occur, and to what degree, if at all, may the two be coalesced? Why did Stendhal turn to philosophy in the first place? There is a widely held assumption that Stendhal took to reading philosophy as a means of offsetting his excessive sensibility and undoing the sentimentalism which he had imbibed through Rousseau as an adolescent. Yet his earliest notebooks and letters reveal a quite different motivation underlying his recourse to the philosophers. What informed Stendhal's judgment of the philosophy which he read, and how did his conceptions evolve over time? The view prevails that, by the time he reached adulthood, Stendhal had forged a definitive philosophy upon which he rested his conception of man and society, and from which he would never thereafter deviate. Nothing, however, could be more misleading than this image of a Stendhal who, from his eighteenth year, as Georges Blin puts it, 'est un homme dont le siège est fait'.¹⁵

It is to such questions that we shall turn our attention in the pages that follow. Let us begin, however, by attempting to establish what Stendhal understood by the term *philosophie* itself. According to J.-C. Augendre, Stendhal first defines philosophy in a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 9 March 1800.¹⁶ In recommending that his sister observe a judicious diet of reading, Stendhal makes the following remark:

Tes lectures, si elles sont choisies, t'intéresseront bientôt jusqu'à l'adoration et elles t'introduiront à la vraie philosophie, source inépuisable de jouissance suprêmes, c'est elle qui nous donne la force de l'âme et la capacité nécessaire pour sentir et adorer le génie. Avec elle tout s'aplanit, les difficultés disparaissent, l'âme est étendue, elle conçoit et aime davantage.¹⁷

Though this passage contains much that is instructive about the benefits of philosophy as Stendhal conceived of them at this early stage, it provides no *definition*, as Augendre claims, of the concept itself. The first definition proper — the first answer to the question: what *is* philosophy? — appears rather in a letter written almost two years later, in which we find Stendhal once more counselling his sister Pauline:

Tu vois, ma chère, que nous sommes toujours contrariés par quelque chose, aussi, le meilleur parti que nous ayons à prendre est-il de tâcher de nous accommoder de notre situation et d'en tirer la plus grande masse de bonheur possible. C'est là la seule vraie philosophie.¹⁸

Here, in 1801, is a clear adumbration of that 'philosophy' which would issue under the name of *beylisme* from a number of Stendhal's letters and diary entries of 1811 and 1812.¹⁹ The eudæmonic principle that is central to the above passage, and which early informs Stendhal's understanding of the proper function and end of philosophy, is present again in the more concise definition which we read in a letter dated 7 June 1804: 'La philosophie est l'art de rendre heureux: pour cela, plaisantons de tout; rions sur chaque chose.'²⁰ Writing once more to Pauline Beyle on 26 January 1806, Stendhal recounts how he has succeeded in coaxing a friend back from the brink of suicide. By showing the friend in question an alternative route to happiness and self-fulfilment (the cultivation of his intellect through a sustained programme of study in which feature philosophers such as Tracy, Hobbes and Cabanis), Stendhal takes credit for having administered '[une] grande cure morale aussi difficile au moins qu'une cure physique.' His tale, however, has a moral which goes beyond the particular case in question. 'Voilà l'avantage de la philosophie', he concludes: 'elle apprend à se guérir des plus grands chagrins.'²¹

In each of these three instances, we find evoked the same *sagesse* which Stendhal holds to be the essence of a sane personal philosophy. 'Voilà de quoi se compose la sagesse,' he writes in his letter of 26 January 1806, 'il faut ou prendre le parti de se brûler la cervelle tout de suite ou se mettre à se corriger.'²² This notion of *sagesse* is

one which is closely related to Stendhal's earliest thoughts on philosophy. It can be defined as the practical business of seeking happiness, of bringing one's desires into line with what felicity is adjudged to be attainable. As such, it implies both self-knowledge and self-mastery.²³ It is this notion precisely that is articulated in another letter, written to Pauline on 22 March 1806, in which Stendhal attempts to codify what he terms 'la véritable philosophie'; in so doing, he prescribes something akin to the treatment which has 'cured' his suicidal friend:

Songe à trois maximes:

1° S'accoutumer aux chagrins, tout hom[me] en a sept ou huit par jour.

2° Ne pas trop s'exagérer le bonheur que l'on n'a pas.

3° Savoir tirer parti des moments de froideur pour travailler à perfectionner notre art de connaître, ou esprit.

Le bonheur est presque dans l'observation de ces trois maximes...²⁴

Between this passage and the principles which Stendhal will outline to his friend Félix Faure in 1812, the thread is unbroken.²⁵ In his enduring concern with the notion of happiness, Stendhal echoes what Robert Mauzi and L.G. Crocker characterise as the distinguishing feature — the 'obsession' and 'highest value', as Crocker puts it — of the eighteenth century.²⁶ To this extent, H.-F. Imbert makes an important qualification when charging that Stendhal comes to philosophy with too much *parti pris* and too little specialised competence. 'Et pourtant,' notes Imbert, 'cette incompétence est limitée par le fait que Stendhal n'a jamais varié sur ce qu'il attendait de la philosophie: la recherche des principes les plus efficaces pour atteindre, en cette vie même, le bonheur.'²⁷

Happiness is a *destination*, a state that is to be reached by negotiating the obstacles which lie in one's path. Stendhal's writings are replete with geometrical images which suggest a course to be plotted or a path to be followed — 'la route du bonheur', 'seul chemin du bonheur', 'l'*unique chemin du bonheur*'²⁸ — in order to attain happiness. In a letter to his sister dated 1 January 1805, he develops the metaphor:

Pour arriver à leur but, les hommes ont une conduite à tenir, c'est le raisonnement qui chez tous trace cette conduite; il est tout simple que, quand le raisonnement est mauvais, nous n'arrivons pas au but désiré, comme nous n'arriverions pas à Voreppe, si nous nous avançons par le chemin du Cours, vers le pont de Claix. [...] De même, dans la vie, l'homme qui raisonne bien arrivera à son but; celui qui raisonne mal restera en route.²⁹

Such strong, simple reasoning is a feature of Stendhal's earliest endeavour to define, in the most readily apprehensible terms, the indispensable place of reason in human affairs. Yet, if the plotting of one's route to happiness is in some sense the geometry of philosophy, the latter also has its algebra. For it must be precise, clinical, unadorned by sentiment. *Sec, clair, sans illusion*, to recall the terms of Stendhal's own definition. Stendhal himself makes just such a suggestion when, in 1818, he writes of 'la

philosophie, laquelle est une espèce d'algèbre et ne cherche que la vérité sans s'adresser aux passions.³⁰ It is to this 'philosophy' precisely that Stendhal will have recourse when recalling the women he has loved in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, where he writes:

Pour les considérer le plus philosophiquement possible et tâcher ainsi de les dépouiller de l'auréole qui me fait *aller les yeux*, qui m'éblouit et m'ôte la faculté de voir distinctement, j'*ordonnerai* ces dames (langage mathématique) selon leurs diverses qualités.³¹

Would it be pushing the point too far to suggest that there is equally an 'arithmetic' of philosophy? Perhaps not, if we recall that 'esprit de commerce, qui compte tout et ne s'enthousiasme de rien,' which Stendhal considers so conducive to sound reason in his diary entry of 12 September 1805.³² Or if we reiterate his remark to Pauline, in a letter of July 1804, concerning the variable proportions in which flattery and effrontery may be combined in conversation without a breach of the proprieties. 'Il faut t'accoutumer à raisonner ainsi mathématiquement,' he insists on that occasion; 'voilà le véritable usage des math[ématiques].'³³

It is evident from such remarks that mathematics early provided Stendhal with a ready paradigm for his philosophical enterprise. However one cares to categorise them — and the mathematical model is one which exercises a strong appeal for Stendhal³⁴ — it is evident that there exist, in fact, various 'orders' of philosophy within Stendhal's overall conception. There is a philosophy that is conducive — more than that, *essential* — to happiness; another which operates outside the realm of sentiment altogether. It would be crude, but not altogether erroneous perhaps, to divide these into the broad categories of 'theory' and 'application'. For Stendhal held that philosophical wisdom and the felicity which should attend it could be founded only upon an accurate understanding of ourselves and of the world around us. '[Je] vois chaque jour', he urges Pauline in July 1804, 'qu'il n'y a point de bonheur sans connaissance de la vérité. Crois cela, et agis en conséquence.'³⁵ Again, on 23 October 1805, he reminds his sister that happiness can be attained only through a knowledge of oneself and of one's place in a wider scheme of things.³⁶

The exercise of philosophical wisdom — or, in Stendhal's parlance, *la sagesse* — must therefore be preceded by and founded upon a more intellectualised apprehension of man and the nature of the world. In one of his earliest extant letters, dated 18 November 1801, Stendhal inquires of Pauline: 'T'occupes-tu de l'histoire, non pas de cette histoire qui consiste à apprendre par cœur M. Le Ragois, mais de cette histoire philosophique qui montre dans tous les événements la suite des passions des hommes....?'³⁷ Clearly in evidence here is that 'spirit of classic ethical psychology' which, as Erich Auerbach observes, informs Stendhal's world-perspective.³⁸ The

study of men and events as they are revealed through history — 'cette base de toute connaissance de l'homme', as Stendhal elsewhere defines the study of the past³⁹ — should serve as a means of acquiring philosophical wisdom in the present. 'La science de l'histoire a-t-elle d'autre but que la construction de la philosophie?' writes Stendhal in a notebook entry dating from January 1803.⁴⁰ Enumerating the benefits of studying history in a letter from the same period, he is unequivocal on this same point:

La première est de faire connaître les hommes: cette connaissance se nomme philosophie, mot tiré du grec et qui signifie *amour de la sagesse*.⁴¹

As a concise definition of philosophy, this is clear enough. Stendhal sees fit elsewhere, however, to define with greater precision still the 'philosopher' to whom such a title should be applied. 'Je n'appelle point philosophes,' he specifies, 'les inventeurs dans les sciences exactes.'⁴² Newton, Euler, Lagrange, if they are to be considered 'philosophers', should be so not through their knowledge of the sciences but through their knowledge of *man*.⁴³ On discovering the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, in June 1804, Stendhal is unstinting in his appreciation. The terms in which he couches his praise are worthy of note:

Il y a plus de *connaissance du vrai sur l'homme* ou de *philosophie* dans ce parag. 14 du chap. V de Hobbes que dans tout J[ean]-J[acques].⁴⁴

It is evident, as we have suggested, that two quite distinct definitions of philosophy are at work in all of this. On the one hand, a eudæmonic and strictly pragmatic conception which makes the procurement of happiness both the function of philosophy and the measure of its value. On the other, a more abstractive notion which holds the 'science of man' to be the basis of all true philosophy. These two conceptions are not in contradiction, but rather form part of the same ideal. Their interdependence is, in fact, made explicit in a note which Stendhal consigns to his diary as early as December 1801:

Presque tous les malheurs de la vie viennent des fausses idées que nous avons sur ce qui nous arrive. Connaître à fond les hommes, juger sainement des événements, est donc un grand pas vers le bonheur.⁴⁵

In electing to live '*en philosophe*' in Paris in 1802, Stendhal would make no distinction, therefore, between a science of Reason and an art of seeking Happiness.⁴⁶ Both were to be subsumed under the 'connaissance de l'homme' which he set himself as the most pressing challenge. 'Quelle est la meilleure marche à suivre pour faire les progrès les plus grands et les plus rapides dans la connaissance de l'homme?' he asks amid his notes for April 1804.⁴⁷ As ever, he engages his sister Pauline in the enterprise, concluding his letter of 25 September 1804 with the injunction: 'réfléchis sur l'homme, voilà la seule bonne science, et tu verras combien elle te servira dans le

The poète-philosophe

It was more, however, than an abstract equation between knowledge and happiness that impelled Stendhal towards this 'plus belle science qui existe, celle de l'homme.'⁴⁹ He had a purpose, and one which was clearly defined from the outset. Amid the many critical appreciations of Stendhal's thought, sight is often lost of the single factor which, more than any other, determined his early intellectual orientation. For there is, as we have intimated, a tendency to perceive Stendhal's excursions into philosophy as a necessary counterweight to his sensibility. Thus, for Jean Prévost, the journal in which Stendhal set down the rudiments of his incipient philosophy was undertaken not — as Stendhal himself might have protested — 'pour développer son esprit', but, the critic asserts, 'pour lutter contre sa sensibilité.'⁵⁰ This view is echoed and amplified by Robert Alter, according to whom Stendhal's early cultivation of philosophy can be seen as an 'instinctive attempt to counterbalance his passionate emotionality with an intellectual apparatus adopted from thinkers who were hard-headed rationalists, utilitarians, materialists, mechanists.'⁵¹ In similar vein, Robert Adams argues that Stendhal 'needed a philosopher, if only as a trace to direct and a snaffle to curb his sensibility.'⁵² No different are the assessments offered by Gita May and Francine Marill Albérès. While May divines in Stendhal 'un besoin profond d'étudier la nature humaine afin d'affermir son jugement et de maîtriser son imagination et sa sensibilité',⁵³ Albérès suggests that his recourse to philosophy is explicable as 'le meilleur remède contre ses chagrins d'amour et le manque de succès mondains.'⁵⁴

Though Stendhal would indeed assign such a counterbalancing value to his philosophical endeavours, he embarked upon these — as he explicitly states — with a quite different purpose in mind.⁵⁵ In May 1803, he resumes thus his ambitions:

Quel est mon but? D'être le plus grand poète possible. Pour cela connaître parfaitement l'homme. Le style n'est que la seconde partie du poète.⁵⁶

It is clear from this statement, and we know from the body of his writings which date from this period, that his overriding ambition was to become a successful playwright, a second and more accomplished Molière.⁵⁷ Philosophy was useful to him insofar as it would advance his theatrical ambitions, for on his success as a dramatist was staked his future happiness as he conceived of it. This strictly functional value is brought out with

a singular clarity of purpose in an entry which Stendhal makes to his journal in July 1804, envisaging the philosophical treatise which he is planning to write under the title *Filosofia Nova* and in which he proposes to lay bare the workings of human nature:

J'ai besoin de cet ouvrage pour faire des poèmes excellents. Il faut observer les passions dans l'homme qui existe pour pouvoir les mettre dans mes êtres plus beaux que nature. Pour observer les passions il faut savoir ce qu'est la vérité. Mais nous voyons les choses telles que notre tête nous les peint. Il faut donc connaître cette tête.⁵⁸

Convoluted the chain of reasoning may be; but it leaves us in no doubt about the hierarchy of the young Stendhal's priorities. Philosophy is conceived here not as a means of 'curbing' or 'curing' sensibility, but as a means of giving dramatic expression to the very passions which, according to those critics cited above, it was Stendhal's objective to counteract. Once embarked upon the drafting of the treatise in question, moreover, the aspiring *poète-philosophe* maintains the same sense of purpose in his attitude toward the task in hand. 'Ce mois-ci,' he records in his diary on 11 August 1804, 's'est passé à l'étude de la grande philosophie pour trouver les bases des meilleures comédies, et, en général, des meilleurs poèmes, et celles de la meilleure route que j'ai à suivre pour trouver dans la société tout le bonheur qu'elle peut me donner.'⁵⁹ A week before penning this note, Stendhal had resumed the two years of self-administered study in which he had been engaged since resigning his commission in summer 1802:

De tout ce que j'ai lu, de tout ce que j'ai vu jusqu'aujourd'hui, je n'ai retenu que ce qui m'a semblé utile au talent que je veux acquérir de grand peintre de caractère.⁶⁰

Philosophy, then, was a means to an end for Stendhal, a first necessary step on the road to success as a dramatist. Early in 1803, he had posed the question: 'Quels sont les avantages de la philosophie pour un poète?'⁶¹ Though he does not, on that occasion, provide any answer, his subsequent writings are peppered with reminders of the *utility* of the philosophy upon which he has embarked:

Je lis *De la vérité* par Brissot-Warville [...]. Cet ouvrage va m'être très utile.

Ce livre [Descartes's *Les Passions de l'âme*] [...] pourra m'être très utile.

Voilà où l'étude de l'*Idéologie* (Tracy et Biran) m'est utile.

Voilà la grande utilité pour moi de l'idéologie...

Voilà comme il est utile aux poètes d'étudier l'idéologie.

Je relis la *Logique* de Tracy, j'ai commencé cet auteur le 31 décembre 1804. Il m'aura été de la plus grande utilité...⁶²

Where, however, was all this relentlessly pursued 'utility' tending?⁶³ Stendhal

provides a clear answer in his diary of February 1805, when he explains the essential but subsidiary role which he assigns to the philosopher's task:

En général, le talent des philosophes n'est que l'échafaudage de celui des poètes. Ils font connaître les affections que le poète peint ensuite pour émouvoir.⁶⁴

The remark is worthy of note. For, in keeping with this distinction, Stendhal forges yet a further definition of 'philosophy', one which resumes with concision all of his intellectual and artistic aspirations as they are invested in his early-literary endeavours:

Philosophie, ou art de connaître et de peindre les passions des hommes.⁶⁵

The simplicity of this definition masks a serious problem for Stendhal. It is a problem, moreover, which harks back to the earlier distinction between philosophy as an intellectual discipline and philosophy as a practical means to happiness. How can the talent of the philosopher and that of the poet be fused? Can one, as Maurice Bardèche puts it, 'devenir poète comme on devient ingénieur?'⁶⁶ For such indeed is Stendhal's intent. We have noted already how the qualities required of the philosopher are the very antithesis of those required in the reader of *De l'Amour*.⁶⁷ Yet Michael Wood is correct when he suggests that Stendhal harbours the 'double desire to be both Lamartine and an eighteenth-century ideologue', that he 'wants to *feel* like Shelley and to *measure* like D'Alembert.'⁶⁸ From the outset, however, it becomes clear to Stendhal that the philosopher and the poet are not of the same stuff, that they are not only fundamentally different but are, essentially, in *conflict* one with the other. By endeavouring to become, in the language of Saint-Lambert, a '*poète philosophe*',⁶⁹ Stendhal is in fact attempting to realise what he soon comes to fear is a contradiction in terms. 'Voilà peut-être Rousseau opposé à Helvétius,' he reflects amid his notes of July 1804, 'où l'on voit que le philosophe ne peut pas plus être bon poète que le poète bon philosophe.'⁷⁰ Whereas he had seemed to find confirmation in Alfieri 'qu'un homme plein d'Helvétius peut être poète sublime',⁷¹ his subsequent reading of Brissot de Warville inclines him towards the opposite point of view. 'Brissot me fait penser,' he concedes in his diary of 7 July 1804, 'que les qualités du philosophe, c'est-à-dire de celui qui cherche à connaître les passions, et du poète, ou de celui qui cherche à les peindre pour produire tel effet, sont incompatibles.'⁷²

Reflections such as these among Stendhal's early private writings betoken more than the self-conscious anxieties of the struggling *littérateur*. For through his deliberations on the respective talents of the philosopher and the poet, Stendhal declares a very personal stake in a well established philosophical debate. If it was the case, as John Locke (and, more forcibly in his wake, Helvétius) had argued, that men were what they were through education, if talents were not *prévenient* but acquired, then this

seemed to open up limitless horizons of achievement for those to whom the appropriate instruction was administered. 'I think I may say,' Locke had written in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 'that of all the Men we meet with, Nine parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education.'⁷³ With Helvétius, the 'nine parts of ten' become *all* 'normally constituted' individuals without exception.⁷⁴ Stendhal, it is clear from his journals and letters, early adheres under the latter's influence to the view that men are *made*, not *born*, to be what they are. His writings from the period exude a boundless faith in the power of education. If the conception of human nature which this implied placed an uncomfortable onus on a neophyte impatient for success in more than one domain, it held out the reassuring promise that genuine ambition and judicious application would reap a plentiful reward. 'Les grandes passions viennent à bout de tout,' writes the student of Helvétius to his sister in January 1803: 'de là, on peut dire que, quand un homme veut *vivement* et *constamment*, il parvient à son but.'⁷⁵

As Jean-Pierre Richard has ably shown, Stendhal would never resolve the problem of reconciling the cold edge of the philosopher with the ardent sensibility of the poet.⁷⁶ Even at the height of his attempt to marry the two, the language which he employs remains conflictual, betraying his continued doubts about the feasibility of his undertaking:

Voilà comment le poète bat le philosophe dans les détails, il n'y a que lui qui les ait sentis, il est donc le seul qui puisse les peindre.
Mais le philosophe [...] le bat dans les grands principes, dans les bases de système.⁷⁷

In a notebook entry dated 6 June 1804, Stendhal writes: 'Je crois que pour bien faire la comédie il faut se dépassionner.'⁷⁸ On the following day, he transcribes this idea in a letter to his friend Louis Crozet: 'Je cherche à me dépassionner pour redevenir froid philosophe et faire mon plan.'⁷⁹ The sharp distinction that is evoked here between reason and sentiment was to bedevil Stendhal's enterprise from its inception. In a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 29 August 1804, he gives graphic expression to his desire to seal off his reason from the incursions of his sensibility: 'Il ne faut pas exalter ton âme, je voudrais pouvoir te parler aussi froidement qu'un géomètre en démontrant la manière d'avoir la valeur de x dans $x^2 - px + 9 = 0$.'⁸⁰ The sense of this remark is more fully appreciated if it is read in conjunction with a series of definitions which Stendhal had entered in his notebook a year earlier, in an attempt to codify the difference between 'le poète, le philosophe et le géomètre':

le poète = le maximum des passions,
le géomètre = le minimum,
le philosophe est entre deux.
J.-J. Rousseau était plus près du poète que du philosophe.

Helvétius peut-être dans le milieu désirable pour un philosophe. Duclos trop près du géomètre.⁸¹

Yet if the conception of the geometer as it is here defined appears to bring the poet and philosopher closer, the *rapprochement* is relative and fragile. In a note which Stendhal consigns to his diary of February 1805, the gulf between the two seems wider than ever: 'Les poètes ne sont loués que par des hommes passionnés, les philosophes que par des hommes froids. Quelle différence de gloire en quantité!'⁸² If Helvétius, moreover, benefits momentarily from being seen as the desirable 'middle path', he is quickly relegated to a realm of insensitivity that is much closer to the geometer than to the poet: 'Helvétius a peint vrai pour les cœurs froids, et très faux pour les âmes ardentes.'⁸³ In a letter to Pauline Beyle of 22 March 1806, Stendhal goes so far as to castigate Rousseau for not having recognised that the qualities of the thinker are the very antithesis of those of the artist:

[...] malheureusement le manque de chaleur lui faisant mépriser les auteurs froids, comme Duclos, Helvétius, d'Holbach, il ne voit pas que leur froideur, qui les rend très peu poètes, ne les rend que meilleurs raisonneurs.⁸⁴

To this criticism of Rousseau, Stendhal adds a brief but revealing fragment of self-analysis: 'Moi-même, tu t'en souviens, je suis tombé dans ce défaut. Tracy a achevé de m'en guérir.'⁸⁵ The reference to Destutt de Tracy is instructive in this regard; for it is clear that the ambition to embody the talents of the philosopher and those of the poet is seen here at least by Stendhal as an example of precisely those 'vœux contradictoires' against which Tracy had put him on his guard.⁸⁶

For all its internal contradictions, however, Stendhal's cherished ideal remains clear. Rousseau, he insists, 's'il faut faire une analyse du cœur humain, [...] est poète là où il faudrait raisonner, et avance mille sophismes.'⁸⁷ Mme de Stael's *Delphine*, on the other hand, 'fait trop sur l'âme (sur mon âme) l'effet d'un cours de philosophie.'⁸⁸ The success of his own endeavour, Stendhal was convinced, would stand or fall by his ability to combine the virtues and avoid the excesses of both. 'Cette union de philosophie sublime et de beaux vers,' he permits himself to predict, 'doit l'emporter.'⁸⁹ Stendhal's use of the epithet 'sublime' here, despite its rhetorical overtones, introduces an important consideration. For it suggests once more that there are different *orders* of philosophy, and that all may not be deserving of the same approbation. Stendhal was, in fact, during this early period, working out further distinctions within the notion of philosophy itself, distinctions which might allow him still to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable. Thus, in his journal of 19 June 1804, we find the brief but significant reflection: 'Il n'y a (je crois) de contraire à la poésie qu'une certaine philosophie.'⁹⁰

Though the tentative nature of this remark is underlined by the parenthetic 'je crois', it does open up the concept of philosophy — as it relates to 'la poésie' specifically — to new considerations. One of the problems inherent in Stendhal's attempt to combine the two lay in the fundamental dichotomy which seemed to him to exist between the poet as a purveyor of pleasure and the philosopher as a purveyor of unpalatable truths, an inveterate iconoclast whose function was to destroy the most cherished of illusions. The dramatist, Stendhal believed from the outset, 'doit plaire d'abord et ensuite instruire.'⁹¹ On the philosopher, however, no such constraint impinged. Quite the contrary. If the first task of the poet is to please, that of the philosopher is to disabuse: 'avant d'instruire il faut commencer par détromper.'⁹² Within such a perspective, the role of the philosopher was indissociable from a disregard for pleasure, whether it be his own or that of others. The philosopher gives no quarter and asks for none in his mission to expose the truth. In a journal entry of 31 July 1804, Stendhal portrays philosophy as a form of intellectual masochism:

J'ai une sensation agréable; celle de mes cheveux divisés en deux masses sur les deux tempes. Je m'arrête à en jouir, à en goûter les nuances; le philosophe l'eût détruite pour voir si elle était bien vraie, si c'était bien de là que venait le plaisir.⁹³

There is much here that is suggestive of those philosophers whom Stendhal early designates as 'froids',⁹⁴ those insensitive or desensitised individuals who, espousing reason to the exclusion of sentiment, measure up unfavourably against his own projected undertaking to combine the two. From such philosophers, Stendhal reasons, dramatic art could never emanate: 'ils pourraient bien parvenir à faire un beau plan de tragédie [...], mais, ne pouvant accoucher d'un sentiment, ils n'en pourront jamais faire une scène.'⁹⁵ Here precisely was the type of philosopher for whom Stendhal's aversion would never be far from the surface, the exponent of that 'certaine philosophie' which he perceived as implacably opposed to all things 'poetic'.⁹⁶

The semantic fields in which Stendhal places his evocations of such philosophy — coldness, aridity, sadness, destructiveness⁹⁷ — are highly significant. For they reflect a tendency on Stendhal's part, and on the part of a substantial body of intellectual opinion in the post-Revolutionary years, to perceive philosophy as a cruel mistress who delighted not only in the unmasking of vicious falsehood but in the destruction of even the fondest illusions. This backlash against the withering character of philosophy is evident in some of the contemporary responses to the *Idéologues* and in a post-Revolutionary reaction to the perceived excesses of the Enlightenment. The spirit of Ideology, 'si constructeur au fond', as Henri Delacroix writes, 'devait apparaître d'abord comme destructeur, comme une philosophie sceptique et révolutionnaire, et les événements politiques, issus de la révolution, devaient favoriser un autre système.'⁹⁸

Thus, as early as 1794, we find Robespierre, in an address to the Convention, defying the 'philosophers' in a ringing exaltation of Rousseau and his defence of 'ces dogmes consolateurs que la raison donne pour appui au cœur humain.'⁹⁹ In like spirit, Maine de Biran warned, in 1802, against any assault on those consoling beliefs which bolstered the fragile happiness of life, those 'sentiments consolateurs de l'existence' which Mme de Staël would uphold and which would be championed by others such as Maistre and Chateaubriand.¹⁰⁰ The conviction expressed was that the atheistic materialism of the *philosophes* and their successors robbed man of cherished beliefs and, as some argued, posed a threat to the moral and social order. Napoléon was not slow to seize upon this pretext in his opposition to Ideology as a hotbed of 'dangerous dreamers' intent upon the destruction of illusions and, by implication, of happiness itself.¹⁰¹ Thus it was that Degérando, in the *Rapport historique sur les progrès de la philosophie depuis 1789* which he produced for Napoleon in 1808, denounced the 'abus commis au nom de la philosophie sous les rapports de la morale, de la religion et des institutions politiques', and defined his objective as being to 'réconcilier la philosophie avec les vérités qui fondent le bonheur de l'homme et la tranquillité des Etats.' The philosophy that must be embraced, Degérando goes on, in terms whose significance is to be weighed against the language of the Enlightenment, is

cette philosophie qui appelle la raison non à proscrire, mais à fonder les idées religieuses, qui s'allie au christianisme, qui reconnaît une morale naturelle, qui respecte les institutions établies...¹⁰²

Though Stendhal was far from sharing the moral, religious or political animus which informed such judgments, he harboured a similar view of philosophy as a sad and disillusioning business, an exercise in 'cette logique inexorable, dure, et se complaisant dans sa dureté'¹⁰³ which seemed the very antithesis of a happy state of mind and which was later to find its most uncompromising exponent in Nietzsche. Reason, far from guaranteeing felicity, becomes 'une école de déception, de défloration', a domain into which the philosopher ventures at his peril.¹⁰⁴ 'Pour fuir la désagréable cuisine intérieure de la croyance,' writes Michel Crouzet, 'il faut recourir à une sorte de cruauté du savoir; est vrai ce qui déçoit, ou accable, en tout cas contraint le moi.'¹⁰⁵ This is a perception of the philosopher which Stendhal would never manage to dispel, and which requires to be set against his image as an unflinching disciple of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues*. 'Voilà pourquoi les peintures du monde sont si tristes chez les philosophes,' he writes in a letter of November 1804 to his sister Pauline: 'ils ont peint ce qu'ils sentaient et qui, en effet, était fort triste.'¹⁰⁶ Writing again to Pauline in June 1810, Stendhal returns to this theme: 'Tous les savants en connaissances de l'homme sont moroses et meurent de tristesse.'¹⁰⁷ In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, the view will be more jaundiced still: 'Le philosophe qui a le malheur de connaître les hommes méprise toujours davantage le pays où il a appris à les connaître.'¹⁰⁸

Consoling illusions there are aplenty, argues the author of the *Promenades dans Rome*, in the philosophy of Kant and Victor Cousin. 'La triste raison,' on the other hand, 'à laquelle il faut bien en revenir quand il s'agit de raisonner, nous offre, pour nous guider dans la recherche si difficile du vrai, les ouvrages de Bayle, de Cabanis, de MM. de Tracy et Bentham.'¹⁰⁹ Happiness, it seems, must be the first victim when one determines, as Stendhal would put it in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, to 'voir les choses du côté philosophique, c'est-à-dire triste.'¹¹⁰

It is clear from our discussion thus far that in Stendhal there is a fusion — or, more properly, an uneasy coexistence — between two quite distinct and opposed currents of thought on the question of truth and falsehood.¹¹¹ Though the utility of truth and the perniciousness of falsehood are major themes underlying the whole edifice of his philosophical beliefs, they are unstable and liable to shift quite dramatically in relation to the overriding criterion of personal happiness. The equation between reason and *unhappiness* that informs each of the foregoing examples is never more graphically expressed by Stendhal than in a note which he enters in his diary as early as 29 March 1805, and in which the problem of truth and illusion is cast in sharp relief:

Voilà encore du génie philosophique. J'ai le diable au corps pour montrer l'écorché à tout le monde. C'est un peintre qui voudrait s'illustrer dans le genre de l'Albane, qui aurait judicieusement commencé par l'étude de l'anatomie, et pour qui, comme objet utile, elle serait devenue tellement agréable, qu'au lieu de peindre un joli sein, voulant enchanter les hommes, il peindrait à découvert et sanglants tous les muscles qui forment la poitrine d'une jolie femme, d'autant plus horrible, en leur sottise manie, qu'on s'attendait à une chose plus agréable. Ils procurent un nouveau dégoût par la vérité des objets qu'ils présentent. On ne ferait que les mépriser s'ils étaient faux, mais ils sont vrais, ils poursuivent l'imagination.¹¹²

Stendhal's 'Age of Reason'

The above passage (with its striking adumbration of the criticisms that would be levelled against the later author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*)¹¹³ expresses in sum the dilemma by which the young Stendhal found himself confronted at the outset of his literary career. Philosophy was, at one and the same time, essential *and* inimical to the art in which his ambition was to excel, essential *and* inimical to the happiness that it was his overriding preoccupation to attain.¹¹⁴ His resolve to 'derousseauseise' himself,¹¹⁵ together with his sustained denunciation of the *froidueur* of a philosopher such as Helvétius, constitute the horns of the dilemma on which he found himself caught. The solution, he reasoned, lay in the formulation of a 'new' philosophy, which would be used not to suppress but to give free expression to sensibility. The intellect

should elucidate, not devitalize, the emotions. This ideal was what Stendhal proposed to realise in the *Filosofia Nova*, a treatise on human nature which he determined to write 'avec le langage propre de [la] passion et non point avec les phrases si froides des philosophes du XVIII^e siècle.'¹¹⁶ Through the medium of his treatise, he resolved, he would codify a number of 'new truths' — 'plusieurs vérités morales que j'ai découvertes et que je crois neuves' — before proceeding to cast these in dramatic form 'et les faire applaudir sur la scène.'¹¹⁷

In the event, the exercise was to prove a fiasco; but if it was fruitless in what it achieved, the drafting of the *Filosofia Nova* remains arguably the most instructive episode of Stendhal's early intellectual life. Before considering this ill-fated project in detail, it is useful to reflect upon the stage in his intellectual development at which Stendhal undertook thus to resolve the problems of the *poète-philosophe*. It has become something of a truism among critics to assert that Stendhal's intellect matured at an early age and that his mind deviated little subsequently from the mould into which it had been cast in his youth. This interpretation dates, essentially, from the essay by Paul Bourget, who writes of Stendhal: 'On peut même affirmer, après avoir lu *Henri Brulard*, que, depuis sa dix-huitième année, il n'a rien acquis, sinon plus d'ampleur de ses tendances premières.'¹¹⁸ Léon Blum gives further impetus to this image of Stendhal, acknowledging and elaborating upon Bourget's remark: 'Il n'a rien acquis, et surtout, fait plus rare et plus significatif, il n'a rien perdu.'¹¹⁹ Paul Arbelet in turn cites Bourget's observation as the very justification for his extensive study, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, though he differs marginally from Bourget over the year in which he places Stendhal's definitive 'formation': 'à vingt ans, le mode de sa pensée est déjà fixé, on voit poindre ou se préciser ses théories familières; Stendhal n'aura désormais rien de tout à fait nouveau à nous dire.' Everything thereafter, according to Arbelet, is but an 'éternel rabâchage' of the same.¹²⁰

The currency which this view of Stendhal has gained is indeed remarkable. By 1803, declares Henri Delacroix, 'les idées capitales de Beyle sont arrêtées et elles se déclarent dès le premier contact avec Helvétius.'¹²¹ Pierre Martino opts likewise for Stendhal's twentieth year as the point beyond which 'il n'avait qu'à étayer sa jeune science et à exalter ses sentiments.'¹²² From this moment onwards, Martino is ready to conclude, 'il n'a point évolué.'¹²³ Henri Martineau and Matthew Josephson subscribe in turn to the view of a Stendhal whose philosophy had been forged by the age of twenty,¹²⁴ while W.H. Fineshriber endorses the earlier claim by Bourget and Blum that Stendhal had acquired the full store of his ideas by the age of eighteen.¹²⁵ Though Victor del Litto sets no date upon Stendhal's intellectual maturation, he lends his support to the view expressed by all of the above:

Stendhal est ainsi fait: c'est dans sa jeunesse qu'il découvre ses idées-clés; par la suite, il se borne à les développer, les compléter, sans changer de cap.¹²⁶

Stendhal himself, it must be said, does much to accredit this view of an intellect which, in Del Litto's words, follows from the earliest the same 'allure monolithique.'¹²⁷ As for the point at which he himself believes he acquired his definitive cast of mind, Stendhal offers a number of suggestions: 1793 ('en 1793, il y a quarante deux ans, [...] mon caractère était absolument le même qu'aujourd'hui'); 1794 ('I am encore in 1835 the man of 1794'); 1799 ('Tel encore j'étais en 1799, tel je suis encore en 1836...').¹²⁸ Though it may be the case, as Georges Blin argues, that Stendhal never dates his 'calcification' at any point later than his twentieth birthday,¹²⁹ research has demonstrated that his recollections on the matter are subject to more than a little caution. Maurice Bardèche's argument that, where Stendhal's recollections of his youth are concerned, it is 'la déformation qui compte et non la réalité'¹³⁰ depends, for its validity, on what one is seeking to establish. While Stendhal may, to cite but one such example, claim in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme* that the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* was his 'bible à seize ans',¹³¹ all evidence indicates that he first became acquainted with the work of Cabanis in his early twenties, and that his admiration for the physiologist did not fully dawn until a number of years later.¹³² The point, as we shall see, is an important one for any chronology of Stendhal's intellectual development.

While it is unquestionable that 'la précocité et la permanence' — to borrow the expression of Léon Blum and Paul Arbelet both¹³³ — are the outstanding features of Stendhal's thought, it is surely misleading to isolate his eighteenth or twentieth year as the point beyond which he would, as Pierre Martino puts it, no longer evolve. There are, of course, numerous aspects of Stendhal's thinking which appear to pass intact from later childhood and adolescence into adulthood and later middle age.¹³⁴ To assert, however, that his development was halted at his majority or shortly thereafter is to condemn Stendhal to an intellectual stagnation which is quite at odds with the evidence provided by his notebooks, letters and diaries.¹³⁵ The choice of his eighteenth year is indefensible, we submit, in that it excludes the whole period from 1802 until 1806, when Stendhal worked assiduously to forge a philosophy which would allow him better to define himself and the world around him. Yet even a critic as distinguished and discerning as Georges Blin insists upon the 'immutabilité', the 'esprit définitif' of a Stendhal who, he suggests with Jean Prévost, remains from the earliest 'insoluble', 'impérmeable'.¹³⁶ In the domain of ideas, Blin contends, 'ce serait l'adolescent, voire l'enfant qui aurait précocement donné réponse d'homme à toutes les questions.'¹³⁷

The fault in this interpretation is, we submit, twofold. Firstly, it leaves no room

whatever for the revision, or indeed renunciation, by Stendhal of ideas to which he held in his youth. Yet such revision and renunciation there most decidedly was. Secondly, it leaves out of consideration a seminal period during which a number of Stendhal's most important ideas took shape or underwent significant modification, a period which, as Maurice Bardèche and Michel Crouzet rightly remind us, constitutes Stendhal's 'seconde éducation', his 'deuxième scolarité'.¹³⁸ The conviction that man was motivated in all cases by self-interest may have sat well with the precocious scepticism of the adolescent Beyle, but it cannot, surely, be seen in isolation from the major influence which Helvétius brings to bear from 1803 onwards.¹³⁹ The interplay of reason and passion, and their respective roles in the determination of human conduct, crystallised fully as a major question for Stendhal only in 1804, prompting him to undertake his treatise, the *Filosofia Nova*, and furnishing a subject with which he was to grapple, in one form or another, throughout his entire writing life. Not before 1805 would Stendhal, in formulating his notions of ideation and epistemology, enjoy the 'mille germes de pensées nouvelles' that were to be the fruit of Tracy's *Idéologie*,¹⁴⁰ or experience the 'bien heureuse révolution dans mes idées' that was to be wrought by the same author's *Logique*.¹⁴¹

Stendhal's thoughts on the importance of physiology to the study of man, with the new emphasis which it placed on instinct, temperament and the physical basis of human character, find their genesis in this period too, most notably in the influence brought to bear by Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis. The latter Stendhal read cursorily in 1805; but he would come to appreciate Cabanis increasingly with the passage of time, recognising fully the importance of this *médecin-idéologue* only after 1811. If the relativity of government and climate, culture and taste was already clear to Stendhal from his reading of Du Bos, Montesquieu, Buffon and Helvétius,¹⁴² the relativity of *human nature* itself would be brought home to him by a reading of Cabanis which was to have profound implications for his conception of man and for the moral, social and political principles that were consequent upon it.

Other ideas, to which it is assumed Stendhal held unerringly from the outset, encounter serious difficulty when put to the test during the period in question. While Stendhal is credited with a materialism redolent of Hobbes and d'Holbach, his notebooks and diaries — from 1804 in particular, when he was engaged in the drafting of his *Filosofia Nova* — provide evidence that he was far from comfortable in handling the precepts of philosophical materialism or in subscribing to their implications. His perception of philosophy and of his own role as a thinker was to undergo significant development during those years spent in Paris, between 1802 and 1805, endeavouring to master the medium of the philosopher-dramatist. If Stendhal held tenaciously to his dramatic aspirations until well into adult life, he would emerge from the experience of

these early years, and from the *Filosofia Nova* in particular, with his philosophical ambitions substantially tempered.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. See Chuquet, p. 474; Wood, p. 36.
2. By coining the term *beylisme*, Stendhal has invited his commentators to strive harder than they might have done to discover in him a systematic thinker — and to be all the more disconcerted when they do not. 'Beylism', however, has evolved into something much grander in the hands of Stendhal's critics than it was ever intended to convey on those rare occasions when the term was employed by Stendhal himself. For it is not the case, as F.M. Albérès claims, that 'ce terme apparaîtra constamment dans les années 1812 et 1813' (*Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 321 n. 1). Stendhal, in fact, uses the term no more than some half dozen times in all (*OI*, I, 662, 663; *Corr*, I, 657, 659, 679). For the most sober, economical and accurate definition of what Stendhal understood by *le beylisme*, see F.W.J. Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 88-90.
3. For the accusations of 'systematising' that were levelled against Helvétius and the Idéologues respectively, see Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 165, 168, 190; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 131, 132, 150, 188-189; 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', pp. 233-234.
4. On the scope of Tracy's enterprise, see Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 148-150; "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', p. 357; S. Moravia, *Il Pensiero degli Idéologues. Scienza e Filosofia in Francia (1780-1815)* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1974) p. 723.
5. *Corr*, I, 313.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 376.
7. Among the countless critical assessments which categorise Stendhal in this fashion, see Doumic, p. 132; Huneker, p. 7; Mélia, *Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 295; *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 19; Blum, pp. 172-173; Martino, p. 314; P. Jourda, *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930), p. 96; Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, p. 45; Fineshriber, p. 46; Van Duzer, p. 129; Cailliet, p. 140; Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 7, 240; Josephson, p. 256; G. Lukács, *Studies in European Realism*, trans. E. Bone (London: Merlin Press, 1978), p. 68; Wood, p. 103; May, *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 262; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 114; Alter, p. 139. The list is endless, attesting to the readiness with which generations of critics have assigned Stendhal to a particular philosophical age, spirit and tradition.
8. All of these terms are employed by Picavet alone (pp. 399, 491-492), who ranges Stendhal among 'la seconde génération d'idéologues', while making him a forerunner of the later Naturalist movement.
9. See Blum, pp. 172-181; Delacroix, pp. 68-69.
10. W.H. Fineshriber's *Stendhal, The Romantic Rationalist* is, as its title suggests, a case in point.
11. For this range of epithets, see *JL*, II, 88; *Romans*, I, 1358; *OI*, I, 112; *JL*, I, 294; II, 348; *OI*, I, 281; *H de P*, I, 393; *Corr*, I, 316; *ibid.*, I, 1, 30; *Romans*, I, 144; *Italie*, 275; *CA*, IV, 401; *Romans*, II, 966; *ibid.*, I, 124; *De l'Amour*, I, 220; *Romans*, I, 60; *CA*, IV, 31; *Italie*, 146; *CA*, II, 30; III, 424; *Romans*, I, 665; *JL*, III, 293.

12. *De l'Amour*, I, 220.
13. *CA*, I, 331; *Romans*, I, 690.
14. The notion that Stendhal *developed* at all in this domain is one which critics have largely dismissed, holding that his philosophical formation was complete at an early age and that his ideas varied little, if at all, thereafter. This is a view which, as we shall endeavour to show, stands in need of reassessment.
15. *Personnalité*, p. 35.
16. See 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', *Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, no. 111 (1986), pp. 259-260.
17. *Corr*, I, 1.
18. *Ibid.*, I, 30.
19. See above, n. 2.
20. *Corr*, I, 96. Cf. the letter to Félix Faure dated 16 April 1809, in which 'la véritable philosophie' is defined as 'celle de tourner tout au gai' (*Ibid.*, I, 519).
21. *Ibid.*, I, 274.
22. *Ibid.*, I, 273. The same point precisely will be made when, in *Armance*, Octave reasons of the world: 'tel qu'il est, il est à prendre ou à laisser. Il faut ou tout finir rapidement et sans délai par quelques gouttes d'acide prussique ou prendre la vie gaiement' (*Romans*, I, 82). It is significant that Stendhal adds here of his hapless hero: 'En parlant ainsi, Octave cherchait à se convaincre bien plus qu'il n'exprimait une conviction.'
23. See the advice and confidences imparted to his sister Pauline: *Corr*, I, 100 163-165, 283, 317, 345, 348.
24. *Ibid.*, I, 316. The whole tenor of this letter, as of many others dating from the same period, is summed up in the exhortation: 'Il faut chercher à se rendre habile dans l'art du bonheur' (*Ibid.*, I, 314).
25. See *ibid.*, I, 657, 658-659, 679. Cf. *OI*, I, 662, 663.
26. See R. Mauzi, *L'Idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée françaises au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Colin, 1965), *passim*; L.G. Crocker, *An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 37, 39. The same is usefully discussed by S. Goyard-Fabre, *La Philosophie des lumières en France* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), pp. 213-234. See also Frankel, pp. 39-40.
27. *Stendhal et la tentation janséniste*, p. 126. Cf. Augendre, 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', p. 259: 'D'une manière générale, on peut bien dire comme on le fait souvent que le beylisme est une philosophie d'inspiration "épicurienne". La fin recherchée en effet est le "bonheur"...' On the Epicurean aspect of Stendhal's thought, see Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, pp. 124-125; *La Création chez Stendhal. Essai sur le métier d'écrire et la psychologie de l'écrivain* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1951), p. 75; Girard, *Le Journal intime*, pp. 309-310; Rey, Preface, *De l'Amour*, xcvi-xcviii; Chuquet, p. 225; Josephson, p. 348; Brussaly, p. 202. Cf. Nietzsche's description of Stendhal as a 'remarkable Epicurean' (*Werke*, II, p. 722). See also in this context Stendhal's diary entry of 29 August 1811: 'J'ai trouvé un homme plein

de grâces dont il me semblait avoir vu la figure quelque part. Il est épicurien ou cherchant le bonheur avant tout, comme moi' (*OI*, I, 717).

28. See *Corr*, I, 195, 342, 348, 352.
29. *Ibid.*, I, 170-171.
30. *JL*, III, 66.
31. *HB*, I, 24-25.
32. *OI*, I, 343.
33. *Corr*, I, 130. On the perceived universality and versatility of the mathematical method, see Van Duzer, pp. 126-127.
34. See *Corr*, I, 45, 151; *JL*, I, 155; *HB*, II, 132-133. See on this question F. Michel, 'Stendhal mathématicien', *Etudes stendhaliennes* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1972), pp. 386-400; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 469-475; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 169-180, 283-285.
35. *Corr*, I, 129.
36. *Ibid.*, I, 242.
37. *Ibid.*, I, 27. Stendhal comes close here to the philosophical conception of history upheld by Volney and the Idéologues. See Van Duzer, pp. 122-125; Cailliet, p. 123; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 348-362. On the philosophical import of history as a discipline in the Ecoles Centrales, see Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity*, p. 256.
38. *Op. cit.*, p. 463.
39. *Corr*, I, 312.
40. *JL*, I, 120.
41. *Corr*, I, 53.
42. *JL*, I, 337 n. 1.
43. See *ibid.*, I, 336-337.
44. *Ibid.*, I, 365. Again, in his diary of February 1805, the same simple equation is established between 'philosophe' and 'connaissance de l'homme' (*OI*, I, 201). Some years later, in his draft of a sequel to *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, Stendhal's vision will have broadened somewhat, but the fundamental conviction remains the same. Thus the Italian jurist and philosopher, Cesare Beccaria, wins his approval precisely because 'il osait dire que la morale, la politique, les beaux-arts dérivent tous d'une science unique: la connaissance de l'homme' (*Italie*, 221).
45. *OI*, I, 31. Stendhal will fuse both notions — knowledge of man and the pursuit of happiness — into one general definition of philosophy when, in his article 'Exposé du système de Kant', he concludes: 'Je réduis donc toute la philosophie à ne pas se méprendre sur le motifs des actions des hommes, et à ne pas nous tromper dans nos raisonnements ou dans l'art de marcher au bonheur' (*CA*, I, 331; *Chron.*, I, 131). The terms of this definition are noteworthy, for they suggest an 'art' of seeking happiness founded upon a 'science' of man. This idea is made explicit in a note which Stendhal appends to the same text and

in which he expands upon his assertion that the two most necessary sciences are '[la] science de connaître les motifs des actions des hommes' and 'la *logique*, ou l'art de ne pas nous tromper en marchant vers le bonheur': 'Le mot propre serait *art*: un art dépend toujours d'une science; il est la mise en pratique des procédés indiqués par une science' (CA, I, 329-330; *Chron.*, I, 129-130). It is worth remarking upon the clear echo which this idea finds in a letter written by Stendhal to Gian Pietro Vieusseux on 22 December 1827. Defining what may be understood by 'philosophy' in the 1820s, Stendhal begins — significantly — with the following: 'La logique ou les recherches sur la manière de ne pas se tromper en raisonnant, et l'*art de ne pas se tromper* fondé sur cette science' (*Corr*, II, 131).

46. *HB*, I, 13. M. Crouzet stresses this eudæmonic aspect of philosophy for Stendhal. 'La rationalité n'a de sens et d'effet que dans le champ de l'expérience égotiste; la promesse d'une certitude infaillible et conquérante qui aboutirait à l'équation vérité-bonheur, il n'est pas admis dès le début qu'elle tende à autre chose qu'à la Vérité et au Bonheur du Moi' (*Raison*, p. 5). See also on this question Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 463-469.
47. *JL*, I, 318.
48. *Corr*, I, 153.
49. *Ibid.*, I, 120.
50. *Les Epicuriens français*, p. 59. For what Stendhal himself took to be the function of his journals and letters, see *JL*, II, 128; *OI*, I, 710. See also, among the letters to Pauline Beyle which so often contain passages transcribed from Stendhal's notebooks, *Corr*, I, 93.
51. *Op. cit.*, 64. Cf. J. Starobinski, 'Stendhal pseudonyme', *L'Oeil vivant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 219: 'le rationalisme de Stendhal est avant tout le système d'un homme qui cherche à se défaire d'un très puissant "irrationnel" intérieur.'
52. *Op. cit.*, p. 49.
53. 'Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', *From Humanism to Classicism*, ed. J. Brody, spec. issue of *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. XV, nos. 1-2 (1975), p. 264. May writes elsewhere of Stendhal's endeavour, through philosophy, to 'préserv[er] un équilibre moral fortement menacé par une conception trop exaltée de la vie' ('Préromantisme rousseauiste et égotisme stendhalien: convergence et divergences', *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. VI, no. 2 [1966], p. 98).
54. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 93. Stendhal's hope, argues Albérès, was that he would discover in the Idéologues 'un remède à son chagrin d'amour, à son ennui, à son manque d'adaptation à la société de son temps' (*Ibid.*, p. 91).
55. M.E.M. Taylor advances the quite untenable suggestion that Stendhal 'turned to the Encyclopedists and Ideologists in a somewhat frantic effort to educate himself when he realised the mistake he had made in deciding not to take advantage of the education offered him at the Paris Polytechnic School' (*The Arriviste: The Origins and Evolution of the 'Arriviste' in the 19th Century French Novel with Particular Reference to Stendhal and Balzac* (Bala: Dragon Books, 1975), p. 83 n. 3).
56. *JL*, I, 154.
57. See on this point R. Bosselaers, *Le Cas Stendhal: une mise au point* (Paris: Droz, 1938), pp. 70-77. See also *HB*, I, 139.

58. *JL*, I, 469.
59. *OI*, I, 112. On the strictly functional value of Stendhal's early philosophy — 'très pratique, très étroitement utilitaire' —, see Martino, p. 30.
60. *JL*, II, 96. Cf. Stendhal's remark to Pauline Beyle in a letter of 29 January 1803: 'Deux causes m'ont fait étudier: la crainte de l'ennui et l'amour de la gloire' (*Corr*, I, 46).
61. *JL*, I, 120.
62. *OI*, I, 94, 267; *JL*, II, 182, 183; *OI*, I, 365. Cf. the diary entry of 12 December 1805: 'L'amour de la gloire reprend le dessus: il m'a fait lire Tracy' (*OI*, I, 363).
63. See *JL*, I, 360: 'My great-father et, je crois, les savants en général, ne cherchent dans leurs connaissances que la vanité satisfaite; je n'y cherche que l'utile.' Stendhal will endeavour to embody this utility in turn for his sister Pauline: *Corr*, I, 129, 164-165, 177, 184-185. In March 1806, he draws up a short inventory of his recent philosophical reading: 'Voilà cependant plusieurs ouvrages utiles que j'aurai lus cette année, je me trouverai perfectionné l'année prochaine' (*OI*, I, 394). Cf. the reading lists which he prescribes for Pauline around the same period: *Corr*, I, 260, 263-264, 278, 292-293. At another moment, Stendhal envisages a method of study which might prove even more fruitful than his reading: 'L'habitude de la vie avec un philosophe fureteur de caractéristique, en supposant que je pusse le suivre dans ses sociétés, me serait infiniment utile' (*OI*, I, 373). Even the commercial turn of mind which he finds himself developing as an imports clerk in Marseille is judged according to this same invariable standard of utility (*Ibid.*, I, 343).
64. *OI*, I, 200 n.
65. *Theatre*, I, 247.
66. *Stendhal romancier* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1947), p. 16.
67. See Chapter I, n. 203. Compare *JL*, III, 185 and *De l'Amour*, II, 266-267.
68. *Op. cit.*, pp. 33, 42.
69. *JL*, I, 221.
70. *Ibid.*, II, 78. It is worth noting that, in Stendhal's judgment, Rousseau, as M. Crouzet puts it, 'n'est pas un philosophe' (*Nature et société chez Stendhal. La révolte romantique* [Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1985], p. 168). Cf. V. Brombert's assertion that Stendhal 'n'a jamais apprécié en [Rousseau] le penseur ou le philosophe' ('Stendhal lecteur de Rousseau', p. 467). It is important to balance such judgments with the recognition that, if Stendhal's admiration for a thinker such as Helvétius is instantaneous and enduring, so too are his reservations. Helvétius is *too much* the philosopher to appreciate human sensibility in all its richness. Compare the notebook entry of 9 January 1803 (*JL*, I, 91-92) with the letter of 13 November 1820 to Adolphe de Mareste (*Corr*, I, 1044). See also *De l'Amour*, II, 281. For a discussion of this point, see Delacroix, pp. 60-64.
71. *JL*, I, 148. Among studies which consider the importance of this philosopher for Stendhal, see Alciatoire, *Stendhal et Helvétius*; Delacroix, pp. 5-10, 58-66; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 39-46; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 34-66; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 130-140 *et passim*. See also Crouzet's insightful article 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de

l'utile', in *Le Prérromantisme: hypothèque ou hypothèse? Actes du colloque de Clermont-Ferrand, 29-30 juin 1972*, ed. P. Viallaneix (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975), pp. 468-487.

72. *OI*, I, 94. On Stendhal's reading of this philosopher, see J.-C. Alciatoire, 'Stendhal et Brissot de Warville', *Modern Philology*, vol. L, no. 2 (1952), pp. 116-129.
73. *Op. cit.* (London: 1693), p. 2, § 1. Though he is credited with having argued much the same as Helvétius on this question, Locke in fact stops some way short of the latter. 'Each Man's Mind,' he recognised, 'has some peculiarity, as well as his Face, that distinguishes him from all others; and there are possibly scarce two Children, who can be conducted by exactly the same method' (*Ibid.*, p. 261, § 202). It was to the much less circumspect assertions of Helvétius that Stendhal would early lend his credence.
74. Cf. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. III, ch. 1, p. 342; ch. 2, p. 353; vol. II, Table sommaire, p. 441. See on this question J.A. Passmore, 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. E.R. Wasserman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 21-46.
75. *Corr*, I, 47.
76. 'Sans cesse il passe d'un camp à l'autre,' writes Richard (p. 74) of Stendhal's oscillation between 'la triste raison' and '[le] sentiment.' Cf. Blin, who argues that in Stendhal 'la sensation et le jugement correspondaient à des intentionalités non seulement divergentes, mais incompatibles. [...] Une conscience également encline aux deux devait, selon lui, renoncer à les cumuler autrement que par alternance' (*Personnalité*, p. 527).
77. *JL*, II, 78. See the distinction between the function of philosophy and that of the theatre which Stendhal establishes in a notebook entry of 24 July 1804 (*Ibid.*, II, 43). See also in this regard *ibid.*, II, 161.
78. *Ibid.*, I, 335.
79. *Corr*, I, 99. Both of these remarks prefigure the objective which Stendhal would still be setting himself some twenty years later, and which he would express in strikingly similar terms in *De l'Amour*: 'Je cherche à me dépouiller de mes affections et à n'être qu'un froid philosophe' (*De l'Amour*, I, 221). The same point will be made, conversely, in the *Avant-propos* to *Armance*, where Stendhal asks his reader: 'Exigerez-vous que des personnages passionnés soient de sages philosophes, c'est-à-dire n'aient point de passions?' (*Romans*, I, 25-26)
80. *Corr*, I, 151. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 342: 'il faut se rendre très fort dans l'art de raisonner, c'est-à-dire contracter *une longue habitude* de raisonner juste, de manière que l'émotion ne puisse pas vous tirer du sentier accoutumé.'
81. *JL*, I, 214-215.
82. *OI*, I, 201 n. Cf. Stendhal's assertion, in his letter to Pauline of 3 August 1804, that 'Condorcet n'avait pas la sensibilité qu'il faut pour juger les poètes' (*Corr*, I, 136-137).
83. *Corr*, I, 252. Cf. the letter of 7 July 1804, where Helvétius is designated 'une de ces âmes froides' (*Ibid.*, I, 124). Of Stendhal's reading of Helvétius, J.-C. Augendre rightly asserts that, 'tout en adoptant sa philosophie, il en dévoile dès le début le *manque*' ('La critique beyliste d'Helvétius', *Stendhal Club*, 30^e année, no. 119 [1988], p. 227).

84. *Corr*, I, 310.
85. *Loc. cit.* This recognition by Stendhal of a fault which he believes he has eradicated resonates with a remark made in a letter of 3 December 1807, when he declares to Pauline: 'Mes amis, si tu leur parles de ce détail, pourront te dire jusqu'à quelle folie j'ai poussé le préjugé contre ce que je nommais les froids; cela allait, il y a trois ans seulement, jusqu'à mépriser Duclos' (*Ibid.*, I, 376-377).
86. See J.-C. Alciato, 'Stendhal et Destutt de Tracy. Les désirs contradictoires: source de malheur', *Le Bayou*, vol. XIV, no. 42 (1950), pp. 151-156. Cf. *Corr*, I, 247; *JL*, I, 323; II, 106; III, 283, 285; *OI*, I, 469, 670; II, 403, 409; *Italie*, 111, 496. 'En raisonnant juste, d'après Tracy,' Stendhal would write in 1814, 'je vais à la chasse du contradictoire qui peut se trouver encore dans mon cœur' (*Corr*, I, 791). An instructive parallel to the problem which confronted him as an aspiring *poète-philosophe* is found in a letter of November 1805 to his sister Pauline, where the influence of Tracy is once more clear: 'Tu apprendras à ne pas former de vœux contradictoires, c'est-à-dire, par exemple, à ne pas attendre d'un ami la sûreté d'une âme froide, avec les élans passionnés d'une âme enthousiaste' (*Corr*, I, 248).
87. *JL*, I, 203.
88. *OI*, I, 201 n.
89. *JL*, I, 294.
90. *Ibid.*, I, 372.
91. *Ibid.*, I, 130.
92. *Ibid.*, I, 258.
93. *Ibid.*, II, 78.
94. *Ibid.*, I, 344; II, 102; *Corr*, I, 125.
95. *JL*, I, 344.
96. *Ibid.*, I, 372. See above.
97. See respectively *ibid.*, I, 344; II, 102; *Corr*, I, 99, 124, 125, 193, 252, 310; *ibid.*, I, 118, 124, 137; *Italie*, 826; *Romans*, I, 60; *Corr*, I, 84, 121, 122, 160, 161, 219; *Italie*, 826; *Romans*, I, 60; *JL*, II, 57: 'Les philosophes détruisaient, ils voyaient bien qu'ils avaient raison...'
98. *Op. cit.*, pp. 21-22. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 72: 'L'Idéologie [est] flétrie sous le nom de sensualisme, rejetée comme l'erreur dominante du XVIII^e siècle, comme l'esprit même d'un siècle, contre lequel se fait toute la Restauration politique, sociale, religieuse et littéraire...'
99. See Gusdorf, p. 299; Kennedy, A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution, pp. 39-40.
100. See M.S. Staum, 'Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', p. 24; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 245, 400-401; Kennedy, "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', pp. 358-359, 362-363.
101. See Kennedy, "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', p. 359; Pearce

- Williams, pp. 329-330; M.S. Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. X (1974), pp. 142-143.
102. See Vartanian, 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2155.
 103. *Romans*, I, 99.
 104. Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 469.
 105. *Ibid.*, p. 41. 'La philosophie telle qu'il l'entend est une épreuve, un baptême du feu, ou selon le rôle adopté justement par un Nietzsche, la rencontre impossible pour les faibles...' (*Ibid.*, p. 108). Within this perspective, as Crouzet argues, Stendhal 'confond le savoir avec un perfectionnement doloriste et une quête du désenchantement.' The point is an important one for any appreciation of Stendhal's thought. See also *ibid.*, pp. 186-188, 219, 227-228, 232-238, 407-408.
 106. *Corr*, I, 161. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 122: 'tous les moralistes sont tristes.'
 107. *Ibid.*, I, 576. Cf. *Italie*, 381: 'Les sciences morales nous montrent l'homme si méchant, ou, ce qui revient au même, il est si facile et si doux de se le figurer meilleur qu'il n'est, que c'est presque toujours dans un monde différent du réel que l'imagination aime à s'égarer.'
 108. *Italie*, 71. Cf. *OI*, II, 13: '[...] le philosophe méprise et hait toujours trop le pays où il a appris à connaître la canaille humaine.'
 109. *Italie*, 826. In *Armancé*, 'la philosophie du dix-huitième siècle', 'cette aride philosophie de l'*utile*', will be dubbed 'les livres de ces hommes si tristes' (*Romans*, I, 60).
 110. *M de T*, I, 429. Cf. *Lucien Leuwen*: 'L'homme malheureux cherche à se fortifier par la philosophie, mais pour premier effet elle l'empoisonne jusqu'à un certain degré en lui faisant voir le bonheur impossible' (*Romans*, I, 1030).
 111. For a general discussion of the currents of thought in question, see L.G. Crocker, 'The Problem of Truth and Falsehood in the Age of Enlightenment', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XIV, no. 4 (1953), pp. 575-603.
 112. *OI*, I, 301-302. Cf. Stendhal's criticism of Fontenelle in a notebook entry of June 1804: 'Fontenelle est comme un homme à qui la nature aurait donné le talent de peindre des squelettes supérieurement, mais rien que des squelettes' (*JL*, I, 344).
 113. See *Le Rouge et le Noir*, ed. P.-G. Castex (Paris: Garnier, 1973), pp. 688-707; Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, pp. 76-86.
 114. M. Crouzet recognises the antinomy in Stendhal's thought when he writes: 'l'eudémonisme rationnel d'un Stendhal contient sous l'affirmation que vérité et bonheur vont de pair, l'affirmation plus subtile et plus "moderne" que la vérité est l'enjeu d'une "passion" de la dureté et de l'ardent désespoir...' (*Raison*, p. 402).
 115. '*Dérousseautiser* mon jugement en lisant Destutt [de Tracy], Tacite, Prévost de Genève, Lancelin' (*OI*, I, 152).
 116. *JL*, I, 321. See Stendhal's aim, as stated in a note of May 1803, to ally mathematical reasoning with '*le langage de la passion*' (*Ibid.*, I, 155).
 117. See *ibid.*, I, 317; II, 84. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 320: 'Mettre dans ma *Philosophie*

nouvelle toutes mes découvertes sur l'homme.' Though the project is prefigured in Stendhal's notes as early as May 1803, it would be over a year before, fresh from his reading of Hobbes in June 1804, he would put pen to paper on his treatise. See *JL*, I, 158, 431 ff.; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, 147-155. On the *Filosofia Nova*, see below, Chapter IV.

118. *Op. cit.*, p. 334.
119. *Op. cit.*, pp. 19-20. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 96, 97-98.
120. *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. iv, v n. 1.
121. *Op. cit.*, p. 63.
122. *Op. cit.*, p. 12. See also *ibid.*, pp. 80, 314, 315.
123. '[...] ce n'est pas à trente ans, mais à vingt ans que Stendhal a su ainsi se définir; et il n'a point évolué. C'est dans le premier chapitre de cette étude qu'il faut aller chercher presque toute sa conclusion' (*Ibid.*, p. 314).
124. See Martineau, *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, pp. 14, 41; Josephson, pp. 77, 82. Of Stendhal's years as a student in the Ecole Centrale and his early acquaintance with the work of Condillac, Martineau writes: 'il tenait désormais les principes essentiels d'une philosophie qui ne cessa toute sa vie d'alimenter son esprit' (*Le Cœur de Stendhal. Histoire de sa vie et de ses sentiments* [Paris: Albin Michel, 1952-53], vol. I, p. 84).
125. *Op. cit.*, pp. viii, 25. Cf. Girard, *Le Journal intime*, p. 309: 'dès dix-huit ans, sa morale est fixée.'
126. 'Aux sources de l'énergie stendhalienne', p. 97. Cf. *La Vie de Stendhal*, p. 49: '[Stendhal] a passé à l'École centrale trois années pleines; années fécondes qui ont achevé de le former intellectuellement.'
127. Preface, *JL*, I, xxv.
128. *HB*, I, 164, 243; II, 241. Cf. *Corr*, I, 59: '[...] toute la vie d'un homme n'est que le développement des qualités qu'il a acquises dans sa jeunesse'; *JL*, III, 95: 'Toute la vie d'un homme de lettres n'est que le développement de sa jeunesse'; *Romans*, II, 1105: 'l'homme n'est jamais pendant toute sa vie que le développement de ce qu'il était à vingt ans.'
129. *Personnalité*, p. 34.
130. *Op. cit.*, p. 12.
131. *S d'E*, 56-57.
132. See below, Chapters V and VI. Stendhal's references to Helvétius present a similar problem of chronology. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 41 n. 40. J. Mélià (*Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 280) and M.G. Brown (p. 63) take at face value Stendhal's assertion that he read Cabanis 'à l'âge de seize ans', without stopping to reflect that the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* was published in 1802, when Stendhal was already nineteen.
133. See Blum, pp. 16-17; Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. iii.
134. See on this question Blin, *Personnalité*, p. 36; Del Litto, Preface, *JL*, I, xxii-xxiii.

135. In addition to the references cited above, see Sabatier, p. 82; Jourda, *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes*, p. 9; Del Litto, Preface, *JL*, I, iii-iv; Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, p. 52; Martineau, *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 9. On publishing extracts from the *Filosofia Nova* in the *Mercure de France* of 15 September 1930, Martineau wrote (p. 513): 'On aura la surprise de le trouver déjà en possession de tout cet ensemble de doctrines qu'il développera minutieusement au cours de son œuvre et qui constitue l'essence du plus pur *beylisme*.' The same view is advanced by Martineau in 'La "Filosofia nova" de Stendhal', *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, 15 August 1931, p. 2.
136. *Personnalité*, pp. 33, 35. Cf. Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, p. 45.
137. *Personnalité*, p. 34. Nor is the evidence adduced in support of such assertions always of the most convincing kind. 'Même son écriture,' argues Blin, 'n'évolue plus beaucoup après 1803' (*Ibid.*, p. 34 n. 3).
138. See Bardèche, pp. 13-14; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 3, 13. Among critics who resist the tendency to arrest Stendhal's intellectual development at his eighteenth or twentieth year, see Green, p. 37; Clewes, p. 14; M.G. Brown, pp. 32-33; Strickland, *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, pp. 22-26. A few have departed more radically from the general trend. See, for example, E. Rey, who claims that the young Stendhal 'n'a pas encore construit son idéologie personnelle. Et il ne le tentera qu'avec *De l'Amour*' (Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, vii).
139. In January 1803, Stendhal notes: 'Je connais mieux l'homme, surtout depuis vingt jours que je médite Helvétius' (*JL*, I, 112). Some days later, the point is reinforced: 'Helvétius m'a ouvert la porte de l'homme à deux battants' (*Ibid.*, I, 124).
140. *OI*, I, 173.
141. *Corr*, I, 246. On the 'sublimes découvertes', the 'foule d'idées neuves' yielded by Tracy's *Logique*, see the letter to Pauline Beyle of 15-17 November 1805, in which Stendhal claims to have undergone 'un changement étonnant dans toutes mes idées' (*Ibid.*, I, 245-247). On Stendhal's reading of Tracy, see below, Chapter V.
142. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 28, 45-46, 85, 128, 271, 443; P. Arbelet, Preface, *H de P*, I, lxxii-lxxiv; II, 438-439 n.

CHAPTER III

PASSION AND REASON: DEFINING THE BOUNDS OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

'Experimental Philosophy'

Whether or not one shares F.C. Green's reluctance to apply the epithet 'critical' to any specific period of Stendhal's life, one must surely concur in regarding 'the years from 1802 until 1805 as really formative.'¹ It makes little sense, certainly, to describe Stendhal as a 'philosopher' of any sort, if one fails to take account of his one sustained endeavour to study — and indeed to *write* — 'philosophy' in the strictest sense of the term. Yet this is precisely what Pierre Martino does when he acknowledges the importance of the philosopher in Stendhal,² yet dismisses as inconsequential the very process through which the latter first defined his philosophical orientation. As Martino has it, the unpublished writings and abortive projects of these early years are to be written off as the product of some dark age which retains a curiosity value at best for scholars.³ Stendhal's much vaunted intellectual precocity notwithstanding, Martino can thus conclude: 'il n'est pas utile de s'arrêter longtemps à cette période malheureuse et inféconde.'⁴

Such a judgment may indeed be tenable, if one is seeking in Stendhal's writings the hand of an accomplished author only. Yet it hardly seems consistent, for any assessment of Stendhal's thought, with the claim that his mind was cast in its definitive mould from the earliest.⁵ For it should be remembered that, whatever the literary failings of Stendhal's initial projects, they were to have provided the vehicle for a particular view of man and society. It is in this sense that the *Filosofia Nova* takes on an importance all of its own; for it was to have been, as Jean Prévost recognises, Stendhal's 'discours de la méthode', serving at once as a forum for the development of philosophical truths and as a manual for their dramatic expression.⁶ 'Purposes,' writes Stendhal in a notebook entry of 10 May 1804: 'Mettre dans ma *Philosophie nouvelle* toutes mes découvertes sur l'homme.'⁷

In order to appreciate what Stendhal was attempting to achieve in this ambitious treatise, it is essential to know something of what preceded it. For this reason, it is important to note that Stendhal's whole philosophical enterprise rests at the outset on the premise that man is knowable, that his innermost, least conscious impulses are susceptible of rational explanation and codification. The method whereby Stendhal proposes to plumb the bedrock of human character is that same empirical reasoning

based on observation and analysis which he advocates as the only viable method of philosophical inquiry and for which, we recall, the Ecoles Centrales provided the model. One must never conclude from the particular to the general, Stendhal cautions first himself, then his sister Pauline, in June 1804.⁸ On the contrary, the most complex just as the most simple phenomenon could be understood only through analysis, through the breaking down of the whole into its constituent parts and the painstaking observation of the subsidiary facts relating to them.⁹

It is this approach — what Diderot had termed 'la philosophie expérimentale' as opposed to 'la philosophie rationnelle'¹⁰ — which Stendhal seeks to adopt as a means of gaining purchase on human nature. To this end, he recognised that he must acquire an aptitude for analytical reasoning. 'Chercher à me donner le pouvoir d'analyse,' he writes, at the height of his philosophical ambitions in June 1804:

Ce sera un grand pas qu'aura fait mon esprit. J'aurai le pouvoir d'analyse lorsque me faisant des questions: qu'est-ce que l'homme? qu'est-ce qu'un nom? qu'est-ce que le rire? qu'est-ce que la faim? qu'est-ce que le remords? je pourrai répondre exactement.¹¹

There are a number of instances in Stendhal's early writings when he rehearses thus a catechetical drill which formed a standard part of the pedagogical apparatus in the Ecoles Centrales.¹² François Picavet cites the case of the Ecole Centrale d'Auxerre, where, as part of a formal public examination, students had to provide answers to such questions as: *Qu'est-ce que l'homme? Qu'est-ce que le raisonnement? Qu'est-ce que la grammaire générale?*¹³ In Stendhal's method, there is a strong suggestion, too, of Saint-Lambert and Volney, whose respective *catéchismes* purported to provide manuals of enlightened ethics for the new generation of post-Revolutionary children. The format in which the latter couch their principles illustrates well the method prevalent in the philosophic instruction which Stendhal early adopts as his model:

D: Qu'est-ce que l'homme?

R: Un être sensible et raisonnable.

[...]

D: Qu'est-ce que la raison?

R: La connaissance des vérités utiles à notre bonheur.

[...]

D: Quels sont ceux qui s'aiment bien?

R: Ceux qui cherchent à se connaître et qui ne séparent pas leur bonheur de celui des autres...¹⁴

If Stendhal entertained any doubts about his own competence to respond adequately to such questions, he had no doubt whatever about the didactic method of which they were a function. 'L'ouvrage le plus utile qu'un bon citoyen pût faire,' we read in a notebook entry of July 1804, 'serait un petit catéchisme de cent pages au plus

qui ferait comprendre au peuple les vérités qui lui sont le plus utiles.¹⁵ To his sister Pauline he writes in August of the same year: 'Envoie-moi vite trois ou quatre caractères peints par les faits; raconte-les exactement, ensuite tire les conséquences. Cette méthode se nomme analyse, c'est la bonne.'¹⁶ Time and again in his notebooks, Stendhal exhorts himself to apply this same method in his study of man.¹⁷ The human being becomes a compound resolvable into so many constituent parts. 'Chercher à décomposer toutes les forces qui font agir les hom[m]es en désirs ou forces particulières,' we read in an entry of June 1804.¹⁸ 'M'occuper tout de suite de l'analyse de chaque passion,' he will similarly urge himself on undertaking his *Filosofia Nova*.¹⁹ Such exhortations give some insight into the object of the young Stendhal's concerns and the extravagance of his ambition alike. This philosopher, it is clear, was seeking no mean return on his intellectual investment.

While the much vaunted analytical method was to have provided a key to unlock the secrets of human nature, this 'decomposition' of man into his constituent parts signified more than a mere method. It implied a whole conception of the human being as an object of inquiry, an entity which could be apprehended in all its various elements and states. The notion of man that emerges from Stendhal's early notebooks and letters is that of a machine-like being responding to given stimuli. Alter the balance of the forces at work upon man, believed Stendhal, and one alters the character and the conduct which ensue.

In principle at least, there is little to distinguish such a conception from the rationale that would inform the writings of Zola and the Naturalist movement more than half a century later. Stendhal's earliest notebooks read at times, indeed, like a prototype for 'experimental' literature:

[...] essayer successivement à chaque personnage tous les vices et toutes les vertus. Voir ceux qui leur conviennent.

Quelles sont les circonstances propres à porter chaque passion à son maximum?

Chercher une méthode d'analyse par laquelle je puisse tirer d'un caractère, ou d'une intrigue, tout ce qu'il peut donner d'utile aux hommes...²⁰

Human nature can be explored by placing characters in given situations and observing how they react. Such was the 'scientific' method from which the young Stendhal, no less than the later Zola, sought to draw the directing principles of his art.²¹ Yet if the former appears more readily a man of eighteenth-century metaphysics than a forerunner of Naturalism, it is because of the highly abstract and rarefied vision of human nature in which he persists. 'Chercher dans les recueils d'anecdotes,' he exhorts himself in June 1804, 'les actions propres à éprouver le cœur et la tête, alors je verrai si tel caractère y

passee bien.²² In a subsequent note, the same problem is framed in more concise, but no less abstractive, terms: 'Quelles sont les circonstances où il faut mettre [...] un homme pour juger de son cœur? pour juger de sa tête?'²³

Some years before taking up his pen in defence of the Romantic aesthetic, Stendhal in fact espouses a thoroughly *classical* notion of human nature and its representation through art. For there is an assumption underlying his earliest literary endeavours that human nature, with its essential elements of passion and reason, is a universal *datum*, an absolute value transcending the variegations of time and space.²⁴ That there was such a thing as a human 'nature' shared by all — '*le cœur humain*', '*la raison humaine*' — is nowhere called into question in his early writings. Instead, Stendhal sets about discovering the common denominators of human experience as a means of providing for his audiences a mimetic representation of man's inner self, a self which, in keeping with a time-honoured tradition not yet challenged by Romantic individualism, he seeks to define not by its *distinctiveness* but by its *universality*. Thus and only thus, he reasoned, could the requisite bond be established and sustained between the inner states of his protagonists and the sensibility of his potential audience.²⁵

Of all the stimuli that operate upon the generic Man envisaged by Stendhal in this early period, it is the passions which first excite his mind. If one is to isolate what is irreducible in human nature, he held, one must start with those unreasoned motive forces by which men are impelled.²⁶ The passions had occupied, of course, a privileged place in the ethical psychology of philosophers and moralists through the ages.²⁷ That Stendhal should seek to understand man through an *analyse du cœur humain* was wholly consonant with the spirit of the eighteenth-century philosophy upon which he drew. Stendhal's repeated use of the formula '*la science de l'homme*'²⁸ to describe his undertaking is no misnomer; for it is indeed as a self-styled 'scientist' that this 'alchimiste de l'âme humaine', as Maurice Bardèche dubs him,²⁹ conceives of his task. Yet the highly abstractive language of Stendhal's earliest writing points up the gulf which separates his literary enterprise at its inception from what the nineteenth century — and Stendhal himself — would come to regard as 'scientific':

Les passions sont des forces qui peuvent être mélangées d'une infinité de façons dans l'homme.

A chaque instant je combine ces forces dans des proportions différentes; elles produisent des actions. Je regarde si ces actions sont de nature à plaire au public. Je ne suis encore que le hasard dans ces combinaisons. Il faut inventer une méthode qui les range dans un ordre commode à suivre, et qui n'en laisse échapper aucune.³⁰

The language of experimentation that is so prevalent here — '*mélangées*', '*proportions*', '*combinaisons*', '*méthode*' — and the stated concern for rigour and

comprehensiveness, while they suggest the analogy between writer and scientist which was to culminate in the 'experimental' novel more than half a century later, are superficial and, to a large extent, rhetorical. In this Stendhal, Maurice Bardèche discerns 'le chimiste devant ses éprouvettes.'³¹ It would be more fitting perhaps to find in him the philosopher-mathematician who had undertaken to apply 'les mathématiques au cœur humain', and who, as we have seen, wished to be able to articulate his thoughts 'aussi froidement qu'un géomètre.'³² For Stendhal's earliest literary enterprise is reducible, in Georges Blin's expression, to 'le projet d'un viol des Lettres par les mathématiques.'³³ The notebooks in which Stendhal compiles the material for his study of the 'human heart' are strewn with a mathematical jargon which, in its endeavour to reduce man to the dimensions of a theorem, points up jarringly at times the discordance between Stendhal's subject and his method:

le poète = le maximum des passions,
 le géomètre = le minimum,
 le philosophe est entre les deux.

une passion = a,
 un climat = c,
 une législation = l.
 Chaque passion pour être exprimée exactement devra être écrite *acl*...

Lois + x climat = mœurs.³⁴

The fact is that there is no room for the *unquantifiable* in Stendhal's view of human nature at this stage. Man, if subjected to the cutting edge of analysis, will be laid bare in his most recondite desires and impulses:

Qu'est-ce qu'un grand peintre de passions?
 C'est un homme qui connaît exactement, et dans leur ordre, toutes les teintes successives et différentes que prend dans un homme passionné un désir vif, et les diverses actions que ces divers états du désir lui font faire.³⁵

The final three words here are of particular significance, for they translate the essentially deterministic terms in which Stendhal early appears to conceive of the human condition. We have noted already how the passions, in their various proportions, 'produisent des actions.'³⁶ Stendhal's choice of the verb 'produire', while it reflects a quasi-scientific concern with cause and effect, throws open to question the degree to which individuals may be held to account for their actions. In a notebook entry of August 1803, we find him reflecting upon what happens when 'une passion subite fait changer de conduite à un homme...'³⁷ Here again man is portrayed not as the agent of his own destiny, but as the object of his passions. 'Le corps d'un homme,' notes Stendhal in June 1804, 'est mû par les passions de cet homme suivant les habitudes qu'elles lui ont fait contracter.'³⁸ The passions are thus seen to play a crucial role in the mobilisation and sustainment of human activity. Exclusive in the demands

which they place upon the individual, they are capable of prevailing, in certain cases, over the desire for life itself.³⁹

Stendhal does, of course, recognise other constituent forces within man; but the role of the passions as the driving force in the human economy remains always to the fore. The passions, he writes in a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 29 January 1803, 'sont le seul mobile des hommes; elles font tout le bien et tout le mal que nous voyons sur la terre.'⁴⁰ In arguing as much, Stendhal establishes an important causal relationship between passion and morality, a relationship that is echoed in a brief but significant remark which appears among his notes of 30 June 1804: 'Les passions produisent des actions utiles ou nuisibles, vertueuses ou vicieuses.'⁴¹ Nor is there any limit — in good as in evil — to what these forces, once unleashed, may achieve. 'Les passions,' the student of Helvétius baldly declares, 'peuvent tout.'⁴²

Man as Abstraction: 'The Heart' and 'The Head'

i. Passion

In thus exalting the passions, Stendhal was not only echoing a current of eighteenth-century philosophical opinion that found exponents in such thinkers as Helvétius, Vauvenargues, d'Holbach and Diderot.⁴³ He was posing a question that had long exercised philosophers and moralists.⁴⁴ If morality is reducible to the effects of passion, and if passion operates beyond the ambit of reason and, consequently, beyond the control of the individual, where does man's accountability for his behaviour begin and end? For to suppose that human beings are responsible agents, morally accountable for what they do or omit to do, one must suppose that they are indeed free to determine their course of action. To this crucial question, Stendhal offers no answer. In emphasising the *involuntary* nature of passion, however, he does appear to subscribe to a view of man as powerless in the face of his own inscrutable impulses. It should be clear to any discerning eye, affirms Stendhal in his notes of July 1804, that 'une passion n'est pas volontaire,' that, consequently, 'on n'est point maître, du moins communément, de se donner des passions.'⁴⁵ Elsewhere he is more emphatic still: 'Une passion est une maladie involontaire de l'âme, comme la fièvre est une maladie du corps.'⁴⁶ It is clear that, in order to know man, one must first learn to identify and to understand the passions in all their manifestations. One must also, and more significantly, be able to establish what room there is — if room indeed there is — within human nature for the notions of responsibility and freedom of choice. 'La seule

science que j'aie à apprendre,' Stendhal had noted, fresh from his reading of Helvétius in February 1803, 'est la connaissance des passions.'⁴⁷

It is important in this context to note that Stendhal shared the deep preoccupation of the eighteenth century and the immediate post-Revolutionary era with the need to establish a new secular morality based on the inescapable relationship between human nature and ethics.⁴⁸ Any realistic morality, he was convinced, had to come to terms with the passions and find means not of negating them but of exploiting them to desirable ends. Passions in themselves are *a*-moral; it is only when translated into action — and this is the crucial point for Stendhal — that passion can be qualified as virtuous or vicious:

Les passions prennent le nom de:
vices lorsqu'elles sont nuisibles à l'individu et à la société;
vertus lorsqu'elles sont utiles à l'un et à l'autre ou à l'un des deux seulement sans nuire à l'autre.⁴⁹

In this definition, so redolent of the eighteenth-century secular moralism of an Helvétius or a d'Holbach,⁵⁰ passion assumes a place that is central to the notion of virtue and vice, just as it is held by Stendhal to be central to the notion of personal happiness. 'Qu'est-ce que le bonheur?' he asks in a note from August 1803. 'C'est l'événement qui donne la plus grande jouissance possible à la passion ou aux passions qui dominant l'individu.'⁵¹

The coincidence is a problematic one. For if passion stands at the junction of happiness and virtue alike, this assumes an identity, firstly, between self-interest and passion, and, secondly, between the interests of the one and the good of the many — an identity which, it must be concluded, is not borne out in fact. Passions are evidently *not*, in their social manifestations, virtuous at best, innocuous at worst. The passions, we recall, 'font tout le bien *et* tout le mal que nous voyons sur la terre.'⁵² Nor is passion always congruent with the interests of the individual. Prompted by Vauvenargues's claim that 'Nos passions se règlent ordinairement sur nos besoins,' Stendhal scribbles in the margin the riposte: 'Nos passions, au contraire, sont presque nuisibles à nos besoins et à nos intérêts.'⁵³

The remark warrants some consideration. Stendhal's early concern with passion is nowhere the reckless and unfettered celebration of this force which had found a voice in the eighteenth century. Thus, in June 1804, he copies into his notebook a 'vérité morale' to which he clearly lends his endorsement: 'La libre disposition de suivre les premiers mouvements de sa volonté est le plus grand de tous les esclavages.'⁵⁴ In the letters to his sister Pauline, Stendhal is more explicit still in equating happiness with

self-control rather than with the reckless venting of the passions. In order to be happy, he urges her in a letter of 30 April 1807, 'il faut d'abord acquérir la tranquillité.'⁵⁵ The more powerful the passion, the more injurious its potential effects on the human constitution. 'Toutes ces jouissances vives que les romans font désirer se fanent en quelques jours,' we read in a letter written from Marseille to Pauline in March 1806. 'Ce qui ne se fane pas, c'est un état heureux, une sagesse qui apprend à éviter les peines.'⁵⁶ On a reading in the same year of Mme de Staël's *De l'influence des passions*, Stendhal notes: 'La base du bonheur des caractères qui ne sont point passionnés est toujours la même, elle est la certitude de n'être jamais dominé par un sentiment plus fort que soi.'⁵⁷

This recognition of a 'self' which *precedes* the onset of passion and which may act as a moderating influence upon the latter is quite at odds with a number of Stendhal's more deterministic pronouncements on the passions. It marks him off in particular from those eighteenth-century thinkers who had been bent on exposing self-control, conventionally understood, as a chimera. In his discussion of d'Holbach's determinism, L.G. Crocker makes the point in the following terms:

When the will is determined by a passion, we cannot even will to use the reason. The process is automatic. There is no self which transcends motives, which decides between passion and reason.⁵⁸

Clearly, for Stendhal, there *is* a self which may transcend, and arbitrate between, motives. Though his writings reflect at times the sweeping denial of free will which had been central to eighteenth-century determinist philosophy, there is a countervailing tendency in his thinking which installs reason as a sentinel over the other components of man. It is the role of reason thus conceived to co-ordinate the interplay of the passions and to determine the value that is to be placed upon each impulse or endeavour in turn. In this Stendhal, certainly, there is no trace of the 'apologiste de l'instinct' denounced by Pierre Sabatier,⁵⁹ or of that cult of a spontaneous ego which, according to Eugene Goodheart, has its source in Stendhal and 'issues finally in supermen and nihilists and immoralists.'⁶⁰ On the contrary, one discerns at times in Stendhal a deep-seated moral and philosophical orthodoxy which has never been fully measured by his critics. A note consigned to his journal of July 1804 tells us much about Stendhal's struggle even as an adult to emancipate himself from influences which, it is commonly assumed, he had repudiated — and that with the utmost ease — in his boyhood:

J'ai une bien triste obligation à mes parents, c'est de prendre toujours dans mon premier mouvement les noms de passion: orgueil, vanité, amour-propre, en mauvaise part. Tâcher de me guérir de ce préjugé qui nuit infiniment à mes plus doux plaisirs, jetant pour un instant un vernis d'odieux sur les personnes que j'aime le mieux quand je discerne ces passions si naturelles dans elles. Je n'aurais

pas ce malheur si mes parents avaient lu Helvétius.⁶¹

'Maladie morale à guérir en moi,' adds Stendhal, by way of a judgment on this revealing fragment of self-analysis. For the passions, he clearly believes, are raw material only. They are not to be condemned outright, but should, through some judicious process of education and legislation, be regulated, sanitised, rendered beneficial — or, at the very least, harmless — to individual and society alike. Thus, in a remark entered among his notes of June 1804, Stendhal compares the Christian dogmatists, with all their impossible strictures, to 'les philosophes dont les lois sont moins parfaites, mais exécutoires.' Men, he charges, in falling short of the laws of religion, 'ne suivent plus que celles de leurs passions et sont beaucoup plus malheureux que s'ils étaient guidés par les philosophes.'⁶²

There is in all of this both a problem of logic and a problem of ethics. Logic in the sense that passion is equated expressly with happiness *and* unhappiness alike; ethics in that, while the need to offset the adverse effects of passion is recognised, the *means* of achieving such an objective are nowhere adequately defined. The moral definition of passion, we have noted, requires the translation of this force into action. It was here, Stendhal believed, that man could exert some degree of control, although he is neither clear nor consistent in his definition of what the nature or boundaries of that control might be. If we can neither determine nor dispel the passions which take root within us, then our sole recourse lies in being able to *direct* those passions in ways which conduce to personal happiness and do not impinge upon the well-being of others.

It is to this already well-worn notion that Stendhal subscribes in his attempt to define the nature and limits of passion. In addressing thus the time-honoured problem of human responsibility, Stendhal sets about identifying the constituent factors of human nature that might act in some sense as a counterbalance to the dominion of the passions. The eighteenth century had, of course, deliberated long and hard on this same question; and among the various answers with which it had come up was the notion, as L.G. Crocker puts it, 'of a harmony, balance or counterpoise among the passions',⁶³ the argument being that the latter themselves, if properly synchronised, could provide a means of control against the excesses of a single passion. While he recognises the 'naïf optimisme' implicit in this view, Robert Mauzi provides a good account of its essential rationale in his discussion of d'Holbach's philosophy of the passions:

On ne dit pas: il faut tempérer les passions par la raison; cela rappellerait trop la morale conventionnelle et plate du rationalisme chrétien. On dit: il faut équilibrer les passions entre elles. Les passions restent ainsi leur propre arbitre, sans que le bonheur et la morale courent aucun danger. [...] et la raison se borne à contrôler l'équilibre du système.⁶⁴

Some echo of this idea can be found in an entry which Stendhal makes in his diary on 28 January 1806. 'J'ai observé hier soir les orages des passions,' he notes, 'que les grandes passions ne peuvent se guérir que par les moyens qu'indique Ph[ilippe] Pinel dans *La Manie*...' ⁶⁵ The remark, as J.-C. Alciatoire suggests, is a probable reference to the chapter of Pinel's work entitled '*Art de contrebalancer les passions humaines les unes par les autres, partie importante de la médecine*.' ⁶⁶ What Pinel in fact argues is that the cure for mental infirmity in individuals provides a model for the government of society at large: both should be informed by a concern not to stifle but to harmonise the passions:

Le principe de la philosophie morale qui apprend non à détruire des passions humaines, mais à les opposer l'une à l'autre, s'applique également à la médecine comme à la politique, et ce n'est point là le seul exemple de gouverner les hommes et de les guérir de leurs infirmités... ⁶⁷

Though Stendhal would record a genuine and enduring admiration for the author of these lines, he was not to espouse this rationale with any real conviction. For the argument advanced by Pinel and echoed in Stendhal's diary raises questions which remain conspicuously unanswered in the latter's writings. Nowhere is there any indication, for example, of *which* passions should be mobilised to offset others in given circumstances, nor indeed of *how* such compensating passions are themselves to be stimulated. Instead, Stendhal returns time and again to the notion of a single dominant passion which admits of neither rivalry nor compromise in its ascendancy over the individual. 'Ce n'est que par une passion que l'on peut triompher d'une autre passion,' he had declared in July 1803. ⁶⁸ Though this appears *prima facie* to echo the above notion of a counterpoise between passions, the choice of the verb 'trionpher' makes it much more akin to a definition which Stendhal consigns to his notebook some weeks later, where he classifies 'passion' as 'le despotisme d'un désir sur tous les autres et une continuité de sentiments de même espèce.' ⁶⁹

It is this notion of passion as an exclusive, overriding force which best characterises Stendhal's early thoughts on the question. The human character is seen not as a convenient balancing act between and among the passions, but rather as the theatre for a relentless struggle waged by the different elements within it. Stendhal's frequent recourse to a military vocabulary, with all its connotations of conflict and subjugation, while it once more carries strong eighteenth-century echoes, spells out clearly his conviction that human resolution and endeavour are invariably the result of a violent internal struggle:

A certaines sensations certaines passions se réveillent, et les unes ont coutume de vaincre les autres.

[Les hommes] sont presque toujours dominés par leurs passions...

[Une] passion est à son plus haut point lorsqu'elle l'emporte sur tout même sur l'amour de la vie.

Une passion sera la plus grande possible lorsqu'elle se fera sacrifier toutes les autres passions de l'individu.

La bonne tête alors, esclave de la passion, raisonne juste sur tout excepté sur l'objet de la passion, car tel est l'intérêt de cette passion.

On prouve qu'on a une passion, en sacrifiant à cette passion la passion immédiatement inférieure ou le lien naturel.⁷⁰

As an apprentice playwright, Stendhal could conceive of no more compelling enterprise than to dramatise this struggle within man, exposing thus to the glare of the footlights the workings of the 'human heart'. For him, the very essence of the dramatist's art lay in the apprehension and faithful depiction of this inner conflict. 'Il me semble,' he reflects in 1805, 'qu'on ne peut point exposer un grand caractère comique sans mettre deux passions qui se combattent.'⁷¹ Such inner conflict had an external dimension, too, in the ties which bound the individual to those around him. The ever problematic relationship between passion on the one hand and social obligation on the other was to provide the very foundation upon which Stendhal's characters would rest. 'Il n'y a de vrai caractère que celui qui est fondé sur l'opposition d'un lien et d'une passion,' he concludes from the earliest.⁷² 'Plusieurs liens opposés à une passion peuvent donner un caractère touchant,' he reasons, in drawing up a list of social ties and passions in January 1803.⁷³ Nothing, however, could rival the out-and-out struggle of passion against reason: there, for Stendhal, lay the most powerful focus of inner human conflict and dramatic interest alike. 'Rien de si fort,' he notes in his journal for October 1803, 'que de peindre un homme aussi philosophe que possible et malgré cela toujours entraîné par ses passions.'⁷⁴

There is nothing new, of course, in this most classical of notions. In Stendhal, however, it takes the form not of a mere theatrical contrivance but of a crucial philosophical issue which the theatre might, in some innovative way, help to resolve. Nor need we await the decisive encounter between Julien Sorel and Mme de Rênal in the garden at Verger to appreciate that the secret of character for Stendhal lies more in the inner struggle which gives rise to action than in that action itself. As we read in a notebook entry dated 7 August 1804, 'une action isolée ne nous découvre que très peu le caractère de celui qui la fait':

Cinquante traits sur un homme ne nous apprennent pas grand-chose, tandis que seulement deux exposés avec les motifs qui l'ont fait agir, ses indécisions, ses combats nous le font connaître.⁷⁵

ii. Reason

Much of what Stendhal consigned to his early notebooks and letters about the passions was conceived under the influence of Helvétius and Vauvenargues.⁷⁶ Both of these thinkers held that man, though he may be the theatre for a number of different passions, was necessarily actuated by a single *passion dominante* which prevailed over all others.⁷⁷ The language of Stendhal's notes in turn reflects this same belief. 'La passion régnante,' he concludes in June 1804, 'n'a pas besoin d'être réveillée par une sensation.'⁷⁸ Again, in July of the same year, he muses upon the changes that occur in heart and head when 'la passion régnante' itself is modified.⁷⁹ Where such passion exists, there can be no balance, no harmony in any meaningful sense. It was inevitable, therefore, that Stendhal should bring his attentions to bear upon that other major component of human nature, reason. On a reading of Lancelin's *Introduction à l'analyse des sciences* in autumn 1803, he had been struck by the author's claim that morality, far from being the result of some aleatory interplay of passions, was to be seen as a function of human reason. 'Dans le système de Lancelin,' he notes,

c'est la raison humaine formée qui engendre toutes les vertus. En la formant il faut donner d'avance l'habitude des vertus par une expérience ménagée.⁸⁰

The suggestion that reason might thus act as a guiding force for the passions was not lost on Stendhal. In a letter of 12 July 1804, he outlines the relationship between 'heart' and 'head' to his sister Pauline: 'D'après cela, tu vois que le meilleur *cœur* (celui où règne le plus fortement l'amour de ce qu'il appelle la vérité) ne peut faire que peu de bien, quand il ne sera pas joint à une bonne tête qui lui aura dit ce que c'est que la vertu véritable.'⁸¹ Some months later, the same point is made with a greater insistence on the crucial role of education. 'Je t'ai expliqué,' Stendhal writes once more to his sister, 'ce que c'était que la *tête* et le *cœur*; comme quoi, avec la même dose d'impulsion, on pouvait ne faire rien qui vaille. Voilà la véritable raison de la nécessité de l'instruction...'⁸²

Here was a principle which, by summer 1804, was echoing through every part of Stendhal's writings — letters, diaries, notebooks and project drafts alike.⁸³ Reason is more than ratiocination: it has what Anthony Levi terms an 'ethically normative function' too.⁸⁴ 'Le meilleur *cœur*, lorsqu'il n'est pas joint à une bonne tête, peut ne faire que peu de bien,' Stendhal insists in a notebook entry dated 13 July 1804, before proceeding thus to define his terms:

J'appelle le meilleur cœur celui qui est prêt à faire les plus grands sacrifices à ce

qu'il appelle *vertu*, mais si sa *tête* ne lui a pas appris ce que c'est que la véritable vertu (*il giovare ai più*, produire la plus grande masse de bonheur possible) il risque de faire de très grands sacrifices sans être très utile au bonheur des hommes. Louis XII, par exemple, n'avait pas ce me semble une tête digne de son *cœur*. Car, sans rien changer à son *cœur*, il pouvait faire beaucoup plus d'heureux. S'il avait un *cœur excellent*, ce qui est possible, il n'avait qu'à, avec une excellente tête, donner à la France une constitution républicaine et lui rendre la liberté. Tous les malheurs de François I^{er}, de la Ligue, de Louis XIV, ne seraient probablement pas arrivés.⁸⁵

Though this passage invites commentary on a number of levels — not least for the ethical import of Stendhal's remarks, and his interpretation of history as a process reducible to the virtues, or vices, of powerful individuals⁸⁶ — it is of significance to note here that Stendhal identifies the relationship between *heart* and *head* as the key to interpreting man on a moral level and to defining his role within society. From his notes on dramatic characterisation, it is clear, moreover, that the theatre was to have provided a testing-ground for this principle. In planning the character of Chamoucy for his play *Les Deux Hommes*, Stendhal applies the logic of the above passage. An ambitious character may always have 'le même cœur'; but, Stendhal argues, 'un léger changement dans la tête en fait un grand poète, un grand guerrier, un grand géomètre, etc.' The reason is simple: 'Il cherche à primer dans ce qu'il croit le plus grand.'⁸⁷

This view of passion as a blind force requiring the sight of reason — 'une force qu'il ne s'agit plus que de diriger'⁸⁸ — had, in fact, been prefigured as early as December 1802, when Stendhal transcribed into his notebook some thoughts inspired by Vauvenargues:

L'esprit est l'œil de l'âme, non sa force. Sa force est dans le cœur, c'est-à-dire dans les passions. La raison la plus éclairée ne donne pas d'agir et de vouloir. Suffit-il d'avoir la vue bonne pour marcher, ne faut-il pas encore avoir des pieds, et la volonté avec la puissance de les remuer?⁸⁹

By 1804, this essential relationship between passion and reason had become one of the pillars on which Stendhal rested his conception of man. 'Une *tête* plus ou moins bonne change les effets des passions,' he writes in July 1804, 'mais ne change rien à leur force.'⁹⁰ In its implications, such a view of human nature constituted a departure from those eighteenth-century thinkers who had advocated setting one passion, or one group of passions, against another. 'Quand la tête est pleine de vérités,' declares Stendhal, 'les passions ont bien moins de combats avec le désir d'être honnête homme, et peut-être entr'elles.'⁹¹ It also meant — and here the human equation was to become decidedly more complex — that passion was in a very real sense *rivalled* as the measure of man. 'C'est-à-dire,' writes Stendhal in a notebook entry dated 26 August 1804, 'que deux hommes à égale force de passion [...] sont entre eux comme leurs *têtes*; à égale bonté de *tête*, entre eux comme leurs passions.'⁹²

As his early writings testify, then, Stendhal became increasingly convinced that any possibility of exerting control over man's irrational impulses had to lie with the judicious exercise of reason. In July 1804, it is once again to Lancelin that he turns, this time for a definition of education which he commits to his notebook as follows: '*Education*: Art de former la tête et le cœur de l'homme, en donnant à l'un et à l'autre le meilleur développement possible.'⁹³ This altogether bland definition would command little interest if it were not clear, from a letter penned some weeks before, that it had been exercising Stendhal's mind. For, writing to his sister Pauline on 11 May 1804, he prisms open what is recognisably the same definition and proceeds to define each of its elements in turn:

Le mot éducation, art de former la tête (ou l'esprit) de l'homme et son âme (ou le centre de ses volontés), en donnant à l'un et à l'autre le meilleur (le plus utile au plus grand nombre) développement possible.⁹⁴

Here we find a prime example of that analytical method which the young Stendhal so aspired to perfect and to inculcate in his young sister. Yet his remarks to Pauline on this occasion raise many more questions than they answer. Where and how could 'education' apply leverage to what is elsewhere seen as an irresistible driving force within the individual? Did reason have power not only to direct but to forge the passions at their very source? These questions were knotty, and they were to preoccupy Stendhal intensely. For it was imperative that some means be divined whereby reason might cut across what he had established as a clear divide between heart and head. In seeking such a bridge between the intellect and the passions, Stendhal was to have recourse to a notion that had found currency among the preceding generation of philosophers and moralists. There were, he argued, certain '*habitudes de l'âme*', or '*habitudes morales*',⁹⁵ which could be cultivated and which could conduce to virtue or vice. One could, he believed, so redefine the contours of one's character by this means that it became predisposed towards certain types of passion, ill-disposed to others. The observation of such '*habits*' as justice, clemency, probity, generosity,⁹⁶ Stendhal held, might serve to promote desirable passions and to stifle more harmful impulses. Hence the reasoning which we find in a note from June 1804, where Stendhal defines such '*habitudes de l'âme*' according to a strict criterion of moral worth: '*On peut les séparer en habitudes utiles ou vertus, nuisibles ou vices.*'⁹⁷

This promotion of habit to the status of virtue or vice was an important step in Stendhal's reasoning on the question of the individual's responsibility for his own conduct.⁹⁸ The implications of the above went further, however. For to argue as much was to come close to holding that *character* itself was subject to control and modification through the medium of habit. Defined crudely in January 1803 as '*la*

somme des désirs qui affectent un personnage,⁹⁹ 'character' is indeed redefined by Stendhal in order to take account of the new factor in question. 'Caractère,' he notes in June 1804, 'est passions modifiées par les habitudes.'¹⁰⁰ In a subsequent journal entry, he develops this idea and its implications for the relationship between heart and head: 'Le caractère est passions et habitudes; mais la tête influe beaucoup sur les hab[itudes], donc aussi sur le caractère. La tête influe donc sur le *cœur*...'¹⁰¹

Here precisely was what Stendhal was seeking to establish. In 'habit', he believed, he had isolated one of the means whereby reason might exert some meaningful influence over the passions.¹⁰² Here, it seemed, was a factor in the human equation which man had the capacity to define to his own specifications.¹⁰³ The idea itself was far from new. The eighteenth century, in its search for the means of legislating for virtue, had recognised the importance of habituation, which was assigned unequivocally to education and social environment. The interest in habit that is expressed by Helvétius or d'Holbach is indissociable from their view of man as a being determined in all aspects of his behaviour by the environment which he inhabits.¹⁰⁴ As the notion is interpreted by Stendhal, however, there is a clear shift in emphasis, an *internalising* of the factors which are held to determine man's character and destiny. For the perspective in which Stendhal views human behaviour takes only very vague and fitful account of the deterministic forces at work upon the individual from without. In this sense, there is apparent from the earliest a gaping contradiction between the determinism to which Stendhal subscribes in principle and the capacities with which he is ready nonetheless to invest the individual in the formation of character and conduct. Habit is a case in point. For it requires to be set in train by some generative force which must *itself* (and here had lain the challenge for the eighteenth-century moralists) be subject to the vagaries of any all-embracing determinism. Stendhal does not trouble, however, with the finer points of the dialectic. Habit, it is suggested, is related to a faculty of reason wherein lies the capacity to *choose* between attitudes and courses of action on the grounds of their desirability alone. Reason, like some *deus ex machina*, would suffice to determine habit. 'Tout l'homme est habitude, songe donc à t'en donner de bonnes,' Stendhal writes glibly to his sister Pauline in March 1806.¹⁰⁵ In a subsequent letter, he cites his own case as an illustration of man's capacity to *select* his habits: 'Je suis étonné d'habitudes que j'ai ainsi contractées sans m'en douter et uniquement parce que je m'étais persuadé qu'il était vertueux et avantageux de les avoir.'¹⁰⁶ The power that is accorded to reason in both of these cases carries a strong echo of a letter written to the same Pauline Beyle a year earlier. Counselling his sister to learn from her observation of others, Stendhal had urged:

Cherche le chemin que tu aurais dû tenir, si tu avais été à leur place, pour éviter les habitudes de la tête et du cœur (ou le caractère) qu'ils se sont données.¹⁰⁷

Within a deterministic perspective, such remarks pose an obvious problem. For, as L.G. Crocker argues, there is a clear distinction to be observed between consigning control of character, with all its irrational impulses, to the *rational* and discerning faculties of a reasonable human being (as Stendhal does here), and making it contingent instead upon *coercive* mechanisms brought to bear from without (in the form, for example, of legislation and education, as the eighteenth-century determinists had insisted).¹⁰⁸ Though Stendhal does subscribe, through Helvétius most notably, to the view that man's thoughts and, ultimately, his behaviour are moulded by social conditioning and education, he is prepared simultaneously to grant powers to the faculty of reason — and, by extension, to the *will* — which fly in the face of any thoroughgoing determinist logic.

The link between habit and reason, once established, had an obvious ethical extension. What one thought, one's opinions or beliefs on a whole range of issues, would have an important role to play in shaping one's habits and one's subsequent behaviour, and in furnishing the means whereby passion might tend, for good or for ill, towards its fulfilment. 'Toutes les actions de notre corps,' writes Stendhal in July 1804, 'portent sur une opinion de notre tête qui est un jugement par lequel elle montre au désir du bonheur tel moyen comme le seul propre, ou comme le plus propre à parvenir à telle chose.'¹⁰⁹ In a similar note dating from the same month, he goes so far as to conclude: 'L'hom[me] vit d'après ce qu'il croit être et non point d'après ce qu'il est véritablement'; he then adds, by way of explanation: 'Toutes ses passions s'appuient sur les vérités de sa tête qui souvent sont des faussetés.'¹¹⁰

However infelicitous the expression, it is clear from such remarks that *truth* has become an essential element in the ever more complex question of human motivation. 'Nos volontés suivent nos opinions,' declares Stendhal in separate notebook entries of June and July 1804.¹¹¹ That men act upon stimuli originating in the mind is the notion that again emerges from a note of 13 July 1804, in which Stendhal seeks to clarify his thinking on this question: 'C'est-à-dire que les passions agissent d'après les énoncés qui leur sont donnés pour vrais par [les] têtes.'¹¹² To claim as much was to return squarely to the question of reason and passion and their influence one upon the other. It prepares the ground, moreover, for the far-reaching remark which Stendhal will make in a subsequent letter to his sister Pauline: 'Une âme forte qui parviendrait à faire tout ce que la raison lui dicterait serait maîtresse de tout ce qui l'environne.'¹¹³

Whatever the merits or demerits of Stendhal's dialectic in all of this, he had good reason for wishing to ascribe a significant role to the rational element in man. As an

aspiring comic dramatist, he thought it imperative that he should be able to relate responsibility for human behaviour to a discerning faculty of reason rather than to blind impulse. On that, according to Stendhal, the whole edifice of comedy rested. In his endeavours to define the 'règles de la plus parfaite comédie' in June 1804, he establishes a distinction that was to have served as one of the canons of his dramatic art:

Les personnages peints par les poètes et les historiens:
1° ne sont odieux que par le cœur et jamais par la tête;
2° ne sont ridicules que par la tête et jamais par le cœur.¹¹⁴

Having elsewhere posited that passion is 'une maladie involontaire de l'âme', and that an audience cannot be disposed to 'se moquer d'un état où ils seront peut-être demain,' Stendhal goes on to draw the following conclusion:

Il suivrait de là qu'on n'est jamais ridicule par ses passions. On ne serait donc *ridicule* que par la *tête* qui influe sur les passions de deux manières en leur fournissant des moyens et par ses habitudes.
Si le caractère n'est composé que de passions et d'habitudes, et que les passions ne soient jamais ridicules, restent les habitudes.¹¹⁵

It was a character's reason, then, together with the habits which were a corollary thereof, that were to form the butt of Stendhal's comic art. His conception of the sublime, it is significant to note, is defined, conversely, by the same terms. 'Comment a-t-on le sublime d'un caractère?' he muses in July 1804: 'En mettant à l'âme qui fait ce caractère une tête la plus éclairée possible.'¹¹⁶ Stendhal's early notion of the sublime thus becomes synonymous not — as one might expect, in view of his subsequent admiration for passionate energy in all its forms — with strength of passion, but rather with *reason* as the arbiter and guide of human nature. Amid his notes of August 1804, he reinforces the point: 'Sublime veut dire ici bonne tête, pleine des vérités les plus propres à faire le bonheur de ce qui l'entourne.'¹¹⁷

Stendhal makes a number of noteworthy applications of this principle in his private diaries and correspondence of the period. Molière's Alceste may be fundamentally admirable, and it is clear that Stendhal feels much sympathy — and, at times, no little affinity — with his predicament;¹¹⁸ but this does not obscure his judgment of Alceste's actions as seriously misguided:

Il y a dans Alceste l'imperfection capitale que la tête n'est pas assez bonne. Il devrait voir que tous ces maux qu'il ne peut endurer viennent du gouvernement monarchique, et tourner contre le tyran la haine que lui donnent les vices de ses contemporains. Ne prenant pas ce parti, n'en ayant pas la force, il devrait se faire une idée nette de la vertu, et pour faire encore quelques biens partiels (ne s'attaquant pas à la racine du mal), rester dans le monde pour s'y liguier avec le peu d'honnêtes gens qui y sont et y faire le plus de bien possible.¹¹⁹

Such criticism of Molière's protagonist is instructive on several levels. In the first place, it presupposes that Alceste has the wherewithal to master his misanthropy and to channel his passion in a different, more constructive direction. Here again, it is reason alone which, it is suggested, provides the means for self-correction. It is significant, too, that virtuous action is equated here — 'faire le plus de bien possible' — with the service of one's fellow men. Alceste's fault is that he succumbs to sterile resentment, *la haine impuissante*, rather than attempting to salvage what 'partial good' he can from a fundamentally corruptive régime.

The significance of Stendhal's reasoning on this question carries us far beyond the occasions when he castigates Molière's protagonist by name. A striking counterpoint to Alceste's case, for example, is provided by the legendary heroes of Ancient Rome, whose 'philanthropie éclairée', as typified by the actions of a Brutus or a Regulus, reveals in similar fashion Stendhal's concern to see fine sentiment matched with sound reason.¹²⁰

Louis XII, par exemple, n'avait pas une *tête* digne de son *cœur*; le divin Brutus (Marcus) n'avait pas peut-être un meilleur cœur, mais il avait une bien meilleure tête, c'est-à-dire pleine de bien plus de vérités.¹²¹

Regulus, avec le caractère d'Henri IV, serait la perfection jusqu'ici connue de l'homme, l'hom[me] donnant le plus de plaisir à ses concitoyens.¹²²

While the perfect coincidence of reason and sensibility was to have been reserved for but a few of Stendhal's more exemplary characters, who were to combine 'la plus belle *âme* avec la meilleure *tête*,'¹²³ the principle that is here outlined gave renewed impetus to his whole conception of characterisation. In August 1804, he records an idea for a new play: *L'homme irritable*, comédie. Un protagoniste qui aurait une *âme* parfaite et une tête également parfaite à cette mauvaise habitude près.¹²⁴ The significance of his play *Les Deux Hommes* was precisely that it would portray the characters of his two protagonists as an inevitable consequence of this heart-mind dichotomy. While the one — Charles Valbelle — was to be a model of republican probity, the other — Chamoucy — was to embody all the prejudice and hypocrisy of the 'caractère monarchique':¹²⁵

Les hom[m]es ont intérêt que les bons cœurs soient éclairés. Charles ne peut faire un crime que par ignorance, tandis que ce n'est que par ignorance que Ch[amoucy] peut faire une belle action.¹²⁶

The proper function of reason, however, is not simply to steer a character away from crime but — here again, as in the case of Alceste — to direct it towards the procurement of the greatest possible good:

Il faut que Charles, renfermé dans les bornes de la vraisemblance, montre le caractère le plus propre possible à faire le bonheur des autres.

Et que Ch[amouc]y sans aller jusqu'à l'odieux montre le caractère le plus propre à faire le malheur des autres.¹²⁷

Construire son âme: Freedom and Determinism in Character Formation

The foregoing passages, penned within a matter of months of one another in 1804, translate Stendhal's growing conviction that, if passion was a *sine qua non* of virtue as of vice, so too was reason. In a note consigned to his journal on 30 August 1804, it is the case of Alceste which once more prompts a revealing observation on the nature of man:

Si je peignais jamais un misanthrope, lui donner pour ami un homme qui reviendrait d'un long voyage, d'Amérique, et qui lui expliquerait pour le consoler mon système de l'*âme* et du *cœur*, comme quoi c'est par erreur et non par méchanceté que la plupart des hommes commettent leurs plus grands crimes.¹²⁸

For all the vagueness of Stendhal's terms here — 'la plupart des hommes', 'leurs plus grands crimes' —, the essence of his meaning is clear. The notion of education that is implicit here and in the previous examples does, however, beg a number of questions. For Stendhal's thought — and here we return to a point upon which we have touched — is complicated by his professed allegiance to a deterministic view of man as the product of forces which lie beyond his bidding. A remark in a letter dating from as early as 1800 appears to endorse the view that the human character is shaped by predetermining influences which man is powerless to direct. 'Il faut le supporter,' writes Stendhal to Pauline of their young cousin, Gaétan Gagnon, 'nous ne nous faisons point nous-mêmes, et il y aurait autant d'absurdité à mépriser un homme parce qu'il a moins d'esprit que nous qu'à s'enorgueillir de ce qu'on a les cheveux blonds tandis qu'un autre les a noirs.'¹²⁹ Stendhal seems to push this deterministic viewpoint still further when, in his journal of May 1803, he writes: '[...] on ne peut se refaire et malheur à qui tâche.'¹³⁰ Some notes on characterisation in the theatre written in July 1804 again appear to bear out this notion. In the case of a well established passion which has mobilised habit in its service, avers Stendhal, 'il est très difficile et par conséquent très rare de se corriger.'¹³¹

The quasi-fatalistic note that is struck in each of these instances is, however, far from characteristic of Stendhal's early thoughts on the question of man's accountability for himself. For it is clear, from numerous examples which are to be found elsewhere in his notebooks and letters, that he fails to subscribe to what such a view of humanity would imply. The overwhelming emphasis is placed not on man's powerlessness or

resignation in the face of some unfathomable determinism, but rather on his capacity to forge, to 'invent', himself *despite* the forces at work upon him. 'Construire son âme,' Stendhal urges himself in July 1804, 'de manière à ce qu'elle ait le plus grand bonheur possible dans la carrière que je prévois que je parcourrai.'¹³² The notion that one could thus lay the ground for one's own character comes repeatedly to the fore in his diaries and letters of this period. Sketching a portrait of his character in August 1804, he reflects: '[...] ton éducation t'a donné une âme très passionnée.'¹³³ In another journal entry from the same period, he strikes a similar note:

Réfléchir à cela pour perfectionner encore mon âme. J'ai étudié la nature dans les chefs-d'œuvre des maîtres, voilà ce qui m'a donné cette âme.¹³⁴

Such remarks recall the endless solicitations which we find in the letters to Pauline Beyle concerning the regime of study and self-cultivation which she should undertake and the moral benefits which, according to Stendhal, are to be derived therefrom. 'Il faut te familiariser avec les chefs-d'œuvre de nos grands écrivains,' he entreats her in December 1801; 'ils te formeront également l'esprit et le cœur.'¹³⁵ This insistence on the notion that one's innermost character can be forged through education, while it found endorsement in the out-and-out environmentalism of Helvétius, suggests a limitless potential residing in untutored human nature which is quite at odds with Stendhal's remarks about the irreversible character of his cousin Gaétan, or his suggestion that human character and reason are defined immutably from the earliest. Clearly, there is a serious philosophical problem in the disparity that exists between these two standpoints. It is, moreover, a problem which is never satisfactorily resolved — or even addressed as such — by Stendhal. What the above extracts demonstrate, however, is that, while appearing to endorse a deterministic rationale in his conception of human nature, Stendhal is by no means prepared to relinquish a very substantial measure of personal responsibility in the formation — and subsequent affirmation — of character. To argue as much was but a short step away from holding that one could *correct* a character that was already formed — a step which we find Stendhal, in a letter of March 1803, quite prepared to take. 'Sois persuadée,' he writes to Pauline, 'qu'on peut se corriger de tout; il n'y a qu'à se bien démontrer la nécessité d'une chose et l'on en vient à bout.'¹³⁶

If one looks back now to his letter of December 1800, or to his notes of May 1803,¹³⁷ one has some measure of the latitude which Stendhal in fact allows on this question of the individual's capacity to define his own character. Two letters of 1804 amply bear this out. In both cases, Stendhal takes up again the question of his young cousin, but his tone now is very different from that of his earlier letter. 'Il faut retremper son âme, autrement ce ne sera qu'un faible,' he writes to his sister in July

1804.¹³⁸ In the second letter, dated the following month, he urges her: 'tâche de [lui] donner un meilleur cœur...'¹³⁹

The suggestion here, clearly, is that one character may be 'traded in' for another, or at least substantially overhauled, provided one has the will and know-how to effect the necessary changes. To Pauline herself, Stendhal's advice has a similar ring: 'Voulez-vous donc avoir de l'esprit: travaillez votre caractère, chassez-en non seulement les vices, mais même les défauts...'¹⁴⁰ The same note is more resonant still in another of the letters from this early period:

Songe à *te connaître toi-même*. Cherche quelle est ta plus forte passion, la deuxième en force, etc.; tes goûts, les habitudes de tes passions; en un mot, cherche à faire ton propre caractère.¹⁴¹

Nor is Stendhal here, as in some other instances, dispensing counsel which he is himself quite content to flout. 'Conclusion: *travailler sur mon caractère*,' he exhorts himself in August 1804.¹⁴² 'Je commence à corriger mon caractère,' he notes in his diary of April 1805.¹⁴³ In July of that year, he draws up a number of maxims under the rubric: 'Travail sur toi-même.'¹⁴⁴ Even his discovery of Ideology in 1805 is cast in this same light: 'Voilà la grande utilité pour moi de l'idéologie; elle m'explique à moi-même, et me montre ainsi ce qu'il faut fortifier, ce qu'il faut détruire dans moi-même.'¹⁴⁵ Increasingly, the notion of self-correction comes to run like a leitmotif through Stendhal's journals and letters. 'Je continue à travailler sur mes sentiments,' he remarks in a letter of May 1807, 'c'est l'unique chemin du bonheur.'¹⁴⁶ The same preoccupation is evident again in his diary of November 1807: 'Il serait utile d'écrire les annales de ses *désirs*, de son *âme*; cela apprendrait à la corriger...'¹⁴⁷ The notion is one to which we find Stendhal returning with more insistence still in an entry dating from October 1808. 'Faire incessamment,' he urges himself, '[...] l'examen de ma conscience: comme homme qui cherche à se former le caractère, les manières, à s'instruire, à s'amuser, à se former dans son métier.'¹⁴⁸

The point bears emphasising. For this notion that one could *form*, or *reform*, one's character is of crucial significance in Stendhal's early conception of human nature. Michel Crouzet is well founded in his contention that Stendhal 'attend de la raison une correction de soi, une sorte de salut.'¹⁴⁹ It seems reasonable to propose, moreover, that the foregoing throws some light upon the manner in which this 'patentee of psychology and inventor of introspection'¹⁵⁰ perceived the exercise in self-scrutiny in which he engaged through his diaries, notebooks and letters. According to Alain Girard, Stendhal's journal is more than 'un instrument de connaissance': it is the means whereby he seeks to *forge* the very 'self' whose thoughts and sentiments he is recording. 'Se connaître,' writes Girard, 'c'est en réalité se faire; et se faire, tenter

d'être soi.¹⁵¹ For Jules Lemaître likewise, Stendhal's journal is first and foremost 'un travail utile. C'est pour lui un moyen de se modifier, de se façonner peu à peu en vue d'un but déterminé...'¹⁵²

On a strictly philosophical plane, the contention that the individual has power to act thus as arbiter over his character and conduct raises a number of important questions, not least about the nature of a determinism which, it has been assumed by critics, Stendhal inherited intact from the eighteenth century and passed on to later intellectual kinsmen such as Taine. For Stendhal as for Taine, it has been argued, man is 'un mécanisme à démonter, et tous ses mouvements, toutes ses actions s'expliquent, comme les mouvements et les directions de la matière, par des faits physiques. C'est de part et d'autre même déterminisme.'¹⁵³ Rémi Bosselaers takes up this point, discovering in Stendhal a convinced materialist and an exponent 'du déterminisme mécaniste de Hobbes.'¹⁵⁴ This notion of Stendhal as a thoroughgoing determinist, a link in the chain from Hobbes to Taine, has gained much currency. For Gita May, Stendhal is a 'deterministic materialist' and disciple of the eighteenth-century sensationalists;¹⁵⁵ for Manuel Brussaly and Etienne Rey likewise, he is an 'epicurean determinist', an exponent of that 'déterminisme utilitaire' which reduced man to a complex of desires and fears, and set him irrevocably on a path towards the gratification of his self-interest as he perceived it.¹⁵⁶

Though there may be ample evidence in Stendhal's writings to support them, such definitions call nonetheless for serious attenuation. For, contained within the same writings, with the premium which they set upon the individual's powers of self-determination, is a compelling case *against* the very necessitarianism in question. Alongside, and in contradistinction to, Stendhal's determinism must be placed what Marcel Prévost calls 'son culte de la volonté consciente et agissante.'¹⁵⁷ The two stances require a reconciliation that is not easily arrived at. It is a problem which Gita May mirrors rather than resolves when she writes:

Like the eighteenth-century sensualists, Beyle denied the existence of free will and firmly believed that all our actions are determined by our physical make-up and our past experience. Yet he differed from the behaviorist school in that he was also convinced that the individual could, in a large measure, shape his own destiny by knowing what options are open to him and by choosing his course of action with as full an understanding as possible of what is best for him in each particular situation.¹⁵⁸

This, we submit, is a less than convincing attempt to accommodate two such radically opposed standpoints.¹⁵⁹ Nor does the vagueness of the language employed — 'in a large measure', 'as full an understanding as possible' — help to resolve the issue. One cannot, with logical consistency, as L.G. Crocker points out, make man subject to an

overbearing determinism *and* grant him 'the special moral dignity of being privileged to decide his own fate.'¹⁶⁰ The problem in the above analysis is centred on the notion of rational 'choice'. For one can argue that, so long as a man is not impeded in the execution of his will, then he is acting in a manner which can be construed as 'free', enjoying a liberty consistent with compulsion. This does not mean, however, that he is free to *choose* the course of action upon which he embarks. Choice cannot be defined independently of the determinism by which it is circumscribed: it merely becomes a function of that determinism.¹⁶¹ There is no better illustration of this point than Hobbes's definition of 'liberty' as 'the absence of Opposition', or of 'externall Impediments of motion.'¹⁶² Water running down a hillside, insofar as it encounters no obstacle in its course, can be considered to run *freely*. This does not, of course, imply that the water is free to execute a motion *other than* that of flowing downhill.¹⁶³

Though both of the positions outlined by May might, then, with more careful wording, be reconciled within a satisfactory determinist logic, they do not, as they are expressed above, constitute a coherent definition of human nature. The fact is that any attempt, however scrupulous, to reconcile the opposing currents — for opposing currents they are — in Stendhal's view of moral responsibility is doomed to inconsistency and failure. There is no easy middle way between determinism and the abolition of free will, on the one hand, and the capacity to 'shape' one's destiny, in any meaningful sense, on the other. Thus May finds herself, elsewhere in the same study, affirming 'Stendhal's lifelong belief in the fundamental freedom of the individual, in his aptitude for choice and for overcoming the sociological or psychological forces that would constrict him.'¹⁶⁴ *Fundamental freedom... choice... overcoming the forces that would constrict him*: we are at some remove here, it will be agreed, from the 'deterministic materialist and atheist, the loyal disciple of Helvétius and the Ideologists' who is elsewhere evoked by the same critic.¹⁶⁵

From Helvétius to Stendhal: The Altered Ego

Though it may not be happily resolved, the problem addressed by May is an important one which goes to the heart of Stendhal's conception of human nature.¹⁶⁶ It raises questions in particular about the manner in which, through his reading of Helvétius notably, he responded to the determinism that was such an essential feature of the latter's philosophy. Let us approach these questions by considering one central aspect of Helvétius's argument, the claim that human beings are, as D.W. Smith puts it,

'simply pleasure-pain calculating-machines, physically incapable of desiring anything but their own material pleasure.'¹⁶⁷ On 24 May 1804, lending his endorsement to Helvétius's theory of human motivation, Stendhal writes in his notebook: '[...] il n'y a que les sots qui croient que je puisse aller contre mes intérêts.'¹⁶⁸ This idea is echoed and amplified in another notebook entry some weeks later, in which he explores its underlying rationale thus: 'Il me semble constant qu'au moment où nous agissons, nous agissons toujours pour notre plus grand plaisir.' He concludes:

Il est donc très vrai que l'amour du bonheur ou amour-propre nous dirige dans toutes nos actions. Ceux qui nient cela appliquent notre bonheur à leurs passions et disent: "Cela n'est pas *le* bonheur, donc il agit d'une manière désintéressée". Il fallait dire: "Cela n'est pas *mon* bonheur."¹⁶⁹

As a reflection of Helvétius's theory of self-interest, these remarks cannot be faulted.¹⁷⁰ Yet Stendhal proves unable to sustain this rationale and to give it anything approaching consistent application in his own writing. We saw earlier in this chapter how he recognises a need to correct the jaundiced view of the passions which, he claims, he has inherited from his family upbringing. This instance of a residual moral orthodoxy, however, is not unique. When Stendhal least suspects it, his language betrays a lingering legacy of the philosophical conservatism which he is everywhere at pains to denounce.¹⁷¹ Men are but egos seeking self-fulfilment, wills which collide or coincide according to the moment and circumstance. Such is the view professed by this avowed disciple of Helvétius and reputed forerunner of Nietzsche. Yet we surprise him, in his notes of June 1804, defining egoism as a '*défaut*' — or, more problematically still, in a note from September of the same year, as an '*habitude de l'âme, vicieuse*'.¹⁷² Clearly, such value judgments should have been rendered redundant by an Helvétian philosophy which, as Michel Crouzet properly asserts, '*ne tend qu'à unir l'égoïsme et la bonne conscience; cette conciliation qui doit déculpabiliser l'amour-propre (contre un christianisme jugé castrateur)*...'¹⁷³ Egoism indulged to the detriment of others might, of course, be deemed reprehensible;¹⁷⁴ but to condemn egoism *per se* was to take issue with the whole rationale upon which eighteenth-century radical determinist philosophy rested. Helvétius is tireless on this point:

Quel homme, en effet, s'il sacrifie l'orgueil de se dire plus vertueux que les autres à l'orgueil d'être plus vrai, & s'il sonde, avec une attention scrupuleuse, tous les replis de son ame, ne s'apercevra pas que c'est uniquement à la manière différente dont l'intérêt personnel se modifie, que l'on doit ses vices & ses vertus? que tous les hommes sont mus par la même force? que tous tendent également à leur bonheur? que c'est la diversité des passions & des goûts, dont les uns sont conformes & les autres contraires à l'intérêt public, qui décide de nos vertus & de nos vices?¹⁷⁵

The express intention of Helvétius was neither to deny nor to reprove man's innate tendency to seek what he perceived to be in his own best interest; it was rather, by

convincing men that their interest lay in promoting the common good, to reconstruct morality on new foundations and forge 'une vertu toujours inébranlable au choc de mille intérêts particuliers & différents.'¹⁷⁶ The challenge which such an aspiration issued to conventional morality is clear; for man is robbed from the outset of the capacity to suppress those very impulses which Christian moralism held to be incompatible with an ideal of altruistic virtue based on individual conscience and rational choice:

Les déclamations continuelles des moralistes contre la méchanceté des hommes, prouvent le peu de connoissance qu'ils en ont. Les hommes ne sont point méchants, mais soumis à leurs intérêts. Les cris des moralistes ne changeront certainement pas ce ressort de l'univers moral.¹⁷⁷

The difficulty which Stendhal encounters in adapting his thinking and language to this most basic precept of philosophical egoism has occasioned remarkably little commentary. Yet the examples cited are no mere slips of the pen. The term 'égoïsme' will throughout Stendhal's writings be charged with a pejorative value which flies in the face of all that he had read and apparently endorsed in a thinker such as Helvétius. From being the very source of 'virtue' for the latter, the Ego undergoes a serious distortion in Stendhal's value-system, emerging not as the protean deity of the moral world, but as its demon. Egoism, Stendhal plainly writes in a letter of 1806, is 'contre la vertu'; it is, as we find him repeatedly asserting, a mark of individuals incapable of generous sentiment.¹⁷⁸ As Michel Crouzet observes, the term is consigned by Stendhal to the semantic fields of vanity, coldness and base calculation. 'A dire vrai, jamais ne cessera chez Stendhal, cet emploi péjoratif du mot *égoïsme*, [...]. Cette pensée, si naturelle, si propre au "status naturae", Stendhal ne s'y résigne pas...'¹⁷⁹

To recalcitrate thus against the ascendancy of the Ego was, however, to return to the very view of man — as a being with a dual nature, capable of good and evil alike and equipped with the moral apparatus required to arbitrate between the two — against which philosophers such as Helvétius had deployed their reasoning. The perception of 'selfishness' as reprehensible implied the espousal of a quasi-Christian definition of moral man. For it assumed the capacity to choose between *self*-interested and *disinterested* behaviour. Stendhal, indeed, goes so far as to admit of what his eighteenth-century predecessors had striven to unmask as a pious fraud when, again amid his notes of June 1804, he expressly recognises the possibility of disinterested human endeavour. 'C'est qu'une passion peut rendre désintéressé,' he avers, adding the suggestion that one might even cultivate a habit of self-abnegation, 'l'habitude du *désintéressement*.'¹⁸⁰

In this sense, Gita May makes an important point when she argues that, whatever

Stendhal's debt to the radical precepts of hard-headed moralists such as La Rochefoucauld and Helvétius, 'il ne peut se résigner à souscrire entièrement à une vue de l'homme selon laquelle il est un être de péché, d'orgueil, de velléité passagère et surtout de monstrueux égoïsme.'¹⁸¹ One suspects that Stendhal might have defended himself on this point by recourse to the *poète-philosophe* dichotomy which we discussed in Chapter II. For it was his contention that Helvétius, and other 'froids philosophes' of his like, were unable to apprehend the full range of human experience in precisely those emotive regions to which, argued Stendhal, they were strangers. The suggestion, clearly, is that there exist some 'higher reaches' of human sentiment, where one may witness a refinement and a generosity of spirit that go beyond the narrow confines of self-interest as perceived by Helvétius. In a letter to Edouard Mounier of 15 December 1803, Stendhal recounts how the latter's *De l'Esprit* has made him call into question such sentiments as love and friendship:

Enfin, j'ai cru reconnaître qu'Helvétius, n'ayant jamais senti ces douces affections, était, d'après ses propres principes, incapable de les peindre. Comment pourrait-il expliquer ce trouble inconnu qui saisit à la première vue, et cette constance éternelle qui nourrit sans espérance un amour allumé?¹⁸²

The remark shows some sensitivity to what may be deemed a major shortcoming of Helvétius's philosophy. For to suggest, as the latter does, that human happiness is reducible to some crudely defined common denominator of sensual gratification was to belie the range and complexity of the motivating forces by which human beings may find themselves impelled. 'The consequence,' as Charles Frankel notes, 'was that Helvétius parodied the nature (and diversity) of human happiness': he might recognise, *quantitatively*, the various domains in which self-interest is pursued, but he fails to take 'account of the qualitative differences between these domains.'¹⁸³ The point was one which made a lasting impression upon Stendhal. In a letter of 13 November 1820 to Adolphe de Maresté, he will reiterate his earlier reservations in terms which are far from arguing an unquestioning allegiance to the fundamental principles of Helvétius's thought:

Helvétius a eu parfaitement raison lorsqu'il a établi que le principe d'utilité ou l'*intérêt* était le guide unique de toutes les actions de l'homme. Mais, comme il avait l'âme froide, il n'a connu ni l'amour, ni l'amitié, ni les autres passions vives qui *créent des intérêts nouveaux et singuliers*.¹⁸⁴

What Stendhal is clearly loath to accept is that the most refined and the most brutish sentiments alike should be judged according to the same narrow conception of material self-interest. He comes close here to a number of the criticisms levelled against Helvétius by Diderot, who, in his lengthy refutation of *De l'Homme*, signalled the failure therein to recognise those noble motivating sentiments — 'ce généreux enthousiasme' — which could not be reduced to some base gratification of the

senses.¹⁸⁵ Stendhal, while identifying precisely the same lack in the author of *De l'Homme*, goes much further than Diderot in his objection. For, where the latter questions the *nature* of the self-interest posited by Helvétius, finding in it too great an emphasis upon the pleasures of the flesh,¹⁸⁶ Stendhal appears at times to question its very *function*, to cast doubt upon the hegemony of self-interest, however broadly defined, as the driving force in human affairs. His misgivings on this question, his insistence upon a *separate category* of experience to which the philosophers of egoism are not privy, together with the suggestion that some element of *selflessness* is the hallmark of a true passion, constitute a substantial departure from the stark Helvétian principle which he had spelt out some months earlier in a letter to his sister Pauline: '*chaque homme juge tout par son intérêt*.'¹⁸⁷

Of the problems implied by the foregoing, Stendhal appears largely unaware. Though he identifies what he takes to be the limitation in Helvétius's treatment of human nature, he is far from suspecting the distortions which he visits at times upon the latter's most fundamental precept. In his earliest endeavours as a would-be playwright, he seeks to provide in dramatic form a demonstration of what he terms 'la vraie morale, celle d'Helvétius'.¹⁸⁸ When it comes, however, to defining the characters for his projected play *Les Deux Hommes* (a heavy-handedly didactic demonstration of republican virtue and monarchical vice),¹⁸⁹ the difficulty which he has in adhering to Helvétius's theory of human nature breaks through once more. 'Un hom[me] méprisable,' opines Stendhal, reflecting on the villain of the piece, Chamoucy, 'est celui qui n'est pas susceptible d'être passionné, et qui lorsqu'on lui montre qu'il y va de son intérêt n'hésite pas à faire une mauvaise action, tel est M. de Chamoucy.'¹⁹⁰

Stendhal's thinking here, by his own stated principles, is surely flawed on a number of counts. The notion of a human being who is not susceptible of passion not only goes beyond the bounds of verisimilitude and calls into question the crucial role of the passions as discussed in the foregoing pages: it runs counter to the explicit claim by Stendhal, in a notebook entry of 5 May 1803, that each human being without exception is susceptible, by nature, to *every* passion.¹⁹¹ More importantly still, the example in question demonstrates the precarious hold which Stendhal has over Helvétius's central principle that we act everywhere and at all times to further our own best interest as we perceive it. This did not for Helvétius, or for the Idéologues who followed him closely on this point, render meaningless the notions of virtue and vice; nor did it imply resignation to a world of unfettered egoism. The solution, however, lay not in reproving individuals for their conduct, but in undertaking a thoroughgoing reform of the social order through education and legislation. As C.H. Van Duzer rightly observes, a 'strong humanitarian sympathy runs through the moral philosophy of the

Ideologues. If man is the product of institutions, as the Sensationalists believed, then he is to be pitied rather than blamed for his immoral actions.¹⁹² No thinker proved a more resolute exponent of this rationale than Helvétius. Without sound instruction, he argued, it availed nothing to criticise the behaviour of individual men:

L'homme d'esprit sait que les hommes sont ce qu'ils doivent être; que toute haine contr'eux est injuste; qu'un sot porte des sottises, comme le sauvageon des fruits amers; que l'insulter, c'est reprocher au chêne de porter le gland plutôt que l'olive...¹⁹³

If one applies this reasoning to Stendhal's *Les Deux Hommes*, one must recognise that Chamoucy, the product of a particular environment, instruction and political régime, is no more able to alter his character — or even to perceive its defects — than Charles, the hero of the play, the republican *par excellence*, is capable of abasing himself to commit reprehensible deeds.¹⁹⁴ In characterising his two protagonists, indeed, Stendhal recalls Helvétius's imagery, describing Charles and Chamoucy as 'ces deux plantes', and stating that the former must be shown to produce 'de bonnes actions comme un poirier porte des poires.'¹⁹⁵ Must not the same hold true, conversely, for his counterpart? The logic is inescapable; yet the judgment that is conveyed by the designation of Chamoucy as 'méprisable' implies a *choice* on the part of the character, the ability *not* to pursue his self-interest as he perceives it — and this is clearly at odds with Helvétius's thesis. 'Il ne faut donc pas rendre passionné mon courtisan, parce que la passion excuse tout,' Stendhal takes care to note, 'mais lui faire commettre de [...] mauvaises actions de sang-froid. Alors on le haïra ou on le méprisera.'¹⁹⁶ The very purpose of Stendhal's play, it is clear, was that the audience should emerge from the theatre *loathing* and *despising* the hapless Chamoucy — that is, giving rein to the very sentiments which Helvétius deems misguided and unjust.

Stendhal's reading of Helvétius, then, is subject to caution. Francine Marill Albérès appears to misjudge the whole import of the latter's philosophy when she asserts that, under Helvétius's influence, Stendhal early espouses '*la notion d'altruisme*' and comes to advocate 'le désintéressement personnel.'¹⁹⁷ Nowhere in Helvétius's philosophy, nor in Stendhal's interpretation of the latter where it is accurate, is there a place for such concepts. Enlightened egoism, yes; self-abnegation, on no account. The author of *De l'Homme* puts it emphatically: '*sans intérêt d'aimer la vertu, point de vertu.*'¹⁹⁸ It was Helvétius's contention that self-interest, by nature ineradicable, could nonetheless be harnessed within a well conceived social order and so made subject to the sanctions of praise and blame, reward and punishment, that it would be in the individual's *interest* to be always virtuous. 'Dans une excellente Législation,' he contends, like Jeremy Bentham after him, 'les seuls vicieux seroient les fous.'¹⁹⁹

In such a social order, one might have all the appearance of being altruistic, of renouncing one's own well-being to procure that of others; but this in itself would be but an exercise of egoism, the pursuit of a higher and more laudable pleasure perhaps, but the pursuit of pleasure no less. Helvétius, as Michel Crouzet rightly observes, 'ne peut concevoir qu'un changement de direction, et non de nature, de l'amour de soi.'²⁰⁰ The distinction is a crucial one. The Ego cannot transcend itself, even in the most heroic of actions. The highest virtue is no more for Helvétius than 'un conditionnement de l'amour de soi par les lois, et les règles de l'éloge et du blâme.'²⁰¹ Even Regulus (to cite again the example which Stendhal, like Helvétius, uses to illustrate this point), when he returned to be put to death in Carthage, chose the course of action which best served his interest as he conceived of it.²⁰² His heroism, his compulsion to live up to the ideal of *virtus*, meant more to him than life itself: he had quite simply, as Stendhal puts it, 'un plaisir plus grand à satisfaire.'²⁰³

The same holds true for another case which Stendhal cites with some frequency, that of Lucius Junius Brutus, the semi-legendary hero who sacrificed his two sons for the preservation of Rome.²⁰⁴ The anecdote was, as H.T. Parker observes, commonplace in the later eighteenth century as a means of exciting admiration for the civic virtues of the Ancients;²⁰⁵ but Stendhal's reflections on it, in his notebook entry of 9 July 1804, are revealing. 'Brutus même en immolant ses fils,' he avers, 'agissait pour son plus grand plaisir. Il prévoyait cette hauteur de renommée, ce rang presque divin qui le rend éblouissant pour les petites âmes, et la préférait aux jouissances que pouvaient lui donner ses deux fils.'²⁰⁶ Thus far the analysis is quite consistent with Helvétius. But, in pursuing his line of thought and reflecting upon the sort of society which might give rise to such virtue, Stendhal introduces a new and alien notion — 'l'amour direct de la vertu' — which, he opines, might well lead men to sacrifice all in the name of their fellow human beings.²⁰⁷ We have seen above Helvétius's dismissal of any suggestion that virtue might be embraced for its own sake; yet, as Michel Crouzet recognises, Stendhal clearly shifts his position towards just such a suggestion, betraying 'une arrière-pensée d'innéité, de spontanéité au Bien' which has no place in Helvétius's scheme of things.²⁰⁸ Had Stendhal consulted again *De l'Esprit*, he would have found unequivocally expressed there the contention that no motive other than self-interest may predispose a man to virtue:

Quel autre motif pourroit déterminer un homme à des actions généreuses? Il lui est aussi impossible d'aimer le bien pour le bien, que d'aimer le mal pour le mal.²⁰⁹

Part of the problem in such instances arises from the inadequacies of Stendhal's language. For though he advocates, like his philosophical mentors, a strictly defined

terminology as the *sine qua non* of sound reasoning,²¹⁰ he himself falls far short of any such ideal. In considering the ties which, in civilised society, bind the individual to the community, Stendhal is clearly mindful of the Helvétian principle of praise and blame as powerful determinants of human behaviour. Yet the language in which he couches his reflection on this question, in a notebook entry dated 25 July 1804, reveals considerable confusion and a betrayal of the logic whereby the above sanctions are held by Helvétius to operate:

[...] il faut bien se souvenir que dans ces jugements c'est toujours l'amour-propre qui décide seul la plupart du temps, et que, quand il est arrêté, ce n'est jamais que par la crainte d'encourir le blâme du public.²¹¹

To argue that self-interest can be directed or channelled is one thing; to suggest that it can be *stemmed* — 'arrêté' — is, of course, quite another.

These early instances are not exceptional. In his later published writings, too, Stendhal will defy Helvétius and accord to human nature a dimension which is indefensible in terms of the latter's strict determinist principle. Thus, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Stendhal will confront the mercenary virtue of the Christian saints with the generosity evinced by the heroes of Antiquity. The criticism to be made of the 'froids égoïstes' who inhabit biblical history, he argues, is quite simply this: 'Il n'y a jamais *sacrifice de l'intérêt propre* à quelque sentiment généreux.'²¹² The same note is struck in *De l'Amour*, where we find Livy's Romans praised as exemplars of 'cette simplicité héroïque, fruit d'un sacrifice entier et de bonne foi.'²¹³ The terms 'sacrifice entier' should no more be overlooked here than the accentuated — the italics are Stendhal's — '*sacrifice de l'intérêt propre*' in the preceding example. In *D'un nouveau complot contre les industriels*, Stendhal goes further still, contending that, 'pour arriver à une haute estime, il faut, en général, qu'il y ait *sacrifice* de l'intérêt à quelque noble but.' Again the emphasis is that of Stendhal, who goes on to define disinterestedness itself — *le désintéressement*, no less — as 'cette plus facile des vertus.'²¹⁴

In each of these examples, Stendhal conceives of a capacity for generosity which, while it may appear superficially to echo Helvétius's perception of a Regulus or a Brutus, is, on a closer reading, much more akin to traditional notions which it was the author of *De l'Esprit*'s express purpose to refute.²¹⁵ For, supervening the Helvétian principle of self-interest, there persists in Stendhal an obdurate conviction that the sublime in human affairs (manifest, for example, in 'heroism', or in 'love') could not be adequately evaluated in the crude terms of pleasure and pain.²¹⁶ Stendhal, indeed, takes issue with the very *coincidence of interests* which Helvétius posits as the *summum bonum* of any well organised society. 'Je veux croire que mille industriels qui, sans manquer à la probité, gagnent cent mille écus chacun, augmentent *la force* de

la France,' he insists in *D'un nouveau complot contre les industriels*; 'mais ces messieurs ont fait le bien public à la suite de leur bien particulier.'²¹⁷ A remark such as this poses a considerable challenge to the view of Stendhal as a loyal disciple of Helvétius. For he remains entrenched in the notion that virtue in its highest form is indissociable not from self-interest but from self-abnegation. Fernand Rude, in his apologetic study of Stendhal as a socialist *avant la lettre*, cites the '*principe de l'utilité*' which, he argues, is that of Helvétius, Bentham and Stendhal in turn:

La vertu n'est pas en effet le sacrifice de nos intérêts à nos devoirs, mais le sacrifice d'un intérêt moindre à un intérêt supérieur. Et, "en travaillant à notre bonheur particulier, nous travaillons pour le bonheur général."²¹⁸

While the axiom cited from Bentham here remains true to Helvétius's theory of self-interest, it is at some considerable remove from Stendhal's criticism above of those who promote 'le bien public à la suite de leur bien particulier.'

It should, however, have been transparent to Stendhal, from his earliest philosophical readings, that an unalloyed virtue was not to be hoped for amongst men. Just as there is no such thing as Happiness, but only that happiness which *I* perceive and pursue, there is no such thing as Virtue, if by that we mean a standard of behaviour which can be objectified and considered in isolation from the drives, wants and needs of individual human beings. Between the individual and the social whole, Stendhal had written in January 1803, virtue is that which is useful 'à l'un et à l'autre ou à l'un des deux seulement sans nuire à l'autre.'²¹⁹ In April 1804, amid the notes from his reading of Vauvenargues, he goes so far as to assert:

La plupart des vices concourent au bien public. Sans l'avarice, la vanité, etc., qui ferait fleurir le commerce? [...] Si les vices font du bien, c'est qu'ils sont mêlés de vertu. Les vices qui font fleurir le commerce sont mêlés de patience, de tempérance, de courage, etc., et ces choses sont des vertus.²²⁰

Somewhere between these lines and the pamphlet of 1825 Stendhal's reasoning goes awry. Nor are the discrepancies in question to be accounted for by his contention, voiced on a number of occasions, that a philosopher of egoism such as Helvétius had underestimated man's capacity to generate '*des intérêts nouveaux et singuliers*';²²¹ for the novelty, even uniqueness, of self-interest as it is construed by any individual does not alter its essence or make it the more easily denied. In a letter to Adolphe de Mareste dated 20 March 1820, Stendhal writes thus of a mutual acquaintance: 'Faites-lui lire Helvétius et Tracy. C'est mon dada.'²²² In considering this ostensibly enduring debt to Helvétius, J.-C. Alciatore unhesitatingly asserts that Stendhal continued throughout to 'puiser, dans ce fonds inépuisable, de nouveaux aperçus.'²²³ Yet a passing remark in his letter to Mareste dated 13 November 1820 raises questions about the precise nature

of this alleged fidelity. Reflecting upon the range of different ways in which a powerful passion may prompt us to pursue our self-interest, Stendhal confesses:

Il se peut qu'Helvétius n'ait jamais deviné ces intérêts; il y a trop longtemps que je n'ai lu son ouvrage, pour pouvoir l'assurer.²²⁴

Such apparent indifference to the finer points of Helvétius's thought is revealing. Revealing, too, is the portrait of Stendhal which 'Mérimée leaves in his *Notes et Souvenirs*. 'Il citait souvent Helvétius avec grande admiration, et même il m'obligea de lire le livre *de l'Esprit*,' records Stendhal's friend; 'mais jamais, à ma prière, il ne consentit à le relire.'²²⁵ Such testimony, from Stendhal and Mérimée both, should perhaps temper our view of the unflinching allegiance which the former is held to have owed to the principles of Helvétius. Even when one returns, indeed, to those early years when the reading of *De l'Esprit* and *De l'Homme* was still fresh, it is clear that Stendhal, in his conception of reason, free will and human responsibility, has about him at times considerably more of the conventional moralist than of the radical determinist.²²⁶ As Roger Smith argues, 'the notion of the mind as an immanent spontaneous source of action is inseparable from the Christian idea of free will and the western social concept of individual responsibility.'²²⁷ Yet Stendhal cannot break free of this traditional perspective sufficiently to allow him to conceive of human nature in a manner consistent with the determinism which he posits in principle, and to relegate the mind from its status as the initiator and supreme arbiter of human resolution. Thus it is his contention that one can and should, despite all of the constraints that might appear to militate against such a prospect, strive, through an ostensibly free exercise of reason and will, to nurture certain passions and to suppress others. The unwavering criterion in one's choice should be the question, firstly, of whether a given passion is adjudged to have a realistic prospect of fulfilment, and, secondly, of whether such fulfilment is of itself likely to conduce to happiness.²²⁸ 'Nous qui avons le bonheur inappréciable d'être passionnés,' he writes to Pauline in August 1804, 'tâchons de déraciner les passions que probablement nous ne pourrions pas satisfaire; d'aviver, au contraire, celles que nous pourrions désaltérer, et nous serons très heureux.'²²⁹ Only those passions which can be fulfilled should be indulged. 'Tâcher de diminuer en moi les passions qui ne pourront jamais être satisfaites,' reads a journal entry from July 1804.²³⁰ 'Une religion peut être utile,' Stendhal notes among his plans for the *Filosofia Nova*: 'Il faut déraciner les passions malheureuses, aviver les heureuses.'²³¹ The remark is amplified in a further notebook entry from the same period:

Amortir, diminuer les passions que nous prévoyons qui ne seront pas satisfaites, augmenter, vivifier celle dont nous croyons les jouissances assurées: voilà l'art du bonheur.²³²

This question of the happiness which should attend the pursuit of certain passions

and renunciation of others is crucial to Stendhal's reasoning on this whole question. A letter written to Pauline Beyle on 19 April 1805 contains much that is instructive in this regard:

Le bonheur consiste à pouvoir satisfaire ses passions, lorsqu'on n'a que des passions heureuses. La haine, la vanité, la cruauté, par exemple, sont des passions qui, généralement parlant, donnent plus de malheur que de bonheur. On peut croire le contraire de l'amitié, l'amour, l'amour de la gloire, celui de la patrie, etc. Il faut donc faire le premier travail sur soi, et tâcher de déraciner de son cœur les passions malheureuses; cela est facile lorsqu'on le veut; il faut ensuite acquérir les habitudes propres à diminuer autant que possible les inconvénients qui paraissent inévitables.²³³

With all its Epicurean overtones, this passage throws into relief the premium which Stendhal sets on self-control and, more importantly, on self-censorship. Undesirable passions should be repressed; desirable passions should be fostered. Reason, elsewhere adjudged by Stendhal to be nothing more than 'le valet de l'âme',²³⁴ is here cast in the guise of arbiter, endowed with the power — the *will* power — to select from among the passions those that are to be encouraged and those that must be extirpated. This, however, raises a question to which the passage cited above provides no satisfactory answer. 'Facile lorsqu'on le veut' it may be; but *how*, in reality, does one rid oneself of an undesirable passion? In the same letter of 19 April 1805, Stendhal addresses this question :

Une fois qu'on a déraciné de son cœur les mauvaises passions, ce qui, je crois, est aisé en le voulant fermement (pour cela, il faut se démontrer qu'elles rendent malheureux dans *tous les cas possibles*), il est clair qu'il faut chercher à satisfaire le plus celles qui restent. Le degré de bonheur dont on est susceptible se mesure alors sur le degré de force des passions.²³⁵

The designation here of 'good' and 'bad' passions finds an echo in a letter of March 1806, where Stendhal asserts: 'Je cherche à arracher de mon âme tout plein de fausses passions.'²³⁶ What, though, is to be understood by 'false passions'? Is not the very juxtaposition of such terms a contradiction in itself, an impossible conflation of the two theatres — heart and head — between which Stendhal is at pains to differentiate? 'J'appelle fausses passions,' he explains, 'celles qui nous promettent dans telle situation un bonheur que nous ne trouvons pas lorsque nous y sommes arrivés.'²³⁷ There is here, one feels, an early prefiguration of the '*N'est-ce que ça?*' response which Stendhal would experience on a number of notable occasions in his life and which he would pass on, in turn, to the protagonists of his fictional world.²³⁸ The problem implicit in the passages cited, however, is that Stendhal commits precisely that error for which he elsewhere reproves Helvétius: he assumes the individual's capacity to determine what is in his own best interest and, in so doing, sets too great a store by some unerring faculty of judgment. Helvétius, he had written in January 1804, 'n'a pas

assez considéré la différence entre notre intérêt réel et notre intérêt apparent. Il a jugé les hommes, trop raisonnables, d'après lui, et ils sont presque toujours dominés par leurs passions...'²³⁹

By no amount reasoning, it seemed, could the circle be squared. For Stendhal finds objections to determinism and to voluntarism in equal measure. No sooner does he appear to endorse the determinist's position than he postulates a faculty of reason which transcends all deterministic constraint; on other occasions, we find the same faculty of reason reduced to nothing more than an intermediary stage between passion and action ('La passion commande à la tête qui transmet l'ordre au corps'), or a mere instrument of the passions ('La tête est absolument le valet de l'âme').²⁴⁰ One could multiply the examples which show Stendhal torn between these two incompatible postures. What matters, however, is that he proves unable to sustain for long the logic of a position which he is readily assumed to have adopted alongside Helvétius, d'Holbach and other thinkers of a similar persuasion. We shall see more of the problems posed by this in the following chapter. Before that, however, it may be useful briefly to consider a number of questions which are called forth by our discussion thus far.

La métaphysique des mathématiques

Resumed in the foregoing pages is, in essence, the age-old philosophical debate between free will and determinism.²⁴¹ Stendhal's all too apparent prevarications on the question of moral responsibility are a measure of the difficulty and complexity — indeed the patent inconsistency — of his thinking on reason, passion and the interaction of the two.²⁴² That an important key to human nature lay at the core of this question, however, Stendhal had little doubt. Once the nature of heart and head respectively could be defined, it would remain to establish how and in what measure they exert a reciprocal influence: 'Quand j'aurai bien décrit *la tête et le cœur*, il ne me restera plus que ce problème à résoudre pour avoir achevé de trouver les idées de la *Filosofia nova*.'²⁴³

Such, then, was the question to be resolved by the philosophical treatise which Stendhal undertook to write in summer 1804. Before considering the *Filosofia Nova* proper, however, a general point may usefully be made. For two outstanding features are to be noted about Stendhal's thought at this stage in his philosophical evolution. The first is the highly *abstract* terms in which he conceives of the object of his inquiry,

human nature; the second, the ill-determined, variable but very real *control* which he assigns to the individual in the forging of character and conduct. For the Stendhal who is engaged in plumbing the depths of human nature in 1804, man is an amalgam of passionate and rational qualities which have no evident basis in any corporal reality. It is all very well, however, to conceive of passion as an irreducible defining characteristic of man; but what *is* passion? Where does it originate and by what outward signs is its presence or intensity to be gauged? Stendhal's definitions — and they are several in this early period — are revealing in terms of just how *little* they advance us on these questions:

Une passion est la continuité du désir d'une même chose.

Un désir continué forme passion.

Une passion est une suite de désirs qu'une telle chose arrive.

Une passion est la longue persévérance d'un désir...

Un désir est une passion lorsqu'il absorbe toutes les autres affections de l'âme.²⁴⁴

Such a simplistic equation between passion and 'desire' is surely inadequate to account for the nature and complexity of what is posited as the prime mover in the human economy. Stendhal falls here into just those semantic difficulties which had presented themselves to his eighteenth-century predecessors. 'Defenders of the passions,' writes L.G. Crocker, 'often confused them with sentiment or emotion, even using such vague words as "le cœur".' Thus, in Helvétius's *De l'Esprit*, 'we find a general lumping together of needs, pleasure-pain reactions, *sensibilité* and violent emotions under the general concept of "passion"...' ²⁴⁵ By the time Stendhal came to apply his mind to this problem, little had been done to refine the terms in which discussion of the passions could be conducted. Though he would attain, through his later interest in the physiological aspect of man, to a new vocabulary in which to express the concepts of heart and head, he is consigned at the outset to the same abstraction and imprecision as his eighteenth-century forebears. Nowhere is this problem of terminology more evident in Stendhal's case than in the putative 'definition' which we find in a notebook entry of 30 June 1804. 'Passions,' he writes: 'état passager dans lequel les passions font passer l'âme; état habituel de l'âme.'²⁴⁶

The point is an important one. Knowledge of man — 'la connaissance du cœur humain' — may from the first, as Henri Martineau argues, be Stendhal's 'indéniable vocation, sa vraie spécialité';²⁴⁷ but examples such as the foregoing highlight the difficulty which this self-styled connoisseur of the human heart experiences in coming to terms with his subject. Compounding the vagueness and abstraction of the concepts and language at his disposal was a concern to 'resolve' man as one resolves a

mathematical problem. Reason, passion, habit, will, character: all are seen as elements in an equation which it is the philosopher's task to break down into its constituent factors. We have only to consult the would-be dramatist, whose ambition it was to portray the complex interplay of character and passion, as he deploys his science in determining the possible combinations of character types:

Combinaisons 2 à 2: $m(m-1) = 6(6-1) = 30$.
Combinaisons diff[érentes]:

$$m \frac{(m-1)}{2} = 6 \frac{[6-1]}{[2]} = 6 \frac{[5]}{[2]} = 15. \text{ }^{248}$$

Whatever François Michel's reservations about Stendhal's prowess as a mathematician,²⁴⁹ it is clear that the latter considered mathematics to have provided a universal method of reasoning, whose precision and clarity were as pertinent to the ambitions of the playwright as they were to philosophy, science or indeed any form of intellectual endeavour. 'Je n'ai jamais su le calcul différentiel et intégral,' Stendhal would much later recall, 'mais dans un temps je passais ma vie à songer avec plaisir à l'art de mettre en équation, à ce que j'appellerais, si je l'osais, la métaphysique des mathématiques.'²⁵⁰

In this attitude, Stendhal was more than the self-proclaimed fugitive from religion, hypocrisy and Grenoble, whose '*passion mathématique*' would be amply portrayed in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*.²⁵¹ He was the inheritor of a current of eighteenth-century thought which placed mathematics, in its various branches, at the service of science and philosophy, holding that knowledge should be susceptible of mathematical notation and verification. The current is best exemplified by the Abbé de Condillac, whose influence Stendhal early encountered as a pupil in the Ecole Centrale.²⁵² By the mid-eighteenth century, observes I.F. Knight in her study of Condillac, 'the word "geometry" had become a kind of ritual invocation of a whole cluster of virtues associated with science of all kinds, including the antimathematical science of the empirical tradition.'²⁵³

The remark is important for our consideration of Stendhal at this stage. For, by extolling indiscriminately both empirical and mathematical reasoning ('Hors la géométrie, il n'y a qu'une seule manière de raisonner, celle des faits'),²⁵⁴ Stendhal confused what he should have been at pains to differentiate: figures and facts, abstract propositions and concrete reality, the 'simplicity and uniformity of mathematics' and — in the terms of I.F. Knight — the 'irreducible diversity of empirical data.'²⁵⁵ How was the neat, ordered but essentially *abstract* world of numbers and equations to be used as an instrument for exploring, as Aram Vartanian puts it in relation to Descartes, 'the order of *res extensa*'?²⁵⁶ Here again, Stendhal does not so much fail to resolve the

problem as fail to recognise it. His professed empiricism is undermined from the outset by a propensity to cast complex reality into simplistic abstract formulæ.²⁵⁷ Conterminous with his cult of *le petit fait vrai* is a search for common denominators and universally applicable principles which could be used to explain human nature and society. The mathematical turn of mind which is evidenced by his early writings was to avail Stendhal little in his endeavour to push back the frontiers of his knowledge of man. As a throwback to the Cartesian search for absolute and unassailable clarity (we have noted already Stendhal's enthusiastic praise for Descartes's *method*), the mathematical paradigm embraced by Stendhal has about it, on the contrary, much of the 'rêve mis en équations' to which Paul Hazard reduces an eighteenth-century cult of mathematics which, he argues, lost its ascendancy precisely *because* it had no contact with reality.²⁵⁸

Such is the essence of the problem confronting Stendhal as he endeavours to discover the means of 'applying mathematics to the human heart.'²⁵⁹ For the crystalline certainty which he seeks through the mathematical method is sharply at variance with the opaque nature of the subject under consideration. 'Je me sens fou pour connaître le caractère des hommes,' he declares in a letter of August 1804.²⁶⁰ Human character, however, poses from the outset an enormous philosophical and artistic problem for Stendhal. The boundaries between passionate impulse and rational control, between self-determination and impotence shift incessantly under his gaze. The more Stendhal seeks to penetrate the depths of man's nature, the more inscrutable the latter appears. 'Dans la connaissance de l'homme,' he had noted in August 1803, 'c'est la finesse qui me manque le plus. Je sais bien qu'une certaine passion p a un effet p', mais je ne sais pas reconnaître dans l'individu que je vois dans le monde toutes les passions qui l'animent.'²⁶¹ Here, however, it is not the finer points of Stendhal's reasoning but his very premise itself which is flawed. For the suggestion that a passion, once defined, elicits the same identifiable response from one individual to the next could not be long sustained. Instead, Stendhal would come to realise that, even if he were to succeed in identifying and labelling each passion, he would still be far from gauging its relative strength in any given case. The heart that was capable of the greatest hatred might not, he recognises, be capable of the greatest love. 'Ici il faut trouver le moyen d'estimer la force des passions,' he concludes in a notebook entry of 31 July 1804.²⁶²

What one finds here is a clear suggestion that Stendhal is recanting his belief, as expressed in earlier notes and letters, that *all* individuals shared the same basic potential in relation to the passions and to reason alike.²⁶³ This shared potentiality had been one of the pillars of the philosophy inherited from Helvétius in 1803. It was an argument to which the physiologist Cabanis was to bring a radical corrective, with his theories on

the natural differences that separated men in matters affective and cognitive alike. For the moment, however, Stendhal is left to resolve the question with the limited tools which he has to hand. Some five months after penning the above remark, he suggests, in fact, what such a means of measuring passion might be; but the note in question, from his journal of 4 January 1805, shows his tendency to intellectualise the problem and to posit hypothetical rather than practicable — 'empirical' — solutions:

Pour apprécier la passion d'un homme, il faudrait savoir le prix, aux yeux de cet homme, de toutes les choses qu'il sacrifie à sa passion.

L'extrême de la passion peut être à tuer une mouche pour sa maîtresse.²⁶⁴

The more Stendhal ponders the difficulty of this whole question, the less feasible his undertaking — 'connaître parfaitement l'homme'²⁶⁵ — appears. 'Pour connaître parfaitement le caractère d'un homme,' he concedes in August 1804, in a note whose arithmetical overtones point up once again the gulf between subject and method,

il faut connaître 1° ses opinions sur tout; 2° jusqu'à quel point il y a conformé ses actions; 3° les habitudes de son cœur qui l'ont empêché de s'y conformer entièrement.²⁶⁶

The *Filosofia Nova* was to represent in this sense Stendhal's first attempt to establish an unshakeable hold over questions which would be exercising still the author of *Lamiel*.²⁶⁷ Yet it is important to recognise that, between the draft treatise of 1804 and the unfinished novel of the 1840s, there is a world of difference in terms of Stendhal's conception of man and of his belief in the means whereby human nature might be regulated or even understood. 'Bien me souvenir,' he urges himself in July 1804, 'qu'il faut tout sacrifier au mérite réel de la *F[ilosofia] n[ova]* qui est de montrer des vérités, d'après ce grand principe que tout malheur vient d'ignorer ou d'avoir ignoré la vérité.'²⁶⁸ By the time Stendhal had channelled his literary talents into more productive media than the theatre, such confidence in the therapeutic value of philosophical truth would have largely evaporated.²⁶⁹ The morally edifying tones in which he commits to paper his early projects were to find no echo in the darker reflections of his later years. It is our purpose, in the chapters which follow, to trace something of the evolution which Stendhal's thought was to undergo over the course of his writing life, and to attempt in particular to chart the distance between the Stendhal who affirms in 1803 that 'on peut se corriger de tout,'²⁷⁰ and the Stendhal who, some two decades later, will declare more peremptorily than ever:

Notre caractère, bon ou mauvais, c'est comme le *corps* que nous reconnaissons à seize ans, quand nous commençons à réfléchir. *Beau, laid ou médiocre*; il faut le prendre tel qu'il est; [...].

Une fois que nous savons quel est notre caractère, nous pouvons nous attendre *au bien et au mal*, qui en sont prédits dans les livres qui donnent la description du dit caractère.²⁷¹

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 37. Cf. J.-C. Alciatoire, *Stendhal et Maine de Biran* (Geneva: Droz; Lille: Giard, 1954), p. 1: 'L'année 1805 est d'une importance capitale pour la formation intellectuelle de Henri Beyle, car c'est au début de cette année-là qu'il entreprit l'étude sérieuse de l'idéologie.'
2. Stendhal's 'culture philosophique' is frequently evoked by Martino. See, for example, pp. 3, 10, 11, 20-23, 26-27, 44-45.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
5. See *ibid.*, p. 80.
6. *La Création chez Stendhal*, p. 67.
7. *JL*, I, 320. On Stendhal's plan to dramatise his treatise, see *ibid.*, I, 443.
8. *Ibid.*, I, 361; *Corr*, I, 109.
9. On analysis as the celebrated instrument of progressive reasoning, see Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 36-37; Van Duzer, pp. 100-101, 110-111, 116-123; Cailliet, pp. 111-112; Chinard, Introduction, *ibid.*, p. 6; Boas, pp. 5 n. 6, 30; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 31-32; Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', pp. 202-205; Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', pp. 1106-1108, 1118-1128; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 431-436; Frankel, pp. 16-17.
10. See Vial, p. 106; Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, p. 138.
11. *JL*, I, 362.
12. See, for instance, *ibid.*, I, 125, 128, 188, 213, 340, 373.
13. *Op. cit.*, pp. 584-586. That schoolboys should have been expected to provide answers to such questions may go some way towards accounting for the extravagance of Stendhal's ambitions as he records them in his early notebooks. See *JL*, I, 250: 'To do a book of all définitions'; *ibid.*, I, 339: '[...] décrire tous les êtres humains que j'ai connus'; *ibid.*, I, 368: 'Chercher tous les rapports des hommes avec les choses, des hommes entre eux'; *ibid.*, I, 431: 'Parcourir toutes les qualités de l'homme...'
14. See Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 230-231; Van Duzer, pp. 60-64, 129; Cailliet, pp. 122-123. On Volney's *Loi naturelle ou Catéchisme du Citoyen français*, see R. Desné, *Les Matérialistes français de 1750 à 1800* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1965), pp. 227-232.
15. *JL*, I, 479.
16. *Corr*, I, 136. 'Tirer les conséquences' is a refrain which echoes throughout Stendhal's early writings. See *JL*, I, 115, 276, 324, 344, 357, 361; II, 146.
17. See *JL*, I, 51, 151-152, 203; II, 42-43.
18. *Ibid.*, I, 392. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 158: 'J'entreprends [...] un traité de chaque état de

l'homme en particulier.'

19. *Ibid.*, I, 443. Such remarks prefigure clearly the quite different project in which, some two decades later, Stendhal would seek to apply the *same* analytic principle as is here outlined. 'Si l'idéologie est une description détaillée des idées et de toutes les parties qui peuvent les composer, le présent livre est une description détaillée et minutieuse de tous les sentiments qui composent la passion nommée l'*amour*. Ensuite je tire quelques conséquences de cette description...' (*De l'Amour*, I, 27 n. 1).
20. *JL*, I, 144, 188, 211. 'Toutes ces sortes d'ambitieux ont le même cœur; un léger changement dans la tête en fait un grand poète, un grand guerrier, un grand géomètre, etc.' (*Ibid.*, II, 125).
21. Stendhal's earliest literary endeavours, as Bardèche puts it, smack not of the belvedere but of the laboratory. 'On compare, on contrôle, on compulse' (p. 14). 'Tout est clair, coordonné, tout se déroule comme dans une expérience de physique. L'homme s'apprend comme la mécanique et comme la chimie' (p. 17).
22. *JL*, I, 346. On passion and reason as the classic ingredients of French drama since the seventeenth century, see Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, pp. 16-17.
23. *JL*, I, 442. There is here already a clear prefiguration of the Stendhal who, as Zola would put it, 'ne voit dans l'homme qu'une noble mécanique à pensées et à passions.' (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 239). On the notions of determinism and experimentalism in literature as they would evolve over the course of the nineteenth century, see King, pp. 5-15, 107-108, 134-136, 165-174, 181-182, 192-198, 205-206.
24. See Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, pp. 16-17, 25-28, 30.
25. Stendhal did not hold long to the illusion that such a bond might be readily struck up with any mass audience: adumbrations of the 'happy few' are evident from an early stage in his writings. See on this point Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, pp. 35-37, 42-43.
26. See, for example, *JL*, I, 118, 128, 188; *Corr*, I, 47, 49, 142. See also on this question J.-C. Alciatore, 'Autour d'une définition stendhalienne des passions et des arts', *Modern Philology*, vol. LVII, no. 3 (1960), pp. 168-171.
27. On the rich pedigree of this question in classical, scholastic and Renaissance thought, see A. Levi, *French Moralists: The Theory of the Passions, 1585 to 1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).
28. See, for instance, *Corr*, I, 120, 153; *JL*, I, 337.
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 18.
30. *JL*, I, 225.
31. *Op. cit.*, p. 22
32. See *JL*, I, 155; *Corr*, I, 151.
33. *Personnalité*, p. 456.
34. *JL*, I, 157; 214.

35. *Ibid.*, I, 128.
36. *Ibid.*, I, 225.
37. *Ibid.*, I, 213.
38. *Ibid.*, I, 373.
39. See *ibid.*, I, 96, 176.
40. *Corr*, I, 47.
41. *JL*, I, 445.
42. *Ibid.*, I, 118. Cf. Helvétius, *De l'Homme, de ses Facultés intellectuelles et de son Education* (London, 1773), vol. I, sec. II, ch. 24, p. 377.
43. See on this question Gay, pp. 187-207; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 231-238; Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 221-226; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 14-15; Desné, pp. 203-207; E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. F.C.A. Koelln and J.P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1951), pp. 107-108.
44. See Levi, *passim*.
45. *JL*, I, 417, 423.
46. *Ibid.*, I, 398.
47. *Ibid.*, I, 128. On this first reading of Helvétius by Stendhal, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 41-46; Alciato, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 9 ff.
48. On some of the broader aspects of this question, see Mauzi, pp. 140-148, 437-458, 580-583, 590-634; Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 217-233; vol. II, pp. 85-106; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 179-201.
49. *JL*, I, 244. See also *ibid.*, I, 101.
50. See, for example, Helvétius, *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. III, ch. 6, pp. 405-415; ch. 8, pp. 429-438. See also on this question E.A. Gellner, 'French Eighteenth-Century Materialism', in O'Connor, *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 287-295; Mauzi, pp. 437-458; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 232-233; G.V. Plekhanov, *Essays in the History of Materialism*, trans. R. Fox (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), pp. 15-16, 93-96.
51. *JL*, I, 210. The same definition of happiness as the fulfilment of passion is to be found elsewhere. See *ibid.*, I, 176; II, 29.
52. *Corr*, I, 47. My italics.
53. *JL*, III, 350.
54. *Ibid.*, I, 338. Stendhal adds: 'Voir sur cette proposition (où il y a du vrai) Shaftesbury, *the Moralists*, part II, sect. 1.'
55. *Corr*, I, 348.

56. *Ibid.*, I, 292. See also *ibid.*, I, 214. 'Un contentement raisonnable' is what Stendhal urges Pauline to cultivate in his letter of 24 March 1807 (*Ibid.*, I, 343). Writing from Paris to the same Pauline some five years later, Stendhal would dispense the same advice, warning his sister away from excess towards the cultivation of a reasoned, and reasonable, contentment. See *Corr*, I, 649.
57. *OI*, I, 406.
58. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 122 n. 42. See also on this question Gellner, pp. 289-293.
59. *Op. cit.*, p. 52.
60. *Op. cit.*, p. 59. Cf. on this point Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. II, p. 114; Albérès, *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, p. 59.
61. *JL*, I, 418 n. 1. We find the clinging legacy of Stendhal's upbringing brought out again as late as 1811. 'La platitude et la pédanterie of my parents,' he writes in the journal of his tour through Italy, 'avaient gâté pour longtemps le mot de vertu pour moi; je ne pouvais me figurer de bonheur et, à vrai dire, je ne puis encore aujourd'hui en trouver que loin de ce qu'on appelle vertu dans les femmes' (*OI*, I, 737). For a fuller discussion of the residual orthodoxy in Stendhal's thought, see below, 'From Helvétius to Stendhal: The Altered Ego', and Chapter IV.
62. *JL*, I, 335. See on this point Plekhanov, pp. 15-21. Such a charge against religion was a standard feature of eighteenth-century rationalism. 'The greatest objection to Christian ethics,' writes L. G. Crocker, 'was precisely that it ignored, or attempted to suppress, our natural needs and drives, in favor of some unreal and unrealizable image of what man [...] should be. To accept man as he is means therefore to accept him as a being actuated by passions, not by reason' (*An Age of Crisis*, p. 225). See also on this question P. Vernière, 'L'Idée d'humanité au XVIII^{ème} siècle', *Studium Generale*, vol. XV, no. 3 [1962], p. 175.) The perception of Christian morality prevalent among the *philosophes* was, as Gay (p. 194) puts it, that of a 'debased Stoicism' which 'made inhuman demands on man's nature.'
63. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 238.
64. *Op. cit.*, p. 447. See also Plekhanov, p. 18.
65. *OI*, I, 384.
66. See 'Stendhal et Pinel', p. 119.
67. Cited by Del Litto, *OI*, I, 1284 n.
68. *JL*, I, 195.
69. *Ibid.*, I, 204.
70. *Ibid.*, I, 447, 283, 176, 161; II, 73 n. 1, 299.
71. *Ibid.*, II, 191. The first step in his theatrical career, one recalls, had been to seek a mathematical idiom in which to express human sentiment, 'comme j'ai fait dans les opp[ositions] de car[actères] et de passions' (*Ibid.*, I, 155).
72. *Ibid.*, I, 95.
73. *Ibid.*, I, 96.

74. *Ibid.*, I, 261.
75. *Ibid.*, II, 99. See likewise *ibid.*, II, 101; *OI*, I, 111: 'Ce sont les motifs qui portent à une action et non pas l'action toute nue qui nous peignent un homme comme aimable ou haïssable. Un père a fait périr son fils; exécrable dans Philippe II, admirable dans J[unius] Brutus.' Cf. Stendhal's judgment of Agamemnon: *JL*, II, 147. This search to portray the inner struggle which resolves in action becomes one of the fundamental principles of Stendhal's proposed dramatic art. See *ibid.*, II, 105: 'L'art de la comédie ne consiste pas, ce me semble, à faire faire des choses extraordinaires au protagoniste, mais à rendre au spectateur très aimables ou très haïssables les auteurs d'actions qu'il voit faire chaque jour dans le monde, cela en montrant les motifs qui les poussent.' For Stendhal's enduring preoccupation with such questions, see *ibid.*, I, 82-84, 159-160, 240-241; II, 295-297, 355-359; *HB*, II, 240; *Romans*, II, 1033-1034.
76. See Alciatoire, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 7-111; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 39-46, 174-176; G. Saintville, *Stendhal et Vauvenargues* (Paris: Le Divan, 1938).
77. See Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, p. 239. On the crucial importance of the passions as Stendhal finds it affirmed by Vauvenargues and Helvétius in turn, see *JL*, I, 28, 92. Apart from Saintville's slim and dated monograph, there is no study of Stendhal and Vauvenargues.
78. *JL*, I, 443.
79. *Ibid.*, I, 456. See also *ibid.*, I, 451: '[...] le désir du bonheur, passion toujours régnante, vrai moi de l'homme.' Cf. *ibid.*, II, 123, where Stendhal reflects upon the means whereby the 'passion dominante' of his protagonists might be stimulated.
80. *Ibid.*, I, 238. On Stendhal's reading of Lancelin, see J.-C. Alciatoire, 'Stendhal et Lancelin', *Modern Philology*, vol. XL, no. 1 (1942), pp. 71-102; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 21-33; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 47-50, 122-124, 142-145; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 427-428 n. 5.
81. *Corr*, I, 126.
82. *Ibid.*, I, 184. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 154: '[...] souvent on a le bon cœur de vouloir le bonheur des autres sans avoir la bonne tête nécessaire pour en assurer les moyens.'
83. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 169: '[...] plus on sait, avec un bon cœur, meilleur on est.' Cf. *ibid.*, I, 284-285; *JL*, II, 18-19, 21, 125-127; *OI*, I, 109, 120. In this concern with the ethical dimension of philosophy, Stendhal is in tune with those currents of eighteenth-century thought which gave rise to Ideology. For a general discussion of this question, see Van Duzer, pp. 43-83.
84. See *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 28-29.
85. *JL*, II, 18-19. See on the same points *ibid.*, II, 21. Stendhal subscribes here to the concept of virtue discussed by P. Trahard, who cites Robespierre's definition of the virtuous man or woman as 'une âme élevée et un caractère ferme dirigé par des lumières suffisantes' (*La Sensibilité révolutionnaire, 1789-1794* [Paris: Boivin, 1936], p. 66).
86. Cf. on this point *Corr*, I, 131. No figure, of course, compels more commentary in this respect than Napoleon, who is adjudged by Stendhal to have outlived his

usefulness in France, while falling short of his potential achievement in Italy. See *JL*, III, 246, 364, 370-371; *H de P*, II, 79-80 n. 3; *CA*, IV, 341; *Mélanges intimes et marginalia* (Paris: Le Divan, 1936), II, 338; *Italie*, 145-146, 426-427, 501, 586.

87. *JL*, II, 125.
88. *Corr*, I, 138.
89. *JL*, I, 24. The image here is a variation on the well-worn eighteenth-century metaphor of man as a vessel requiring the winds of passion for its power and the helm of reason for its guidance. See Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, p. 221; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 231, 237. This latter image, it is worth noting, is one which Stendhal would employ much later, in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, and which he would integrate into his theory of the arts as an expression of the energy at work within a given society: 'On voit les chefs-d'œuvre des arts enfantés par l'énergie des passions, et plus tard tout devenir insignifiant, petit, contourné, quand la tempête des passions cesse d'enfler la voile qui doit faire marcher l'âme humaine, si impuissante quand elle est sans passions, c'est-à-dire sans vices ni vertus' (*Italie*, 483-484).
90. *JL*, II, 74.
91. *Ibid.*, II, 7.
92. *Ibid.*, II, 136.
93. *Ibid.*, II, 10.
94. *Corr*, I, 93.
95. See, for example, *JL*, I, 99, 447; II, 355.
96. *Ibid.*, I, 447; *Corr*, I, 118.
97. *JL*, I, 447.
98. Cf. *Corr*, I, 66: 'On nomme *vertu* l'habitude des actions utiles à tous les hommes; *Vice*, l'habitude des actions nuisibles à tous les hommes.'
99. *JL*, I, 96.
100. *Ibid.*, I, 373.
101. *Ibid.*, I, 393. Henceforth, the notion of habit would, as R. Vigneron observes ('Beylisme, romantisme, réalisme', p. 103), acquire a central place in Stendhal's definition of character. See also the same author's 'Stendhal disciple de Chateaubriand', *Modern Philology*, vol. XXXVII, no. 1 (1939), pp. 56-58.
102. On the role assigned to habit by Maine de Biran and the influence of this maverick *idéologue* upon Stendhal, see Alciatore, *Stendhal et Maine de Biran*, pp. 2-3, 7, 23, 39-41 *et passim*; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 431-434 n. 1; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 166-169. On Destutt de Tracy's conception of 'habit', see Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 67.
103. The power of habit to govern human conduct — 'Tant est grande la force de l'habitude en bien et en mal' (*OI*, I, 209) — is evoked on numerous occasions in Stendhal's notebooks and letters. See, for example, *JL*, I, 248, 423, 440; II, 36; *Corr*, I, 337.

104. See Crocker, *Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 181-182; Gellner, p. 289. On the premium set upon habit by Locke and Condillac, see Passmore, pp. 21-22, 40.
105. *Corr*, I, 291.
106. *Ibid.*, I, 296.
107. *Ibid.*, I, 193. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 117-118, 311-312.
108. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 252.
109. *JL*, I, 423.
110. *Ibid.*, I, 417-418.
111. *Ibid.*, I, 397, 456.
112. *Ibid.*, II, 18.
113. *Corr*, I, 347.
114. *JL*, I, 345.
115. *Ibid.*, I, 398. This is a notion to which Stendhal will cling. See *ibid.*, II, 390.
116. *Ibid.*, I, 476. See also *ibid.*, I, 422.
117. *Ibid.*, II, 124 n. 1.
118. *Ibid.*, I, 345, 347; II, 92; *Corr*, I, 150; *OI*, I, 301, 663. For the notes which Stendhal made on a reading of *Le Misanthrope* in 1813, see *JL*, II, 480-495. See also on this question M. Crouzet, 'Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, fasc. 125 (1967), pp. 29-52.
119. *OI*, I, 120. Cf. the instructive critique of Alceste's character which Stendhal was to pen in 1813 (*JL*, II, 482-483), and where he would again reflect upon 'le bien qu'Alceste pouvait faire avec un autre ton' and 'l'absurdité d'un homme qui par sa force individuelle veut changer l'effet d'un gouvernement.' Alceste is, Stendhal concludes, 'un homme qui veut arrêter l'océan avec un mur de jardin. Beau idéal.'
120. See *JL*, II, 11-12.
121. *Corr*, I, 126.
122. *OI*, I, 148. See also *JL*, II, 19, 21. Henri IV, as we read in a letter of 7 February 1806, 'n'avait pas la tête aussi bonne que le cœur' (*Corr*, I, 285).
123. *JL*, II, 91.
124. *Ibid.*, II, 89.
125. See *ibid.*, II, 89-90.
126. *Ibid.*, II, 126.
127. *Loc. cit.*

128. *Ibid.*, II, 148.
129. *Corr*, I, 17.
130. *JL*, I, 155.
131. *Ibid.*, I, 423.
132. *Ibid.*, I, 474.
133. *Ibid.*, II, 150. Cf. the planned characterisation of Chamoucy in *Les Deux Hommes*: 'L'éducation qu'il a reçue peut en faire un hom[me] sans passions' (*Ibid.*, II, 125).
134. *Ibid.*, II, 68.
135. *Corr*, I, 29. In a subsequent letter, Stendhal returns to the notion of habit. '[Il faut] acquérir les habitudes propres à diminuer autant que possible les inconvénients qui paraissent inévitables' (*Ibid.*, I, 193).
136. *Ibid.*, I, 61.
137. See *ibid.*, I, 17; *JL*, I, 155. See above.
138. *Corr*, I, 132.
139. *Ibid.*, I, 137.
140. *Ibid.*, I, 184-185. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 275: 'En g[énéral] travaille-toi toi-même.'
141. *Ibid.*, I, 291.
142. *JL*, II, 82.
143. *OI*, I, 315.
144. *Ibid.*, I, 336.
145. *JL*, II, 182.
146. *Corr*, I, 352. Again, in December of the same year, he reflects: 'Mon vrai travail a été sur mon caractère' (*Ibid.*, I, 374).
147. *OI*, I, 485.
148. *Ibid.*, I, 508.
149. *Raison*, p. 213.
150. Samuel, p. 81.
151. *Op. cit.*, p. 313.
152. Cited by Girard, *ibid.*, p. 304. The point is echoed by M. Crouzet, who identifies in the act of writing an exercise which affords Stendhal the means to become 'son propre "médecin moral"' (*Raison*, p. 163).
153. M. Droz, 'Taine et Stendhal', *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, 4^e année (1896), p. 658.

154. See *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 25-27.
155. *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 262.
156. See Brussaly, p. 202; Rey, Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, xxix-xxx.
157. Cited by Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 386.
158. *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 113.
159. A similar problem is apparent in the analysis by R. Bosselaers, who, ascribing to Stendhal a 'déterminisme quasi-mécaniste' congruent with 'son orientation matérialiste', can nonetheless claim: 'il n'a jamais nié en propres termes le libre arbitre, et il ne ressort pas de l'ensemble de son œuvre qu'il rejette la responsabilité morale' (*Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 25, 27). The problem here, as with May, arises not from the fundamental contradiction in Stendhal's thought which is thereby laid bare, but from the failure to acknowledge it as a contradiction.
160. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 77 n. 11.
161. Compare with May's equivocal analysis the remarks of E.B. Tenenbaum, who recognises in Julien Sorel 'exceptional strength of will but not genuine freedom of choice' (*The Problematic Self: Approaches to Identity in Stendhal, D.H. Lawrence, and Malraux* [Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard UP, 1977], p. 57). Tenenbaum provides a number of telling insights into Stendhal's conception of free will and determinism. See the chapter devoted to Stendhal's definition of the self, pp. 27-64.
162. *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (London, 1651), Part II: 'Of Common-Wealth', ch. 21, p. 107. See on this question W. von Leyden, *Hobbes and Locke: The Politics of Freedom and Obligation* (London: Macmillan, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1982), pp. 10, 32-33. T. Sorell makes the point with clarity in his discussion of necessitation in Hobbes: 'Freedom is not a matter of being able to confound or cancel one's choices at the last moment; it is a matter of making a choice and not being hindered in its execution' (*Hobbes* [London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986], p. 92).
163. On the reconciliation of determinism and 'freedom' by means of such reasoning, see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, part II: 'Of Common-Wealth', ch. 21, pp. 107-108. For a detailed discussion of this question, see the chapter 'Deliberation, Voluntary Action, and Determinism' in von Leyden, pp. 32-61. See also R. Taylor, 'Determinism', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. II, pp. 364-365; R.S. Peters, 'Thomas Hobbes', *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 41; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 158-159, 253. The question receives more critical discussion in *Hobbes Studies*, ed. K.C. Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965). See in particular J.R. Pennock, 'Hobbes's Confusing "Clarity" — The Case of "Liberty"' (pp. 101-116); A.G. Wernham, 'Liberty and Obligation in Hobbes' (pp. 117-139). See also on this central question Sorell, pp. 92-95.
164. *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 266. V. Brombert argues likewise for Stendhal's 'emphasis on choice and action', his 'disregard for all the forces that may bind and determine...' (*Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom* [New York: Random House, 1968], p. 174).
165. *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 262.
166. See the 'contradictory concepts of selfhood', the 'simultaneous commitment to

impulse and volition', which E.B. Tenenbaum (p. 11) ascribes to a 'paradoxical system of values' in Stendhal. For he allows us, as Tenenbaum writes of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 'to admire Julien's success in achieving an identity of his choice while suggesting that only when Julien's impulses triumph over his will is he truly himself.' Tenenbaum's reading of Stendhal, though it upholds what, for the determinist, would be a problematic distinction between 'impulse' and 'volition', suggests something of the difficulty involved in squaring determinism with the freedom of will that is generally ascribed to the Stendhalian hero. On the question of determinism in Stendhal's novels, see below, Chapter VII.

167. *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, p. 14.
168. *JL*, I, 327.
169. *Ibid.*, II, 11-12.
170. See on this point J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1955), pp. 31-34.
171. On the philosophical position which Stendhal wishes to occupy but finds himself — despite himself — betraying, see Crocker, *Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment*, pp. 461-482; Gay, pp. 187-207; Plekhanov, pp. 20-21.
172. See *JL*, I, 447-448; II, 165.
173. *Raison*, p. 133. See also Desné, pp. 201-202, 207-211; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 115-117.
174. See Desné, pp. 223-225; 250-251, 270-273.
175. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 2, pp. 71-72.
176. *Ibid.*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 6, p. 112.
177. *Ibid.*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 5, pp. 99-100 n. (a).
178. See *Corr*, I, 304-305; Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, pp. 104-105.
179. *Loc. cit.*
180. *JL*, I, 448 n. 1. The claim is elsewhere made by Stendhal that self-interest is inescapable, even in the most *apparently* disinterested motive. See *ibid.*, I, 327; II, 11.
181. 'Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', p. 270.
182. *Corr*, I, 84.
183. *Op. cit.*, p. 60.
184. *Corr*, I, 1044.
185. See Diderot's *Réfutation suivie de l'ouvrage d'Helvétius intitulé L'Homme*, in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, ed. J. Assézat and M. Tourneux (Paris: Garnier, 1875-77; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966), vol. II, pp. 304, 310, 312-315. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 305: 'Développez le sentiment de l'amitié, et quand, à force de le défigurer, vous n'en aurez fait que de la peine ou du plaisir physique, ne vous étonnez pas si l'on vous regarde comme un homme atroce ou

comme un raisonneur absurde.'

186. See *ibid.*, p. 310: 'Vous n'admettez que des plaisirs et des douleurs corporelles, et j'en ai éprouvé d'autres. Celles-ci, vous les ramenez à la sensibilité physique comme cause; moi, je prétends que ce n'est que comme condition éloignée, essentielle et primitive.' On the *variability* of self-interest, see also *ibid.*, p. 385.
187. *Corr*, I, 57. See, on this most fundamental of Helvétius's principles, Alciato, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 42-44 *et passim*. Recognising the ambivalence with which Stendhal greets this principle, H. Delacroix (p. 32) concludes: 'Stendhal est plus près des mystiques que des philosophes de l'égoïsme; certes, il n'aurait rien à objecter à l'Amour-propre, entendu comme le plein déploiement de soi; rien, sinon ceci que la passion est créatrice de valeurs, qu'elle projette hors de soi ses objets, qu'elle se cherche hors d'elle-même, qu'elle se dépense pour se dépenser, qu'elle disparaît dans ce qu'elle aime.'
188. 'Ne jamais faire commettre à aucun de mes caractères intéressants aucune action contre la vraie morale, celle d'Helvétius' (*Théâtre*, I, 255).
189. 'Ma comédie durera autant que les hommes seront partagés entre l'éducation dévote et l'éducation philosophique. Longtemps après que celle-ci aura remporté la victoire on regardera encore ma pièce avec reconnaissance comme un des moyens qui la lui ont assurée' (*Ibid.*, I, 249).
190. *JL*, I, 220.
191. *Ibid.*, I, 157. What such a remark clearly reveals is Stendhal's attempt to remain in tune with his division of man into heart and head, and with his attendant belief that comedy resides in the vagaries of reason, not of passion.
192. *Op. cit.*, p. 66.
193. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 10, p. 154.
194. This is a point which Stendhal implicitly endorses when he reflects: 'Charles ne peut faire un crime que par ignorance, tandis que ce n'est que par ignorance que Ch[amouc]y peut faire une belle action' (*JL*, II, 126).
195. *Théâtre*, I, 293, 447.
196. *Ibid.*, I, 284.
197. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 47.
198. *De l'Homme*, vol. I, sect. IV, ch. 12, p. 513.
199. *Ibid.*, vol. I, sect. IV, ch. 14, p. 524. The influence of Helvétius on Bentham is discussed by E. Halévy in *La Formation du radicalisme philosophique* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1901-04), vol. I: *La Jeunesse de Bentham*, pp. 24-30, 38-42.
200. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 56. Helvétius argued, as R. Bosselaers puts it, that 'l'égoïsme humain [...] peut se transformer en altruisme égoïste par une égoïste sociabilité...' (*Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 27).
201. Crouzet, 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'*utile*', p. 482.
202. See *De l'Esprit*, vol. II, disc. III, ch. 22, pp. 120-122.
203. *CA*, IV, 28-29. 'Régulus se représentait parfaitement les dix sous de clous avec lesquels les Carthaginois menaçaient de le transpercer à son retour; mais il avait

un plaisir plus grand à satisfaire: la fierté de sortir de Rome accompagné du respect et de l'admiration de tout ce qu'il quittait et l'assurance d'une gloire immortelle dans l'histoire de son pays.'

204. See *JL*, II, 11-12, 101; *Romans*, I, 44, 1298.
205. *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries: A Study in the Development of the Revolutionary Spirit* (New York: Octagon, 1965), pp. 24, 32, 90, 139-145.
206. *JL*, II, 11. Roman history and legend provide from the earliest for Stendhal models of the enlightened self-interest, the 'social contract', in question. See his description of 'Curtius qui se précipita, à Rome, dans le gouffre ouvert au milieu de la place publique: il préférerait le bonheur public et la gloire à la vie, et il se tua' (*Corr*, I, 47). Cf. *De l'Amour*, I, 151: 'La conduite des Régulus, des Décius était une chose convenue d'avance, et qui n'avait pas le droit de les surprendre.'
207. *JL*, II, 12 n. 1.
208. 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'*utile*', p. 483.
209. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 5, p. 99. Cf. d'Holbach, who, as E.A. Gellner (p. 293) points out, cites Sallust: 'nemo gratuito malus est' ('no one is bad for no reason'), and rejoins: 'nemo gratuito bonus' ('no one is good for no reason').
210. Precision of language was very much a concern of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues*. See Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 38-44, 144-175; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 126-131; Frankel, pp. 51-56; Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France.'
211. *JL*, II, 50.
212. *H de P*, I, 116. 'Régulus ne pouvait s'attendre à être payé au centuple après sa mort; attaché à sa croix dans Carthage, il ne voyait point d'anges au haut du ciel lui apporter une couronne. La découverte de l'immortalité de l'âme est tout à fait moderne' (*Loc. cit.*, n. 3).
213. *De l'Amour*, I, 151.
214. *Mél. Pol/Hist.*, 276, 281. See G. Strickland's quibble with M. Tillett over Stendhal's understanding of the term *sacrifice* (*Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, p. 271 n. 64). Strickland's treatment of this question is too narrow to be convincing, for, in arguing that it is not a question of sacrificing *all* personal interest, he fails to take account of what we have seen to be Stendhal's express recognition of quite *dis*-interested action, of the possibility of 'un sacrifice entier'.
215. See *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 5, pp. 99-103; vol. II, disc. III, ch. 22, pp. 119-125.
216. An interesting parallel may be drawn in this context with contemporaries much less given than Stendhal to the sensation-based ethic of eighteenth-century materialism. Witness the response of Mme de Staël and the Coppet circle to the philosophy of egoism as discussed by F.P. Bowman. 'One cannot,' writes the latter (p. 77), 'create faith, hope, or the sublime while measuring responses to pleasure and pain.' Something more was required, a 'divine transcendent spark which could lead to moral conduct when faced with adversity.' Though Stendhal stops far short of any such divine dimension, he does hanker, despite

- himself, after some superior 'faculty' which allows the individual to override the pleasure-pain calculus and to arbitrate over the demands of his ego.
217. 'Ce sont de braves et honnêtes gens [...]. Mais je cherche en vain l'*admirable* dans leur conduite' (*Mél. Pol/Hist.*, 272).
 218. *Op. cit.*, p. 62.
 219. *JL*, I, 101. See above.
 220. *Ibid.*, I, 301. See on this point Saintville, pp. 19-20.
 221. See *Corr*, I, 84, 1044.
 222. *Ibid.*, I, 1008.
 223. *Stendhal et Helvétius*, p. v.
 224. *Corr*, I, 1044.
 225. See Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 207. Stendhal's own apparent reluctance to reopen Helvétius acted as no bar to his continual recommendation of this philosopher to *others*. See, for example, *Corr*, I, 893-894, 919, 941, 943; II, 132, 153, 161; III, 258.
 226. The point is one to which we shall return in our discussion of Stendhal's materialism. See below, Chapter IV.
 227. 'The Background of Physiological Psychology in Natural Philosophy', *History of Science*, vol. XI (1973), p. 77.
 228. The aim of determinist philosophers such as Helvétius and d'Holbach is no different, in this sense, from that which Stendhal espouses. What *is* fundamentally different is the *means* — for Helvétius and d'Holbach, educative and legislative conditioning rather than any exercise of free will or of a self-determining faculty of reason. See the critical discussion of this point in Plekhanov, pp. 66-75.
 229. *Corr*, I, 139.
 230. *JL*, II, 15.
 231. *Ibid.*, I, 470. The remark is quite consistent with Stendhal's anti-religious sentiment. For the latter is defined by reference to the Christian model which it rejects. Stendhal can well imagine what moral utility a well conceived religion might have. A creed which promoted happiness in the *hic et nunc* would, he believed, be a means of institutionalising the principle which should lie at the base of all moral and political calculation. In contrast to a repressive Christianity, with its 'ascetic principle' and its *futile* 'virtue', he holds the ancient religions of Greece and Rome up as monuments to the utility in religion which is here envisaged. 'Les temples des anciens étaient petits, et les cirques fort grands,' he would write in the *Mémoires d'un touriste* (II, 136), expressing still a sentiment that had been with him from the earliest; 'chez nous c'est le contraire: la religion parmi nous proscrie le théâtre et ordonne de se mortifier. Celle des Romains était une fête, et, ne demandant point à ses fidèles de sacrifier leurs passions, mais bien de les diriger d'une façon utile à la patrie, n'avait nul besoin de les rassembler pendant de longues heures afin de graver dans leurs âmes la peur de l'enfer.' See in similar vein *JL*, II, 11-12, 18-19, 26; III, 149; *Corr*, I, 47, 93, 109-110, 126; *H de P*, I, 47, 114-116; II, 301; *Italie*, 265-266, 277, 526-527, 689; *Romans*, I, 1216; II, 678-679. There is much

here of the rationale that inspired the *Fêtes révolutionnaires* and the whole appeal to ancient civic morality which was so much a part of the Revolutionary ethic. See on this question A. Mathiez, *La Théophilanthropie et le culte décadaire. Essai sur l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution, 1796-1801* (Geneva: Slatkine-Megariotis Reprints, 1975), pp. 15-39; M. Vovelle, *La Mentalité révolutionnaire. Société et mentalités sous la Révolution française* (Paris: Messidor/Éditions sociales, 1985), pp. 157-190; Parker, pp. 131-138; Gusdorf, pp. 148-172; Van Duzer, pp. 112-114; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, p. 300. Stendhal's repeated references to the Ancients signal a defiantly outmoded stance on the religious question; though his hostility is reserved in the main for Christian clericalism, he proves on the whole inimical towards the fashion for new religious forms which, as D.G. Charlton shows, replaced the Revolutionary cults in the early decades of the nineteenth century (*Secular Religions in France*, pp. 34-37 *et passim*). The anachronistic nature of Stendhal's sentiment in this regard may be gauged by Parker, pp. 178-179. His refusal, however, to move with the 'spirit' of the times would occasion warm praise from a later generation. See, for example, Bourget, p. 283.

232. *JL*, I, 475. Cf. *Corr*, I, 292: 'Lorsque tu te connaîtras bien, tu verras les passions qu'il faut arracher, et tu tâcheras de parvenir à un genre de vie dans lequel tu puisses satisfaire les bonnes.' On the 'principe ascétique' which Stendhal, like Jeremy Bentham, denounced in contemporary religion, see *H de P*, II, 220; *De l'Amour*, II, 44, 199; *Italie*, 885. Cf. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), pp. 8-23; Halévy, vol. I, pp. 42-43; vol. II, pp. 264-270.
233. *Corr*, I, 193.
234. 'La tête est absolument le valet de l'âme (l'ensemble de tous nos désirs et passions). L'âme fait obéir la tête comme le corps' (*JL*, I, 434).
235. *Corr*, I, 194. In anticipation of our later remarks on this question, we may note that Stendhal still believes here in the possibility of measuring the intensity of passion. It is a belief which he would later call seriously into question. Cf. *JL*, II, 72, 184, 352, 353-354. See below, Chapter V, on this question.
236. *Corr*, I, 300.
237. *Loc. cit.* On this notion of 'la fausse passion', see Crouzet, *Le Héros fourbe chez Stendhal, ou Hypocrisie, politique, séduction, amour dans le beylisme* (Paris: SEDES, 1987), pp. 66-69.
238. See on this point Adams, p. 62; Levin, pp. 98, 136.
239. *JL*, I, 283.
240. *Ibid.*, I, 463; 434. In so reasoning, Stendhal echoes — quite literally — what L.G. Crocker describes as 'the common eighteenth century notion that reason is the servant, not the master' (*An Age of Crisis*, p. 224).
241. For two very readable studies of the free will-determinism debate, see A. Farrer, *The Freedom of the Will* (London: Black, 1958) and D.J. O'Connor, *Free Will* (London: Macmillan, 1977).
242. The list of conflicting assertions that are to be found in Stendhal on this question is long. See, for example, *JL*, I, 397: 'Les passions [...] sont la volonté même'; *ibid.*, I, 434: 'La tête est absolument le valet de l'âme...'; *ibid.*, I, 440: 'Plus une passion est forte, plus elle vainc [...] le corps, la tête et le cœur'; *ibid.*, II, 76: '[...] la passion vicie jusqu'à [la] tête'; *Corr*, I, 117: 'Le corps et la

tête sont les valets de l'âme...'; *ibid.*, I, 197: 'Que je vois bien combien les connaissances de l'esprit influent peu sur les déterminations du cœur!' Cf. *Corr*, I, 117: 'Remarque combien la tête influe sur le cœur'; *ibid.*, I, 174: 'Les passions sont un effet de la volonté'; *ibid.*, I, 345: 'Accoutume ton corps à obéir à ta cervelle...'; *ibid.*, I, 347: 'Une âme forte qui parviendrait à faire tout ce que la raison lui dicterait serait maîtresse de tout ce qui l'environne'; *OI*, I, 272: 'Je vois [...] l'influence de la tête sur le cœur'; *JL*, I, 356: 'C'est au moyen que l'esprit commence à influencer sur la passion'; *ibid.*, I, 397: 'Nos volontés suivent nos opinions. [...] Voilà bien la tête influant sur le cœur'; *ibid.*, I, 398: '[...] la tête [...] influe sur les passions de deux manières...'; *ibid.*, I, 423: 'Toutes les actions de notre corps, portent sur une opinion de notre tête...'; *ibid.*, II, 18: '[...] les passions agissent d'après les énoncés qui leur sont donnés pour vrais par [les] têtes.'

243. *JL*, I, 456.
244. *Ibid.*, I, 96, 176; II, 109; *Corr*, I, 342; *OI*, I, 408.
245. *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 226-227.
246. *JL*, I, 450.
247. *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 25.
248. *JL*, I, 86.
249. See 'Stendhal mathématicien.'
250. *HB*, II, 132-133. On Stendhal's mathematical reasoning and its shortcomings, see, in addition to Michel's article, Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 286-295; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 469-475.
251. See *HB*, I, 105, 129, 166; II, 201, 204 *et passim*. On the strong, though essentially *negative*, appeal of mathematics for Stendhal, see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 169-180.
252. See Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 281-285 *et passim*; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 17-20; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 12-14; Blin, *Personnalité*, p. 427 n. 4. On Condillac's mathematical method, see the chapter 'Metaphysics *en géomètre*' in Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 17-51. See also Cailliet, pp. 111-112.
253. *Op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
254. *Corr*, I, 45.
255. *Op. cit.*, p. 26. Knight levels precisely this criticism against Condillac.
256. *Diderot and Descartes*, p. 179. 'The Cartesian dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*,' writes C. Frankel (p. 50), 'persisted in the shape of the division between experience and reason.'
257. On the distinction between the '*vérités de définitions*' of mathematics and the '*vérités physiques*' of observed fact, between '*l'évidence*' and '*la certitude*', see Buffon as cited by Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 189-190.
258. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 174-175. Cf. E.J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture*, trans. C. Dikshoorn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 404. As E. Kennedy observes, the decline of the mathematical method can be seen as

a major factor marking off the Idéologues from their immediate predecessors. 'Condillac's idea of reasoning as a series of identical propositions was no longer applicable': knowledge was to be acquired now through 'observation and deduction, not calculus or geometry' (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 50). Stendhal's error, in the early stages of his reasoning at least, was to make an indiscriminate appeal to both.

259. *JL*, I, 155.
260. *Corr*, I, 144.
261. *JL*, I, 237.
262. *Ibid.*, II, 72.
263. See, for instance, *ibid.*, I, 157; *Corr*, I, 52.
264. *JL*, II, 181.
265. *Ibid.*, I, 154.
266. *Ibid.*, II, 117.
267. See, for example, *Romans*, II, 1033-1034.
268. *JL*, I, 457. 'Voici la perfection de la *Filosofia nova*,' he elsewhere notes: 'Etre le plus utile possible, c'est-à-dire faire concevoir les vérités les plus utiles (à l'auteur et au public) avec le moins d'ennui possible' (*Ibid.*, I, 432).
269. As we observed in Chapter I, Stendhal's faith in the very possibility of attaining to a 'truth' worthy of the name was to be severely eroded through time. See again the note consigned to the margin of *Le Rouge et le Noir*: *JL*, III, 186.
270. *Corr*, I, 61.
271. *JL*, III, 162.

CHAPTER IV

FROM MATHEMATICS TO MATTER: THOMAS HOBBS AND THE *FILOSOFIA NOVA*

Sans répéter avec ce qu'on prendrait pour de l'emphase que je ne dis que le vrai, que je consacre ma vie au vrai, ne dire que la vérité [...]. Donner, en un mot, des vérités éternelles dans le langage le plus simple...

Such are the terms in which Stendhal records — with no little *emphase* — his aim in undertaking the *Filosofia Nova*.¹ In a notebook entry dated 24 April 1804, he gives the first provisional title to his project: 'Philosophie nouvelle. Sentiments et idées.' Then follows the simple definition that was to be fundamental to the whole enterprise: 'J'appelle *idées* les sensations du cerveau; je nomme *sentiments* les sensations du cœur.'² While we may wonder at the value of such an altogether banal distinction, there is no denying the importance which Stendhal attaches to it. 'J'appelle *cœur*,' he writes to his sister Pauline, 'le centre des sentiments (désirs, peines, plaisirs, etc., etc.) et *tête* ou *cerveau* le centre des idées.' To this he adds: 'Je reviendrai une autre fois sur cette idée, qui est un flambeau qui éclaire bien dans la connaissance de l'homme.'³

Return to this notion Stendhal indeed does. His writings from the period are, as we have seen, replete with references to this division of man into the respective spheres of reason and passion. 'Pousser ma discussion du *cœur* et de la *tête*,' he exhorts himself on 13 June 1804.⁴ In a letter written shortly thereafter to Pauline, he outlines at some length the reciprocal influence of heart over head, and concludes by reaffirming the value of his principle: 'cela est bien sec, j'en conviens, mais cela mène à tout ce qu'il y a de sublime dans la science de l'homme.'⁵ Similarly, when he comes to draft his *Filosofia Nova*, we find the first task clearly set out: 'Parcourir toutes les qualités de l'homme (triste, gai, doux, irascible, etc., etc.) les assigner au cœur ou à la tête.'⁶ Defining the objective of his treatise in a subsequent journal entry, Stendhal writes:

Cet ouvrage a pour objet de connaître la tête et les passions. Le désir que j'ai d'être u[n] g[rand] p[ro]f[iteur] me conduira donc jusqu'aux vérités qu'il contiendra.⁷

Such truths, however, were to prove more elusive than Stendhal anticipated. It was one thing to posit distinctive theatres of head and heart; quite another, as we saw in Chapter III, to define the nature and boundaries of their reciprocal influence.⁸ In an endeavour to advance his enquiry, Stendhal undertakes anew the breakdown of passions which had served him in his earlier plans for the theatre. 'M'occuper tout de suite de l'analyse

de chaque passion,' he resolves, 'cela me rendra plus facile à décrire l'action de l'âme sur la tête et de la tête sur l'âme.'⁹

If such, however, was the swell upon which the *Filosofia Nova* was launched, it proved also to be the rock upon which it would founder. While Stendhal can adduce examples aplenty to illustrate the reciprocal influence which he postulates,¹⁰ he can arrive at no satisfactory *synthesis* of what continues to read like a catalogue of contradictory assertions.¹¹ The problems with which we saw Stendhal wrestle in the previous chapter were to bedevil the *Filosofia Nova* from its inception to its effective abandonment in August 1804. Though Stendhal's faith in his fundamental principle of 'heart' and 'head' remains unshaken,¹² his hope of articulating this in any formal 'philosophy' would expire with the collapse of his project.¹³ The importance of the episode is that, by giving some tangible measure of Stendhal as a 'philosopher' — and, more precisely, a *materialist* philosopher — in the strictest sense of the term, it reveals an aspect of his mind which has never been properly appraised. For his writings, during a period when he is engaged, according to his own lights, in 'the loftiest philosophy',¹⁴ demonstrate the difficulty which he in fact experiences when called upon to master the concepts involved, and the effect which this in turn has upon his perception of himself as a thinker.¹⁵

The evidence is lacking, we submit, to sustain Henri Martineau's assertion that, by 1803, Stendhal had applied the finishing touches to both his 'méthode' and his 'philosophie particulière'.¹⁶ 'Toutes ses positions étaient occupées, ses goûts affirmés; son système était clos,' affirms Martineau.¹⁷ Yet, as Stendhal's own notebooks clearly attest, he emerges from his years of study in Paris in search still of a 'method' which has consistently eluded him, both as a dramatist *and* as a thinker.¹⁸ Nor can one readily subscribe to the view, expressed by Paul Arbelet and echoed by subsequent scholars, that the limited range of Stendhal's thought 'la sauve du vague ou de la confusion.'¹⁹ The truth is that Stendhal's early private writings, as they record his attempts to fashion a philosophy, provide a veritable catalogue of confusion and imprecision, the record of a mind ill at ease with its subject and its medium alike. Alain Girard comes much closer to the mark than either Martineau or Arbelet, we contend, when he writes of Stendhal's early philosophical endeavours: 'On y sent les difficultés d'expression d'un écrivain qui n'est en possession ni de ses moyens d'expression, ni de l'expérience suffisante.'²⁰

That said, the importance of these early writings for the student of Stendhal cannot be gainsaid. For they provide the starting-point from which any evolution of his thought must be measured. If it is the case, as Victor del Litto argues, that 'le rôle du *Journal* est fondamental dans la vie intellectuelle de Stendhal,' if it is here that is to be

found 'la véritable assise de sa formation intellectuelle,'²¹ then it is here that any analysis of his thought must begin. For Stendhal himself, the notebooks and letters of the early 1800s were to have been of imperishable value, furnishing respectively the storehouse of his ideas — 'mes magasins', as he would call them²² — and the history of his mind, 'l'histoire de mon esprit.'²³ The fact is, however, that the inchoate assemblage of maxims, reflections, project drafts, fragments of self-analysis and borrowings yielded by Stendhal's notebooks from this period provides 'le récit d'un échec' not only — as Alain Girard suggests²⁴ — in *literary* terms, but, as the following pages will seek to demonstrate, in *philosophical* terms too.

Hobbes and the *Filosofia Nova: Homo Duplex* Revisited

Stendhal's ambition in undertaking the *Filosofia Nova* had, we recall, been to 'connaître la tête et les passions.'²⁵ His regimen of reading in 1803 — when the project was first intimated²⁶ — and 1804 — when it was consigned to an ever-growing list of abortive enterprises²⁷ — reflects this overriding concern. Thinkers as diverse as Helvétius, Vauvenargues, Lancelin, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Brissot de Warville were all grist to the same mill, confirming Stendhal in his intuition that man was a being governed by the now complementary, now conflicting imperatives of heart and mind.²⁸ No thinker, however, is more closely associated with Stendhal's endeavour to erect this principle into a philosophy than the English materialist philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. Enthusiastically enlisted in the cause of the *Filosofia Nova*, Hobbes enjoyed some of the warmest approbation reserved by Stendhal for any author. While there is no evidence to suggest that Stendhal ever had recourse to Hobbes's *Leviathan*,²⁹ it is clear that between 15 and 22 June 1804 he read and extracted copiously from the treatise *Human Nature*, in d'Holbach's translation of 1772, a work which he at once deemed 'un excellent ouvrage' and in which, he declared, was to be found 'le meilleur style philosophique que j'aie encore vu.'³⁰ Helvétius, Lancelin, Condillac, Vauvenargues³¹ — all are diminished by a work which contains more philosophy in a single paragraph than is to be found in the whole of Rousseau!³²

In the weeks and months following Stendhal's reading of *De la Nature humaine*, Hobbes enjoyed an unchallenged ascendancy in his esteem. Placing the English philosopher 'sur la frontière de la science',³³ Stendhal urges his sister, in characteristic fashion, to procure the treatise in question. 'C'est la fin,' he writes anachronistically, 'de l'édifice dont Helv[étius] jette les fondements. C'est l'analyse et la description de

nos passions. Helvétius doit quelquefois te paraître insipide, parce que ce qu'il dit doit être trop simple pour toi. Hobbes t'amusera.³⁴

High praise indeed; but to what precisely was it due? The question is one which has been the object of a surprising scholarly neglect. Stendhal's reading of Hobbes, though it remains one of the best documented among the events recorded in his journals, has been subjected to scant critical analysis.³⁵ Victor del Litto has, in his invaluable edition of the *Journal littéraire*, meticulously reconstituted the extracts and commentaries which chart Stendhal's reading of *De la Nature humaine*; but the notes which accompany the text fall short of any sustained critical assessment. Del Litto's *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal* likewise provides some useful textual references, but places more emphasis on documentation than on analysis.³⁶ Robert Vigneron and J.-C. Alciatoire, in their respective studies of the influence of Chateaubriand and Lancelin on Stendhal, refer to the latter's reading of Hobbes, but offer only the briefest of commentaries upon it.³⁷

Such neglect is all the more surprising since it is generally acknowledged that Hobbes occupies a foremost place among the thinkers who exerted an influence on Stendhal. 'Ces trois noms,' writes Henri Martineau, 'Helvétius, Hobbes et Destutt de Tracy, sont ceux de ses vrais maîtres.'³⁸ Martineau is echoed in this judgment by scholars from François Picavet through to Victor del Litto.³⁹ The tendency, however, has been to affirm rather than to examine the influence in question. Among those scholars who reserve a privileged place for Hobbes in Stendhal's intellectual lineage, there is a common assumption that the latter understood Hobbes aright, and that the extracts which he transcribed are an accurate representation both of this understanding and of the original text itself. There is not, claims Francine Marill Albérès, 'une interprétation stendhalienne de Hobbes. Beyle se borne à résumer la *Nature Humaine*.'⁴⁰

Nothing, however, could be more at odds with the textual evidence available. On close examination, it becomes clear that there is much distortion, no little confusion, and a substantial element of invention in Stendhal's reading of *De la Nature humaine*.⁴¹ From the very outset, indeed, the interpretation of Hobbes which we discover in Stendhal's notebooks betrays a serious misconception. Galvanised finally by his reading of this philosopher into putting pen to paper on his own treatise, he writes on 23 June 1804:

Voici le squelette:

Dans son livre *De la Nature humaine*, Hobbes a la div[ision] qui fait la base de la *Filosofia nova*.

L'homme est composé: 1° d'un *corps*; 2° d'une *tête* ou centre de combinaisons; 3° d'un *cœur* ou *âme* centre de passions.⁴²

From this basic premise, Stendhal goes on to consider the ways in which these independently defined realms of man function, the boundaries that separate them, and the degree to which each may be considered the driving force in human nature. Dismissing the body almost out of hand — 'Je ne m'occuperai que très sommairement de l'influence du corps'⁴³ — he founds his proposed philosophy on a conception of 'mind' and 'heart' which, in truth, owes little to Hobbes. Does human motivation spring from the heart? From the head? From a combination of the two? What is the inter-relationship between reason and passion, and to which are we the more beholden for what we call the 'will'?⁴⁴ So many questions which, if they are consonant with Stendhal's earliest philosophical concerns, point to a fundamental misunderstanding of Hobbes. For nowhere does the latter subscribe to the tripartite definition of man which Stendhal foists upon him, nowhere does he endorse any such view of reason and passion as faculties that may be considered qualitatively different from the material body.⁴⁵ Indeed, it was precisely *against* such a view that the whole of Hobbes's philosophy militated. While Hobbes does speak in terms of 'heart' and 'head', and while he acknowledges reason and passion as 'les principaux ingrédients de la nature humaine',⁴⁶ he does not attribute these to *independently defined categories* as such, but subsumes both under the term 'esprit'. Though we may discern and distinguish between the cognitive and affective aspects of human nature, both must be seen merely as variations of 'mental' activity, functions of the same 'mind'.⁴⁷ In the first chapter of *De la Nature humaine* — '*Nature de l'Homme composée des facultés du Corps & de celles de l'Esprit*' — Hobbes is unequivocal on this point:

D'après les deux parties dont l'homme est composé je distingue en lui deux especes de facultés, celles du corps & celles de l'esprit.⁴⁸

It might appear from this that Hobbes wishes to sustain a distinction between the corporal and mental realms, that he posits mind as a category independent of body. Nowhere, however, as Samuel Mintz stresses, does Hobbes entertain 'the possibility that the product of mental activity — thought — is different in kind from the physical processes which give rise to it.'⁴⁹ Mental activity is material and therefore subject to the laws which govern all matter: there could be no compromise with any notion of mind, heart or 'soul' which implied distinction, however slight, from the body material. Thought, perceived by Hobbes as 'a complicated series of physical motions', is, as Mintz puts it, 'a reaction to other motions communicated to the head by means of the sense-organs and nerves. The whole process is mechanical and material.'⁵⁰ To the reader of *De la Nature humaine*, the point should have been crystal-clear:

[...] les conceptions & les apparitions ne sont réellement rien que du mouvement excité dans une substance intérieure de la tête; ce mouvement ne s'arrêtant point là mais se communiquant au cœur doit nécessairement aider ou arrêter le mouvement

que l'on nomme *vital*.⁵¹

The refusal by Hobbes to see reason and passion as anything but transformations of the *same* physical phenomenon was consistent with a monistic materialism which held all 'mental' experience — cognitive, affective and volitional — to be but variations of matter in motion.⁵² *Res cogitans* for Hobbes is, as E.A. Burtt puts it, nothing but 'a combination of certain types of motion possessed by *res extensae*.'⁵³ Any division of man such as Stendhal implies would have meant capitulation to the very orthodoxy which Hobbes was challenging.⁵⁴ 'C'est, en effet,' notes Raymond Polin, 'un *monisme du mouvement* que Hobbes édifie en unifiant le corps et l'esprit sous les mêmes lois mécaniques, sans jamais qu'aucune intervention d'une autre sorte ne vienne en troubler le cours.'⁵⁵ In keeping with this basic principle, Hobbes expounds a mechanistic psychology whereby ideas and passions alike are but developments of primary sensation:

[...] le mouvement ou l'ébranlement du cerveau que nous appellons conception, est continué jusqu'au cœur où il prend le nom de passion...

[...] la sensation est due à l'action des objets extérieurs sur le cerveau ou sur une substance renfermée dans la tête, & [...] les passions viennent du changement qui s'y fait & qui est transmis jusqu'au cœur...⁵⁶

It is clear from these statements that Hobbes recognises no substantive distinction between reason and passion, presenting both as respective stages in a single, complex process of sense-experience.⁵⁷ We insist upon this point because its significance has been overlooked by all of the scholars who have commented upon Stendhal's reading of Hobbes. As the two short extracts cited above attest, there is no place in the latter's mechanistic sensationalism for any clear demarcation between 'mind' and 'heart' as theatres of *independent, self-generating or self-sustaining* activity.⁵⁸

Stendhal, from the outset, then, makes a serious category error in his reading of Hobbes. His conception of reason and passion as discussed in Chapter III could nowhere be aligned with Hobbes's reductionist view of man and his faculties. While Victor del Litto acknowledges Stendhal's distortion of Hobbes in this respect — 'alors que pour Hobbes l'homme est formé du *corps* et de l'*esprit*, Beyle porte les composantes à trois: *corps, tête, cœur* (ou *âme*)'⁵⁹ — he fails to draw any conclusion from this or to pursue the logical consequences of Stendhal's error. Robert Vigneron and J.-C. Alciatore, for their part, fail even to recognise that Stendhal has departed from Hobbes at all.⁶⁰ 'Aussi note-t-il avec plaisir,' writes Alciatore, 'que le livre de Hobbes renferme "la div[ision] qui fait la base" de sa philosophie nouvelle.' Hobbes thus confirms for Stendhal, the critic goes on, 'la résolution d'étudier l'homme d'après la distinction entre le cœur et la tête.'⁶¹ This supposed contribution by Hobbes to the

very foundation of Stendhal's philosophy of man has entered into a received critical wisdom which has nowhere been challenged, even by those scholars who devote particular attention to the early years of study during which Stendhal conducted his reading of Hobbes. Thus, in a recently published article, we find J.-C. Augendre resting his discussion of the *Filosofia Nova* on the assumption that 'la structure fondamentale ou le "squelette" est empruntée au traité *De la Nature humaine* de Hobbes.'⁶²

The misconception which such remarks denote is considerable. For there is clear evidence here both of a failure to appreciate the import of Hobbes's materialism and of a tendency to take *on trust* Stendhal's interpretation of this philosopher. What Stendhal does, however, in stark contrast to Hobbes, is to envisage quite separate theatres of thought and sensibility which — with varying degrees of autonomy — are capable of rivalling, complementing or eclipsing one another.⁶³ When, a number of weeks after his reading of *Human Nature*, Stendhal defines the human economy as 'la réunion de notre corps, notre tête et notre cœur', it is clear how little of Hobbes's thought he has assimilated.⁶⁴ In holding mind to be one with body, Hobbes was striving to 'reunite the sundered halves of the Cartesian dualism.'⁶⁵ Stendhal, on the other hand, perpetuates this sundered view of man through insisting not upon the *homogeneity* but rather upon the *coincidence*, or *union*, between the components of man as he perceives them.⁶⁶ For he denies — through the logical implication of the term 'réunion' — the whole basis upon which Hobbes founds his monistic view of man. The mind, as E.A. Burtt points out in discussing Hobbes's attack on Cartesian dualism, 'is simply a name for the sum of an individual's thinking activities, is thus nothing but a series of motions in an animal organism.'⁶⁷ Reason, as Hobbes makes clear, is but one of man's '*natural Faculties and Powers*', along with those of '*Nutrition, Motion, Generation, Sense*', etc.⁶⁸ To set the mind up as an independent entity, to be distinguished in nature and activity from the body (even *without* compounding the issue with a third distinct category of *cœur* or *âme*) would have seemed to Hobbes, as Burtt puts it, 'a mere relic of the scholastic occult qualities.'⁶⁹

Of his misappreciation of Hobbes, however, Stendhal remains blissfully unaware. No sooner does he establish the supposed correlation between his own thought and that of Hobbes than he addresses — in terms which savour more of a cloak-and-dagger farce than a philosophical disquisition — the question of a reciprocal influence among the three categories of *âme*, *tête* and *corps*:

L'*âme* fait contracter des habitudes à ses deux valets: le *corps* et la *tête*.
Le *corps* et la *tête* ayant contracté des habitudes guident l'*âme* sans qu'elle s'en aperçoive.⁷⁰

Such a conception of the human economy would, for Hobbes, have been so much nonsense, all human endeavour being determined by a simple pleasure-pain calculus over which no single 'part' of man has power to arbitrate:

Toutes les conceptions que nous recevons immédiatement par les sens étant ou plaisir ou douleur, produisent ou le desir ou la crainte; il en est de même de toutes les imaginations qui viennent à la suite de l'action des sens.⁷¹

While this statement should have done no more than reaffirm for Stendhal a principle which, as we know, he had found elsewhere (most notably in Helvétius), it raises the fundamental question of the will. Here again, Stendhal's divergence from Hobbes is apparent. For it is Hobbes's contention that the will is nothing more than the last desire or the last fear by which a human being is actuated at any given moment:⁷² 'Dans la délibération le dernier desir, ainsi que la dernière crainte, se nomme *volonté*.'⁷³ What Hobbes is especially keen to dispense with is the notion of the will as an independent, rational 'faculty', pre-existing — and therefore *presiding over* — the wishes and fears of the individual:

Le desir, la crainte, l'espérance & les autres passions ne sont point appellées volontaires, car elles ne procedent point de la volonté, mais elles sont la volonté même, & la volonté n'est point une action volontaire, car un homme ne peut pas plus dire qu'il *veut vouloir* qu'il ne peut dire qu'il *veut vouloir vouloir*, & répéter ainsi à l'infini le mot vouloir, ce qui serait absurde ou dépourvu de sens.⁷⁴

The net result of this argument for Hobbes was to make of the term 'will' nothing more than a convention, a manner of denoting the desire or fear which tipped the balance of calculation to one side or the other in any given set of circumstances; and this Stendhal appears to acknowledge when he notes: 'Les passions (Hobbes dit le *désir*, la *crainte*, l'*espérance* et les autres passions) ne sont point volontaires, car elles ne procèdent point de la volonté, mais elles sont la volonté même.' He goes on, however, to add in parentheses what he clearly intends as an illustration of this point: '(h[enri]. L'amour d'une femme, la haine d'un hom[me], *font* la volonté).'⁷⁵ This apparently insignificant shift of sense — from 'sont' to '*font*' (the emphasis is Stendhal's own) — puts a world of difference between the conception of the will that is here evoked and that of Hobbes. For it promotes volition to the status of a *separate* category, independent from the passions that are said to be its source. In Hobbes, by contrast, they remain necessarily one and the same: 'elles sont la volonté même.' The rift is widened still further, and the confusion of sense compounded, by Stendhal's claims, firstly, that the passions 'sont la cause et non pas l'effet de la volonté', then — conversely — that the passions 'sont un effet de la volonté.'⁷⁶

It is clear from these examples that Stendhal fails to grasp the point which Hobbes is most at pains to make in his discussion of the will. To speak of passions as the

'causes' or the 'effects' of will is to return to the very 'senselessness' and 'absurdity' that Hobbes reproves in those who posit a *faculty* of willing as such. It may be instructive here to pause briefly and to anticipate something of what this alleged disciple of Hobbes was to make of the concept of 'will' in his later writings. For he will appear throughout quite heedless of the identity, postulated by Hobbes and the sensationalist tradition in general, between *feeling*, *thinking* and *willing* as transformations of the same essential experience. When he writes in *Armance* of those many philosophers who have sought to determine 'comment l'homme pense et comment il veut,'⁷⁷ he is articulating a distinction which is ever present in his construction of the will as a *faculty in its own right*. The term 'faculty' is, of course, Stendhal's own. 'Napoléon, Fieschi avaient la faculté de *vouloir*,' he writes in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*.⁷⁸ Fieschi, we read again in a letter to Jules Gauthier, 'avait plus de faculté de vouloir à lui seul que les cent soixante pairs qui l'ont condamné.'⁷⁹ The presence or absence of this 'faculty of will' was to furnish Stendhal with a ready means of judging not only individual character but the whole environment from which human beings issued. Casimir Périer, we are told in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, 'avait la qualité dauphinoise, il savait *vouloir*.'⁸⁰ As inhabitants of Paris, Villemain, Delavigne and Pastoret lack this quality, while of the Italian Cardinal Tosti we read in a letter to Domenico Fiore: 'Comme il est homme du plus bas peuple, il a la *faculté de vouloir*.'⁸¹ Nor is this 'faculty' restricted to the individual: it can be the appurtenance of whole communities. The Arabs possess it in abundance; the Swiss not at all; whilst in France it is a dwindling resource.⁸² As the author of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* puts it, 'la *faculté de vouloir* manque de plus en plus à Paris.'⁸³

Where it exists, *la faculté de vouloir* is for Stendhal a quantifiable, measurable, almost palpable quality, a means of discriminating between individuals, whole communities, and even, as on a number of occasions, historical periods.⁸⁴ All of this, however, is predicated upon a fallacy, if one accepts the theory of will propounded by those sensationalist philosophers whom Stendhal took to be his mentors. For any such talk of a volitional faculty is a far cry indeed from the *Homo simplex* conceived of by Hobbes or, in turn, by Destutt de Tracy. We have not yet considered the influence of Tracy upon Stendhal;⁸⁵ but it seems apposite, in view of his much hailed contribution to the latter's philosophy, to mention him briefly in this important regard. For Tracy's intention, like that of Hobbes before him, was not to endorse but, as Michel Crouzet rightly points out, to abolish the hard and fast boundaries which divided conscious experience, to define the will as nothing more than a *modified sense impression*, incapable as such of the independent powers which Stendhal so readily ascribes to it:

ainsi Tracy dans sa thèse générale, que sentir est tout, n'hésitait pas à franchir un pas de plus que ses devanciers; en parvenant par un net écrasement des termes à soutenir que sensation, jugement, mémoire, désir étaient du ressort d'une seule et

unique faculté de sentir, et [qu'il] était inutile de tenter de transformer ces moments du sentir en facultés distinctes, en attitudes différenciées, de diviser l'esprit, à quoi il se déclarait lui-même incapable; employant couramment les mots "penser" et "sentir" l'un pour l'autre, [...], il protestait contre toute décomposition de la pensée...⁸⁶

A glance at the *Elémens d'idéologie* confirms this assessment. For there Tracy defines the 'will' in the most reductionist terms as a simple 'résultat de notre organisation.'⁸⁷ The will is no *prime mover* in the human economy, but rather the *end result* of a process which the agent is powerless to initiate or to forestall: 'la volonté, ne pouvant naître sans motifs, naît elle-même nécessairement.'⁸⁸ This is what makes Maurice Larkin's argument suspect when he asserts that it was 'Tracy who brought home to Stendhal how determinism could be reconciled with a satisfying conception of the individual will.'⁸⁹ For the two approach the whole concept of volition from quite different poles. Tracy may seek to mitigate the more fatalistic implications of his doctrine by admitting *some* degree of suggested choice through the rational process of 'attention';⁹⁰ Stendhal, on the other hand, may pay lip-service to a theory of the will as a passive instrument in the hands of some overriding determinism; but they do not for long share common ground on this crucial philosophical issue. How, indeed, could the future author of *Julien Sorel* and *Lamiel* have endorsed any notion of *la volonté* as a vacant receptacle of determined stimuli, nothing more, in sum, than the necessary consequence of processes which originate beyond the bidding of the individual psyche?⁹¹ It was, Tracy insisted, 'un véritable *non-sens* de prétendre que la volonté est libre de naître.'⁹² Thus conceived, the will, as Emmet Kennedy puts it, 'is not free to will or not to will what it actually wills, but simply free to act in consequence of its will, to fulfill its desires.'⁹³

By such quasi-mechanistic logic, it is clear, the expressions *savoir vouloir* and *la faculté de vouloir*, which reappear time and again under Stendhal's pen, would have been bereft of sense for Hobbes and Tracy alike. Through the association implied by Stendhal between the 'will' and some rational faculty of choice, the self becomes re-invested with precisely those powers of which the sensationalists had sought to divest it; for theirs was everywhere a concern, as Colin Smith observes, 'to play down the notion of an autonomous self', to insist upon 'the subject as the recipient of the data of consciousness rather than as their source.'⁹⁴ By his readiness to reverse the terms of this principle, Stendhal commits what L.G. Crocker recognises to be the 'error of the proponents of free will' in general: it is 'to assume that the will is "the first motive force of its acts," whereas it is caused, independently of itself.'⁹⁵ The problem, as we have seen, is apparent from the first in Stendhal's reading of Hobbes. Though *Human Nature* should have left him in no doubt about Hobbes's conception of the will, he would have found the point spelt out with more clarity and emphasis still in *Leviathan*:

In *Deliberation*, the last Appetite, or Aversion, immediately adhæring to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the WILL; the Act, (not the faculty,) of *Willing*.⁹⁶

In his reading of Hobbes, however, Stendhal is far from apprehending any such distinction. On the same question of human motivation, the picture becomes more confused still when, in a note dated 24 June 1804, he makes the following assertion: 'Plus une passion est forte, plus elle vainc les dispositions des trois petites parties de l'hom[me]: le corps, la tête et le cœur.'⁹⁷ The problem here stems partly, once more, from Stendhal's language; but the statement as a whole involves him in a number of divisions and sub-divisions within man — passion, dispositions, parts, body, head, heart — which are untenable not only within any strict materialist logic, but within Stendhal's own conception of human nature as it is elsewhere defined. What is the distinction that obtains between 'passion' and 'heart'? As in the earlier case of the 'will', Stendhal here seems to envisage 'passion' as an entity which can be considered in isolation from — indeed in opposition to — *corps*, *tête* and *cœur* alike. More seriously still, what are the *dispositions* of body, head and heart? Stendhal's avowed belief — with Locke, Condillac and the sensationalist school — that man is a *tabula rasa* on which all experience is inscribed through sense-impressions is clearly at odds with the suggestion here of inherent 'dispositions'. Stendhal is unsparing of Brissot de Warville when he encounters a similar suggestion in the latter's discussion of Descartes.⁹⁸ Yet he clearly finds difficulty himself in adhering to the notion that the human being has no prevenient tendencies. For in his later writings, the same readiness as we have seen above to flout the first principle of the sensationalists will be in evidence. Witness the article for the *London Magazine* of October 1826, in which Stendhal will declare — with no apparent irony — that every well-born Italian woman abandons herself to her passions only when 'tous les principes de vertu que la nature avait mis dans son cœur se trouvent effacés par degrés...'⁹⁹ Or the assertion by the author of *Le Rouge et le Noir* that, in Mme de Rênal's nascent affections for Julien, 'un instinct de vertu était effrayé.'¹⁰⁰ Heretical language indeed from an avowed disciple of Locke and Condillac!

To return to the extract cited from Stendhal's notebook of 24 June 1804, we may observe that this is but one among a number of difficulties into which he is led by his tripartite division of man. Nor is the confusion dispelled when it is a question of applying the distinctions which he upholds in theory:

Je crois sentir (chez moi) qu'il n'y a proprement que mon âme qui ne suive point d'habitude et qui juge à chaque instant ce qui convient le mieux pour son bonheur. Le corps et l'esprit (la tête) suivent des habitudes.¹⁰¹

If there is consistency between this passage and what Stendhal argues elsewhere, it is one of bare terminology alone. For we find overturned here the notion to which he holds in so many other instances: that reason is the preserve of the *mind*, the guiding eye of the passions. *L'âme* can, the above remark suggests, dispense with the services of *l'esprit* and become, though we are told not how, the 'judge' of its own best route to happiness without the intervention of the intellect. If the heart indeed has its 'reason', this does much to confound the balance and interplay of faculties which Stendhal elsewhere imagines to be central to the very definition of human nature.

Such extracts from Stendhal's early private notebooks may be of limited significance within the overall corpus of his writings. Yet they merit consideration, in view of the claim by so many critics that the fundamentals of his philosophy are laid down in his earliest journals and letters. Whatever reasons one may adduce to account for the problems experienced by Stendhal in handling the tools of his metaphysic at this stage, it is difficult to comprehend an altogether remarkable entry which he consigns to his notebook on 30 June 1804. 'Ame,' he writes, with his customary relish for definition: 'cette partie de nous qui reçoit des impressions agréables ou désagréables qui ne peuvent se rapporter à aucune partie du corps.'¹⁰² *A aucune partie du corps!* Whether borrowed or of Stendhal's invention, such a definition clearly ascribes to the 'soul' the very incorporeal quality which he is elsewhere so prompt to deny.¹⁰³ It is all the more astonishing that this explicit endorsement of *Homo duplex* should find its way into Stendhal's notebook at the height of his admiration for a philosopher who — it need scarcely be reiterated — holds all talk of the 'immaterial' to be, quite simply, 'a senseless speech.'¹⁰⁴

***Nihil est in intellectu...* : The Sensationalist Principle**

The few examples cited above demonstrate the need to get behind the assumptions and to examine in some detail what are taken to be Stendhal's philosophical convictions. For his failure to adhere to the most basic principles of Hobbes's materialism signals a problem that goes beyond his reading of *De la Nature humaine*. His insistence on the distinction between heart and head, far from being sanctioned by the sensationalist philosophy which he early purports to espouse, is in fact a challenge to the very precepts upon which the latter is founded. Following through his own logic rather than that of Hobbes, Stendhal envisages (long in anticipation of a Proust or a Joyce) the stenographer who might record all that transpires within a given individual's

consciousness over the course of an entire day. 'Supposons,' he muses, 'qu'un hom[me] pût parler aussi vite qu'il pense et sent; que cet hom[me] une journée entière prononçât de manière à n'être entendu que d'un seul hom[me] tout ce qu'il pense et sent.' He then goes on to imagine the value which a transcription of this would have for the student of human nature:

Supposons que le sténogr[aphe], après avoir noté toutes les pensées et sentiments de notre hom[me], nous les traduisît [...], nous aurions un caractère peint pendant un jour aussi ressemblant que possible.¹⁰⁵

This notion of the stenographer who might capture all of an individual's fleeting thoughts and emotions is one which is dear to Stendhal and which is to be found elsewhere among his private writings.¹⁰⁶ His interest, it is clear, lies not with any limited 'stream of consciousness', but with the whole range and interplay of rational and affective influences which, he held, dispute possession of the individual and make up the experience of every moment. In a note on characterisation dated 4 July 1804, he imagines how an accomplished actor might reproduce on stage all of the physical gestures recorded by such a stenographer. He then makes the following, much more substantive point:

Il y aurait un autre procès-verbal de la même journée bien plus intéressant: ce serait celui que nous donnerait un dieu qui aurait tenu un compte parfaitement exact de toutes les opérations de sa tête et de son âme. C'est-à-dire de ses pensées et de ses désirs dans l'ordre avec lequel ils se sont mutuellement suivis ou causés. Ce second procès-verbal développerait le cœur humain avec tant de vérité qu'il ne pourrait manquer de plaire généralement.¹⁰⁷

The clear insistence, in both of the passages cited, upon the distinction between thought and feeling — a logical corollary of the division of man into head and heart — will colour Stendhal's reading of Destutt de Tracy as it colours his reading of Hobbes. The suggestion, however, that 'ideas' are the function of one domain, 'desires' that of the other, amounts to a betrayal of both the spirit and the letter of sensationalist philosophy. For the 'sensationalist' (from Hobbes through Locke and Condillac to the *Idéologues*),¹⁰⁸ ideas *are* sensations: to think is to experience a transformed sense-impression; to think is to feel. *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu* — nothing is in the mind which was not first in the senses.¹⁰⁹ Such was the contention of a philosophy which pushed the frontiers of Descartes's *cogito* back a stage and dug itself in behind a new axiom: *sentio ergo sum* — '*penser, c'est sentir*.'¹¹⁰ Though the sensationalist may retain a place in his vocabulary for the terms 'thinking' and 'feeling', he must remain alive to the essential redundancy of the distinction. As much is made explicit by Destutt de Tracy in *De la Logique*, where the theorist of Ideology writes:

[...] je réunis et confonds dans la faculté générale de sentir, ce que l'on a coutume

de distinguer en *affections* et *connaissances*, et ce qu'on appelle souvent en termes métaphoriques et peu exacts, *l'esprit* et le *cœur*. Effectivement je crois que cette division n'est pas fondée, que notre faculté de *connaître* vient et dépend de celle d'*être affecté*, et lui donne naissance à son tour, qu'elles sont intimement liées et inséparables, et que toutes deux sont parties intégrantes et indivisibles de celle de *sentir*...¹¹¹

By insisting that *penser* and *sentir* are separate theatres of operation to be treated independently, Stendhal subscribes, therefore, to the very distinction which Tracy is at pains to abolish. '*Penser, comme vous voyez,*' insists the latter, '*c'est toujours sentir,* et ce n'est rien que sentir.'¹¹² Nothing could be more unequivocal than this reduction of all thought to sensation. It is a line of argument, moreover, which Stendhal himself energetically endorses on a number of occasions. One of the definitions upon which the *Filosofia Nova* purports to rest, we recall, designates 'idées' as 'les sensations du cerveau.'¹¹³ Though we find Stendhal defining thought as sensation from as early as January 1803, when he is fired with enthusiasm for Helvétius,¹¹⁴ the question is never more emphatically addressed than in a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 1 January 1805. 'Qu'est-ce que penser?' asks the self-appointed tutor in Ideology:

Tu penses, tu le dis à chaque instant; mais as-tu examiné ce que tu fais en pensant? je crois que non. Tu sens, ma chère amie, tu ne fais que cela. Penser est sentir; [...]

Mais, puisque *penser* et *sentir* sont la même chose, pourquoi a-t-on fait deux mots? Parce que c'est la majorité des hommes qui fait la langue et non dix ou douze philosophes.¹¹⁵

Any distinction in essence between thought and feeling, Stendhal clearly recognises here, is at best redundant, at worst misleading. His letters, notebooks and diary from 1803 and 1804 proclaim the belief that 'toutes nos idées nous viennent par nos sens.'¹¹⁶ Yet Stendhal's language, more evocative often of Cartesian dualism than of the monistic rationale of the *sensualistes*,¹¹⁷ continues to belie his stated conviction. Resolving to undertake an analysis of the passions in June 1804, he reflects: 'Je trouverai peut-être que toutes les habitudes sont dans le corps ou dans la tête.'¹¹⁸ Such a statement, like so many others that one finds in Stendhal's early writings, is predicated on a metaphor, and, to return to the judgment of Tracy above, a pernicious metaphor at that.¹¹⁹ 'Against the traditional view of the dual nature of man,' writes Gilbert Chinard, 'the Idéologues held a belief in monism: they solved the problem which had for so many generations exercised the minds of theologians and moralists by denying the existence of the problem.'¹²⁰ Even Condillac, intent though he was on retaining a place for the soul in the human economy, had sought, through his 'animated statue', to eschew the time-honoured distinction between body and mind.¹²¹ Though Condillac himself chose to follow his conclusions only part of the way,¹²² the materialism to which he pointed found more uncompromising proponents among those *philosophes* and Idéologues (Helvétius, d'Holbach, Tracy, Cabanis, to name but the

foremost) who erected sensationalism into a first principle of philosophical integrity.¹²³

It may be useful once more, before concluding our thoughts on this question, to anticipate something of the later Stendhal. For the licence with which he interprets the sensationalist principle is not restricted to his early notebooks. 'Quelle différence! pensait ou plutôt sentait Octave,' we read in *Armance*.¹²⁴ The remark might appear at first glance to be a faithful reiteration of the formula so tirelessly expounded by the successors of Locke and Condillac. In truth, however, it pays service to a distinction between thought and sensation that is evoked on numerous occasions in Stendhal's later writings. Léon, in *Le Rose et le Vert*, 'était un homme qui sentait plus qu'il ne réfléchissait.'¹²⁵ Lamiel had, we are told, 'non pas la conviction, mais bien mieux, la sensation qu'elle commettait un grand crime.'¹²⁶ Nor will Stendhal be closer to the letter or spirit of Ideology on those occasions when he depicts the inner conflict of his protagonists as a struggle for ascendancy between heart and mind. '[Sa] tête dominait son cœur,' we read of Julien Sorel in his fraught relations with Mathilde de la Mole.¹²⁷ 'Le combat de son âme et de son esprit le rendait presque fou à la lettre,' writes Stendhal of Lucien Leuwen, in flagrant breach once more of Tracy's ruling that no such division should be upheld.¹²⁸ Not that the conflict results in any clear resolution for his hero: 'Une seule tête, une seule âme ne suffisent pas pour y voir clair, au milieu de devoirs si compliqués.'¹²⁹ Should Fabrice del Dongo have killed in order to make good his escape on a stolen horse? 'Sa raison lui disait oui, mais son cœur ne pouvait s'accoutumer à l'image sanglante du beau jeune homme tombant de cheval défiguré.'¹³⁰

Stendhal's sensitivity to the vagaries of human consciousness, his clear recognition of what would later be explored as the *sub*-conscious, may seem to us today to be the measure of his psychological acuity. Yet it should not be forgotten that his insights in this domain are more *despite* than *because of* the crude and overly restrictive equation between sensation and thought which was fundamental to Ideology. Of the founder of French sensationalism, Condillac, H.B. Acton writes:

His aim would today be called 'reductionist'. That is, he set out to show that reasoning, judgement, thought generally, are identical with, or nothing but, sensation. This he expressed in his famous phrase that thought is 'transformed sensation'. The transformation here meant is not magical but symbolical or logical. Although de Tracy criticized Condillac on many points, he too, in his *Eléments de l'idéologie* (1801), took the same course when he said 'penser c'est sentir', which I translate 'to think is to have sensations'.¹³¹

Such is the first precept of a philosophy which, for all its recognition of the complex *effects* of thought, invites a minimalist interpretation of mental activity at its *source* and in its various operations.¹³² Stendhal, however, presents a quite different case. His is a

concern not to diminish but to amplify and give full play to the gradations and nuances of conscious experience. Thus we will read of a fleeting reflection of Lucien Leuwen: 'Or, disait-il, ou plutôt sentait-il sans se l'avouer, ma mère ne doit ni aimer ni haïr madame de Chasteller.'¹³³ *Dire*, *sentir* and *avouer* here denote three distinct operations of the conscious mind which place Stendhal at some remove from the reductionism of the Idéologues. When, in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, a troubled Julien Sorel seeks distraction in Napoléon's memoirs, we are told:

ses yeux seuls lisaient, n'importe, il s'y forçait. Pendant cette singulière lecture, sa tête et son cœur, montés au niveau de tout ce qu'il y a de plus grand, travaillaient à son insu. Ce cœur est bien différent de celui de madame de Rênal, se disait-il, mais il n'allait pas plus loin.¹³⁴

Here again, the subtle gradations of consciousness are evoked in terms which take us far beyond the basic *penser-sentir* equation. No less is this the case when, in *Armance*, we are told of the eponymous heroine: 'Elle ne se disait pas, elle sentait (le dire en détail eût été comme en douter), elle sentait cette vérité.'¹³⁵ The emphatic, repetitive interplay of verbs here — *dire*, *sentir*, *douter* — conveys the fragile and fleeting nature of the thought, the *vérité*, in question. From all of Stendhal's novels, examples can be thus adduced which issue a challenge to the view (upheld, as we have noted, by Arbelet, Van Duzer, Cailliet and others) that in Stendhal the school of Ideology finds its novelist. 'Une étude de son œuvre,' insists Cailliet, '[...] ne peut que faire constater un épanouissement des thèmes du XVIIIe siècle dans l'expression que leur a donnée l'Ecole des Idéologues.'¹³⁶ The remark is open, as we see from the foregoing, to considerable qualification.

Reading Philosophy

Stendhal's early writings, then, throw into relief an aspect of his thought which has hitherto passed unattended by commentators — in particular by those who readily annexe him to the school of Ideology and make of him a champion of philosophical materialism. Stendhal is considerably less of an *idéologue* — and we shall have occasion to return to this point — than has been commonly asserted. Less of a 'materialist', too, if we set store by what his reading of Hobbes reveals. For, as the notebooks which record this reading amply demonstrate, Stendhal is quite unable to sustain any consistently materialistic definition of the world. The moment he departs from Hobbes's text and attempts to re-cast the latter's principles in his own terms, he exposes himself to inconsistency and contradiction. In extracting from chapter XII,

where Hobbes develops a distinction between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' activity, Stendhal notes: 'Les actions involontaires sont celles causées par les propriétés de la matière. On pousse un hom[me]. Il tombe contre une glace et la casse. Involontaire.'¹³⁷ Though Stendhal's example here is closely related to one which Hobbes himself cites, his attribution of involuntary action to 'les propriétés de la matière' finds no echo in Hobbes. Nor could it. For what Stendhal is, in effect, implying here is some realm where the 'properties of matter', as he puts it, do *not* hold sway, which is a denial of the whole basis of Hobbes's plenist philosophy.¹³⁸ What Hobbes in fact says in the passage which Stendhal transcribes *à sa façon* is: 'Les [actions & les omissions] involontaires sont celles que [l'homme] fait par la nécessité de nature, comme quand il est poussé, qu'il tombe & fait par sa chute du mal à quelqu'un.'¹³⁹ This is a far cry indeed from what is implied by Stendhal, whose thought on the question is further confused by a subsequent note in which it is 'voluntary' rather than 'involuntary' activity which is ascribed to 'les propriétés de la matière'.¹⁴⁰

In yet other instances, Stendhal's notes reveal that he is far from comfortable with some of the most basic terminology which he finds himself employing. In resuming Hobbes's discussion of 'amour' and 'haine' as manifestations of the process whereby external stimuli to the sense organs, by exciting movement within the body which impinges on the 'mouvement vital', gives rise to the 'mouvement animal' known as appetite or aversion, he notes in parenthesis: 'qu'est-ce que ce mouv[emen]t vital?'¹⁴¹ Considering the nature of sensual, or 'organic', pleasure as discussed by Hobbes, Stendhal stops short to pose the question: 'Qu'est-ce que veut dire le mot *organique*?'¹⁴² His extracts and notes from his reading of Hobbes are punctuated by interrogatives of this sort.¹⁴³ Such questions, while they have about them an element of the rhetorical, a clear echo of the dialectical method in which Stendhal has been schooled, betray uneasiness in the presence of terms and principles whose meaning or application he clearly fails fully to grasp.

To isolate examples such as these is to place the emphasis upon one aspect only of Stendhal's mind in this period. Yet the detailed comparisons which his notebooks permit with the original text of Hobbes provide a valuable insight into the manner in which he conducted his early readings in philosophy. They demonstrate in particular the interaction which Stendhal has with the text in hand, posing questions, inventing examples, and developing ideas within his own frame of reference. In the midst of his extracts from Hobbes, there is a note which reads:

Hobbes, chap. IX, page 85:

'L'ennui est une maladie de l'âme dont le principe est l'absence des sensations assez vives pour nous occuper. Ce qui est habituel n'excite plus de sensation vive en nous. Je crois que d'après ce principe on peut forcer sa tête au travail, mais non

The first noteworthy feature about this is that it is derived not from Hobbes but from Helvétius.¹⁴⁵ The second is that it illustrates well Stendhal's method, in his philosophical reading, of grafting his own reflections onto the extracts which occasion them. Though the distinction is not made in the *Journal littéraire*, the final sentence is, in fact, the conclusion which Stendhal *himself* draws from the definition in question — a conclusion which, in servicing his continuing distinction between heart and head, takes him beyond the perimeter of Helvétius's reasoning on this point.

Stendhal's notes from Hobbes provide a number of similar examples,¹⁴⁶ the most remarkable of which relates to the philosopher's discussion of the pleasure-pain principle and the moral implications which are to be drawn from it. In the lengthy extract which Stendhal transcribes in his notebook, we find Hobbes's conclusion not only expressed intact, but extended and employed as the basis for a further — and much bolder — conclusion which is Stendhal's own:

Il n'y a point de *bonté* ni de *mauvaiseté* sans relation. Chaque homme nommé *bon* ce qui est agréable pour lui-même, et mal ce qui lui déplaît, de manière qu'il y a autant de *bontés* ou de *mauvaisetés* qu'il y a d'hommes.¹⁴⁷

While Stendhal's contribution (here underlined) may be the logical corollary of Hobbes's argument,¹⁴⁸ the conclusion which he draws takes us much further than the point at which Hobbes himself chooses — significantly — to rest his case.¹⁴⁹ Thus Bertrand Russell, in interpreting Hobbes's thought on this question, points towards the conclusion drawn by Stendhal but, like Hobbes himself, stops some way short of drawing it:

It will be observed that these definitions give no objectivity to 'good' and 'bad'; if men differ in their desires, there is no theoretical method of adjusting their differences.¹⁵⁰

Such minor misrepresentations of Hobbes and Helvétius may seem nugatory. But they do offer a glimpse into Stendhal's method of reading, indicating the extent to which his most apparently faithful rendering of an author's thought remains open to elaboration and distortion. What the foregoing examples demonstrate, moreover, is the way in which Stendhal uses his reading to reaffirm already formulated ideas. Just as Helvétius's reflections on *ennui* are translated into Stendhal's *own* terms of reference, Hobbes serves in the above instance to confirm a principle which is already central to Stendhal's moral philosophy and which he had outlined thus, as early as February 1803, in a letter to his sister Pauline:

Tout homme regarde les actions d'un autre homme comme *vertueuses*, *vicieuses*

ou *permises*, selon qu'elles lui sont *utiles*, *nuisibles* ou *indifférentes*. Cette vérité morale est générale et sans exception.¹⁵¹

Since men necessarily pursue, in all their endeavours, their own self-interest as they perceive it, and since there is in nature no universal principle upon which such self-interest may be calibrated, the notion of an absolute standard of good or evil is meaningless. The idea that the human being was equipped with some indwelling moral gauge as to the rightness or wrongness of his actions — a faculty *in situ*, as the Church claimed, from the so-called 'age of reason' in the child — was dispelled as a nonsense if one accepted that self-interest, in all its manifold forms, constituted the sole determinant of human values and of human conduct alike.

Hobbes, in 1804, brings nothing new to an idea which, as we saw in the previous chapter, Stendhal had found clearly articulated by Helvétius. From that fact in itself however, there is a very significant point to be drawn. For Stendhal's most enthusiastic approval is reserved not for those authors who, by challenging his assumptions, broaden his perspective or sharpen his powers of reasoning, but rather for those who, rightly or wrongly understood, confirm him in his ideas, not to say his *idées fixes*. There is nothing more inveterately *subjective*, at bottom, than Stendhal's reading of philosophy. This intense subjectivity is a feature of Stendhal's thought which has not, in this particular context, been recognised by critics; yet it informs his whole relationship with those authors from whom he is generally held to have derived the principles of his philosophy. Hobbes, though he provides an instructive case in point, is not the only thinker upon whom Stendhal visits his preconceptions. As Francine Marill Albérès rightly observes, 'Stendhal se crée une idéologie personnelle et ne voit dans les philosophes que ce qu'ils lui apportent.'¹⁵²

We should not wish, certainly, to suggest by this that Stendhal's ideas did not undergo very significant development with time or through the influence of particular thinkers. But he does approach his reading, in adulthood as in his youth, with a marked predisposition towards those authors who appear to echo, reaffirm or amplify his ideas as they are already defined. Hence his judgment of Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des lois*, read some months after Helvétius in May 1803: 'J'avais deviné d'après la lecture du livre de *l'Esprit* faite six mois auparavant beaucoup des découvertes que Montesquieu y montre.'¹⁵³ No less than Montesquieu, Vauvenargues serves to confirm Stendhal in what are already his established ideas. 'De l'âme. *All my découverte is in this §*', he notes in April 1804, believing he finds the essence of his theory of human nature in Vauvenargues's *Introduction à la connaissance de l'esprit humain*.¹⁵⁴ Helvétius, too, delivers. 'Je reviens à Paris en lisant Helvétius,' we read in Stendhal's diary of 6 August 1810, 'il me semble que je lis des notes écrites par moi en style lâche, tant je

suis d'accord avec lui.¹⁵⁵ Elsewhere, the same sentiment is applied almost verbatim to a somewhat less likely candidate: 'Quand je lis Pascal, il me semble que je me relis [...]. Je crois que c'est celui de tous les écrivains à qui je ressemble le plus par l'âme.'¹⁵⁶ Even Mme de Staël, for all the endless criticisms levelled against her inflated style, has her moment: 'Je retrouve mes idées et jusqu'à mes expressions favorites dans ce que Mme de Staël dit de l'Italie...'¹⁵⁷

Such remarks give evidence in Stendhal of a keen desire to *anticipate* the lessons of his reading, to prove himself something more than the passive recipient of another's wisdom. 'Si j'avais su analyser une seule de mes journées [...],' he reflects ruefully in a notebook entry of 18 June 1804, 'j'aurais découvert ce que j'ai lu dans Hobbes.'¹⁵⁸ Nor is the latter alone in upholding, as Stendhal has it, the 'division' of man upon which the *Filosofia Nova* rests.¹⁵⁹ 'Prévost avait vu,' we read in a note of 24 April 1804, 'la div[ision] de l'esprit et du cœur, il parle souvent d'une manière conséquente à ce principe.'¹⁶⁰ Stendhal's enthusiasm for Mirabeau in particular is redoubled when he finds in him what he takes to be confirmation of this same principle: 'Tout ce que je lis dans Mirabeau et tout ce que j'entendis hier soir à Feydeau m'engage de plus en plus à croire à ma div[isi]on de la tête et du cœur.'¹⁶¹ From such a meeting of minds, one could not but take heart. 'Je suis flatté,' declares Stendhal, with no excess of modesty, 'de voir que Mirabeau pense souvent comme moi.'¹⁶² The remark resonates with an exultant diary entry dated 23 July 1804:

Je lis *L'Esprit de Mirabeau* à la Bibliothèque. Ouvrage à méditer et à discuter profondément. Je lis la partie: *Philosophie*. Je suis dans un des états les plus délicieux que j'aie éprouvés de ma vie. Je retrouve dans les écrits *di quel grande* plusieurs des pensées que j'avais déjà eues: par exemple, sur Montesquieu, [...]; mes idées sur l'incontinence, [...]. Il a développé, je crois, ce que je pensais sur le christianisme.¹⁶³

This readiness to conclude that the *rightness* of an author's ideas is commensurate with the degree to which they resemble his own would become a marked and enduring feature of the commentaries which Stendhal provides on his reading. On 8 August 1804, it is with the Scottish philosopher Dugald Stewart that he registers his affinity, in terms which betray not the merest hint of objectivity:

Je lis [...] la *Philosophie de l'esprit humain* [...] par Dugald Stewart, [...] où se rencontrent beaucoup des choses que j'ai découvertes il y a un mois. Cela prouve leur vérité.¹⁶⁴

Some sixteen years later, Stendhal's response to the Italian philosopher and economist, Pietro Verri, will be no less conclusive — and no less intensely subjective. 'Que dites-vous du traité *Sull' indole del Piacere e del Dolore* du c[om]te Pietro Verri?' he inquires of Adolphe de Mareste:

Je le lis pour la première fois; je tremble sans cesse d'y trouver mes idées. Donc je le trouve fort bon.¹⁶⁵

The list of such examples is long¹⁶⁶ and testifies clearly to the predispositions which informed Stendhal's judgment of the authors whom he undertook to read. For he is ever on the lookout to discover, as he puts it on one occasion, 'des choses qui confirment mes idées au lieu de les modifier.'¹⁶⁷ Though he would later claim, as we have seen, to have been pursuing the same few fundamental ideas throughout,¹⁶⁸ it is clear that he felt a need to have these expressed in new and ever more cogent forms.¹⁶⁹ Even the highly personal 'philosophy' for which Stendhal, in 1811, coins the term *beylisme* cannot assume its full 'truth' until it undergoes ratification against the sounding-board of *another* intellect. Reading Mme du Deffand's letters to Horace Walpole, Stendhal is, as he declares in a letter of 9 January 1812, confirmed in the principles of his 'Beylism'. 'Mme du Deffand me fait sentir encore mieux tout le bon de mon système,' he boasts to his sister Pauline, adding in conclusion: 'J'ai été bien aise de voir toutes mes idées confirmées par Mme du Deffand.'¹⁷⁰

On recording dissatisfaction with his various draft projects in July 1804, Stendhal exempts from an otherwise sweeping criticism 'mes anciennes observations, par où il fallait passer pour en venir où j'en suis.'¹⁷¹ The remark clearly suggests that he perceives his philosophical development as a process of accretion, the overlaying of one truth by another which confirms, corrects or extends it. Reflecting in June 1807 upon his intellectual progress to date, he notes with some approval: 'L'expérience m'a vieilli de deux ou trois ans depuis mon départ de Grenoble, à en juger du moins par la couche d'idées nouvelles que je suis obligé de traverser pour retrouver celles de ce temps-là.'¹⁷² This image of retracing one's course through past 'layers' of thought, or of advancing to new levels of truth, is one that is recurrently employed by Stendhal. Observing, in the aftermath of the Russian campaign, that he has lost his enthusiasm for reading, he will record a graphic description of his *état d'esprit* in his diary of 15 September 1813:

Reste la lecture [...]. Je ne b[ande] pour aucun livre, et ce n'est que dans cet état heureux que je lis avec fruit, avec augmentation de mon magasin d'idées, ou plutôt avec rectification de mes idées, et approche toujours plus voisine de la vérité. Elle est pour moi (dans la connaissance de l'homme) comme une peinture recouverte d'une couche de chaux; sans cesse quelque parcelle de chaux tombe, et j'approche de cette vérité désirée.¹⁷³

This notion of 'rectification' is central from the earliest to Stendhal's intellectual evolution.¹⁷⁴ It goes some way, too, towards accounting for the shifting allegiances that lie beneath the surface of what is generally seen as Stendhal's adherence to a single *school* of philosophy. Thus Condillac and Vauvenargues find themselves amplified and

superseded by Helvétius, who is both confirmed and eclipsed by Hobbes, who will give way in turn to Tracy, Cabanis and a reinstated Helvétius.¹⁷⁵ For philosophy, in Stendhal's perception, is always personalised, incarnate in the thinkers who vie for his superlatives. Condillac is '*la base de tout*',¹⁷⁶ Cabanis 'le père du matérialisme',¹⁷⁷ Hobbes 'le meilleur style philosophique',¹⁷⁸ Helvétius '[le] plus grand philosophe qu'aient eu les Français', 'le seul Français qui raisonne',¹⁷⁹ Tracy 'le plus grand de nos philosophes, ou, pour mieux dire, le seul philosophe que nous ayons.'¹⁸⁰ Condillac's *Logique* contains 'plus d'idées que toutes les bibliothèques du monde!' — *until* that of Tracy comes to hand.¹⁸¹ The latter will be recalled as 'l'homme que j'ai le plus admiré à cause de ses écrits, le seul qui ait fait révolution chez moi.'¹⁸² Plaudits which do not, however, prevent Stendhal from deeming the *Encyclopédie* 'le livre le plus utile qui ait jamais été publié', or from declaring Pierre Bayle to be 'indiscutablement dans l'ordre chronologique, et peut-être dans l'ordre de mérite, le premier philosophe de France.'¹⁸³

'Stendhal, that arch-materialist'

Whatever distinctions Stendhal establishes between and among those philosophers whom he read with what he took to be the greatest profit, there is good reason to endorse Paul Arbelet's assertion that 'il ne croira trouver chez eux que les aspects différents d'une même doctrine.'¹⁸⁴ The reading of Hobbes provides a clear illustration of this point. The precepts of mechanistic materialism, the analysis of the passions, the pleasure-pain principle, the egoistic ethic, the importance of philology and the precision of language, even Hobbes's celebrated definition of laughter¹⁸⁵ — *all* are known to Stendhal prior to his reading of *Human Nature*, all have about them more of the familiarity that reaffirms than the revelation that converts. Yet for all that, and for all Stendhal's assiduous note-taking, his reading of Hobbes, as we have seen, remains superficial and distorted. A simple remark made in a letter to Pauline Beyle in November 1804 gives evidence of just how impervious Stendhal has been to the philosophy expounded by Hobbes. It demonstrates, too, the extent to which his reasoning remains hostage to an ill-defined and highly inadequate terminology:

Tu connais le cœur et tu as une âme ardente qui te l'explique assez; reste la tête.¹⁸⁶

To rend man thus into *cœur*, *âme* and *tête*, to confer upon a vague notion of 'soul' powers (of explication notably) which are elsewhere reserved for the 'mind', was to fragment beyond all recognition Hobbes's view of human nature. No sooner indeed

had Stendhal completed his reading of the philosopher than we find him writing to his sister: 'Tu te souviens sans doute que je t'ai écrit que l'homme était composé de trois parties: '1° *le corps*; 2° *l'âme* ou toutes les passions; 3° *la tête* ou le centre des combinaisons.' To *tête, âme, cœur, corps*, Stendhal then introduces a *fifth* category, to confound still further the conception of human nature in question: 'Le corps et la tête sont les valets de l'âme, et l'âme obéit elle-même au *moi*, qui est le désir du bonheur.'¹⁸⁷

That such reasoning reveals more about Stendhal than about Hobbes should by now be clear. It is in this sense, however, that Stendhal's reading of the philosopher can be said to attain its fullest significance. For it raises a number of fundamental questions, in particular about the depth and range of Stendhal's materialism. The notes by which the event is documented may appear at a glance to be little more than a transcription of Hobbes; as a critical reading shows, however, they testify to the difficulty which Stendhal experiences in breaking out of a traditional, not to say profoundly orthodox, view of man that is more akin to Christian or Cartesian dualism — or, borrowing the forbidding terminology of C.D. Broad, to 'Differentiating-Attribute Pluralism'¹⁸⁸ — than to the monistic materialism of Hobbes.¹⁸⁹

Such a claim, of course, runs counter to a received critical wisdom which, ever since Mérimée's description of his friend as a 'matérialiste outrageux',¹⁹⁰ has held philosophical materialism to be the very bedrock of Stendhal's world view. 'Stendhal est pleinement matérialiste,' declares Jean Méliá,¹⁹¹ while Albert Collignon discovers in his thought a

Théorie matérialiste et expérimentale, fondée uniquement sur l'utile et qui donne une explication simple et naturelle du libre arbitre, de la moralité, de la responsabilité, de l'héroïsme et de tous les autres phénomènes de cet ordre.¹⁹²

Such a judgment was, even in Collignon's day, far from novel. As early as 1842, in the obituary article published by E.-D. Forgues in *Le National*, Stendhal had been hailed as 'le plus spirituel parmi les derniers champions de la philosophie matérialiste; le seul homme peut-être à qui Diderot, de nos jours, eût volontiers tendu la main...'¹⁹³ Rarely, however, was this view of Stendhal to occasion such fulsome praise. While the same alleged materialism would find sympathy in Hippolyte Taine and in the young Paul Bourget,¹⁹⁴ it constituted, as we saw in Chapter I, the very essence of criticisms levelled against Stendhal throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Barbey d'Aurevilly acts as spokesman for a whole generation of reactionary critics when he proclaims Stendhal to be 'l'expression la plus raffinée et la plus sobre de ce matérialisme radical et complet dont Diderot fut le philosophe et le poète.'¹⁹⁵ Stendhal

is, he charges, a 'matérialiste sans emphase, souterrain et fermé', a latter-day proponent of 'le matérialisme raccourci et brute de d'Holbach, d'Helvétius, de Cabanis...'¹⁹⁶ Fashions in philosophy, however, ebb and flow just as surely as those in any other field of human interest. Divining a change in the intellectual and moral climate of the later nineteenth century, Paul Albert ascribes the reascent appeal of Stendhal in the 1880s to the very materialism which had hitherto proved a source of critical condemnation:

Si Stendhal a eu peu de succès vers 1830, c'est qu'alors on était idéaliste et spiritualiste et il était, lui, matérialiste. S'il en a davantage aujourd'hui, c'est qu'il y a plus de matérialistes et ceux-ci saluent Stendhal comme un des leurs.¹⁹⁷

The twentieth century, while it has, as we have noted, tempered the morally censorious tendency among Stendhal's critics, has brought no significant reappraisal of his materialism. Writing in 1909, James Huneker summed Stendhal up as a 'descendant of Diderot and the Encyclopædists, a *philosophe* of the *salons*, a *petit maître*, a materialist for whom nothing exists but his ideas and sensations.'¹⁹⁸ Huneker articulates here a notion which has a formidable body of critical opinion behind it. 'In the sphere of philosophy,' writes H.B. Samuel, Stendhal's 'logical and mathematical turn of mind embraced with natural facility the materialism of the French sceptics.'¹⁹⁹ Pierre Martino goes further, discerning in Stendhal 'la négation de tout idéal moral, un matérialisme absolu.'²⁰⁰ Etienne Rey subscribes in turn to the view of a Stendhal who is 'nettement matérialiste';²⁰¹ so too J-C. Alciatore, who discovers in Stendhal not the 'matérialisme à brûle-pourpoint' of an intellectual 'brigand' — as Barbey d'Aurevilly had a century before²⁰² — but a reasoned materialism which predates the influence of his philosophical mentors. 'Appartenant par son éducation d'adolescent à la tradition des philosophes du XVIII^e siècle,' writes Alciatore, 'Helvétius, Destutt de Tracy et Cabanis renforcent son matérialisme.'²⁰³ Stendhal is a 'faithful materialist' for Matthew Josephson, a 'deterministic materialist' for Gita May, an 'arch-materialist' for Robert Adams.²⁰⁴

The sheer weight of the critical opinion that has rallied behind this view might be deemed sufficient to discourage fresh inquiry. What none of the above assessments endeavours to establish, however, is the *nature* of the materialism which is so consistently ascribed to Stendhal. Instead, there is a marked tendency to assume — with Jean Méliá — that Stendhal, as the inheritor of an eighteenth-century philosophical legacy and a self-proclaimed disciple of Ideology, 'ne pouvait être que matérialiste.'²⁰⁵ The recent article by J.-C. Augendre, 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', gives evidence of how little has been done to further our understanding of Stendhal on this question. Augendre rests his analysis upon a number of the preconceptions which have informed so much of Stendhal criticism in this domain.²⁰⁶

To read Hobbes may indeed, as he argues, be to effect 'un retour au "berceau" du matérialisme';²⁰⁷ but Stendhal's place in any 'history of materialism' requires most surely to be defended on grounds more rigorous than these. Nor is Augendre's suggestion that Stendhal might be held to mark a new departure in materialist thought convincing;²⁰⁸ for the critic does not pursue this reflection beyond a simple allusion to the psychologist who would be so appreciated in Stendhal by Nietzsche.

Despite its promising title, Augendre's study fails in turn to raise the question that is called forth by each of the definitions cited above: by what *criterion* is Stendhal's 'materialism' to be judged? The question must be posed, for, as his notebooks and diaries from the earliest attest, if Stendhal is a materialist, he is a materialist who is singularly uninterested in *matter*. Even at the height of what Georges Blin calls 'ses années d'idéologie militante et expérimentale', his 'fanatisme "philosophique"',²⁰⁹ Stendhal's materialism, such as it is, is no more than a vaguely formulated and highly abstract principle. Nowhere is there evidence, for example, that he takes steps to ascertain what Hobbes actually meant by '*mouvement vital*', '*organique*', or any of the terms which had caused him to punctuate with questions his reading of *Human Nature*.²¹⁰ Never, even at the height of his enthusiasm for Hobbes, does he trouble to pose the questions: What *is* matter? How is it organised? How does it function? What distinctions are to be made between apparently different categories of matter? How are these to be related to differences in sensation: sound, sight, smell, pain, desire, rage...? All of this may be fare for the philosophically curious; but it does not detain Stendhal.²¹¹ What is the basic structural element of the material universe as he envisages it? The answer is nowhere in evidence. Nor does Stendhal, as he sets about drafting his *Filosofia Nova*, trouble to inquire into the *physical* seat of the reason and the passion which so preoccupy him; these he is content to ascribe, in keeping with time-honoured metaphysical — and metaphorical — convention, to *la tête* and *le cœur* respectively. 'Je ne m'occuperai que très sommairement de l'influence du corps,' he resolves. 'Tirer de l'ouvrage de Cabanis *Influence du physique sur le moral* quelques vérités claires.'²¹²

Such is the store which this latter-day Diderot, this 'matérialiste jusqu'à l'héroïsme',²¹³ sets, in June 1804, by the *material* aspect of man. What is perhaps most surprising of all in this context is that Stendhal did not graduate from Hobbes to his translator, the Baron d'Holbach, *enfant terrible* of French materialism and author of the notorious *Système de la nature*. Stendhal could not have failed to appreciate the significance of this 'Bible of all Materialism', as F.A. Lange dubs it.²¹⁴ Yet for all his reputation as an intellectual kinsman of d'Holbach, there is, as we stated in our Introduction, no evidence that Stendhal ever read the latter, and his writings contain so

few references as to rule out any suggestion that d'Holbach contributed in any meaningful way to the formulation of his thought²¹⁵ Would a mind so given to entering into a recorded dialogue with those authors who engaged his intellect have passed over in silence a reading of this most formidable exponent of French atheistic materialism? The thought is an unlikely one, which does little to sustain Sergio Moravia's description of Stendhal as a devotee of d'Holbach, or Ernest Abravanel's more tentative suggestion that he *probably* read the *Système de la nature*.²¹⁶

That Stendhal read Cabanis, on the other hand, there can be no doubt. Yet here again there is little evidence to suggest that he had any genuine interest in the concept of matter or the first principles of philosophical materialism. His earliest recorded reading of Cabanis in January 1805 does not even acknowledge the central question raised by the physiologist concerning the intimate relationship between the 'physical' and the 'moral' states, with all its radical materialist implications. A critical commentary on the style of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* provides the grounds for the summary judgment of Cabanis as a 'vague' author to whom Bacon and Hobbes are to be preferred.²¹⁷

Stendhal's materialism, we submit, is a conviction, a faith, a 'religion renversée', to borrow Alain Girard's suggestive expression:²¹⁸ it is not, in the strictest sense of the term at least, a 'philosophy'. For it is not arrived at or sustained through any dialectical process, but is the fruit rather of a massive presumption, a leap of faith; it is, quite simply, accepted from the outset as a *donnée*, the logical consequence of the evacuation of God and the incorporeal soul from the Universe. Stendhal's materialism is in essence a partisan stance for which he seeks — and finds — support among those philosophers with whom he registers a ready affinity. 'Tout le monde sait,' he would write, as we recall, 'que la philosophie est une république divisée en deux factions; la faction matérialiste et la faction spiritualiste.'²¹⁹

It is precisely this spirit of *engagement* which informs from the earliest Stendhal's commitment to the materialist 'cause'. Philosophical materialism in the 1790s was, as G.V. Plekhanov puts it, 'a "militant doctrine", a revolutionary doctrine.'²²⁰ Stendhal's adherence to those philosophers who were to exert an enduring appeal has, within this perspective, all the hallmarks of a surrogate religious faith. Hence his 'croyance' in Helvétius, where almost everything is 'divin';²²¹ his *veneration* for Cabanis and Tracy;²²² the 'source de toute lumière' which he would discover in the latter's *Elémens d'idéologie*;²²³ and the status of 'bible' to which his recollection would elevate the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*.²²⁴ Hence, too, the 'adoration pour le vrai' which he avows in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*,²²⁵ and the 'espèce d'examen de

conscience' which, he claims in a letter of 1808, the reading of philosophy helps him to conduct.²²⁶ Thus, in 1811, Stendhal records his intention to re-read Tracy's *Logique* at least once a year, 'afin que mon esprit soit toujours ouvert à la lumière.'²²⁷ The same work, he writes with irony to his sister Pauline in 1814, is 'aussi vrai que l'Évangile pour le moins et aussi clair.'²²⁸ The remark finds an echo in a subsequent letter to the same Pauline, in which Stendhal denies that the baser passions can conduce to happiness in old age. 'Cela est aussi vrai,' he concludes, 'que le vrai en l'évangile ou dans Helvétius.'²²⁹

At one level, of course, this is all so much rhetoric. At another, however, it suggests Stendhal's readiness to commit himself to *belief* in what he takes to be right-thinking philosophy. 'Mon père et mon grand-père avaient l'*Encyclopédie* in-folio de Diderot et d'Alembert,' he will write in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*. He recalls: 'J'avais la plus entière confiance en ce livre à cause de l'éloignement de mon père et de la haine décidée qu'il inspirait aux p[rêtres] qui fréquentaient à la maison.'²³⁰ What more could be required as a recommendation of the philosophy in question? From faith to certitude, moreover, would be but a step. Writing for the British press in the 1820s, Stendhal will be no less Manichæan in his perspective than had been the recalcitrant Brulard. 'Je crois vraiment, avec M. de Tracy,' he writes in the *London Magazine* of December 1825,²³¹ 'que la science des idées [...] est fondée sur la physiologie. Cette vérité exaspère les prêtres de toutes les religions et les Allemands de toutes les conditions.' So it is, we read in the *New Monthly Magazine* of December 1828, that the 'rêveries de Platon' seek to triumph over the 'vérités de Locke et de Tracy.'²³² In yet another submission to the same journal, the 'spéculations idéales' of philosophical idealism are contrasted with the 'réalités établies par Locke et Condillac.'²³³ The same tone of trenchant certitude everywhere characterises Stendhal's thoughts on the philosophical schools over which he sits in summary judgment. It is evident still in a letter of February 1838, where he confidently affirms 'la vérité des idées dans Bentham ou dans l'*Esprit* d'Helvétius.'²³⁴

Stendhal's language in such instances is significant on two counts. Firstly, his readiness to perceive certain authors as oracles of truth and others as purveyors of falsehood runs counter to the spirit and the letter of the 'methodical doubt' which he is ever prescribing for himself and for his sister Pauline. We have noted in the preceding chapter that, where Helvétius in particular is concerned, Stendhal is far from being the scrupulous reader which his declared enthusiasm for this philosopher might at times suggest. Secondly, and more importantly for our considerations here, it says much about Stendhal's philosophical posture that it should be defined not as a self-sustaining truth but by reference to — and *in the very terms of* — the Christian faith against which

it is mobilised. There is truth in Emile Cailliet's assertion that, where Stendhal is concerned, 'l'Idéologie se met au service du mot d'ordre: Ecrasez l'Infâme!'²³⁵

It is this relationship between religion and philosophy for Stendhal which helps to explain a somewhat cryptic remark found in a note dating from 7 September 1803. 'Les douleurs dans l'enfantement,' Stendhal writes quite simply, 'sont une preuve du matérialisme.'²³⁶ The meaning of this remark is elucidated by a subsequent note, penned some three weeks later, in which an acrimonious apostrophe to the Christian God reveals much about the basis of Stendhal's 'materialism':

Si vous êtes bon pourquoi avez-vous souffert que les maladies rendissent l'homme malheureux une partie de sa vie?
Pourquoi les douleurs de l'enfantement, la prospérité des méchants?
Moi, qui ne suis qu'un simple homme, je vous dis: Pourquoi après vingt-cinq ans n'a-t-il pas été donné à la seule vertu de prolonger nos jours? [...]
N'est-ce pas votre faute si votre machine au lieu de produire des actions vertueuses en produit de vicieuses?
Et je ne vois pas comment il est digne de votre bonté de faire des machines vicieuses et de les punir ensuite de l'avoir été.²³⁷

The importance of these extracts is twofold. In the first place, they suggest very clearly that Stendhal conceived of his materialism as a *reaction against* the notion of a providential deity overseeing the workings of humanity. The very fact that Stendhal's thought should be couched here in an imaginary address to the Christian God tells us much about the source from which he derives his philosophical animus and recalls Mérimée's revealing assertion that his friend 'était fort impie, matérialiste outrageux, ou, pour mieux dire, ennemi personnel de la Providence [...]. Il niait Dieu, et, nonobstant, il lui en voulait comme à un maître.'²³⁸ Mérimée's qualification here is significant; for it signals the quasi-logical connection in Stendhal's mind between a denial of the divine, on the one hand, and the embracing of 'materialism', on the other. The same point is clearly underlined by another of Stendhal's intimates, Louis Crozet, in a letter written after the author's death to Romain Colomb. Of their deceased friend, Crozet, ever mindful of the reception which Stendhal's works were likely to enjoy among the reading public, writes:

[...] les fondements de ses écrits sont assis sur la philosophie des sensations, sur le pur matérialisme, et sur un mépris hautement affiché, je dirai même sur une haine de l'esprit religieux qui sont parfaitement opposés aux idées du moment et qui sont injustes même philosophiquement parlant.²³⁹

Whatever doubt one may cast on the value of such remarks as a means of advancing the appreciation of Stendhal's art, they do shed important light upon the philosophical posture which he exhibited to his friends and associates. The second noteworthy feature about the extracts from Stendhal's notebooks cited above is that

they provide the first intimation of a problem which would haunt him throughout his life and which re-emerges on a number of occasions in the published work of his later years. Here again, moreover, the 'philosophy' to which Stendhal's remarks attest comes over less as a self-sustaining dialectic than as a means of filling the void that is left when the notion of a providential deity is abolished. Thus, in *De l'Amour*, he fires off the following salvo:

Pourquoi au moment où un assassin tue un homme ne tombe-t-il pas mort aux pieds de sa victime? Pourquoi les maladies? et, s'il y a des maladies, pourquoi un Troistaillons ne meurt-il pas de la colique? Pourquoi Henri IV règne-t-il vingt et un ans, et Louis XV, cinquante-neuf? Pourquoi la durée de la vie n'est-elle pas en proportion exacte avec le degré de vertu de chaque homme?...²⁴⁰

In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, we find the same question related directly, as it had been in September 1803, to the notion of the supernatural. 'Si l'on admet des miracles,' protests Stendhal, 'pourquoi, lorsqu'un homme en tue un autre, ne tombe-t-il pas mort à côté de sa victime?'²⁴¹ This flagrant absence of any natural — or, *a fortiori*, supernatural — justice, the insistence, in as many words, upon 'la méchanceté de la Providence',²⁴² is indissociable from Stendhal's denial of God and from the philosophical standpoint which he early adopts. Henri Martineau, succumbing to the temptation to seek the psychological determinants of the later author in the child, dates what he terms 'cette absence quasi totale de spiritualité' from Stendhal's seventh year, when, as we read in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, he heard his mother's death described as God's will. 'Jamais,' writes Martineau,

[...] il ne pardonna à un Dieu capable de ravir sa mère à un enfant. Désormais, sans crainte de se contredire, il niera la Providence ou l'accusera d'être méchante: "Qu'est-ce qu'un Dieu qui a inventé la peste et la gale?"²⁴³

Whatever the precise source of such reasoning, it is true that it represents a deep-seated and constant feature of Stendhal's world-view. In a passage which would be excised from the published version of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, he deploys an acerbic logic against what he deems the absurdity of Christian faith in a benign Providence:

Je ne crains pas de le dire, l'homme qui souhaite un enfer catholique à Néron ou à Philippe II ne sait ce qu'il dit, ou est lui-même plus atroce que ces monstres. S'il en est ainsi d'un simple mortel qui sent gémir dans son cœur l'humanité qu'ils outragèrent, que peut-on dire du créateur de Tibère qui, lorsque ce monstre était encore au bras de sa nourrice, voyait tous les maux qu'il ferait peser sur 120 millions de sujets, et toutefois le laissait vivre, sauf ensuite à commettre une seconde atrocité aussi imbécile que la première, en le punissant d'un supplice éternel?²⁴⁴

These remarks give expression to a sentiment which, as D.G. Charlton observes, was felt by a growing number of anxious intellectuals in the nineteenth century. For there

was an increasing tendency, among thinkers notably who held fast to some religious aspiration, to question the very morality of Christian doctrine. Concepts such as the Fall and eternal damnation, far from arguing a benevolent deity, 'presupposed a morally repugnant idea of God,' particularly when set against the notion that man is determined by hereditary and environmental forces that lie beyond his control.²⁴⁵ Such is the idea that we find expressed again by Stendhal in the margins of Schlegel's *Cours de littérature dramatique*, where he sustains his view with a telling reference to thinkers whose very names, he suggests, serve to demolish any defence of a providential deity:

Quand on a lu et compris Helvétius, Tracy, Gibbon et Cabanis, on ne croit à aucune religion. Théos lui-même paraît absurde, car pourquoi l'existence des Pans? Pourquoi l'homme qui m'assassine ne tombe-t-il pas mort à mes pieds? Tout ce qui suit dans Schlegel paraît extrêmement absurde.²⁴⁶

Stendhal's materialist view of the world, it is clear from these examples, rests upon a denial of any spiritual dimension to life, which is closely linked to a denial of natural justice and a belief in an arbitrary and inscrutable destiny. But he takes no delight — as some of his eighteenth-century predecessors had done²⁴⁷ — in concluding thus that the endeavours of humanity are subject to no inherent logic or rule of law. On the contrary, it is a question which troubles him deeply and which serves to buttress his early atheistic — and, by extension, 'materialist' — stance against claims that any divine Providence is at work in the government of human affairs.²⁴⁸ 'Moi aussi, j'aimerais à croire,' he protests in the *Promenades dans Rome*; 'mais la fièvre vient de faire périr trois pauvres petits enfants chez mon voisin, ce qui me force à croire que tout n'est pas juste et beau dans ce monde.'²⁴⁹

In this view of a morally indifferent universe there was, of course, nothing new. The problem of evil, with the attendant prosperity of the wicked and suffering of the righteous, was one which had exercised the eighteenth century and fuelled an age-old debate between optimism and pessimism.²⁵⁰ The mid-eighteenth century had, as I.F. Knight argues, witnessed 'the rediscovery of evil in the universe' and confronted the conclusion that there was 'too much cruelty, too much waste and destruction, too many monstrous and anomalous occurrences, to suppose design in nature.'²⁵¹ The sentiment expressed by Stendhal in the above instances recalls the denunciation of philosophical idealism and attack on Leibnizian optimism which one finds in the later Voltaire.²⁵² Whereas, however, the latter's deism survived the doubts which he came to harbour about a beneficent Providence overseeing the affairs of men, Stendhal is sweeping from the outset in his rejection of any supernatural order. 'Il n'avait aucune idée religieuse,' recalls Mérimée, 'ou, s'il en avait, il apportait un sentiment de colère et de rancune contre la Providence: "Ce qui excuse Dieu, disait-il, c'est qu'il n'existe pas"'²⁵³

In this simple aphorism, which would so arouse the envy of an admiring Nietzsche,²⁵⁴ we find the first principle of Stendhal's 'materialism'. Nor would the frank denial of God lead Stendhal, as would the 'honest doubt' of so many of his contemporaries, to seek new deities to replace the fallen.²⁵⁵ One has a choice, according to Stendhal, between two ways of viewing the world: materialism or myth. It is within this quasi-Manichæan perspective that he reflects, in the *Promenades dans Rome*, upon the philosophy best suited to the Italian cast of mind. 'Le matérialisme déplaît aux Italiens,' he contends. 'L'abstraction est pénible pour leur esprit. Il leur faut une philosophie toute remplie de terreur et d'amour, c'est-à-dire un Dieu pour premier moteur.'²⁵⁶

As our discussion thus far shows, Stendhal's materialism is in large part a stance of reaction and negation. One does not, however, have to probe far beneath the surface to discover just how hollow is the base upon which he rests his conviction in all of this. The principles of philosophical materialism proper are not only a matter of limited interest to Stendhal; they are the expression of a notion which confronts him with a serious intellectual problem. For it did not require extensive observation of the world to discover aspects and dimensions of reality for which matter alone appeared to provide a less than satisfactory explanation. In what has been perceived as a clear profession of his materialism,²⁵⁷ Stendhal commits a brief but pregnant remark to his notes of August 1803: 'Tout le matérialisme est dans ces mots: tout ce qui est, est cristallisé.'²⁵⁸ This is one of the few occasions, in all of Stendhal's writings, when he employs the term 'materialism', and the only occasion, to my knowledge, when he ventures a definition, however rudimentary, of the concept. The remark carries a suggestion, however, less of conviction than of doubt. For it is followed at once by a telling qualification, whose significance has been ignored by those critics who cite the above statement as testimony of Stendhal's materialism.²⁵⁹ Taken in its entirety, the journal entry in question reads thus:

Tout le matérialisme est dans ces mots: tout ce qui est, est cristallisé.
Toute l'objection dans ceux-ci: en jetant sur des feuilles de papier des milliers de caractères, quelle absurdité qu'une *Iliade* se soit trouvée imprimée.
Mais si tout ce qui n'était pas une *Iliade* a été détruit?²⁶⁰

That Stendhal should conclude here with a question is significant. For the objection to materialism which he cites indicates clearly his hesitation about reducing all human potential and achievement to mere functions of brute matter. Where, for example, could notions of 'greatness', or 'genius', or 'beauty' (in any but the most superficial sense) be accommodated within a strictly materialist-deterministic conception of human nature? The failure of mechanistic materialism, argues Marx Wartofsky, lies in its inability to 'account for such refined qualities as sensibility, intelligence, mind.' He goes on:

Cartesian dualism rests on this. Thinking being is seen as qualitatively distinct from extended being, and it is this qualitative gap that a quantitatively-limited mechanism, the mechanism of homogeneous matter, cannot bridge.²⁶¹

Though Stendhal does not pose the problem in such terms, he clearly finds it impossible, within a strict materialist perspective, to bridge the 'qualitative gap' in question.

On the face of it, certainly, Stendhal seems tireless in his endeavour to incorporate within the world of *physical* reality those areas of human experience habitually placed beyond the realm of matter. Hence the unequivocal definition of the 'soul' which we find among his writings of 1804: 'l'âme est une partie du corps, [...] un morceau de matière (cervelle) qui sent.'²⁶² As with the soul, so with man's other supposed higher faculties. The imagination, Stendhal insists, 'fait partie de l'organisme humain tout comme l'oeil ou la main.'²⁶³ Ideas, he argues, are but sensations, and sensations but 'des portions de matière [...] entrant en mouvement.'²⁶⁴ Music may afford the most ineffable of pleasures; but, as we read in the *Vie de Rossini*, it can be fully appreciated only if the listener is 'isolé comme pour les expériences électriques.'²⁶⁵ The most 'metaphysical' of notions, according to such logic, have their roots in a *physical* reality. Thus can Stendhal speak of those 'beaux sentiments qui électrisent l'âme',²⁶⁶ or of an 'effet électrique de *la vérité*' which, as Georges Blin puts it, denotes '[le] court-circuit émotionnel provoqué par l'œuvre d'art, lorsqu'elle dépeint au plus juste le sentiment.'²⁶⁷ Thus, too, will Stendhal speculate upon the prospect that some day a machine might be developed to measure human intelligence,²⁶⁸ or that strength of character might be registered in the individual as electricity is registered in the atmosphere.²⁶⁹ In such reasoning, it would seem, there is room only for the concrete, transient world of the materialists. A diary entry of 22 December 1804 is expeditious in its dismissal of any higher dimension:

Le principe de Locke que toutes nos idées nous viennent par nos sens, et l'anatomie des passions telle que celle qui se voit dans Helvétius prouvent que nous ne voyons dans l'homme aucun effet de l'âme, qu'il n'y a que des effets de sens, que par conséquent il n'y a point d'âme.²⁷⁰

All of these examples may be adduced as evidence of the 'tentation du matérialisme intégral' which Philippe Berthier discerns in Stendhal's thought.²⁷¹ They provide, however, only a very partial picture. For such concepts, like the language in which they are couched, prove impossible for Stendhal to sustain. Thus, in a notebook entry dated 10 July 1804 — within twenty-four hours of defining 'l'âme' as 'une partie du corps', 'un morceau de matière'²⁷² — we find him writing of the death of Marcus Junius Brutus as recounted by Plutarch:

Elle a quelque chose de divin. Le corps n'y triomphe point. C'est une âme d'ange qui abandonne un corps, sans le faire souffrir. Elle s'envole.²⁷³

The tone of these remarks may be consonant with Stendhal's early reverence for the heroes of Ancient Rome. They suggest clearly, however, his readiness to dispense with the notion that men are mere agglomerations of matter. The instance is not unique. Similar betrayals of Stendhal's 'materialism' are not difficult to find in writings contemporaneous with his readings in materialist philosophy. Thus, for example, the entry in his diary of February 1805, where he congratulates himself on having shone, despite his unprepossessing physique, in the company of his mistress-to-be, Mélanie Guilbert. 'Toute mon âme paraissait,' he notes triumphantly, 'elle avait fait oublier le corps...'²⁷⁴ Such a remark would merit not even a footnote in any history of Stendhal's thought. Yet it does offer a candid glimpse of his failure to carry his declared philosophy over into his day-to-day preoccupations, underlining the residual dualism by which his thinking continues to be informed. The same divide between corporal and spiritual qualities is evident once more when, writing from his posting in Brunswick, Stendhal reflects upon what he terms the 'belles âmes logées dans des corps de femme.'²⁷⁵ This distinction between body and 'spirit', sustained by a time-honoured philosophical tradition, was clearly one from which Stendhal found it difficult to disengage his mind. Thus, of a certain Amélie de Bézieux, he writes in a letter of September 1808:

Elle a de grands yeux d'un bleu foncé se détachant sur le plus beau blanc du monde; des yeux qui, par leur éclat et leur pureté, percent au fond de l'âme; c'est quelque chose d'immatériel que ces yeux-là; c'est une âme toute nue.²⁷⁶

Scarcely the idiom one would expect from 'le disciple de Diderot et des philosophes amis du baron d'Holbach!'²⁷⁷ Yet these are but a few illustrations of a tendency that is evident across the range of Stendhal's writings. Thus, in the *Vie de Rossini*, we find a clear distinction upheld between a material and a non-material dimension in man. 'Ce qui fait de la musique le plus entraînant des plaisirs de l'âme,' avers Stendhal, '[...] c'est qu'il s'y mêle un plaisir physique extrêmement vif.'²⁷⁸ Similarly, in *De l'Amour*, we read: 'Le degré de tension des nerfs de l'oreille pour écouter chaque note explique assez bien la partie physique du plaisir de la musique.'²⁷⁹ As with music, so with love we find the recourse by implication to *another* realm beyond the confines of the material world. Love, as Stendhal puts it, 'a un mélange forcé de physique'; in a hundred years, he predicts, medical science will provide 'la description de la partie physique de ce phénomène.'²⁸⁰ So much, then, for Stendhal's protestations that the 'soul' is but a lump of feeling matter housed in the body organic. Encountering in *Rome, Naples et Florence* a number of women whom he credits with more reason than sensibility, Stendhal concludes: 'avec tant de raison, on ne doit

comprendre que la partie matérielle de l'amour.²⁸¹

In each of the above cases, Stendhal falls, despite himself, into the traditional dualist categories of body and soul, suggesting that there is a realm, an 'essence', within man that is in some way independent of his physical constitution. What he sends packing through the front door, one might say, he ushers in again by the rear. For he could not with any consistency endorse a philosophy which made no distinction between man and the material universe, presenting the former merely as a mode of some undifferentiated matter. Such a philosophy, Stendhal frequently suggests, has as its net effect to leave man bereft of what is most essential, most precious within him. Alongside the desire to pierce the veil of mystery surrounding man, to reduce human consciousness and sentiment to the terms of a simple theorem, to admit of nothing that is not sanctioned by the maxim '*Facta, facta, nihil praeter facta*',²⁸² there persists in Stendhal a strong hankering after the ineffable. How else to understand his deep-seated and lasting ambivalence towards 'les froids philosophes', or the disdain which — his *idéologie* notwithstanding — he manifests at times for the 'esprit sage, calculateur, ne pensant jamais qu'à ce qui est *démontré vrai*'.²⁸³ How else to account for a remark which, issuing from the pages of *Racine et Shakespeare*, runs counter to every philosophical principle that Stendhal is elsewhere at such pains to exalt:

Platon avait l'âme d'un grand poète, et Condillac l'âme d'un chirurgien anatomiste. L'âme ardente et tendre de Platon a senti des choses qui resteront à jamais invisibles à Condillac et gens de son espèce.²⁸⁴

Stendhal himself provides a gloss on this intriguing remark. Plato's reasoning may be puerile and obscure, he contends, but it is saved *ipso facto* from the soul-destroying aridity that characterises the thought of Condillac. Of the latter, by contrast, Stendhal goes on to assert:

comme il fait profession d'y voir clair et qu'il ne voit pas ce qu'il y a de généreux et de noble dans la vie, il semble la condamner au néant; car nous sentons qu'il a la vue très nette.²⁸⁵

Such a reversal of the cherished ideals of precision and clarity, for all its aberrant aspect, is far from exceptional. For there is in Stendhal a wilful 'blindness' which asserts itself at times to defy the eye of reason, an anti-philosophical tendency which delights in the very mysteries that it was his avowed ambition to see dispelled.²⁸⁶ 'Je bénis le ciel de n'être pas savant,' declares the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*. He explains: 'Si j'avais les moindres connaissances en météorologie, je ne trouverais pas tant de plaisir, certains jours, à voir courir les nuages et à jouir des palais magnifiques ou des monstres immenses qu'ils figurent à mon imagination.'²⁸⁷ In the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, it is in just such a spirit that Stendhal describes the thunder claps which

accompanied his visit to the Grande-Chartreuse monastery in the French Alps. 'Que j'aurais voulu dans ce moment,' he exclaims, 'ne rien savoir de l'électricité ni de Franklin!'²⁸⁸

With this denial of reason's claim to usurp the place of sentiment, we come back to the fundamental irreconcilability between philosophy and poetry which is evident from the earliest in Stendhal.²⁸⁹ 'Je m'instruis ici, à la vérité,' he had written from Paris to his sister Pauline in January 1803; 'mais que la science est froide auprès du sentiment!' He goes on:

Malheureux et bien à plaindre, le cœur froid qui ne sait que savoir! Eh! que me sert de savoir que le soleil tourne autour de la terre, ou la terre autour du soleil, si je perds, à apprendre ces choses, les jours qui me sont donnés pour en jouir?²⁹⁰

Such a powerful appeal *against* the hegemony of reason, recurring as it will in his later writings, must be borne in mind when assessing Stendhal's thought. 'Ne se fier qu'à ce qu'on comprend, telle est sa devise,' argues Georges Blin.²⁹¹ Yet this 'positivisme de l'évidence', as Blin puts it,²⁹² goes only *part* of the way towards explaining Stendhal's perception of the world. 'Il n'y a qu'une très petite partie de l'art d'être heureux, qui soit une science exacte,' we read in *De l'Amour*.²⁹³ In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, the idea takes on a more personal aspect: 'Enfin, je suis si peu fait pour les sciences sages, qui ne s'occupent que de ce qui est *démontré*...'²⁹⁴ The emphasis is, significantly, Stendhal's own.

The irrational velleities of which such remarks are an expression would seem to call into question Blin's assertion that Stendhal rejects 'non seulement tout postulat et tout *credo*, mais même tout mystère, fût-ce celui que recèle l'homme.'²⁹⁵ Blin cites in support of this point André Gide, who, for all his acute sense of Stendhal's merits, is surely much too categorical in asserting: 'Il reste en l'homme bien des régions qu'il n'aura pas su découvrir, et même il n'aime à découvrir que ce qu'il va pouvoir expliquer; les tons ultra-violets lui échappent...'²⁹⁶ What both Gide and Blin in turn appear to overlook is the celebration of the *un-known*, and *un-knowable*, which is to be found in Stendhal and which is patently at odds with his pursuit of empirical certitudes. 'Je sais parfaitement bien qu'il est permis à un poète d'ignorer les réalités de la vie,' he writes in the *London Magazine* for July 1825.²⁹⁷ 'J'irai plus loin, il est nécessaire à son succès de poète qu'il en soit ainsi.' Such a remark rescues the intuitive dimension to life that is threatened by the cold edge of philosophy, and allows the artist access to some *terra incognita* where the incursions of reason have no place. Again in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, the same eschewal of 'reality' in favour of some richer realm of experience is in evidence:

Hé bien! je voudrais presque redevenir une dupe et un nigaud dans la réalité de la vie, et reprendre les charmantes rêveries si absurdes qui m'ont fait faire tant de sottises, mais qui seul, en voyage, comme ce soir, me donnaient des soirées si charmantes...²⁹⁸

What has all this to do with Stendhal's 'materialism' as it is discussed above? To this question, Stendhal himself provides an answer in *Racine et Shakespeare*, where, in the debate between the Romantic and the Academician, the former makes a telling point. If the Academician persists in contesting the sentiment which should accompany a particular dramatic illusion, then no amount of reasoning will bring him round to the opposite view. 'Et j'avoue,' declares the Romantic, 'que je ne puis rien vous répondre.'

Vos sentiments nè sont pas quelque chose de matériel que je puisse extraire de votre propre cœur, et mettre sous vos yeux pour vous confondre.
Je vous dis: Vous devez avoir tel sentiment en ce moment; tous les hommes généralement bien organisés éprouvent tel sentiment en ce moment. Vous me répondez: Pardonnez-moi le mot, *cela n'est pas vrai*.
Moi, je n'ai rien à ajouter. Je suis arrivé aux derniers confins de ce que la logique peut saisir dans la poésie.²⁹⁹

Stendhal puts his finger squarely here, with this question of aesthetic sensibility, upon a fundamental difficulty in the materialist conception of man, what E.J. Dijksterhuis calls 'the hopeless problem of deriving psychic from physical phenomena.'³⁰⁰ Stendhal's response to the problem is indicative of his readiness to concede to a conventional dualist view of man's nature rather than pursuing the logic of the materialist doctrine through to its conclusion. The explicit affirmation that there exists a sensibility which lies *beyond* the realm of the material, *beyond* the outer confines of what can be apprehended through reason, is a reminder of the difficulty that bedevils his materialism from the outset.³⁰¹ Stendhal comes perilously close here, in fact, to articulating the very argument which was levelled against the Idéologues at the height of their disfavour under Napoleon, and which is well summed up in Degérando's *Rapport historique sur les progrès de l'histoire depuis 1789*:

Le scalpel et le microscope ne peuvent atteindre qu'une portion de nous-mêmes; il en est une autre, et la plus noble, qui leur échappe, mais qui se découvre à cet œil intérieur de la réflexion dont les observations, pour être délicates, n'en sont pas moins réelles. La physiologie qui ne peut expliquer la vie physique elle-même, expliquerait-elle le sentiment et la pensée?³⁰²

It is, it seems, with such reasoning in mind that Stendhal, the self-styled physiologist who reduces love to the terms of a geo-physical process,³⁰³ who defines a lover as 'un instrument auquel on se frotte pour avoir du plaisir',³⁰⁴ is just as prone to conceive of the same phenomenon as 'un pur fait de conscience' which has no apprehensible link with any neuro-biological reality.³⁰⁵ 'Sa conception intime et

personnelle de l'amour,' argues Etienne Rey in his preface to *De l'Amour*, 'vient aussitôt à la traverse de la conception du philosophe, lui barre la route et se substitue à elle.'³⁰⁶ The remark is pertinent, for it acknowledges the divide in Stendhal's view between what is measurable in the crudest, most clinical terms, and what is beyond the reach of all that philosophy, aided by the physical sciences, can apprehend. The point is given graphic expression by Stendhal in a letter of 23 March 1831 to Adolphe de Mareste:

Un homme après six mois de rêves, aspire à émettre 1/2 once d'une petite liqueur visqueuse. Qu'importe au genre humain? Rien assurément; mais pour lui c'est le bonheur, c'est la vie.³⁰⁷

Where then, in which of these two radically contrasting perspectives, is *reality* to be located? Stendhal provides no answer; but that he should acknowledge the question is ample commentary upon the many-sidedness which he recognises to be a defining feature of human experience. There are different *orders* of 'reality' which call for different definitions. Thus it is that, while holding man to be a 'machine' devoid of any but material components,³⁰⁸ Stendhal, as Jean Mélià recognises, 's'en tient à la dualité classique: l'âme et le corps.'³⁰⁹ Thus, too, that the Stendhal who defines art as 'cette espèce d'écume', 'le produit nécessaire d'une certaine fermentation',³¹⁰ yet finds something in great literature which defies the simplicity of this 'matérialisme artistique'.³¹¹ It is impossible, contends the student of Helvétius, that anyone negate his ego and 'agir contre ses intérêts';³¹² yet in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* he describes himself in terms devoid of sense for any advocate of utilitarian determinism: 'Mon amour-propre, mon intérêt, mon moi avaient disparu en présence de la personne aimée, j'étais transformé en elle.'³¹³ In *De l'Amour*, Stendhal goes to some lengths to demonstrate, through his classic example of Regulus, that man is no more than the pleasure-seeking animal described by Helvétius, physically incapable of pursuing anything beyond his own selfish gratification.³¹⁴ Yet in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, as we have seen, he flies in the face of this very principle by holding that the self-seeking protagonists of the Bible are inferior to the heroes of Antiquity precisely *because* their egoism takes precedence over nobler sentiments.³¹⁵

Such are the difficulties and contradictions which emerge when one brings a critical eye to bear on Stendhal's thought. Whether one designates it a 'romantisme logique' (like Adolphe Paupe),³¹⁶ or a 'romantisme analytique', Helvétius attempting to explain Saint-Preux (like Léon Blum),³¹⁷ there is an inescapable antinomy — a 'double aspiration', as Georges Blin puts it, 'de logicien et de romantique'³¹⁸ — in Stendhal's perception of the world and in the philosophy which is a function of it. We have suggested earlier that the much evoked split between a rationalist and a romantic in Stendhal is of itself insufficient to account for the complexities and inconsistencies

which are evident in his perception of the philosopher.³¹⁹ Stendhal's ambivalence resides not between two clearly delineated regions of Philosophy and Romanticism, but, to a very large degree, *within* the domain of Philosophy itself. That said, the recourse by critics to the 'romantic' label has provided some means, however schematic, of approaching what remains one of the most ambiguous and challenging areas of Stendhal's thought.³²⁰ 'All his life long,' declares George Brandes, Stendhal remained 'the unfaltering philosophic antagonist of everything in the great Romantic movement which was of the nature of a reaction against the spirit of the eighteenth century.'³²¹ The very sweeping nature of such a statement militates, one fears, against its truth. For if Stendhal never took up arms with the Romantics against the excesses of the preceding century, he nonetheless waged his own private opposition to much that the Romantics found most indictable in the scientific rationalism which was the hallmark of that earlier age.³²² The 'more complete epistemology' which, as D.G. Charlton observes, the Romantics strove to attain beyond the confines of eighteenth-century rationalism was, as we saw in Chapter II, Stendhal's goal from the outset.³²³ On this question, Auguste Bussièrè's article of 1843 retains its freshness and acuity:

M. de Stendhal, qui ne veut voir dans l'homme que des fonctions et des phénomènes physiologiques, prend à chaque instant parti pour l'âme pure et pour toute cette portion de la sensibilité, pour tous ces mouvements de la passion immatérielle dont le scalpel ne saurait retrouver le ressort.³²⁴

It is for this reason, we contend, that Maurice Larkin is quite wrong to suggest that Stendhal has none of the 'divided view of mind and matter' so characteristic of Balzac, or that his cult of the will, free of all spiritual tincture, results in an 'intellectually satisfying reconciliation between his respect for willpower and his recognition of the material basis of mind.'³²⁵ There is no thornier question in all of Stendhal than that of reconciling his concept of the will with the material basis of man and mind. *Tête, cœur, âme, volonté*: all are concepts which — traditionally accorded a place apart within man — pose enormous difficulties for Stendhal, and which he finds it impossible to express satisfactorily within any strict and consistent materialist idiom.³²⁶ Even when he most wishes to reason away the distinction between the physical and spiritual realms, when he appears to be subscribing to an out-and-out materialism, the problem is apparent. For, although he can claim (under the influence of Hobbes), that all human experience is reducible to matter in motion,³²⁷ or (under the sway of Helvétius) that the soul, 'n'étant prouvée par rien, n'existe pas,'³²⁸ it is clear from the application which he proceeds to make of such principles that he fails to subscribe to their logical implications. Among the notes drafted for the *Filosofia Nova*, there is one in which Stendhal ventures a step-by-step demonstration of the corporeality of the soul. The passage is worth citing in some detail, for it provides a glimpse of Stendhal grappling with a problem that is central

to the whole materialist question. 'Une preuve que l'âme est une partie du corps,' he reasons, 'c'est qu'elle se fatigue.' He goes on:

Il est donc probable: 1° que c'est un morceau de matière (cervelle) qui sent; 2° que ce morceau de matière est dans la tête.
Car, quelle que soit cette chose, elle se fatigue comme le corps. Ce n'est qu'un rapport, mais nous n'en connaissons point d'autre. Voici ce rapport en entier:
L'âme se fatigue, existe complètement (santé), incomplètement (douleur) comme le corps. Quand le corps cesse d'exister elle s'évanouit.
Elle s'endort ordinairement avec lui, quelquefois elle veille en partie quoiqu'il dorme, elle dort aussi en partie quoiqu'il veille.³²⁹

Despite the principle for which he is arguing, the whole of Stendhal's language here *sustains rather than abolishes* the distinction between the two separate categories of body and soul. For this unique attempt by Stendhal to construct a reasoned defence of monistic materialism is itself couched in *dualist* terms ('elle se fatigue *comme* le corps'; 'Quand *le corps* cesse d'exister, *elle* s'évanouit'; 'Elle s'endort [...] *avec* lui, [...] *elle* veille [...] *quoiqu'il* dorme...'). Nothing here, certainly, of the 'natural facility' with which it has been claimed that Stendhal embraced his philosophical materialism.³³⁰ His uneasiness in handling here what he would clearly like to regard as a rigorous demonstration of materialism is betrayed by a final, hesitating question: 'Tout cela est-il vrai?'³³¹

Back to the Drawing-board

In the light of the foregoing discussion, we are better able to appreciate the nature of Stendhal's materialism. If we are to define materialism as the denial of conventional dualist categories (mind/matter, body/soul) and an insistence upon matter as the sole constituent of the universe, then it is clear that the Stendhal whom we have been considering is a fitful materialist at best. For he cannot relinquish his adherence to a conception of man which draws upon and reinforces the very categories which he seeks to refute. On this whole question, his reasoning fails to remain in tune with his stated conviction. Hence the jarring disparities between what he purports to hold as a disciple of Hobbes and Helvétius, on the one hand, and the distortions to which he subjects some of their most fundamental axioms, on the other. '*Ce psychologue qui se met à l'école de la science,*' observes with some piquancy Francine Marill Albérès, '*n'est en fait qu'un amateur d'âmes.*'³³²

In its 'narrower and more technical sense,' argues E.A. Gellner, materialism 'can

be defined as the doctrine that only matter exists, and hence that all other phenomena and features of the world are explicable as manifestations of the organization and movement of matter.³³³ The point is self-evident, perhaps; but it is worth stating. For if, as Paul Feyerabend suggests, one discards the refinements of what modern science, with its particle and high energy physics, has brought to theories of matter, one is left, in philosophical materialism as it has presented itself to the human mind through the ages, with a single, inescapable contention: 'that the only entities existing in the world are atoms, aggregates of atoms and that the only properties and relations are the properties of, and the relations between such aggregates.'³³⁴ It is on this latter point, that of the 'properties' and 'relations' existing within and between entities, that the materialist's view of the world is, arguably, at its most intellectually exacting. As Maurice Mandelbaum puts it,

a strict materialism is a reductionist philosophy in a two-fold sense: it not only claims that all entities, however immaterial they may appear to be, have a material basis by means of which they are to be explained, but it also claims that whatever properties these entities reveal are explicable in an identical set of terms, regardless of their apparent disparities.³³⁵

We emphasise the point since it is to this monistic rationale precisely that Stendhal fails to subscribe with any semblance of consistency. There is, however, a broader and looser understanding of materialism, which incorporates a number of concepts associated with materialist philosophy as it evolved during the French Enlightenment notably: anti-clericalism and the rejection of the supernatural; the contention (though in Stendhal's case, as we have seen, this calls for substantial qualification) that human beings are, like all other objects, material entities; a deterministic psychology based on the principle of egoism and issuing in a utilitarian ethic; the overthrow of tradition in favour of empiricism and of absolute standards in favour of relativism; a belief in the power of education and government to determine human character and conduct. All of these, argues E.A. Gellner, can be seen as off-shoots of the materialist doctrine as articulated by the exponents of eighteenth-century progressive thought.³³⁶

If Stendhal is to be accurately termed a 'materialist', we submit, it is within this latter category that his 'materialism' must be understood. He is far, certainly, from being the thoroughgoing materialist for which he has been taken by so many of his critics. 'Son point de départ,' writes Emile Cailliet of the young Stendhal, 'est matérialiste.'³³⁷ Anti-religious and fiercely secular Stendhal's point of departure may be; materialist, in any strict philosophical sense of the term, it is not. His one sustained attempt to come to grips with the metaphysical materialism of Hobbes results in his abandonment of the *Filosofia Nova* and his ultimate rejection of Hobbes's philosophy, in August 1806, as 'le discours d'un hom[me] de bon sens qui n'a pas assez

approfondi sa matière, ou des vérités sans objet.³³⁸

This is anything but an objective reappraisal of the work which had inspired such admiration in Stendhal only two short years before. His repudiation of Hobbes is indissociable, one must conclude, from the realisation that he himself has failed a test of his own philosophical mettle. On 12 September 1805, Stendhal, then working as a commercial clerk in Marseille, had struck an optimistic note in his diary. 'Ma pensée,' he declares, 'acquiert plus de vérité, plus de force et plus de profondeur':

Je ne désire pas lire les philosophes que je connais, ils me rejetteraient dans l'ornière où j'étais il y a six mois. J'ai cependant envie de relire Hobbes et les pensées que j'écrivais à Paris, pour en tirer ce qu'il y a de bon.³³⁹

The measured confidence that is conveyed by this note was, however, to be short-lived. For the re-reading of his earlier reflections on man would bring home to Stendhal the fact that he was still very firmly *in* the 'rut' from which he believed he had emerged. On 1 October 1805, he confesses in a letter to Pauline the serious misgivings which this realisation has given him about his capacities as a thinker:

J'ai lu hier par hasard les cahiers que j'écrivais à Paris en messidor an 12, sur la tête et le cœur et la div[isi]on des passions que je faisais à cette époque. J'ai trouvé ce principe vrai, mais tout le reste gisquet, orgueilleux, vide, peu réfléchi, ressemblant à un article de Geoffroy, surtout par la présomption de l'ignorance. Cela m'a fait faire de sérieuses réflexions. Je crois que je m'en vais réétudier à fond l'*Idéologie*, et relire le plus froidement possible Helvétius, [...], Hobbes et Duclos.³⁴⁰

As a critical self-assessment, Stendhal's remarks here could scarcely have been harsher. His diary of 1 October 1805 carries a strong echo of these reflections, calling into question the whole basis of his ambition as a *poète-philosophe*:

J'ai relu aujourd'hui une partie du cahier *della Filosofia nuova*, écrit en messidor an XII. J'ai trouvé ce qu'il y avait jeunet, peu profond, pas profond du tout même, ça n'est pas pensé. *I believe that my talent is perhaps for be the bard*, mais je sens que je n'ai pas le génie (la tournure d'esprit) philosophique. Je crois qu'il faut que je me mette sérieusement à l'idéologie et à relire les philosophes. Il y a, outre cela, dans ce cahier, la présomption de l'ignorance. Je suis plus content de mes cahiers *of poetry*.³⁴¹

When one considers the dubious quality of Stendhal's verse, together with the unsparing criticisms to which he elsewhere subjects his Muse,³⁴² one can appreciate the strength of his feeling here with regard to his philosophical achievement. His admiration for Hobbes is too closely associated, moreover, with the fortunes of his *Filosofia Nova* to survive its demise. When at last Stendhal reopens Hobbes in August 1806, it is with a predisposition which could scarcely have resulted in renewed enthusiasm for the English philosopher. 'Je viens de lire *La Nature humaine* de

Hobbes,' he notes laconically in his diary of 26 August 1806:

A l'exception du chapitre IX, ce livre est de la force des cahiers que je composais il y a deux ans dans le même lieu où j'écris ceci [...]. Ce livre, qui m'avait laissé une telle admiration, m'a ennuyé.³⁴³

In these few curt lines, we find Stendhal's definitive assessment of the work in question and of its author. For it is an assessment that he was never thereafter to revise. All that is common to this summary dismissal of Hobbes and the rhapsodic terms of Stendhal's earlier commentary is the subjectivity which informs his judgment and his admiration for the analytical method of which the ninth chapter of Hobbes's treatise stands as a model. Even this, however, was soon to be forgotten, leaving Stendhal with a single exiguous precept which he will acknowledge as Hobbes's contribution to his thought: the definition of laughter.³⁴⁴ Yet the view persists unchecked, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, that in Hobbes Stendhal embraced a philosopher who made a deep and lasting contribution to his thought. François Picavet identifies Hobbes as an important formative influence, while Jean Prévost suggests that Stendhal's debt to the English philosopher is greater than his debt even to Helvétius.³⁴⁵ Victor del Litto, too, considers *Human Nature* to be one of the most fruitful readings undertaken by the young Stendhal, while Arthur Chuquet places Hobbes first among those select few thinkers to whom Stendhal, as he claims, 'resta fidèle jusqu'au dernier jour.'³⁴⁶

All of this, however, stands in need of correction. For what Stendhal found in Hobbes was largely of his own invention. 'J'ai changé Hobbes ici et ailleurs. Relire son livre dans un an,' he remarks nonchalantly in his notebook on 16 June 1804.³⁴⁷ Stendhal never sought to further his acquaintance with Hobbes beyond the treatise in question, and he never progressed beyond the sketchiest notion of Hobbes as a political theorist.³⁴⁸ When his short-lived enthusiasm for the philosopher had run its course, Stendhal seldom again (from 1806 onwards) deigned even to mention the name of Hobbes. Francine Marill Albérès, alone among Stendhal scholars, brings an important corrective to the assessments cited above when she writes that Hobbes's influence on Stendhal 'paraît singulièrement restreinte et limitée à l'époque où il le lit.' Hobbes, Albères rightly concludes, 'n'a guère contribué à la formation intellectuelle et morale de Stendhal...'³⁴⁹

If the whole episode in question leaves us with no more than a distorted view of Hobbes, it lends a valuable insight into Stendhal's perception of himself. Not least among the reasons which may be seen to account for the dramatic reversal in Stendhal's estimation of Hobbes is the fact that, for all the light which the latter had appeared to shed upon man, human nature remained an enigma. As much is made clear by a

notebook entry penned only some six weeks after Stendhal's reading of *Human Nature*, but at a moment when his confidence in the *Filosofia Nova* was already nearing its end:

En général le froid génie de l'observation est bien plus propre à faire des découvertes dans l'homme que l'être passionné tel qu'Henri B. Il faut cependant remarquer que le froid philosophe ne sait plus ce qu'il dit lorsqu'il veut analyser ce qu'il n'a jamais senti. Je ne crois pas que je fasse jamais de grandes découvertes dans l'analyse des sentiments ordinaires de l'homme. Ce n'est pas mon génie, mais je puis décrire les sentiments que j'ai éprouvés, analyse qui sera neuve.³⁵⁰

In this passage, which brings us back squarely to the problem of combining the poet and the philosopher, we find the balance tipping markedly in favour of the former. Even at the height of his enthusiasm for Hobbes and the *Filosofia Nova* alike, Stendhal is alive to the fact that all is not well in his reasoning:

Cependant parmi les vérités que j'écris ici et ailleurs, il en est qui semblent se contredire. C'est qu'elles ne sont pas complètes et aussi claires que possible.

[...]

Enoncer donc les vérités le plus nettement et le plus complètement.³⁵¹

The 'truths' in question, however, were not to be so readily substantiated. On 25 June 1805, a year almost to the day after having launched his 'new philosophy', Stendhal records a dispirited assessment of his progress to date:

Je relis la plupart de mes cahiers, je les trouve remplis de choses communes, mais peut-être elles ne me paraîtraient pas si simples si je ne les avais pas laborieusement découvertes.

Je vois qu'à l'avenir je n'écrirai que *the world* lui-même ou des anecdotes.

Ils m'ennuient et me rendent triste.³⁵²

Here, at the no longer tender age of twenty-two, Stendhal finds himself confronting squarely his shortcomings as a thinker. Nor, as the extracts cited above testify, would the weeks that lay ahead do anything to bolster his flagging confidence. Instead, a note entered in his journal on 16 October 1805 gives evidence of a Stendhal whose 'philosophy' is being returned, once more, to the drawing-board:

Je me sens je ne sais quel nuage sur la con[naissance] de l'homme. J'ai envie de bien lire l'*Esprit* de Mirabeau et l'*Idéologie*.³⁵³

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. *JL*, I, 461.
2. *Ibid.*, I, 310-311. Cf. Stendhal's diary entry for 23 April 1804: 'La div[isi]on de l'âme et de l'esprit m'éclaire de plus en plus' (*OI*, I, 67).
3. *Corr*, I, 95. V. del Litto attributes this idea alternately to Lancelin (*La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 143) and Helvétius (*OI*, I, 1154 n.), while J.-C. Alciatoire considers it a debt to Lancelin and Vauvenargues ('Stendhal et Lancelin', p. 78). Stendhal, by contrast, claims the idea for his own (*OI*, I, 58; *JL*, II, 36).
4. *JL*, I, 345.
5. *Corr*, I, 118.
6. *JL*, I, 431.
7. *Ibid.*, I, 469.
8. 'Le difficile,' declares Stendhal from the outset, 'est de décrire exactement la manière dont l'âme agit sur la tête' (*Ibid.*, I, 435).
9. *Ibid.*, I, 443.
10. *Ibid.*, I, 356, 456; *OI*, I, 272; *Corr*, I, 197.
11. See, for example, *JL*, I, 393, 434, 456; *Corr*, I, 117, 174.
12. See *JL*, II, 36-37, 58-59, 118, 136, 148, 179; *Corr*, I, 224; *OI*, I, 331 n.
13. An ambiguous diary entry of 1815 (*OI*, I, 936) seems insufficient reason for supposing Stendhal's continued interest in a project which, his early notebooks suggest, had run its course by the end of 1804. Cf. on this point *Journal* (Paris: Le Divan, 1937), V, 269 n. 1; *OI*, II, 1671 (Index).
14. *JL*, II, 88.
15. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 140 n. 1; II, 102, 206; *OI*, I, 344; *Corr*, I, 230-231.
16. *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 14.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
18. See *JL*, I, 211, 225, 462; II, 88. Martineau's view, as we have noted, is a common one. Cf. M. Bardèche (p. 13), according to whom the twenty-year-old Stendhal 'a une méthode pour avoir des femmes, une autre pour avoir du génie, une autre encore pour arriver.'
19. *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. iv. Cf. Cailliet, pp. 259-260.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 297. In discussing Stendhal's early endeavours to forge a single method whereby 'bonheur' and 'vérité' alike might be assured, G. Blin hesitates, significantly, on just this point: 'Pour la "chasse" dont il s'agit il possède ou, du moins, songe à acquérir un "système", de "vrais principes", un corps de "règles", un code' (*Personnalité*, p. 462).
21. Preface, *JL*, I, iii, iv. H. Martineau contends likewise that 'les *Pensées*, ce sont

les assises sur lesquelles Henri Beyle a construit jusqu'à la fin de ses jours' (*L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 50). The point is reaffirmed by A. Girard (p. 315): 'le journal de Beyle ne prend sa signification qu'en fonction de l'œuvre de Stendhal.' Cf. G. Genette, who argues for an 'indéchirable continuité' between Stendhal's private and published writings, from his braces to his novels (*Figures II* [Paris: Seuil, 1969], pp. 155-193).

22. *JL*, II, 128. Cf. Stendhal's diary entry of 10 August 1811: '*Nosce te ipsum*. Je crois avec Tracy et la Grèce que c'est le chemin du bonheur. Mon moyen, c'est ce journal' (*OI*, I, 710).
23. *Corr*, I, 93. See on this point Alter, p. 66.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 303.
25. *JL*, I, 469.
26. *Ibid.*, I, 158.
27. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 155.
28. The list of references to this notion is long. In relation to the thinkers mentioned, however, one can isolate, by way of example, *JL*, I, 24, 28, 92, 118, 203, 214-215, 238-239, 302, 477-478; II, 10; 78; *OI*, I, 94; *Corr*, I, 309-310.
29. See on this point V. del Litto, Postface, *R et S*, 450-451.
30. *JL*, I, 351.
31. *Ibid.*, I, 369, 411; *Corr*, I, 109, 124-125.
32. *JL*, I, 365.
33. *Corr*, I, 168.
34. *Ibid.*, I, 270.
35. Developed in this chapter are a number of ideas first presented in a paper to the London Colloquium, French Institute, 13-16 September 1983. See J.G. Shields, 'Le cas Hobbes: un fiasco en philosophie', *Stendhal et l'Angleterre*, ed. K.G. McWatters and C.W. Thompson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987), pp. 129-148.
36. *Op. cit.*, pp. 145-155.
37. See Vigneron, 'Stendhal disciple de Chateaubriand', pp. 54-55; Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Lancelin', pp. 86-89. Vigneron appears to have planned a study of Stendhal's reading of Hobbes (p. 54 n. 64); but we can find no evidence that such a study was ever published.
38. *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 48.
39. See Picavet, p. 490; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 152. Cf. Saintville, p. 44; Prévost, *La Création chez Stendhal*, p. 67; Alter, p. 64; Strickland, *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, pp. 37, 71.
40. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 63.
41. V. del Litto, in his meticulously documented *Journal littéraire*, assumes the

accuracy of passages which Stendhal ascribes to Hobbes, but which prove on a number of occasions to be signally corrupt or apocryphal. See below.

42. *JL*, I, 433.
43. *Loc. cit.*
44. See *ibid.*, I, 433-480, *passim*.
45. 'Are thoughts the same as bodily motions, or are they merely accompanied by bodily motions? Or are thoughts qualitatively different from bodily motions, a view which ordinary experience would seem to suggest: Hobbes said they were the same as corporeal motions, and let the matter rest there' (S.I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth-Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1962], p. 78).
46. *De la Nature humaine*, trans. Baron d'Holbach (London, 1772), Epître Dédicatoire, p. i.
47. 'Of the powers of the *Mind* there be two sorts, *Cognitive* and *Imaginative*, or *Conceptive* and *Motive*' (*Humane Nature: Or, The fundamental Elements of Policie* [London, 1650], p. 4, § 7).
48. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 3, § 5. 'According to the two principal parts of man, I divide his Faculties into two sorts, Faculties of the *Body*, and Faculties of the *Mind*' (*Humane Nature*, p. 3, § 5). Stendhal notes this distinction: 'Hobbes dit que l'homme est composé d'un *esprit* et d'un *corps*' (*JL*, I, 411). He does not recognise, however, that such a conception of man precludes the operations of heart and mind as he envisages them; and he goes on crudely to foist his *idée fixe* upon Hobbes.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 65.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 66. In the 'mechanico-material' man posited by Hobbes, 'cogitation is really the same thing with Corporeal Motion' (*Ibid.*, p. 66). On the *material* nature of the 'mind' and the 'passions' alike, see *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
51. *De la Nature humaine*, pp. 64-65, § 1. Hobbes's emphasis in the original edition is telling: '[...] *conceptions* and *apparitions* are nothing *really*, but *motion* in some internal substance of the *head*; which motion *not stopping* there, but proceeding to the *heart*, of necessity must there either *help* or *hinder* the motion which is called *Vital*' (*Humane Nature*, p. 69, § 1).
52. 'All of reality known to science exists of imperishable bodies with one single feature: motion' (M.J.J. Karskens, 'Hobbes's Mechanistic Theory of Science, and its Role in his Anthropology', *Thomas Hobbes: His View of Man*, ed. J.G. Van Der Bend [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982], p. 47).
53. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 121.
54. 'Nothing without us but bodies in motion, nothing within us but organic motions' (*Ibid.*, p. 121).
55. *Politique et philosophie chez Thomas Hobbes*, p. 61.
56. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 72, § 1; p. 113, § 1. See on this point F.A. Lange, *The History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance*, trans. E.C. Thomas (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), bk. I, sec. 3, pp. 288-289.

57. Cf. *Humane Nature*, p. 77, § 1: 'Having [...] presupposed, that motion and agitation of the brain which we call Conception, to be continued to the heart, and there to be called *Passion*...'
58. When, fresh from his reading of Hobbes, Stendhal proceeds to distinguish between passion which arises from sensation and passion which does not (*JL*, I, 443), it is clear how far he remains from the first principle of the mechanistic sensationalism in question. R. Polin (p. 4) articulates with clarity Hobbes's thought on this point: 'L'esprit humain, *man's mind*, tout comme le corps humain, se définit seulement comme le lieu où se composent les mouvements provoqués en nous par les corps extérieurs et les mouvements propres à tout être vivant: le vital et l'animal ou volontaire.'
59. *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 152.
60. See Alciato, 'Stendhal et Lancelin', pp. 88-89; Vigneron, 'Stendhal disciple de Chateaubriand', p. 55.
61. 'Stendhal et Lancelin', p. 88.
62. 'La critique beyliste d'Helvétius', p. 228. Cf. the same author's 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme.'
63. The merest suggestion of spontaneity or autonomy in the operations of heart and head defies Hobbes's mechanistic materialism, which, as F. Brandt points out, holds sensation to be no more than 'a motion of reaction' (*Thomas Hobbes's Mechanical Conception of Nature* [Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1928], p. 346). As M.J.J. Karskens puts it (p. 53), Hobbes's mechanistic sensationalism is reducible to 'the connection between input (perceptions, experiences) and output (passions, emotions, actions) of the organism...' See also S.E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), pp. 232-238.
64. *JL*, II, 48. A useful account of sense, reason and passion within Hobbes's monistic conception of man is provided by Sorell, pp. 82-95.
65. Burt, p. 125.
66. See on this point in general S. Moravia, 'Cabanis and His Contemporaries', trans. G. Mora, Introduction, *On the Relations between the Physical and Moral Aspects of Man* by Cabanis, trans. M. Duggan Saidi, ed. G. Mora (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981), vol. I, p. xxii.
67. *Op. cit.*, p. 119. As T. Sorell argues (p. 82), 'Hobbes's theory of the mind makes no firm distinction between sense and intellect.' Cf. Polin, p. 60: 'Il est clair que, pour Hobbes, la raison n'est ni un pouvoir, ni même une force ou un effort, mais simplement un mouvement, une démarche, un enchaînement de pensées selon une certaine méthode, c'est-à-dire un acte de ratiocination, un calcul.'
68. *Humane Nature*, p. 3, § 4.
69. *Op. cit.*, p. 119. By recognising the 'mind' as an independent entity, therefore, Stendhal endorses the very philosophy which he seeks to undermine. Cf. Frankel, pp. 13-15, 30.
70. *JL*, I, 434.
71. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 67, § 3. Desire and aversion are, as Hobbes

elsewhere makes clear (p. 143, § 1), 'les premiers mobiles cachés de nos actions.'

72. See *ibid.*, pp. 143-148, § 1-6.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 145, § 2. See on this question Polin, pp. 59-60.
74. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 147, § 5. Stendhal would have encountered a similar treatment of this crucial question of free will and determinism in Helvétius. See, for example, the latter's discussion of liberty in *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. I, ch. 4, pp. 51-55. To talk of 'free will', argued Helvétius, was to talk of an *effect* without a *cause*, which was clearly a nonsense. See J. Lough, 'Helvétius and D'Holbach', *Modern Language Review*, vol. XXXIII, no. 3 (1938), p. 364.
75. *JL*, I, 397. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 455: 'Le dernier désir ou la dernière crainte fait agir et par conséquent est volonté.'
76. *Ibid.*, I, 456; *Corr*, I, 174.
77. *Romans*, I, 33.
78. *HB*, II, 317.
79. *Corr*, III, 194.
80. *HB*, II, 317. Cf. *M de T*, II, 250: 'M. Casimir Périer, [...], fut une empreinte assez exacte, quoique peu élégante, du type dauphinois; il *savait vouloir*...
81. *HB*, II, 317; *Corr*, III, 424. In Stendhal's novels, too, we find the principle asserted. 'Ce qui manquait peut-être le plus à ce pauvre comte de Thaler,' we read in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 'c'était la faculté de vouloir' (*Romans*, I, 466).
82. See *M de T*, I, 132, 454; II, 159.
83. *Ibid.*, I, 77.
84. Among a proliferation of examples, see *M de T*, I, 294, 318; *Italie*, 225, 570, 1079; *Corr*, II, 221.
85. See below, Chapter V.
86. *Raison*, p. 267.
87. *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch. 5, p. 47.
88. *Ibid.*, vol. V, 'Extrait raisonné servant de table analytique à la seconde partie du *Traité de la volonté*', p. 399. On Tracy's theory of the will, see Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 78-84.
89. *Man and Society in Nineteenth-Century Realism: Determinism and Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 25.
90. See Kennedy, A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution, p. 61.
91. See *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch. 5, p. 46.
92. *Ibid.*, vol. V: *Traité de la volonté et de ses effets*, Introduction, pp. 42-43.
93. A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution, p. 61.

94. 'Destutt de Tracy and the Bankruptcy of Sensationalism', *Balzac and the Nineteenth Century. Studies in French Literature Presented to Herbert J. Hunt*, ed. D.G. Charlton, J. Gaudon and A.R. Pugh (Leicester UP, 1972), p. 195.
95. *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 122-123.
96. *Leviathan*, part I: 'Of Man', ch. 6, p. 28.
97. *JL*, I, 440.
98. *Ibid.*, II, 13.
99. *CA*, IV, 321.
100. *Romans*, I, 279.
101. *JL*, I, 441.
102. *Ibid.*, I, 450.
103. See, for example, the elaborate denials of the 'soul' that are to be found in *ibid.*, I, 206 and *OI*, I, 165.
104. See J. Laird, *Hobbes* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1934), p. 93.
105. *JL*, I, 436.
106. See *Corr*, I, 253; *OI*, I, 728. See also on this point V. del Litto, *OI*, I, 1434 n.
107. *JL*, I, 415.
108. Although they shared the same broad contention that ideas were acquired through the mediation of the senses, one must be careful to distinguish between and among these thinkers. Hobbes maintained that certain truths of reason were essential to any knowledge of the world gained through sense-experience; Locke abolished innate ideas but retained an autonomous realm of reflection; Condillac refused pointedly to relinquish the soul; the Idéologues dispensed with all of these subtleties in turn. Theirs was to be no rationalist account of the world, but a thoroughgoing 'scientific monism' (V.W. Topazio, *D'Holbach's Moral Philosophy: Its Background and Development* [Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, Les Délices, 1956], p. 139). See on this question P. Alexander's brief but useful article 'Sensationalism', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. VII, pp. 415-419.
109. See, for example, Helvétius, *De l'Esprit*, vol. II, disc. IV, ch. 7, p. 305 n. (i). For applications of this axiom, see *ibid.*, vol. I, disc. I, ch. 1, pp. 1-18; ch. 4, p. 59; disc. III, ch. 1, pp. 341-342. On this crucial question of *a posteriori*, sense-based knowledge, see Creighton; Lough; Cailliet, pp. 31, 104, 273; Boas, p. 204; Plongeron, pp. 409-410; Rosen, p. 331; Gay, pp. 177-178; Barth, pp. 4-6; J.S. Spink, *French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire* (London: Athlone Press, 1960), p. 220; R. Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 70-71.
110. See Tracy, *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch. 1, pp. 15-19. See more generally on this crucial point Barth, p. 3; Frankel, pp. 16, 43, 45-47; Chinard, Introduction to Cailliet, pp. 8-9; Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', p. 210; Charlton, 'French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', p. 248; Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 138; Smith, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Bankruptcy of

- Sensationalism', pp. 196-197.
111. *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. III i: *De la Logique*, ch. 2, p. 202.
 112. *Ibid.*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch 1, p. 17.
 113. *JL*, I, 311.
 114. See Alciatoire, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 7-78.
 115. *Corr*, I, 172-173. Stendhal's fidelity here to the central precept of Ideology is, as C. Smith observes, not in question ('Aspects of Destutt de Tracy's Linguistic Analysis as Adopted by Stendhal', *Modern Language Review*, vol. LI, no. 4 [1956], pp. 512-513). Cf. *JL*, II, 69, where Stendhal appears to endorse the very linguistic superfluities which he censures in this instance.
 116. *Corr*, I, 52. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 74: '*nos idées nous viennent pas nos sens. Réfléchis à cette grande vérité*'; *JL*, I, 212: '*Toutes nos idées nous venant par nos sens, un discours est une suite d'images*'; *ibid.*, II, 85-86: '*La liaison des idées ne vient que de la liaison des sensations*'; *OI*, I, 190: '[...] toutes nos idées arrivent par nos sens...'
 117. On these two postures, see Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 90-92.
 118. *JL*, I, 443. If Stendhal can be accused of misrepresenting the precepts of sensationalism at such a basic level, it is worth noting that a similar problem is evident at times in the interpretations of his commentators. See, for example, F.C. Green's definition of the doctrine which, he argues (p. 47), Stendhal fashions from his reading of the sensationalists (Locke, Helvétius, Condillac, Hobbes) and Idéologues (Cabanis and Tracy): 'Our physical and intellectual faculties are governed by the soul, and the latter, in turn, obeys our *moi*, whose essence is the universal, human desire for happiness. [...] And sometimes, ironically enough, the body and the mind may in turn influence the soul.' There is little need to insist upon what the philosophers in question would have made of such a travesty of their thought.
 119. Though M. Crouzet is among the few critics to recognise the 'glissement vers la trahison' which takes place in Stendhal's reading of the Idéologues (*Raison*, p. 4), he gives no hint of this significant departure by Stendhal from his avowed *maîtres*. On the contrary, Crouzet affirms Stendhal's adherence to 'toute la partie de Tracy qui décrit un dépliement unitaire et continu du psychisme, et découvre une non-rupture du sentir au penser, du spontané au réfléchi, de l'existence à la conscience...' (*Ibid.*, p. 264). As the foregoing examples demonstrate, it is far from being the case that Stendhal 'recueille pieusement l'assimilation du penser au sentir', that he is, in Crouzet's words, 'entièrement fidèle à la conception de la sensation-jugement, ou de l'idée "sentie"...' (*Ibid.*, p. 269).
 120. Introduction to Cailliet, p. 14. On this question of *Homo duplex* versus *Homo simplex*, see also *ibid.*, p. 20.
 121. The whole of the *Traité des sensations* (*Œuvres* [Paris: Libraires Associés, 1777] vol. III, pp. 1-286) is intended as a demonstration of this principle. See on this question Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 79-108.
 122. While contending that all ideas are derived from sense-experience, Condillac offers a spurious account of how the mind — '*l'ame*' — would be capable of direct knowledge, without the mediation of the senses, were it not for man's fall from grace. See the *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (*Œuvres*, vol. I), part I, sect. I, ch. 1, pp. 3-7.

123. '[...] dans l'homme, tout se réduit à sentir,' proclaims Helvétius in *De l'Esprit* (vol. I, disc. I, ch. 1, p. 18). On this 'reduction of complexity to basic elements', which was common to Condillac, Helvétius and the Idéologues, see Creighton, pp. 706-707. It may be pointed out here that the semantic difficulties into which Stendhal's terminology at times leads him are shared by thinkers more eminent than he. The problem of breaking out of the traditional lexicon was one which, as E. Kennedy observes, bedevilled even Destutt de Tracy, and conflicted with his emphatic appeals for the precise definition of words and for the abolition of linguistic superfluities such as double meanings and synonyms (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 149-150). One need only glance at a letter written to Pauline Beyle in the first flush of his enthusiasm for Ideology to uncover something of the difficulty which lies in wait for Stendhal in the sensationalist philosophy. Purporting to define for his sister the nature of physical sensibility, he writes: 'La sensibilité est cette faculté, ce pouvoir, cet effet de notre organisation, ou, si vous voulez, cette propriété de notre être en vertu de laquelle nous recevons des impressions de beaucoup d'espèces, et nous en avons la conscience' (*Corr*, I, 174). Though the passage is drawn from Tracy (*Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch. 2, p. 20), Stendhal shows no awareness of the problems implicit in such loose terminology. His readiness to equate 'faculties', 'powers', 'effects' and 'properties', sanctioned though it may be by Tracy himself, is evidence of how imprecise are the instruments of his dialectic. Though the sensationalists were at pains to rest their reasoning upon firmly established definitions, they were far from unanimous in determining what constituted the most basic element of their philosophy, sense experience, and by what means this became 'transformed' into thought. (See Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', pp. 208-211; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 112-116, 157-160; Smith, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Bankruptcy of Sensationalism.') Whatever Stendhal's esteem for the analytical precision of Hobbes, Condillac or Tracy, he remains, under their tutelage, far from the objective which he had set himself in proposing to bring the cutting edge of a clearly defined and unambiguous language to bear upon his reasoning (*JL*, I, 250, 362).
124. *Romans*, I, 73.
125. *Ibid.*, II, 1125.
126. *Ibid.*, II, 926.
127. *Ibid.*, I, 621.
128. *Ibid.*, I, 953.
129. *Ibid.*, I, 907.
130. *Ibid.*, II, 188.
131. 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', p. 210.
132. See E. Kennedy's description of Tracy's thought as 'an empirical "ideology" which he simplified to an unprecedented degree': 'Not only was there no soul, or substance which received sensations or produced ideas, there was no mind or intelligence either, but only a faculty or power. Some of the mind's activity was similarly dispensed with: the intermediary step between sensation and idea was eliminated, and Tracy found perception synonymous with idea, without adequately explaining what mechanism produced either' (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 57-58).

133. *Romans*, I, 1360.
134. *Ibid.*, I, 620.
135. *Ibid.*, I, 71.
136. *Op. cit.*, p. 140.
137. *JL*, I, 396.
138. There is no clearer affirmation of Hobbes's plenist materialism than that which is to be found in *Leviathan*, Part IV: 'Of the Kingdome of Darknesse', ch. 46, p. 371: 'The World, (I mean not the Earth onely, [...], but the *Universe*, that is, the whole masse of all things that are) is Corporeall, that is to say, Body; and hath the dimensions of Magnitude, namely, Length, Breadth, and Depth: also every part of Body, is likewise Body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the Universe, is Body, and that which is not Body, is no part of the Universe: And because the Universe is All, that which is no part of it, is *Nothing*, and consequently *no where*.'
139. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 146, § 3. Contrary to Stendhal's reading of it, such a remark implies no departure from the definition of a world composed, from first to last, of matter. See Polin, pp. xiv-xv.
140. *JL*, I, 455.
141. *Ibid.*, I, 369. For Hobbes, the 'vital motion' of the body was to be found in such spontaneous functions as the circulation of the blood and breathing. It was distinct from 'animal motion', which resulted from stimuli to the senses and involved some endeavour towards pleasure and away from pain. See R. Peters, *Hobbes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 129-130; Polin, pp. 57-59. On the moral implications of Hobbes's thought here, see B. Gert, 'Hobbes, Mechanism, and Egoism', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XV, no. 61 (1965), pp. 341-349; F.S. McNeilly, 'Egoism in Hobbes', *ibid.*, vol. XVI, no. 64 (1966), pp. 193-206.
142. *JL*, I, 375-377.
143. See *ibid.*, I, 453, 379, 375, 370.
144. *Ibid.*, I, 382.
145. See Alciatoire, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 65, 84-85; Del Litto, *JL*, I, 534 n.
146. See Stendhal's remarks on love and desire, which are again part transcription from Hobbes, part invention: *JL*, I, 391. Cf. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 101, § 16.
147. *JL*, I, 370. Cf. *De la Nature humaine*, p. 66, § 3: 'Chaque homme appelle *Bon* ce qui est agréable pour lui-même & appelle *Mal* ce qui lui déplaît.'
148. See Lange, bk. I, sec. 3, p. 281; Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan*, pp. 25-28.
149. Hobbes goes only so far as to conclude: 'Ainsi chaque homme différant d'un autre par son tempérament ou sa façon d'être, il en differe sur la distinction du Bien & du Mal; & il n'existe point une bonté absolue considérée sans relation...' (*De la Nature humaine*, p. 66, § 3).
150. *Op. cit.*, p. 534. See also on this question Polin, p. 133: 'Les biens et les maux ne sont ni bons, ni mauvais en eux-mêmes [...] Il n'existe pas, à proprement

parler, de biens et de maux, il n'existe que des moyens et des fins par rapport à des désirs.'

151. *Corr*, I, 56. Stendhal's reasoning in this letter bears all the hallmarks of Helvétius.
152. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 63. It is within this 'personal ideology' that Stendhal can consider Hobbes not as a forerunner but as a *successor* to Helvétius (*Corr*, I, 270), and that he can deem Cabanis, in the early 1800s, to be 'le père du matérialisme' (*S d'E*, 56).
153. *JL*, I, 171.
154. *Ibid.*, I, 302.
155. *OI*, I, 616. Cf. the diary entry of 19 June 1807, where Helvétius's *De l'Homme* is deemed 'le bon sens même' (*Ibid.*, I, 477).
156. *JL*, II, 172.
157. *Ibid.*, II, 295.
158. *Ibid.*, I, 366.
159. See *ibid.*, I, 433.
160. *Ibid.*, I, 311.
161. *Ibid.*, II, 36. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 58: '[...] Mirabeau croyait évidemment à la distinction utile de l'esprit et du cœur.'
162. *Ibid.*, II, 32. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 35: 'Je retrouve dans Mirabeau mes idées sur l'incontinence.'
163. *OI*, I, 102.
164. *JL*, II, 102.
165. *Corr*, I, 1018-1019. A revealing admission from Stendhal's diary of 1811 is worth citing in this context: '[...] savoir d'avance que la musique de tel opéra est de Pergolèse me fait trouver l'opéra beaucoup meilleur que si j'ignorais le nom de l'auteur' (*OI*, I, 724 n.). So much for objective critical standards.
166. See, in addition to the examples cited, *OI*, I, 457 (on Hobbes), 495 (on Lambert). Cf. *JL*, II, 15: 'Hier j'ai beaucoup médité sur l'hom[me]. Aujourd'hui j'ai lu une histoire. Cette méthode est excellente. Tous les faits que je lisais confirmaient mes principes.'
167. *OI*, I, 495.
168. *HB*, I, 30.
169. The ever-present fear of 'contracting' prejudice is at the source of Stendhal's desire to revise and 're-prove' even his best established notions. See the notebook entry of 16 December 1802: 'Faire l'inventaire de son savoir de temps en temps, et se reprouver tout ce qu'on croit; c'est ainsi qu'on peut espérer de ne contracter aucun préjugé, vice aussi nuisible à l'avancement du génie que facile à prendre' (*JL*, I, 31). On this intellectual 'hygiene', see also *ibid.*, I, 42, 92, 127. Every influence becomes a potential source of prejudice and dupery: *ibid.*, I, 130, 239, 258, 366, 403, 458; II, 18; III, 6. On this recurrent need to

- 'lessiver l'intellect', see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 202-203, 969-970 n.
170. *Corr*, I, 626-627. For the full significance of Stendhal's remarks on Mme du Deffand, see below, Chapter X. See also on this question Vermale, 'L'élaboration du beylisme', pp. 274-275.
171. *JL*, II, 77.
172. *Corr*, I, 352.
173. *OI*, I, 885.
174. See the perceptive remarks of M. Crouzet on the 'correctif rationnel' which Stendhal comes to seek not only from his reading but from his friends and associates. He is, as Crouzet observes, ever in search of a '*médecin moral*', an '*homme sensé*', a '*bonne tête*' to shore up, supplement and, where necessary, supplant his own reason (*Raison*, pp. 158-167).
175. This constantly shifting allegiance in Stendhal's philosophical reading is overlooked by J.-C. Augendre, who discusses Helvétius's loss of ground to Hobbes in 1804 as though it were a definitive development in Stendhal's thought. ('La critique beyliste d'Helvétius', pp. 224, 228, 229; 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', p. 263.) One need look no further than 1806, however, to appreciate the ephemeral nature of this shift in preference from Helvétius to Hobbes. In December 1804, Hobbes and Tracy are adjudged by Stendhal to be 'sur la frontière de la science' (*Corr*, I, 168); by March 1806, it is Tracy and Helvétius who hold this honour, Hobbes having fallen — irredeemably — from grace (*Ibid.*, I, 313-314).
176. *HB*, II, 23. This 'grande parole' is attributed by Stendhal to his old mathematics teacher, Dupuy de Bordes. Stendhal adds, with hindsight: 'On ne dirait pas mieux aujourd'hui en remplaçant toutefois le nom de Condillac par celui de Tracy.'
177. *S d'E*, 56.
178. *JL*, I, 351, 411.
179. *De l'Amour*, II, 171; *Corr*, I, 920.
180. *Mél. Pol/Hist.*, 229.
181. *Corr*, I, 36, 313.
182. *S d'E*, 33.
183. *CA*, IV, 390, 395.
184. *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 283. We should not wish to suggest by this that serious differences do not exist among the thinkers whom Stendhal read, or that he failed to recognise the importance of such differences when he came upon them. See, for example, the corrections of Condillac (on the question of instinct) and of Helvétius (on the questions of instinct and climate) that will be occasioned by the reading of Cabanis: *OI*, I, 195-196; *CA*, I, 57; *H de P*, II, 35. That Stendhal should ultimately discover in the physiologist a philosophy which marks him apart from all of the other thinkers in question does not alter the fact that, in his earliest philosophical readings, he seeks ratification for the same essential corpus of ideas.
185. On the definition of laughter, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*,

pp. 75-77.

186. *Corr*, I, 164. Cf. the earlier letter of June 1804: 'Lucile, à cet excellent cœur dont nous avons eu mille preuves, à cet esprit si distingué, joint une âme forte, courageuse et résolue...' (*Ibid.*, I, 115).
187. *Ibid.*, I, 117.
188. See *The Mind and its Place in Nature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1925) pp. 23-27.
189. For Hobbes's demolition of the principles which Stendhal finds himself — despite himself — upholding, see Burt, pp. 117-127. This important point is somewhat obscured by M. Crouzet when he writes: 'D'emblée Stendhal n'a accès qu'à des théories "monistes" [...] qui démontent l'être de l'homme suivant les principes d'un développement unitaire et continu' (*Raison*, p. 263). Such, as we have seen, is not the *only* conception of man to which Stendhal's mind is open from the outset.
190. See Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 207. The testimony of John Cam Hobhouse (*Ibid.*, p. 24), who met Stendhal with Byron in Milan in 1816, is also interesting in this respect.
191. *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 265. See also *ibid.*, p. 307: 'Ses tendances le conduisirent, en philosophie, au matérialisme le plus conscient, en littérature, au plus intelligent naturalisme.'
192. *Op. cit.*, p. 404.
193. E.-D. Forgues (alias 'Old Nick'), 'Une erreur de nom', *Le National*, 1 April 1842. See Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, pp. 135-153.
194. See Taine's definition of Stendhal as 'libéral, matérialiste et athée' (cited by Paupe, *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, p. 164). Cf. Bourget, p. 283.
195. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 199. On Barbey's condemnation of Stendhal's 'matérialisme presque crapuleux', see also Paupe, *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, p. 152. Though giving no quarter in his denunciation of the philosophy for which Stendhal was seen to stand, Barbey was not typical of the blinkered criticism of some who shared his religious and anti-materialist sympathies. It says much about the difficulty of pinning Stendhal down, of consigning him to a single niche, that Barbey, from a philosophical position quite antipodal to that of Zola, shares nonetheless much of the latter's ambivalence. '[...] ce diabolique Stendhal est ma dépravation intellectuelle,' he concedes. '[...] Je l'ai toujours aimé, ce brigand-là... ce qui ne m'a pas empêché de lui dire qu'il est un brigand, digne de toutes les cordes de la critique et de leurs nœuds' (Paupe, *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, p. 158; Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 332). On Barbey's ambivalent attitude to Stendhal, see also Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 197-198.
196. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 199, 207. 'On sent le matérialisme médical dans ce livre qui ne devrait être consacré qu'aux grâces sévères et chastes,' wrote the ever censorious Caro of *De l'Amour* in 1855 (Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 327). Cf. the no less 'engaged' judgment of Collignon (p. 493) in 1868: 'Ce ne sont point les doctrines athée et matérialiste de Stendhal qui ont besoin d'excuse, puisqu'elles sont les seules acceptables...'
197. Cited by Méliá, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 304.
198. *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

199. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.
200. *Op. cit.*, p. 210.
201. Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, xlvi.
202. See Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 332.
203. *Stendhal et Helvétius*, p. 284.
204. See Josephson, p. 224; May, *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 262; Adams, p. 134 n. The currency which this view of Stendhal has gained is borne out by numerous other commentators. J. Théodoridès, in his *Stendhal du côté de la science*, discovers in Stendhal 'un matérialiste convaincu, dans la lignée des "philosophes" du siècle des Lumières' (p. 279). The comparison with Diderot is once more upheld by Théodoridès, in whose judgment Stendhal remains 'le fils spirituel du XVIII^e siècle et dans une certaine mesure le continuateur de la pensée de Diderot, Montesquieu ou Maupertuis' (p. 282).
205. *Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 12. Few indeed, as we argued in our Introduction, are the dissenters from this view. M. Turnell ventures the suggestion that Stendhal 'was very far from being the intransigent materialist for which he is sometimes taken' (*Op. cit.*, pt. I, p. 58). R. Bosselaers likewise acknowledges the need for some attenuation when defining Stendhal's materialism (*Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 23). The point, regrettably, is not developed beyond bare assertion by either of these critics.
206. See, for instance, *op. cit.*, pp. 255, 257.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
208. 'On a peut-être affaire, tout au moins dans l'histoire du matérialisme, à l'ouverture (ou à la résurgence) d'une lignée nouvelle, irréductible au matérialisme des Lumières et à son prolongement par delà la Révolution, chez les "idéologues" notamment' (*Loc. cit.*).
209. *Personnalité*, pp. 495, 526.
210. *JL*, I, 369, 375. See above.
211. For a discussion of a number of the questions that are raised here, but to which Stendhal appears quite oblivious, see G. Ryle's essay 'Pleasure', in *Dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1954), pp. 54-67.
212. *JL*, I, 433.
213. Bourget, p. 283.
214. *Op. cit.*, bk. I, sec. 4, p. 93. Twice in relation to the publication of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and its possible repercussions at the hands of the censors, Stendhal will refer to d'Holbach's *Système de la nature* as a work that is freely available on the bookstalls. See *Corr*, I, 846, 860.
215. It is no less surprising to note the dearth of references to La Mettrie in Stendhal's writings, and the lack of evidence that he ever had recourse to a reading of the notorious *L'Homme machine*.
216. See Moravia, *Il tramonto dell'illuminismo*, p. 28; Abravanel, Postface, *De l'Amour*, II, 470.

217. *OI*, I, 195.
218. *Op. cit.*, p. 290.
219. *Mél. Journ.*, 206.
220. *Op. cit.*, p. 82.
221. *HB*, II, 238; *Corr*, I, 920.
222. *HB*, I, 14.
223. *Corr*, I, 310. On the 'foi', the 'passion absolue', the 'attitude de fidèle' with which Stendhal reads Tracy (and which do not, as we have argued, preclude distortion and betrayal), see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 3-4, 16. On 'le degré de croyance qui entre dans la conversion idéologique', see also *ibid.*, p. 100: 'Nous sommes d'emblée dans une idolâtrie philosophique, où le texte prend valeur de dogme ou de drogue...'
224. *S d'E*, 56-57.
225. *HB*, II, 64. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 208: 'De quelle ardeur j'adorais la vérité alors!'
226. *Corr*, I, 495. 'Je cherche quelles sont celles de mes opinions que je n'ai pas mises en jugement depuis longtemps' (*Loc. cit.*). A similar sentiment is expressed in Stendhal's diary of October 1808: 'Faire incessamment [...] l'examen de ma conscience...' (*OI*, I, 508).
227. *Corr*, I, 603.
228. *Ibid.*, I, 796.
229. *Ibid.*, I, 802.
230. *HB*, II, 207-208.
231. *CA*, V, 266.
232. *Ibid.*, III, 443.
233. *Ibid.*, III, 410.
234. *Corr*, III, 258.
235. *Op. cit.*, p. 137. J.-C. Alciatore, too, suggests an equation between Stendhal's anti-religious sentiment and his materialism (*Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 12-13).
236. *JL*, I, 246.
237. *Ibid.*, I, 254-255.
238. 'Notes et souvenirs', in Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, pp. 207-208.
239. The letter is cited by Weinberg, p. 17.
240. *De l'Amour*, II, 127-128 n. 2. Cf. *JL*, III, 177.
241. *Italie*, 381.

242. *De l'Amour*, II, 127. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 199: '[...] nous ne sommes pas faits par un être bon...
243. *Le Cœur de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 59-60. See also on this question Chuquet, pp. 221-222.
244. *H de P*, II, 497 n.
245. 'French Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', pp. 260-261. One can usefully compare Charlton's remarks on Alfred de Vigny in 'Religious and Political Thought', *The French Romantics*, vol. I, pp. 41, 44-45.
246. *JL*, III, 289.
247. One thinks at once of Sade and La Mettrie. See on this point Mauzi, pp. 249-252; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 99-100, 212-214, 389-390.
248. The evacuation of all moral purpose from the universe was, as L.G. Crocker argues, characteristic of an eighteenth-century materialism which 'denied the metaphysical reality of evil, and the very existence of a "problem of evil," inasmuch as the universe is simply empty of moral value.' Such, argues Crocker, was the view 'basic to La Mettrie, Helvétius, d'Holbach, and Diderot' (*An Age of Crisis*, p. 44).
249. *Italie*, 900.
250. See P. Hazard, 'Le problème du mal dans la conscience européenne du dix-huitième siècle', *The Romanic Review*, vol. XXXII (1941), pp. 147-170; A.O. Lovejoy, 'The Principle of Plenitude and Eighteenth-Century Optimism', *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 208-226. For a stimulating discussion of the problem of evil as it presented itself to eighteenth-century minds, see Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 36-70.
251. *The Geometric Spirit*, p. 113.
252. See T. Besterman, 'Voltaire et le désastre de Lisbonne: ou, La mort de l'optimisme', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II (1956), pp. 7-24. See also in this regard D.G. Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France: A Study in European Cultural History, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), pp. 87 ff.
253. 'H.B.', in Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 191. Cf. Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 113-114: 'The rise of atheism in the middle decades of the [eighteenth] century is surely to be explained in large measure by [...] disillusionment with the serene and happy world of the deists.'
254. 'Vielleicht bin ich selbst auf Stendhal neidisch? Er hat mir den besten Atheisten-Witz weggenommen, den gerade ich hätte machen können: "Die einzige Entschuldigung Gottes ist, daß er nicht existiert"' (*Ecce Homo*, in *Werke*, II, p. 1088). Cf. Stendhal's reported remarks to Lamartine: 'Je ne dis pas que Dieu existe, je ne dis pas qu'il n'existe pas, je dis seulement que je n'en sais rien, que cette idée me paraît avoir fait aux hommes autant de mal que de bien, et qu'en attendant que Dieu se révèle, je crois que son premier ministre, le hasard, gouverne aussi bien ce triste monde que lui' (Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 93).
255. See D.G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France*, pp. 13-37, 65-154; 'Religious and Political Thought', *The French Romantics*, vol. I, pp. 36-57. See also on

this question Bowman, *ibid.*, pp. 80 ff.

256. *Italie*, 645. Once more here the equation 'atheism = materialism' forms the basis of Stendhal's reasoning.
257. See Mélia, *Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 291; 'Le Matérialisme de Stendhal', *La Nouvelle Revue*, vol. XVI (1902), p. 385; Picavet, p. 490.
258. *JL*, I, 202.
259. For Stendhal, writes J. Mélia, 'le domaine d'universalité ou d'éternité, le connaissable ou l'intelligible, chaque chose est contenue dans cet axiome: "Tout ce qui est est cristallisé"' (*Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 291).
260. *JL*, I, 202.
261. 'Diderot and the Development of Materialist Monism', *Diderot Studies*, vol. II (1952), p. 304.
262. *JL*, I, 467.
263. *CA*, IV, 26. Cf. Plekhanov (p. 35) on the materialism of d'Holbach: 'Does not a caprice also consist of molecules?'
264. *JL*, I, 581 n.
265. *Rossini*, I, 21. 'La chaleur animale d'un corps étranger me semble fatale au plaisir musical.'
266. *Romans*, II, 1069.
267. *Roman*, p. 55.
268. *H de P*, II, 37.
269. *Italie*, 388.
270. *OI*, I, 165.
271. *Stendhal et Chateaubriand. Essai sur les ambiguïtés d'une antipathie*, p. 106.
272. *JL*, I, 467. See above.
273. *Ibid.*, II, 14.
274. *OI*, I, 238 n.
275. *Corr*, I, 371.
276. *Ibid.*, I, 514.
277. Jourda, *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes*, p. 96.
278. *Rossini*, I, 19. 'La musique est une jouissance tellement physique...'
279. *De l'Amour*, II, 166.
280. *Ibid.*, I, 56 n. 1, 217-218: 'Si l'influence des tempéraments se fait sentir dans l'ambition, l'avarice, l'amitié, etc., etc., que sera-ce dans l'amour qui a un mélange forcé de physique?'

281. *Italie*, 493. Cf. *Armance*, where Octave's 'monomanie' is thought by his doctors to 'provenir non point d'une cause physique, mais de l'influence de quelque idée singulière' (*Romans*, I, 46).
282. *H de P*, II, 64 n. 1.
283. *Italie*, 381. It is interesting to note that in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* (II, 237), Stendhal would deem himself 'une des âmes les moins raisonnables.' On Stendhal's 'revolt' against clinical reason, see Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 525-541.
284. *R et S*, 255. We are close again here to Stendhal's earliest criticism of Helvétius: 'Comment pourrait-il expliquer ce trouble inconnu qui saisit à la première vue...?' (*Corr*, I, 84).
285. *R et S*, 256.
286. See on this question the perceptive remarks of J.-P. Richard.
287. *Italie*, 477. Cf. Stendhal's note of 12 March 1819: 'Le même événement qui plonge le poète dans les plus brillantes illusions donne à réfléchir pour trois jours au philosophe' (*OI*, II, 32).
288. *M de T*, II, 233. The same rationale inspired Keats — 'Do not all charms fly/At the mere touch of cold philosophy?' — to lament Newton's explanation of the rainbow. See H. Dingle, 'The Relations between Science and Literature', *Literature and Science. Proceedings of the Sixth Triennial Congress of the International Federation For Modern Languages and Literatures, Oxford, 1954* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), pp. 1-11. Stendhal could not be further here from the spirit of Ideology as it is defined by L. Pearce Williams, pp. 316-319. Cf. the very different reference to Franklin in the *New Monthly Magazine* of September 1824 (*CA*, II, 193-194).
289. On the 'état de guerre' which prevails between reason and sentiment in Stendhal, between 'la vision logique, l'idéal de sécheresse, le besoin de *détermination* et, d'autre part, l'impressionisme de la tendresse, la rêverie musicale et la magie de l'*indistinction*,' see Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 525-528.
290. *Corr*, I, 40-41.
291. *Roman*, p. 122.
292. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
293. *De l'Amour*, II, 188. See on this point Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 410; Blin, *Personnalité*, p. 526 n. 1.
294. *Italie*, 381.
295. *Roman*, p. 122.
296. *Ibid.*, p. 122 n. 3.
297. *CA*, V, 103. M. Crouzet recognises clearly this conflict in Stendhal between the cult of demonstrable truth, 'l'agenouillement devant le *petit fait*', and '[le] pouvoir infini du moi de nier, inventer ou croire.' Under such conflicting impulses, writes Crouzet, Stendhal's philosophy could not but 'évoluer vers des retournements, des paradoxes, la coexistence d'énoncés contradictoires, de visées incompatibles' (*Raison*, p. 8).

298. *M de T*, III, 178. Stendhal's embracing of the unknown comes to the fore in his admiration for Italy, '*Paese della virtù sconosciuta*' (*De l'Amour*, II, 17 n. 1). See, for instance, *Italie*, 1414 n.: 'Donc il y a une supériorité dans ce pays. Il y a quelque chose d'inconnu, que n'a pas la France, par exemple, ni l'Espagne, ni l'Angleterre.' Cf. *ibid.*, 139, 193; *JL*, III, 119; *OI*, II, 5.
299. *R et S*, 19-20. On the philosophical problem which Stendhal identifies here, see W.H. Sheldon, 'Critique of Naturalism', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. XLII (1945), pp. 266-267. On the 'nécessité d'ignorer' in which, as M. Crouzet argues, Stendhal seeks redemption from the 'calvaire cynique de l'esprit qui sait', see *Raison*, pp. 435, 442-444.
300. *Op. cit.*, p. 432. While for the sciences the concept of mechanistic materialism was, as Dijksterhuis argues, 'stimulating and productive, it confronted philosophy with the difficult problem of the real relation between the world of our perceptions and feelings and the world of the mechanical processes outside, which is so entirely different in character' (*Loc. cit.*).
301. 'Le moi,' as M. Crouzet observes, remains for Stendhal 'porteur et accoucheur de sa vérité' (*Raison*, p. 9). Beyond the "démonstrable" lies the realm of the "devinable" (p. 525). Hence 'la réhabilitation de l'intuition, de l'ignorance, de l'ingénuité de pensée' in contradistinction to the certainties vouchsafed by Ideology (p. 532): '[...] l'être s'évade de la raison, le vrai se passe de preuves, le moi s'identifie à un donné inexplicable comme injustifiable' (p. 543). On the important role which Crouzet assigns to Maine de Biran in this context, see *ibid.*, pp. 559-590.
302. Cited by Plongeron, p. 389. Cf. the criticisms levelled, in *Le Mercure* of 6 January 1802, against Tracy's *Projet d'éléments d'idéologie* (Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 116-117). 'As physics tried to account for the world without God,' writes R. Adams (p. 56), 'so ideology tried to account for man's brain without a soul.'
303. *De l'Amour*, I, 20-21.
304. *Romans*, I, 1365.
305. See Delacroix, p. 236. The incompatibility between these two positions is discussed by J.J.C. Smart. Against the classic dualist argument that 'you can't put love in a test tube', Smart sets the by now no less classic objection that 'you can't put a gravitational field in a test tube' — but that the latter is quite defensible within the terms of a materialist conception of the world. See the article 'Materialism', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. LX (1963), p. 652.
306. Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, xli.
307. *Corr*, II, 261.
308. *H de P*, II, 37-38.
309. *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 350. The same critic writes elsewhere: 'C'est que Stendhal est avant tout un psychologue. Il s'en tient à cette dualité classique qui forme la base de l'ancienne philosophie: l'âme et le corps' ('Stendhal et Émile Zola', *Mercur de France*, May 1899, p. 569). It is curious that Méliat can make such an assertion whilst adjudging Stendhal 'pleinement matérialiste' (*Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 265). Cf. *Les Idées de Stendhal*, pp. 13-14.
310. *Corr*, I, 839; *Italie*, 28, 1343 n.
311. See Collignon, p. 530; *JL*, I, 202.

312. *Italie*, 1411 n. See CA, IV, 28: '[...] l'homme est invariablement déterminé dans ses actes par la vue d'un plaisir immédiat; [...] un être humain n'est jamais porté à agir que par l'appât d'un plaisir immédiat.' For the defence of this rationale, see JL, II, 11-12; III, 178-186; *De l'Amour*, II, 108, 171-172; CA, I, 303-304.
313. *HB*, I, 29.
314. See *De l'Amour*, II, 108, 171-172. See also in this regard CA, I, 303-304; JL, III, 178-186. On this view of man as it is expounded by Helvétius, see Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 14, 115-116; Alciato, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 167-170.
315. *H de P*, I, 116. If one compares Helvétius's treatment of the same question (*De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 2, pp. 71-72), one has a measure of the distance which separates the two.
316. *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, p. 170.
317. *Op. cit.*, pp. 191-192, 302.
318. *Personnalité*, p. 468. P. Arbelet describes Stendhal as 'un curieux et hybride mélange des tendances les plus opposées' (*La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 7). Cf. R. Alter (p. 28), for whom Stendhal is 'an extraordinary compound of superrational intellectuality and extravagant emotionalism'. See above all on this question the analysis of J.-P. Richard.
319. See the introductory discussion to Chapter II. V. Brombert goes further than most in claiming: 'The real masters of this pseudo-*idéologue* are not Helvétius, Condillac, and Destutt de Tracy, but rather Rousseau, Corneille, and Tasso' ('Stendhal, Analyst or Amorist?', *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 164).
320. The question of Stendhal's 'romanticism' is treated at length in *Stendhal et le romantisme. Actes du XV^e Congrès International Stendhalien (Mayence 1982)*, ed. V. del Litto and K. Ringger (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1984).
321. *Op. cit.*, p. 217.
322. See J.-C. Augendre's definition of Stendhal as "'pré-romantique" puisqu'on y reconnaît l'opposition du "savoir", de la "science", et du "sentiment"' ('La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', pp. 262-263).
323. 'The French Romantic Movement', *The French Romantics*, vol. I, p. 25. See also on this point Bowman, *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
324. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 91-92. See also on this question Albérès, *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, pp. 74-82; Blum, pp. 171-202; Prévost, *Les Epicuriens français*, p. 131.
325. *Op. cit.*, p. 40.
326. It is interesting to note that J. Méliá, while retailing the classic view of Stendhal as 'le disciple convaincu des sensualistes du XVIII^e siècle' (*Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 295), is among the few critics to show any real awareness of the problem that exists in defining the boundaries of Stendhal's materialism. There are, as Méliá observes, occasions when 'Stendhal se montre moins absolu que les philosophes ses maîtres. Le corps n'est pas toujours prépondérant. Le

cerveau se dégage, se perfectionne de par lui-même...' Stendhal indeed goes so far at times that 'il semble abandonner le chemin tracé par les sensualistes. Il fait éclater l'importance du cerveau, de la volonté. Il est sur les confins ou, plutôt pour employer un mot qu'il affectionne, il est sur la frontière du spiritualisme.' These remarks take us back to our discussion of Hobbes and of volition as Stendhal construes it, and convey something of the difficulty that is encountered when seeking in Stendhal the logical corollaries of his 'materialism'. The mind for Stendhal — call it *head, reason, will* — takes on an autonomous aspect that has no place in the philosophical materialism which we have been considering. Though Méliá fails, surprisingly, to see in this any problem for the coherence of Stendhal's thought — 'Matérialiste dans son œuvre, Stendhal l'est également dans sa vie' (*Ibid.*, p. 291) — the point on which he touches is an important one.

327. *JL*, I, 581 n.
328. *Ibid.*, I, 206. Cf. *OI*, I, 165.
329. *JL*, I, 467.
330. Samuel, p. 71.
331. *JL*, I, 467.
332. *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, p. 81. The remark is made in relation to Stendhal's reading of Johann Kaspar Lavater. On Stendhal and Lavater, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 124-125, 495; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 115.
333. *Op. cit.*, p. 278.
334. 'Materialism and the Mind-Body Problem', *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. XVII, no. 1 (1963), p. 49.
335. *History, Man, and Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 22.
336. *Op. cit.*, pp. 278-279.
337. *Op. cit.*, p. 136.
338. *OI*, I, 457.
339. *Ibid.*, I, 343.
340. *Corr*, I, 230-231.
341. *OI*, I, 344-345.
342. See, for example, *JL*, II, 77; *OI*, I, 229.
343. *OI*, I, 457.
344. See the many references to this definition in *JL*, I, 146, 167; II, 385; III, 28-29, 34-35, 328; *Corr*, I, 108-109, 110; *OI*, I, 629, 838-839; *H de P*, I, 183 n. 2; *R et S*, 26, 159; *HB*, II, 251.
345. See Picavet, p. 490; Prévost, *La Création chez Stendhal*, pp. 66-67.
346. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 152; Chuquet, p. 73.

According to Del Litto, 'l'ouvrage [de Hobbes] a été, sans nul doute, l'une des lectures les plus profitables de Stendhal à cette époque.' G. Saintville (p. 44) likewise reserves for Hobbes a place alongside Helvétius, Tracy and Vauvenargues as one of Stendhal's 'maîtres'.

347. *JL*, I, 356 n. 2.
348. See, for example, *OI*, I, 203.
349. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 64.
350. *JL*, II, 102.
351. *Ibid.*, I, 470.
352. *Ibid.*, II, 206.
353. *Ibid.*, II, 255.

CHAPTER V

FROM HOBBS TO CABANIS: THE DISCOVERY OF PHYSIOLOGY

'Rational Ideology': Destutt de Tracy

The reading of Mirabeau in autumn 1805, Stendhal might have hoped, would reaffirm his theory of 'heart' and 'head',¹ whilst the recourse to Tracy's *Idéologie* would furnish the means to locate and root out the flaws in his reasoning. Stendhal's first encounter with the latter, recorded in a much quoted diary entry and letter to his sister Pauline,² had taken place on the eve of 1 January 1805 when, he tells us, he had been prompted to brave the elements and purchase the first volume of Tracy's work, *l'Idéologie proprement dite*. The impression had been that of a veil being lifted. As he declares in his diary of 7 January 1805, 'je reconnais à mille germes de pensées nouvelles les heureux fruits de *l'Idéologie*.'³

Of the nature of these 'felicitous fruits', Stendhal's letter of 1 January 1805 gives some indication. Sensation is the primary datum of cognition; an 'idea' is no abstract phenomenon, but a resolvable compound of sensations.⁴ Nothing here, certainly, which should not already have been clear to a reader of Hobbes and Condillac. Yet Tracy brings home with all the force of a conversion ideas already present, if less developed, in works with which Stendhal was by now quite familiar. In his letter to Pauline, he dilates upon the four 'operations' which Tracy defines as sensation, memory, judgment and will, and which are all, argues the philosopher, reducible to simple sensation.⁵ Here was a manual, Stendhal was convinced, to guide him through the labyrinth of his own thoughts and to elucidate the mental processes which lay behind the thoughts of every human being. The art of reasoning could be mastered, he declares triumphantly, 'avec neuf livres d'argent et une heure par jour pendant six mois.'⁶

In autumn 1805, however, Stendhal had need of reassurance. As it happened, he turned neither to *l'Esprit de Mirabeau* nor to Tracy's *Idéologie*; but he would soon find himself engrossed in the third volume of the *Elémens d'idéologie*, the newly published *De la Logique*, where he would read, to his delight: 'La cause première de toute erreur est, en définitive, l'imperfection de nos souvenirs.'⁷ Such unhesitating confidence could not but engage a reader in search of definitive answers. To the aspiring playwright who held the essence of comedy to lie, as we have seen, in the operations of the mind, Tracy's identification of human error with the function of memory seemed to

offer a new departure.⁸ 'Je me suis procuré la *Logique* de Tracy, ouvrage sublime,' writes Stendhal to his sister Pauline on 9 November 1805; 'la cause de nos erreurs est dans l'imperfection de nos souvenirs.'⁹

Sensation, from which all ideas derive, is infallible. Sound reasoning comes of perceiving one idea within another and establishing an accurate relationship between ideas; error lies in the confusion of ideas through imperfections of memory.¹⁰ Though it is difficult to gauge with any precision the correlation between Stendhal's enthusiasm and the benefits which he would ultimately derive from this discovery,¹¹ the immediate impact of his reading of Tracy is recorded in a second letter of November 1805, in which he describes the 'bien heureuse révolution' which his ideas have undergone as a result. 'Au bout de toutes mes connaissances,' he writes, 'je voyais un voile qui me désespérait. Ce voile était: peu d'exactitude dans les *souvenirs des premiers faits*.'¹² In a note penned in his diary the following month, Stendhal takes to heart Tracy's lesson: 'Toutes nos erreurs viennent de nos souvenirs. C'est donc un immense avantage d'avoir une bonne mémoire. J'en ai, je crois, une très bonne...'¹³

Yet if Tracy's *Logique* appeared to offer Stendhal some issue from the *impasse* into which his reasoning had led him, it did little to substantiate his view of human nature. On the contrary, Tracy cuts the very ground from under Stendhal's definition of man by affirming the redundancy of any distinction between mind and heart. There is but one 'faculté générale de sentir': any talk of a further division of man into 'heart' and 'head' is a fallacy.¹⁴ The very analysis of memory over which Stendhal so enthuses provides a pretext for Tracy to insist upon the essential redundancy of any distinction between the cognitive and the emotive in man:

Cette analyse approfondie de nos souvenirs nous montre pourquoi on a cru devoir faire deux choses essentiellement différentes de *sentir* et de *penser*, de ce qu'on appelle *l'esprit* et le *cœur*, des impressions que l'on nomme *affectives* et *perceptives*. C'est l'effet d'un examen superficiel. Il n'y a entre ces deux classes de perceptions, d'autre différence que celle d'un degré plus ou moins grand d'énergie et de vivacité; mais c'est toujours sentir.¹⁵

There could be no clearer denial of the fundamental principle of Stendhal's *Filosofia Nova* than this statement, in which Tracy says neither more nor less than Hobbes had done some hundred and fifty years before him. Yet Stendhal appears to be no more alive to the fallacy in his own reasoning here than he had been in his reading of *Human Nature*. It is curious to note that he nowhere records a reaction to Tracy's insistence on the single, indivisible faculty of 'feeling', restricting himself instead to evoking the 'foule d'idées neuves'¹⁶ which his reading of the latter's *Logique* has occasioned.

That such a crucial point should have escaped the notice of this 'disciple reconnu

de Destutt de Tracy¹⁷ is indeed remarkable. More than that, it makes the whole question of Tracy's *real influence* upon Stendhal subject to caution. It is clear from the tenor of the latter's notes and letters that Tracy's value lay less in what he could reveal — objectively — about human nature than in what he could teach Stendhal — in subjective terms — about *himself*.¹⁸ Though self-knowledge was closely linked for Stendhal to knowledge of man,¹⁹ the distinction in this case is a significant one. For Stendhal's trammelled ambition to achieve fame as a philosopher-playwright receives renewed impetus under the influence of a thinker who offers not a comprehensive philosophy of man, but rather the prospect of attaining, through a process of intellectual self-discipline, to a comprehensive philosophy of conscious experience.²⁰ 'Ideology' provides Stendhal with a do-it-yourself course in reasoning, a 'propédeutique positive', as Michel Crouzet puts it.²¹ 'Voilà la grande utilité pour moi de l'idéologie,' notes Stendhal in January 1805; 'elle m'explique à moi-même, et me montre ainsi ce qu'il faut fortifier, ce qu'il faut détruire dans moi-même.'²² At the end of the same year of 1805, he will reflect upon the enormous intellectual benefit which he feels he has derived from Tracy and which, he observes in a note dated 12 December 1805, has coincided with the reawakening of his literary ambitions.²³ 'Cet homme,' we read in a further diary entry from April 1806, 'a eu la plus grande et la plus salutaire influence sur moi depuis un an.'²⁴

It has been easy for critics to conclude from such remarks that Stendhal is indebted to Tracy for the sum of his philosophy after 1805. All indications are, however, that the benefits to be derived from Ideology relate much more to the *method* than to the *substance* of Stendhal's thought. 'Je sens,' he writes in a letter of 28 December 1805, 'que les lectures (je suis à la deuxième) de la *Logique* de Tracy augmentent singulièrement la force de ma tête...'²⁵ His powers of reasoning — not, it should be noted, the store of his ideas. In this sense, it is important to recognise that Ideology was for Stendhal a means to an end, not an end in itself. Tracy may, as Stendhal puts it, bring to fruition the science founded by Locke and developed by Condillac;²⁶ but it was not here, in Stendhal's estimation, that the greatest discoveries about man's nature were to be made. Ideology was an exercise in intellectual hygiene. That was both its appeal and its shortcoming for Stendhal. His ambition was to use the method of Ideology to pass beyond the achievements of the Idéologues.

This, however, raises questions about the extent to which Stendhal may accurately be termed an exponent of Ideology and disciple of Destutt de Tracy. Described by Henri Delacroix as 'le plus intellectualiste des idéologues',²⁷ Tracy elaborates a science of ideas which one notably unsympathetic contemporary, Louis de Bonald, was moved to denounce as an 'étude stérile, [le] travail de la pensée sur elle-même, qui ne saurait produire.'²⁸ It is interesting to note that, in principle at least, Stendhal (though for very

different motives) shares something of Bonald's aversion to excessive rationality. One recalls the dismissive tone with which he refers, in the planning of his *Filosofia Nova*, to: 'La tête. Tous les métaphysiciens s'en sont occupés (Locke, Condillac, Lancelin, etc).'²⁹ More revealingly, in his notes on Hobbes, Stendhal betrays something approaching disdain for thinkers who, he suggests, have concentrated their attentions on man's rational faculties at the expense of a more compelling object of study:

Il me semble que jusqu'au chap. VII, page 64, Hobbes a parlé uniquement de la tête, il va parler du cœur. On dirait qu'Helvétius, Lancelin, Condillac n'ont jamais eu celui-ci qui leur est supérieur.³⁰

Stendhal's language here articulates clearly that impatience with clinicians of the intellect which is early so evident in his thought. Rationalism — insofar as it seeks to *rationalise* man's behaviour — becomes synonymous with a coldness and sterility, a lack of emotional *élan*, which render the philosopher insensitive to, and therefore ignorant of, part of a human nature for which he can provide only a deficient account at best.³¹ In laying the ground for his *Filosofia Nova*, Stendhal, as we have seen, resolves therefore to eschew 'les phrases si froides des philosophes du XVIII^e siècle' in favour of an idiom that reflects human experience in its entirety, taking account of reason and passion alike.³² The philosophers of the eighteenth century, he declares, 'ont si peu connu les passions et leur langage qu'ils se sont trahis eux-mêmes par leurs écrits.'³³ Even the most trustworthy thinkers, '*les philosophes les plus constants diseurs de vérité*', as Stendhal puts it, '*peuvent se tromper quand ils parlent de passions violentes*.'³⁴

The net effect of such statements was to widen and to deepen still further the trench which Stendhal perceived between the two main constituents of human nature, reason and passion. It was also to keep the world of intellectual endeavour firmly divided into the camps of philosophy and poetry. By sustaining the distinction between 'la science des idées' and 'la science des passions', however, Stendhal continues to rend what Ideology strove to fuse.³⁵ This is never more explicit than in some lines which he pens in 1818 as part of a draft pamphlet on the Italian language:

Le philosophe soumet au *feu de réverbère* de l'attention [...] les problèmes encore obscurs de la formation et de l'expression des idées. Le poète écoute les sentiments de son âme ardente, nourrit cette âme par les passions orageuses et étudie dans les poètes anciens l'art d'exprimer avec grâce les sentiments passionnés qui l'agitent ou l'art de peindre les images magnifiques qui se présentent à sa vue.³⁶

The head, it is clear, is still the province of the philosopher; the heart, that of the poet. 'Est-il possible,' Stendhal concludes by musing, 'qu'arrivés à un certain âge et déjà lancés dans la carrière et couronnés de lauriers ces deux hommes changent de métier?'

That he should pose — and leave unanswered — such a question in 1818 is a measure of Stendhal's enduring failure to reconcile, in the words of Georges Blin, 'des intentionalités non seulement divergentes, mais incompatibles.'³⁷

All of this must be taken into account when considering Stendhal's place in relation to the school of Ideology. For, while the tenets of Tracy's philosophy — that reason and passion alike are reducible to sensation, and that the 'science of ideas' itself forms but part of a wider science of man in which philosophy and physiology are one³⁸ — should have bridged the gulf between sentiment and reason, they serve instead to entrench Stendhal still further in his distinction:

On ne saurait comparer des faits qu'après les avoir connus, dit très bien Tracy. C'est ce qui fait que Tracy lui-même, avec son excellente manière de raisonner, ne pourrait jamais devenir poète, à moins d'être très sensible.³⁹

In this remark, we glimpse something of what Stendhal took to be the *limitation* of Ideology. 'L'homme que l'on voudrait reconstruire avec les quelques leviers simplifiés qu'il nous laisse ne serait plus qu'une machine à penser, un automate intellectuel,' writes Gilbert Chinard of Tracy.⁴⁰ The point is one that is keenly felt by Stendhal. It is for this reason, we submit, that Emmet Kennedy is quite mistaken when he contends that 'in one deft stroke Tracy destroyed precisely the distinctions between reason and sensibility, mind and heart, which had beset [Stendhal]. He was now eminently rational, for to think was no different from to sense.'⁴¹ The fact is that Stendhal identifies *only up to a point* with a school of thought which he greatly esteemed but aspired to surpass through the study of an object which the Idéologues and their sensationalist forerunners were seen to have neglected.⁴² The elaborate qualification with which he appropriates the label of 'Ideology' in *De l'Amour* is highly significant in this regard:

Je demande pardon aux philosophes d'avoir pris le mot *idéologie*: mon intention n'est certainement pas d'usurper un titre qui serait le droit d'un autre. Si l'idéologie est une description détaillée des idées et de toutes les parties qui peuvent les composer, le présent livre est une description détaillée et minutieuse de tous les sentiments qui composent la passion nommée l'*amour*. [...] Je ne connais pas de mot pour dire, en grec, discours sur les sentiments, comme idéologie indique discours sur les idées.⁴³

This insistence upon the distinction between his own undertaking and that of the Idéologues is instructive on two levels. Firstly, by harking back to such a clear divide between *idées* and *sentiments*, it runs counter to the essentially monistic spirit of the philosophy in which Stendhal here seeks nominal legitimation at least for his ideas. Secondly, it articulates unequivocally Stendhal's ambition to *depart* from, to *supersede*, Ideology and to push his inquiry instead into that 'large undiscovered country' which,

as Peter Gay puts it, the eighteenth century had glimpsed 'behind and beneath reason.'⁴⁴ Here, Ideology was a bankrupt currency according to Stendhal; here, as we have seen, lay things 'à jamais invisibles à Condillac et gens de son espèce.'⁴⁵ Stendhal's desire was not to flush out and reason away intuition and passionate impulse, but rather to observe them at close quarters in their natural state. To the 'Apollonian philosophy' which Robert Adams ascribes to him, 'implying throughout a belief in the therapeutic value of sunshine, open air, and rationality,'⁴⁶ there is a darker underside, and one which Stendhal is at pains to preserve from the withering glare of the rationalists.⁴⁷

In the light of the above, Stendhal's perception of Ideology becomes somewhat clearer. Intensely concerned with the nature of consciousness Stendhal, as Adams rightly argues, was and would remain.⁴⁸ But his intention from the outset was to forsake the path trodden by Tracy and to devote himself instead to exploring the inner reaches of the human heart, to seeking not a science of reason, but, in Harry Levin's apt expression, 'a rationale of the emotions.'⁴⁹ It is here that the true goal of Stendhal's enterprise lies from the earliest, from those days when, as Brulard would recall, 'Mon grand-père m'étourdissait sans cesse du grand mot: *la connaissance du cœur humain*.'⁵⁰ It is here that we find, as Henri Martineau puts it, the 'leitmotiv obligé'⁵¹ of Stendhal's intellectual world — a leitmotiv which becomes no less evident with time. To be an interpreter of the human heart, 'un grand peintre de passions': such is Stendhal's ambition as he records it in a notebook entry of 23 February 1803.⁵² 'Je ne retiens que ce qui est *peinture du cœur humain*. Hors de là, je suis nul,' affirms the same Stendhal in August 1811, adding: 'Tout ce qui m'éloigne de la connaissance du cœur de l'homme est sans intérêt pour moi.'⁵³ From these remarks to the *Chroniques italiennes*, the thread — 'J'aime ce qui peint le cœur de l'homme' — would remain unbroken.⁵⁴

Tracy, though he may lay claim to an important place in the genealogy of Stendhal's thought, does little to advance this much sought '*connaissance du cœur humain*.' M.E.M. Taylor is quite unfounded in her assertion that from Tracy 'Stendhal learns the theory and the analysis of the passions.'⁵⁵ Rousseau, Vauvenargues, Lancelin and Helvétius are only some of the influences whom Stendhal had absorbed by the time he came to read the analysis of the passions which he would prize so highly, for a time, in Hobbes. Tracy's influence, by contrast, begins and ends with the intellect. *L'Ideologie*, as Victor del Litto puts it, 'lui offrait non pas un système tendant à expliquer la nature de l'homme, mais une analyse circonstanciée et exempte de toute métaphysique de la formation des idées.'⁵⁶

Nor can there be any question over the gulf which separates Stendhal's

philosophical enterprise from that of his mentor in Ideology. When Stendhal sent a copy of his 'Ideological' treatise on love to Tracy, the latter is reported to have found it quite incomprehensible. His daughter-in-law, Sarah Newton de Tracy, who records the event, cites *De l'Amour* indeed as the reason for a marked cooling in relations between the two men:

M. de Tracy se lia avec M. de Stendahl, qui n'était autre que l'auteur de *Rouge et Noir*; mais ils se brouillèrent bientôt à cause du livre de cet écrivain sur la théorie de l'amour, démontrée par la *crystallisation*, qui était l'*idéologie* de M. de Stendahl. M. de Tracy essaya de lire cet ouvrage, n'y comprit rien, et déclara à l'auteur que c'était absurde.⁵⁷

As a letter written by Tracy to Stendhal in September 1822 attests, he quite failed to understand the book's most celebrated notion, that of 'crystallisation'.⁵⁸ 'Tracy's literal-minded sensationalism and his disdain for metaphor,' writes Emmet Kennedy, 'did not allow him to appreciate *De l'amour*.'⁵⁹ Such, in fact, was the philosopher's inability to take the work seriously that he remained convinced Stendhal had written it as a spoof. As much is clear from a letter addressed by Victor Jacquemont to Stendhal on 22 December 1825. 'Pour M. de Tracy,' writes Jacquemont in reference to *De l'Amour*, 'il n'a jamais cru et ne croit pas encore que vous ayez écrit ce livre sérieusement...'⁶⁰

It is difficult to establish with precision the extent to which Stendhal himself would have recognised the grounds for such misgiving. He would, one feels, have defended his *method* as 'Ideological', even if he was himself at pains to draw distinctions in terms of the subject matter. The essentially practical value of Tracy had emerged at the outset from the *cours d'idéologie* which Stendhal provided for his sister Pauline in letters of 1805.⁶¹ From these and other letters of the period it is clear that Stendhal perceived Ideology as Kennedy defines it, as 'a science of *method* applicable to all sciences.'⁶² Beyond its strictly methodological value, however, Ideology had about it a whiff of the superfluous, not to say the redundant. Robert Adams is overly dismissive perhaps when he asserts: 'Like most rationalist philosophies, it tells us brilliantly what we already knew before we started to philosophize and do not particularly need to hear again.'⁶³ Yet, as a jibe in *Racine et Shakespeare* makes clear, Stendhal himself was alive to just such a weakness in Ideology's pretension to provide a 'new' science of man:

L'idéologie est une science non seulement ennuyeuse, mais même impertinente. C'est comme un homme qui nous arrêterait dans la rue, nous proposant de nous enseigner à marcher.⁶⁴

While such a contribution was, for the Stendhal of 1805, a welcome one, it did not guarantee any substantially new philosophical departure to compensate for the collapse

of the *Filosofia Nova* and the loss of faith in Hobbes. 'En réalité,' writes Victor del Litto, 'ce qu'il a retiré de Tracy se résume en un petit nombre de principes pratiques constituant un système clair, simple et précis de la science du raisonnement.'⁶⁵ Robert Adams pares the influence down still further, evacuating of much of its substance what Stendhal is generally held to have inherited from his preceptor in Ideology. 'For what Beyle derived from De Tracy,' argues Adams, 'was essentially an ideal, an attitude, and only the mask of a manner or method.'⁶⁶ Though Stendhal would to the end consider himself beholden to Tracy as a foremost intellectual influence,⁶⁷ he is far from being the faithful disciple depicted by so many of his commentators. For all its protestations of 'Ideological' rigour, a work such as Stendhal's *De l'Amour* remains indefensible on any grounds other than its own. The point is ably demonstrated by Gilbert Chinard, who, while recognising the reality of Stendhal's debt to Tracy, rightly calls into question its proportions. Confronting the text of *De l'Amour* with the pages penned by Tracy under the same title, Chinard concludes that, in relation to the *Idéologues* as a whole, Stendhal 'est beaucoup moins leur disciple qu'il ne le croit et qu'il ne voudrait nous le faire croire.'⁶⁸

'Physiological Ideology': Cabanis

It is in vain, then, that we should look to Destutt de Tracy for any major development in Stendhal's conception of human nature. Tracy built upon and carried to new stages of refinement a thinking with which Stendhal had been acquainted since his days as a student at the Ecole Centrale in Grenoble, where he had first heard Tracy's predecessor, the Abbé de Condillac, vaunted as '*la base de tout*.'⁶⁹ Even at the height of his admiration for Tracy's Ideology, Stendhal's notes and letters show that he has made no substantive advance in his philosophy since his earlier readings of Condillac, Helvétius and Hobbes. Man remained still a compound of abstract qualities (desire, will, judgment, memory), a disembodied object of *rational* inquiry. 'So abstract is most of Tracy's "ideology",' writes Emmet Kennedy, 'so little sinew and muscle is there, that it is difficult to call it materialist.'⁷⁰ The role of bringing a new dimension to Stendhal's understanding of man was to fall not to Tracy but to the thinker who is the real object of our interest in this chapter, Tracy's friend and fellow-*idéologue*, Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis. For it was the passage from the 'idéologie rationnelle' of Tracy to the 'idéologie physiologique' of Cabanis⁷¹ that was finally to bring about a serious development in Stendhal's thinking and, as he himself would later recognise, provide a whole new foundation upon which to rest the study of man.⁷²

It is with the reading of Cabanis, first in 1805, then, much more notably, in 1811, that Stendhal's conception of human nature enters a new and decisive phase. Decisive in the sense that Cabanis furnishes him with a philosophy of man to which he will relate much more readily than to the abstract conception he had found in other thinkers. In his earliest considerations on man, Stendhal's thinking is in large part a throwback to seventeenth and eighteenth-century rationalism; for it is predicated, as we have seen, upon a view of passion and reason as concepts which have no discernible root in a physical reality. There is truth in Robert Adams's claim that, as the exponent of an outmoded eighteenth-century philosophy, Stendhal 'was a philosophical anachronism almost before he started to think.'⁷³ Like many truths about Stendhal, however, it is open to substantial qualification. For, with the reading of Cabanis, Stendhal takes a leap into the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ To the metaphysical and rational analyses of Hobbes, Helvétius and Tracy, Cabanis brings a whole new physiological dimension; to the 'animated statue' of Condillac, or the 'man-machine' of the mechanistic philosophers, he gives a new depth, richness and vitality.⁷⁵ 'L'homme métaphysique' was being replaced by 'l'homme physiologique' long before Zola suggested as much in 1880.⁷⁶ Under the influence of Cabanis, Stendhal would come to believe that the science of physiology, though in its infancy, was the repository of hope for man's future knowledge about himself. The *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* — curiously — did not endear Cabanis to Stendhal from the outset; but the work would, through time, become one of the surest pillars of his philosophical world, an 'immortal' achievement inspiring in him all the fervour — or 'veneration',⁷⁷ as he would put it — of a convert and prompting him, in 1829, to define himself as 'un philosophe de l'école de Cabanis.'⁷⁸

The importance of Cabanis has proved something of a 'blind spot' in Stendhal scholarship. Georges Blin's regrettably unrealised promise of a study on the question⁷⁹ has left a lacuna which remains yet to be filled. Henri Delacroix, Francine Marill Albérès, Jean Théodoridès and Michel Crouzet have in turn devoted consideration to the influence of Cabanis upon Stendhal's thought, but their aggregate research falls short of an *étude d'ensemble*.⁸⁰ Victor del Litto, by contrast, in *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, plays down the importance of this influence, asserting that other thinkers predate Cabanis in introducing Stendhal to the notion of temperament, and that it is Philippe Pinel 'qui va lui révéler l'intérêt de la physiologie, et non pas, comme on aurait pu le croire, Cabanis.'⁸¹ Referring the reader to Paul Arbelet's *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal*, Del Litto does not seek to account for the substantial debt which Stendhal owes in his writings to Cabanis.⁸² More surprisingly still, neither does Arbelet. For the latter is concerned only to signal a number of the more obvious

borrowings, without considering what these contribute *qualitatively* to *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, or what motivates Stendhal in his recourse to Cabanis.⁸³

Among other scholars, the importance of Cabanis, where it has not been denied outright, has been seriously neglected. 'L'influence propre de Cabanis sur Stendhal n'est qu'apparente,' declares Claude Liprandi.⁸⁴ In similar vein, René Girard reduces what Stendhal derived from Cabanis, on the theory of the temperaments notably, to the exiguity of 'quelques emprunts sans lendemain.'⁸⁵ This lack of recognition for Cabanis has proved commonplace among scholars who devote consideration to Stendhal's philosophical development. Henri Martineau omits the name of the physiologist altogether from the roll-call of Stendhal's *maîtres à penser*, a list which includes Helvétius, Hobbes, Tracy, Vauvenargues, Chamfort, Mirabeau, Maine de Biran, and, in a lesser capacity, Dugald Stewart, Brissot de Warville and Lancelin.⁸⁶ G. Saintville, too, excludes Cabanis from the ranks of Stendhal's mentors, restricting the latter to Helvétius, Hobbes, Tracy and Vauvenargues.⁸⁷ Margaret Tillett, in her *Stendhal: The Background to the Novels*, examines works such as *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, *De l'Amour* and *Rome, Naples et Florence*, but nowhere mentions the name of Cabanis. In his *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, Geoffrey Strickland likewise makes nothing of the influence of Cabanis, while devoting considerable thought to Helvétius and Tracy. Strickland makes two passing references only to Cabanis, neither of which gives any insight into the importance which Stendhal accorded to this *médecin-idéologue*, or the role played by Cabanis in the 'education' which this study undertakes to explore.⁸⁸

Such has been the curious fate of Cabanis at the hands of Stendhal's critics. Yet the fact is that, between 1805 and 1815, Stendhal had recourse on as many as five or six occasions⁸⁹ to a reading — however partial or selective⁹⁰ — of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, hailing its author as a great physiologist and a founder of French philosophy.⁹¹ To no thinker does Stendhal owe a more substantial philosophical debt, we submit, and to none will that debt be more enduring. It is our purpose in the pages that follow to consider in some detail the nature of Cabanis's influence upon Stendhal and to determine something of the place occupied by this neglected mentor in the evolution of his thought.

Man as Organism: Instinct, Temperament and the Body Corporeal

i. Instinct

Towards the end of August 1804, Stendhal, preoccupied as ever by the question of the passions, consigns to his journal a note in which he reflects upon man in a state of nature. In so doing, he touches upon a question which clearly troubles him. What does one mean, he asks, by a 'state of nature'?

Où trouver cet *état de nature*? Je ne l'ai jamais vu. Qu'est-ce que c'est? Entend-on Adam et Eve transportés adultes l'un et l'autre au milieu du jardin d'Eden? Qui leur donna l'idée de porter les fruits à la bouche quand ils eurent faim? Cette *idée* est-elle *innée*?⁹²

Stendhal's own emphasis here indicates his awareness of the implications of his question, for he was only too conscious of the pointed rejection of innate ideas by Locke, Condillac and the sensationalist school to which he subscribed. In posing such a question, however, he clearly recognises the need to account for natural desires and impulses which do not appear attributable, in their origin, to *experience*. For the moment, Stendhal pursues his thought no further. Some months later, however, in January 1805, he enters the following note in his diary on the same date under which he records for the first time his reading of Cabanis:⁹³

Je vois dans Cabanis que nous agissons souvent pour satisfaire à des besoins qui viennent d'après des idées qui viennent de l'intérieur du corps au cerveau. La réunion des désirs qui nous viennent de cette manière se nomme *instinct*. Condillac a entièrement méconnu l'instinct: deux oiseaux enlevés de leur nid paternel au moment où ils viennent d'éclore et élevés à la brochette n'ont certainement aucune idée de *nid*, d'*oeufs* et d'*accouchement*; cependant, dans la saison des amours, quinze jours ou plus avant que la femelle ponde, ils constituent un nid.⁹⁴

This is a highly significant passage. For what we find here is the first clear recognition by Stendhal that the *body* exercises its own empire over the mind. In all of his previous lucubrations on passion and reason, the body had been in attendance only, the *valet* of 'head' and 'heart' in turn. Now the suggestion of unconscious *needs* and *instincts* which have a distinctly corporal source brings a new dimension to the question of human motivation. There are, as Cabanis argues, certain 'déterminations [qui] ne sauraient être rapportées à aucune sorte de raisonnement, et [qui], sans cesser pour cela d'avoir leur source dans la sensibilité physique, [...] se forment le plus souvent sans que la volonté des individus y puisse avoir d'autre part que d'en mieux diriger l'exécution.'⁹⁵ These unreasoned 'determinations' Cabanis designates as 'instinct', before going on to cite examples from the behaviour of birds and animals in order to sustain his premise.⁹⁶

Stendhal does not at once seize the full import of the above as a corrective to the exclusive environmentalism of Helvétius.⁹⁷ As his reference to Condillac makes clear, however, he does not fail to recognise that Cabanis is taking issue here with the whole 'sensationalist tradition that held the mind to be a *tabula rasa* upon which the experience of the world alone left its imprint.⁹⁸ 'Au moment de la naissance,' argues Cabanis, 'le centre cérébral a donc reçu et combiné déjà beaucoup d'impressions: il n'est point *table rase*, si l'on donne au sens de ce mot toute son étendue.'⁹⁹ This recognition of an animal impulse which owes nothing to experience resolves at a stroke for Stendhal ('Je vois dans Cabanis'; 'Condillac a *entièrement méconnu* l'instinct') a question for which he has failed hitherto to find any plausible explanation. 'Je me souviens,' he reflects, 'que je demandais à tout le monde pourquoi les petits cochons cherchent le mamelon de leur mère. On ne me répondait pas.'¹⁰⁰

It was in its application to man, however, that the notion of instinct, which we find dawning in Stendhal's diary of 24 January 1805, was to have its most far-reaching implications.¹⁰¹ If he could not be sure of the limits of instinct, Stendhal, as his later writings attest, would be in no doubt as to its importance. A passing reference to instinct in *De l'Amour* will prompt him to add in a footnote: 'Grande question. Il me semble qu'outre l'éducation qui commence à huit ou dix mois, il y a un peu d'instinct.'¹⁰² The vagueness of Stendhal's language here should not obscure the importance of this remark as a corrective to the idea that environmental influences alone accounted, at source, for human character and conduct. The point is made with much more conviction in a contribution to the British press in 1822, where Stendhal recognises the shortcoming of Helvétius in this important respect. 'Il est sûr,' he declares, 'que les philosophes modernes les plus estimés, et Helvétius à leur tête, n'ont pas connu l'un des plus grands motifs des actions de l'homme: *l'instinct*.'¹⁰³

ii. The Body as Differential

Such is the first of Stendhal's debts to a philosopher for whom he registers a curious antipathy at the outset. Cabanis's cardinal failing lies, according to Stendhal, in his method of argument. 'La manière d'énoncer les faits,' he notes, 'me semble si générale qu'elle en est vague. Cet auteur ne me plaît point, lire Bacon et Hobbes.'¹⁰⁴ To conclude from this, however, that Stendhal took nothing more from his first reading of Cabanis is to miss a very important point. 'Il n'attache pas beaucoup d'importance aux théories de Cabanis,' affirms Victor del Litto,¹⁰⁵ noting his surprise that Stendhal

should have failed to set any store by Cabanis's chapter on the temperaments in particular. To argue as much, however, is to take no account of an entry which Stendhal makes in his journal on 7 February 1805, some two weeks after his reading of Cabanis, in which he adds a fundamental corrective to his conception of the passions:

Les hommes ont des passions différentes. L'amour senti par Crozet n'est point le même amour senti par Beyle. C'est tout simple: ils ne peuvent être charmés par les mêmes objets, puisque ces objets leur font des impressions différentes et qu'ils mettent leur bonheur dans des états différents et de l'âme et du corps, ou, pour mieux dire, du dernier seul, *corps* étant pris dans le sens de Cabanis.¹⁰⁶

Before considering the significance of these remarks for Stendhal, it is worth citing here what Cabanis, in the 'Premier Mémoire' of his work (which we know Stendhal to have read when he penned the above passage),¹⁰⁷ has to say on this question of sense-impressions as they affect different individuals:

Certainement les hommes ne se ressemblent point par la manière de sentir: l'âge, le sexe, le tempérament, les maladies, mettent entre eux de notables différences; et dans le même homme, les diverses impressions ont, suivant leur nature et suivant beaucoup d'autres circonstances accessoires, un degré très-inégal de force, ou de vivacité. Cela posé, l'on voit [...] que de ces impressions, si peu semblables chez les divers individus, doivent résulter des tournures très-diverses d'esprit et d'âme; et que de l'association, ou de la comparaison chez le même homme d'impressions inégales dans les diverses circonstances, doivent résulter également des idées, des raisonnements, des déterminations très-variables, qui ne permettent pas de leur assigner de type fixe ou constant, et surtout de type commun à tout le genre humain.¹⁰⁸

Having thus recognised the important differences which separate men in their experience of sense-impressions, Cabanis goes on, in the 'Troisième Mémoire', to attribute this to their physical organisation:

Tout nous porte donc à croire que la différence des impressions tient à la structure différente non des nerfs, mais des organes dans lesquels ils sentent; à la manière dont leurs extrémités y sont épanouies; à celle dont les causes des impressions agissent sur leurs épanouissements.¹⁰⁹

If we return now to the specific terms of Stendhal's note of 7 February 1805, its full significance becomes clear. For it constitutes a serious revision by Stendhal of his understanding of the nature and workings of passion. 'J'ai cru pendant un temps,' he adds in the same notebook entry, 'que les passions ne différaient qu'en intensité, qu'elles étaient comme la température. Crozet, par exemple, marque 2 degrés de chaleur, Beyle 1 1/2.'¹¹⁰

Buttressed by the influence of Helvétius, this latter notion — that the difference between men's passions was one of *degree* rather than of *kind* — is prevalent in Stendhal's early considerations on the question. 'L'homme,' he had written in August

1803, 'dans quelque état qu'il soit renferme en lui le germe de toutes les passions.'¹¹¹ Nor were there limits to what such passions, once aroused, might achieve. 'Les grandes passions viennent à bout de tout,' writes Stendhal to his sister Pauline in a letter of 29 January 1803.¹¹² Nothing, as we suggested in an earlier chapter, could have been more reassuring to this aspiring *poète-philosophe* than the belief that the strength and constancy of his ambition might alone suffice to awaken the genius latent in all men. It is a notion which he proposes as a 'vérité générale' in a subsequent letter to his sister, urging her to recognise 'Que l'éducation seule fait les grands hommes; par conséquent, qu'on n'a qu'à le vouloir pour devenir grand génie.'¹¹³

These remarks have about them the unmistakeable ring of Helvétius,¹¹⁴ whose central tenet was that men, in their common humanity, shared a uniform organism and a uniform capacity for passion and reason alike. '[Les] mêmes objets font à peu près les mêmes impressions sur tous les hommes,' insisted the author of *De l'Homme*, who concluded that men must, as a result, perceive 'toujours les mêmes rapports entre les mêmes objets.'¹¹⁵ This *standardisation* of the human mind — what H.B. Acton terms 'the epistemology of egalitarianism'¹¹⁶ — was central to Helvétius's social philosophy. By a judicious stimulation of desirable passions, he argued, men could be guided in concert towards virtue and away from vice.¹¹⁷ The role of the legislator and of the educator was to actualise and turn to the common weal the inborn and uniform potential of men to experience, in a comparable — ergo predictable — fashion, the whole range of passions to which human nature is susceptible.¹¹⁸ Such a view of man leaves no room for disparities in the natural inclinations and potential talents of 'normally constituted' individuals, of what Helvétius terms 'les hommes bien conformés, doués de tous leurs sens.'¹¹⁹ *Omnia possunt omnes* was the notion upon which rested the thoroughgoing environmentalism of a thinker whose whole philosophy can be reduced to the simple but radical axiom: '*L'éducation peut tout.*'¹²⁰

Though Stendhal may not have grasped at once their full implications, he is aware that the observations inspired by Cabanis mark a significant departure from his previously held conviction. For they introduce a whole new relativistic dimension into his conception of man. While his early reservations about Cabanis did attenuate his enthusiasm, there is no doubt that Stendhal found in the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* ample cause for reflection, for he cites the work in a diary entry of 4 March 1806 as one among 'plusieurs ouvrages utiles que j'aurai lus cette année', and he recommends it, on a number of occasions, to his sister Pauline.¹²¹

What Cabanis was, in essence, obliging Stendhal to do — though it would be some time before the problem would fully crystallise in these terms — was to re-pose

the question of 'human nature' itself. Does the latter signify some universal fund of characteristics and potential (as Helvétius claimed), or is it merely a generic notion employed to denote the whole range of varying dispositions, inclinations and needs which the individual undergoes as a result of his particular constitution (as Cabanis held)?¹²² At what point did the uniformity of the species give way to the diversity and individuality of the organism?¹²³ Stendhal had, in fact, prefigured just such a question when casting around for a guide to dramatic plot in summer 1804:

Voici un moyen de faire les plans de mes poèmes, relativement aux actions que je fais faire aux personnages. C'est de bien m'assurer par des anecdotes certaines du point au-delà duquel l'éducation et les qualités que l'homme apporte en naissant ne peuvent pas le porter. De manière que je puisse dire de toutes les actions qui passeront cette limite: elles sont hors de la nature.¹²⁴

That Stendhal should, as early as August 1804, have been ascribing some role to *innate* qualities raises the question of his acquaintance with Cabanis's principal theories prior to his reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* in January 1805. He certainly knew of the work in summer 1804; and he seems to have had a clear idea of what was to be found there, for he regarded it as preparatory reading both for his *Filosofia Nova* and for his projected comedy, *Les Médecins*.¹²⁵ Whatever the precise inspiration for the above remark, it anticipates an important development in Stendhal's view of human nature. The fact that he posits some 'point', however ill-determined, beyond which education relinquishes its power to prevail over human conduct marks a notable departure from the limitless potential which he had previously assigned to the educative process as envisaged by Helvétius. 'A l'exception du *omnia possunt omnes* de Helvétius,' he would write to Adolphe de Marest in 1818, 'tout y est divin.'¹²⁶ Everyone is not, then, capable of everything: capacities are not interchangeable from one human being to the next, but are determined — and restricted — by the range of factors that define us *as individuals*. Again in *Racine et Shakespeare* Stendhal would return to refute this central point of Helvétius's theory. We perceive the world not according to any fixed and immutable standard, he argues, but from our own very singular point of view:

Avouez donc bonnement [...] que *non omnia possumus omnes*; que, quelque bons yeux que nous ayons, nous ne pouvons pas voir à la fois les deux côtés d'une orange.¹²⁷

What led Stendhal to recant his faith in the boundless educability of the human being is nowhere explicitly acknowledged in his writings. It is clear, however, that the assumption of a universal human nature, constituting a reservoir of like potential shared by all, is seriously undermined by the notion that the differences between men arise not only from the intensity with which they respond to sense-impressions, but from the very nature of those sense-impressions as they are experienced from one individual to

the next. For if passion lies — as Helvétius held — at the root of all human motivation and achievement, and if the same passion differs — as Stendhal now recognises — from one individual to the next, then this pointed surely to ineradicable differences between men which called the whole basis of Helvétius's social philosophy into question.

In the light of the above, Stendhal's notebook entry of 7 February 1805 provides a glimpse of two notions that were to become central to his philosophy of man. The first of these is implicit in the reference to *corps* as a term denoting both body *and* 'soul'. By recognising the preponderant role of physiology in the determination of human sentiment, Stendhal was to bring an important new dimension to his conception of man. If one's moral characteristics are indissociable from, indeed reducible to, one's organic constitution, if the passions by which one is motivated have a *physical seat*, then the notions of 'heart' and 'head' which had formed the basis of the *Filosofia Nova* become subject to serious revision. Though he would continue to have recourse to a metaphysical model predicated on the relationship between 'heart' and 'head', Stendhal would defer increasingly hereafter to a more physiologically-inspired conception of man.¹²⁸

The second notable development that is heralded by the passage in question lies, as we have argued, in the new relativism which comes to characterise Stendhal's view of human nature. For if men experience the same passions in different ways, if they are not so many automata responding in like fashion to like stimuli, then the problem of establishing any uniform measure by which to gauge their character and conduct becomes infinitely more complex. This realisation had begun to dawn on Stendhal with his reading of Tracy's *Idéologie* some weeks before he records his first reactions to Cabanis. In a notebook entry dated 4 January 1805, he reflects on the fact that no 'thermometer' can accurately measure passion from one individual to the next:

Les passions sont divergentes, chacune fait sa route; si elles se rencontrent, c'est par hasard. Cela vient de ce que chacun a ses idées à lui de tout ce qui est tombé sous ses sens.¹²⁹

This quasi-solipsistic conclusion finds reinforcement in the note which we have been discussing, with its reference to Cabanis and its evocation of the unbridgeable difference — both in degree *and* in kind — between the passions of Beyle himself and those of Crozet. Though the relativistic attitude that results from this conclusion would, in the longer term, offer Stendhal some means of accounting for extraordinary qualities in men, and for the very real differences that exist between them in terms of their potential and achievement, it placed, in the short term at least, a serious obstacle in his path. For it deprived him of what he most required as a student of human nature.

'Quelle doit être pour moi l'unité, le point de comparaison de ces passions?' he asks:

Est-ce leur force dans l'individu? Comment la mesurer? Par la quantité de vie qu'il sacrifierait pour arriver à la jouissance. Mais cette mesure est incomplète; il faudrait, pour qu'elle satisfît à la condition, que tous les hommes aimassent également la vie.

Dans une âme faible, ce serait une grande preuve d'amour que de traverser la Vendée en l'an VI, à cheval, seul avec un domestique, pour aller voir sa maîtresse. La preuve d'amour sera bien moins grande dans une âme ferme.¹³⁰

Stendhal's logic here is as inescapable as his vexation is evident. For he had, on more than one previous occasion, argued the necessity of establishing some common standard against which the range and intensity of passions could be measured.¹³¹ 'Pour mesurer le degré d'intensité des passions,' he had written during his reading of Hobbes in June 1804, 'trouver un terme commun de compa[raison], une unité, c'est là le premier travail. h[enri].'¹³² It becomes clear now, however, with the reading of Cabanis, that such a 'terme commun' or 'unité' might not be so easily formulated, that the method of reasoning of which it is a function might itself be seriously defective.¹³³ Hence the short but illuminating commentary by which Stendhal qualifies his note of 7 February 1805, on transcribing it into his diary over a year later:

Tout cela n'est point encore creusé, l'approfondir. Je corrige infiniment cette note, je la dénature, je vois bien mieux les objets sur lesquels elle porte qu'il y a un an, mais je suis loin d'être content.¹³⁴

iii. Temperament: Early Adumbrations

Far from happy Stendhal may have been; but the questions he had raised were to be of lasting consequence. His early reflections on Cabanis constitute the thin end of a wedge which, on the question of instinct and the differential role of physiology in the determination of character and conduct, would prise Stendhal increasingly away from the unmitigated environmentalism of his original mentor, Helvétius, and force him to accommodate a number of new and important considerations within his conception of man. In the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, it is the *distinguishing features* of character, not the *common denominators*, which come into their own. By embracing human beings in all their diversity, Cabanis would offer Stendhal some means of accounting not just for Man as a generic concept, but for the artist, the hero, the criminal — the Individual, in a word, made flesh. Physiology would provide him also — and not least — with a means of understanding, or attempting to understand, himself.

As early as 3 February 1805, indeed, barely a week after his first recorded reading of Cabanis, Stendhal's diary bears the imprint of the physiologist, as he recognises in himself 'une grande âme mélancolique' which, he laments, only his friend, 'le philosophe Mante', can appreciate.¹³⁵ In a subsequent letter to his sister Pauline, the description of his mistress Mélanie Guilbert gives rise to the same romanticised portrayal of the melancholy temperament. 'Elle est comme toi,' he writes, 'et comme tout ce qui est trop parfait pour cette terre, gâtée par la mélancolie.'¹³⁶ As Francine Marill Albérès observes, 'Stendhal se veut mélancolique.'¹³⁷ His 'bestowal' of a melancholy temperament upon himself, his mistress and his sister has about it a ring more suggestive of Rousseau than of medical philosophy. It is for that reason, however, significant to note that Cabanis, for all the clinical nature of his undertaking, does much to sanction the romanticised notion of the melancholic of which Stendhal gives evidence in the instances cited above. The physiologist, it can be argued, lends a whole new legitimacy to the 'caractère mélancolique' of which Stendhal had early sought to 'cure' himself through his process of so-called 'derousseauisation'.¹³⁸ 'Leur physionomie est triste, leur visage pâle, leurs yeux enfoncés et pleins d'un feu sombre,' writes Cabanis of the melancholic. He goes on:

Ils fuient les hommes, dont la présence agit sur eux d'une manière incommode: ils cherchent la solitude qui les soulage de ces impressions pénibles. Cependant, leur physionomie porte l'empreinte d'une sensibilité qui intéresse, et leurs manières ont un certain charme auquel peut-être je ne sais quel commencement de compassion donne encore plus d'empire.¹³⁹

It is tempting to seek here some legitimation of the misanthropy which proximity to his fellow men could prove so apt at inspiring in Stendhal. The coincidence between his reading of Cabanis and his renewed appreciation of the melancholy temperament certainly suggests that he took to heart something of the sympathetic portrait presented by Cabanis. Though Stendhal's journal does not elaborate upon his debt to the physiologist at this juncture, the discovery of Tracy's *Logique*, with all its praise of Cabanis, appears to have prompted him to reopen the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* towards the end of 1805. While the evidence of this second reading among Stendhal's notes is slight,¹⁴⁰ he does nonetheless cite Cabanis early in 1806 among those thinkers whom he considers adept in 'l'art de conduire son esprit à la vérité,' and who will help him, as he puts it, to 'perfect' his reasoning.¹⁴¹

A number of letters to Pauline Beyle which date from the same period suggest, however, that Stendhal had absorbed rather more from this early excursion into physiology than his notebooks reveal. 'J'étais comme toi, ma bonne amie,' he writes on 23 December 1805, 'les circonstances et le tempérament nous ont donné à peu près

la même âme.¹⁴² In a subsequent letter, dated 28 December, he echoes this point, enjoining his sister to 'cultiver cette sensibilité profonde et délicate à la fois que les circonstances et ton tempérament t'ont donnée.'¹⁴³ This is followed, in the same letter, by the recommendation that she take steps to procure Cabanis.¹⁴⁴

The same notion is prevalent in a letter which Stendhal addresses to his sister on 22 March 1806, in which he recounts how he is overcoming his aversion for history. 'J'entre dans ces détails,' he explains, 'parce qu'il est possible que les mêmes maîtres agissant sur un tempérament et un caractère analogue, t'aient donné le même éloignement pour cette base de toute connaissance de l'homme.'¹⁴⁵ Reason, Stendhal is clearly arguing here, goes to work not on a 'blank slate', but on an already existent raw material. Yet again, several letters later, we find him urging his sister to procure a copy of Cabanis.¹⁴⁶

Some weeks before penning the above, Stendhal had insisted to the same Pauline that, on days when she found herself beset by '*l'ennui*', she should 'avoir l'attention de *peu manger*.' He explains: 'avec ton tempérament et le mien, l'ennui vient souvent d'un mal à la tête sourd, et ce mal à la tête d'un embarras dans l'estomac.'¹⁴⁷ The whole tenor of this remark, the reference to temperament, the close association between the moral and physical states, the causal chain from 'embarras dans l'estomac' through 'mal à la tête' to 'ennui', is strongly suggestive of Cabanis, whose reflections on the 'moral' effects of diet and regimen are developed in the 'Huitième Mémoire' of the *Rapports: 'De l'influence du régime sur les dispositions et sur les habitudes morales'*.¹⁴⁸ In a subsequent letter, Stendhal lists a number of '*habitudes*' which he is endeavouring to adopt. Among these, he specifies: 'Habitue de la sobriété. Etudier les aliments qui nous font du bien et en prendre l'habitude.'¹⁴⁹ Though there is some disagreement among critics over the inspiration of this remark,¹⁵⁰ it attests clearly to the store which Stendhal was coming to set by the role of the body, and of attendant regiminal factors, within the human economy.

iv. From the Physical to the Moral: '*l'estomac gouverne la cervelle*'

On 29 March 1805, Stendhal consigns to his diary the following note: 'J'ai du feu dans les veines. Il faut que je prenne un régime rafraîchissant.'¹⁵¹ It is not clear whether, in his earliest reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, he had turned to the 'Huitième Mémoire.' If he did, however, he would have seen that no aspect of

daily regimen was insignificant for the physiologist : 'Ainsi donc le régime, c'est-à-dire l'usage journalier de l'air, des aliments, des boissons, de la veille, du sommeil et des divers travaux exerce une influence très-étendue sur les idées, sur les passions, sur les habitudes, en un mot, sur l'état moral.'¹⁵² Even a cup of coffee, Cabanis held, could alter the moral state; coffee was, as he put it, '*une boisson intellectuelle*', capable of sharpening sensibility and of rendering 'les idées plus actives et plus nettes.'¹⁵³

Whether the two are directly related or not, this evocation of the stimulant properties of coffee resonates with a remark which Stendhal makes in a letter of 27 November 1805, when he urges his sister Pauline: 'Prends du café une fois et lis l'*Idéologie*.'¹⁵⁴ Whilst working as a commercial clerk in Marseille, Stendhal in fact adopted as part of his routine the consumption of a daily measure of coffee. Towards the end of his spell in Marseille, we find him deliberating in his diary upon the 'moral' effects of this calculated habit. 'Il y a un mois que je prends chaque jour une demi-tasse de café,' he records on 17 May 1806, 'je n'en ai point pris aujourd'hui et suis infiniment plus gai, plus au niveau des hommes. Il semble que le café donne le génie et la tristesse.'¹⁵⁵ Much later, in 1818, we will find Stendhal invoking once more the logic underlying these remarks. Reflecting upon the difficulty of establishing any permanent and unerring perspective within which to apprehend reality, he writes among his notes for a second edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence*:

Comment juger de la vraie couleur des objets à travers une lunette dont les verres changent de couleur suivant le temps qu'il fait ou le nombre de tasses de café que vous avez prises?¹⁵⁶

In these brief lines, Stendhal raises a time-honoured philosophical question about 'reality' and the perception thereof.¹⁵⁷ When one considers the notion of 'reason' that is implied here — a reason that is subordinate to the contingent factors of climate and diet —, one appreciates something of the distance which Stendhal has come since his earliest definitions of this faculty. For it is clear from the above that *le cerveau* is more now than just 'le centre des idées', as he had defined it in 1803.¹⁵⁸ It is an organ dependent upon the range of influences to which the body as a whole is subject. In a text penned in 1838, which may have been destined for inclusion in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, Stendhal will recount the tale of a certain Lisimon, who has cured himself of a misanthropic and suicidal tendency and who describes his 'premier pas vers la guérison' — the adoption of a healthy regimen — in the following terms:

Dans mon malheur, je me souvins de mon ancien et respectable ami, l'illustre Cabanis; j'attaquai le physique pour venir à bout du moral; oserai-je vous dire que, depuis douze ans, je ne me suis pas permis d'autre viande que celle du poulet...¹⁵⁹

Reason, it is clear, is a fragile faculty, one element only in a complex — and

variable — human equation. This emerges clearly from an arresting entry which we find in Stendhal's diary as early as 30 December 1805:

Je dois être sobre si je veux conserver l'usage de mon esprit: le moindre dérangement d'estomac influe sur ma tête, m'y donne mal, ou m'empêche de voir nettement mes idées par un trouble d'un autre genre. La chicorée amère me rendant l'usage de mon esprit et ce libre usage étant une des choses que je désire le plus, elle me rend gai.¹⁶⁰

This conception of the organism as a filter colouring reason, serving now as support, now as hindrance to the intellect, had far-reaching implications. The 'mind' could not be divorced from the body and its operations.¹⁶¹ This example, like others which we have cited, calls into question the suggestion that Stendhal was awakened to the importance of physiology by his reading of Pinel and not of Cabanis.¹⁶² Stendhal would not come to read Pinel until late January 1806,¹⁶³ by which time he was clearly aware of the significance of physiological factors and of their close relationship with the moral state. The same echo of physiology, and of Cabanis notably, will continue to ring out from the correspondence which Stendhal despatches from his administrative posts with the French War Office in Brunswick and Vienna. Thus, in a letter written to Pauline Beyle in June 1807, he expresses his fears that the woman he has been courting, Wilhelmine von Griesheim, is dispensing her favours elsewhere. 'Enfin hier,' he writes, 'la rage dans le cœur je me suis souvenu de l'influence du physique sur le moral, j'ai pris beaucoup de thé et j'ai retrouvé un peu de ma raison.'¹⁶⁴

A clearer echo still of the ideas expounded by Cabanis is to be found in a letter written from Vienna in July 1809. 'Je suis encore malade de la fièvre,' Stendhal informs his sister; 'on me fait espérer que six jours de calmants me remettront à flot; mais le moral a la fièvre, le médecin n'en sait rien et s'étonne du peu d'effet de ses drogues.'¹⁶⁵ These remarks, evoking as they do the absence of any real differentiation between the physical and moral states, lead Stendhal to make an altogether more substantive point:

la santé est le premier des biens; il faut prendre une consultation chez tous les grands médecins. Tu finiras par connaître ton tempérament; ne point faire de remèdes et changer le mauvais équilibre des humeurs uniquement par la diversité de la nourriture et de la diète générale; voilà de la science, je crois; mais souviens-toi que la mère des émotions douces et par conséquent du bonheur, c'est une bonne santé.¹⁶⁶

Much has been made by certain critics of Stendhal's valetudinarian tendencies.¹⁶⁷ The significance of a remark such as the above, however, carries beyond a narrow preoccupation with personal health and permits of a more broadly philosophical interpretation. Happiness itself is invested here with a physiological dimension; indeed, to judge by Stendhal's language — 'le premier des biens', 'la mère [...] du bonheur'

— corporal well-being becomes a pre-requisite of the 'moral' state of happiness. While this can be read, on one level, as good common sense, it contributes once more to an obscuring of the distinctions between the physical and the moral realms, recalling Cabanis's contention that 'le bonheur moral' resides in 'le bien-être physique': both are but 'ce même bien-être, considéré sous un autre point de vue et dans d'autres rapports.'¹⁶⁸ When, in a letter written some weeks later, Stendhal recounts how 'l'air du mois de septembre me donne toujours le bonheur, sans avoir aucun sujet de contentement de plus ou de moins qu'à l'ordinaire,'¹⁶⁹ he conveys something of this notion. In a diary entry of 19 December 1815, however, he will go much further, attempting to *localise* the experience in question, to assign the sensation of happiness to a particular region of the human organism:

Je sens vivement que le bonheur tient aux nerfs. J'ai un sentiment de bien-être par tout le corps, surtout au diaphragme, après six heures de travail. Il y a un bon moment dans chaque journée. Lorsqu'il est passé, donner le reste à la société.¹⁷⁰

A measure of chicory, a cup of tea or coffee, a breath of September air, a few hours of work at a desk: all suffice to lend a distinctly *physical* quality to the operations of head and heart, and to the happiness or unhappiness that may ensue. Such a notion, if its expression gains in assurance through time, was, as we have suggested, not new to Stendhal. As early as 12 August 1804, in fact, we find a diary entry in which the consumption of a particular tisane is recorded for the intellectual inspiration and the feeling of intense happiness with which it coincides. The event brings to mind a meal of spinach and bread which, Stendhal recalls, had accompanied a similar feeling of elation one Sunday evening in Claix, 'après avoir fait les premiers bons vers que j'aie trouvés de ma vie.' Such moments of ecstasy, he concludes, 'd'après la nature de l'homme, ne peuvent pas durer.'¹⁷¹

The remark is worthy of note. For if Stendhal seeks here to identify some of the mechanisms whereby a state of happiness may be induced, he places severe limitations upon the nature and possible duration of that state. The diary entry in question might be overlooked, were it not for the much more extensive treatment of the same question which we find in a number of letters written to Pauline Beyle between 1805 and 1812, in which the ephemeral nature of happiness is related to contingent factors in the human organism itself.¹⁷² 'Une ou deux fois par an on a de ces moments d'extase où toute l'âme est bonheur,' Stendhal writes in a letter dated 20 August 1805. He explains:

Un peu d'étude de l'homme moral apprend la rareté de cet état délicieux, un peu d'étude de l'homme physique montre comment il est rare. Pour le produire, il faut un éréthisme (une chanterelle de violon lâche donne le *ré*; on la tend à son ton naturel, elle donne le *mi*; on la tend encore, elle donne le *fa*, mais bientôt elle se casse, elle est en éréthisme); voilà nos nerfs. L'état d'extase les met dans un état qui ne peut durer sans produire d'horribles douleurs.¹⁷³

More colourful than physiologically accurate, perhaps, this passage nonetheless illustrates what Stendhal clearly considers to be an important idea, if we are to judge by the number of occasions on which we find it reiterated in subsequent letters.¹⁷⁴ The same notion, as J.-C. Alciatoire points out, could have been inspired by a number of the thinkers with whom Stendhal was acquainted.¹⁷⁵ The idea, however, that man is constrained by the limits of his organism found no more emphatic expression than in Cabanis's *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. No work appears to have been more influential in bringing Stendhal to identify not only reason and happiness but the essence of character itself with man's physical constitution. Thus, in a diary entry dated 20 September 1808, we find him reflecting upon the lack of character which he deems to be the principal defect of the Germanic people. This he ascribes to a number of causes, such as climate, government and a predilection for the Bible. He then goes on to assert:

La froideur des Allemands s'explique bien par leur nourriture: du pain noir, du beurre, du lait et de la bière; du café cependant, mais il leur faudrait du vin, et du plus généreux, pour donner de la vie à leurs muscles épais.¹⁷⁶

In the segment of his journal of 1808 headed 'Voyage à Brunswick', Stendhal endeavours similarly to account in physiological terms for the German character. Generally speaking, he argues, 'c'est le *ton* qui manque aux organes allemands: ils sont sains, d'une belle taille, mais le ton y manque. Il me semble que leur bière, leur *butter-brod* et leurs laitages éternels ne sont pas propres à leur donner plus de vivacité.' To this brief description of the German diet, Stendhal then adds the reflection: 'Je ne doute pas que la physionomie morale du paysan changeât si chaque homme buvait une bouteille de vin de Languedoc par jour.'¹⁷⁷

These remarks, however apparently crude in their assumptions, recall very closely indeed Cabanis's discourse on the effects of diet, his bold contention that 'l'estomac gouverne la cervelle.'¹⁷⁸ In particular, they echo the latter's observations on the tendency of milk to impose 'des habitudes de lenteur aux mouvements musculaires', and the capacity of wine, by contrast, to inspire 'une douce excitation du cerveau', 'un sentiment vif d'accroissement dans les forces musculaires', 'les penchants bienveillants, la confiance, la cordialité.'¹⁷⁹ Stendhal's ruminations on the Germanic character and its rapport with diet serve too, in some sense, as a pendant to a curious personal observation which he consigns to his diary in March of the same year:

Pour moi.
Remède souverain contre l'amour: manger des pois. Epruvé aujourd'hui, 25 mars, après une promenade très agréable à cheval et un goût vif éprouvé pour la petite voisine du palais Bewern.¹⁸⁰

While the response on the part of today's reader may be mild amusement, there is nothing to suggest that Stendhal is anything less than serious here. The fanciful nature of his reflection serves only to throw more clearly into relief his conviction that the properties of the food one consumed could have a very significant effect upon one's moral disposition. Nor is the detail of his ride on horseback gratuitous, since, as his letters and diaries from Prussia testify, he had come to regard horse-riding as a valuable therapeutic exercise within his daily regimen.¹⁸¹ 'Mais je tombe dans le sentiment,' he writes in a letter of 26 November 1809. 'Je vais fumer trois ou quatre pipes et monter à cheval.'¹⁸²

Human Nature Redefined

It seems reasonable to conclude from the foregoing that Stendhal set considerably greater store by his early reading of Cabanis than has been suggested by some critics. His diaries and letters from 1805 onwards, with their increasing insistence on the physiological dimension of human nature, demonstrate the sharp contrast that exists between the highly abstract conception of man which characterises Stendhal's earliest writings and the much more naturalistic vision which emerges with his reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. We have noted how, on a number of occasions, Stendhal registers dissatisfaction with his reasoning on human nature as it is developed in his notebooks of 1802 to 1805.¹⁸³ It would be some time, however, before he would be able to address himself to the business of reaffirming his convictions in this domain, and of bringing the ideas encountered in Cabanis fully to bear upon his philosophy of man.

The years 1805 to 1810 mark something of a hiatus in Stendhal's philosophical endeavours. During this period, which he spent firstly as a commercial clerk in Marseille and then, from October 1806, in the service of the imperial bureaucracy in Prussia and Austria, Stendhal's wordly ambitions were at their height and left him little leisure with which to indulge his more intellectual interests. Consequently, the names of Helvétius, Tracy, Cabanis *et al* are cited with decreasing regularity, disappearing almost entirely from his letters and diaries between 1807 and 1810.¹⁸⁴ It is only when, in 1810, Stendhal returns for a prolonged spell to Paris that his writings reveal a rekindled interest in philosophy. What prompts him, significantly, is the reawakening of his dramatic ambitions. In May 1810, amid a number of notes which signal a renascent interest in his long neglected play *Letellier*,¹⁸⁵ he remarks upon the scant insight into human nature which he has to show for his years of study and wordly

experience.¹⁸⁶ The following month, he commits to his diary a short note outlining the measures that might help to re-establish on a firmer foundation his understanding of man:

Il peut être utile, pour mettre de la clarté dans mes idées, de repenser, après cinq ans d'oubli, à mon ancien travail de 1805, sur les caractères naturels et sociaux et leurs oppositions avec les passions, avec le classement de ces oppositions en sujets tragiques ou comiques.

Combiner avec le tempérament physique.¹⁸⁷

It is the final remark here that is most significant. For it indicates quite clearly that Stendhal now considered the physiological aspect of temperament to be essential in any complete representation of human nature. After a brief review of the '*liens naturels*', '*passions*' and '*habitudes*' which had so absorbed him in 1803 and 1804, he makes a new and very telling point:

Les passions font faire des actions presque entièrement différentes suivant qu'elles se nichent dans des *tempéraments* ou des *caractères* ou *ensembles d'habitudes*, différents.¹⁸⁸

Here, in 1810, we find an explicit reaffirmation of the ideas contained, in germ, in Stendhal's notebook entry of 7 February 1805. For the introduction into the human equation of an indwelling physiological factor, preceding the operations of 'heart' and 'head' and influencing the ways in which passions are at work from one individual to the next, signals a far-reaching advance upon the more rationalistic analysis of character which Stendhal had attempted in his earliest writings.¹⁸⁹ The role of physiology in determining the intensity of passion was a notion, we recall, which had not even occurred to him in his initial reflections on the question.¹⁹⁰ In a note dating from June 1804, Stendhal had posited the following distinction — described then as 'lumineuse' — between sensual and cerebral pleasure:

Le plaisir des sens ou pour mieux dire du sens doit être le même chez toutes les nations, l'autre [le plaisir de l'esprit] varie et augmente à mesure que la civilisation se perfectionne.¹⁹¹

Though he had tempered this assertion with the question 'Est-il vrai?', the notion that *physiological* particularities and differences could determine the very character of the sensation undergone — from one region to the next, one individual to the next — had nowhere entered into Stendhal's rationale at this early stage. Commenting, in August 1804, upon the need for some aesthetic sensitivity in the depiction of passion, he had observed:

Il faut peindre l'Apollon du Belvédère dans les bras de la Vénus de Médicis, dans les plus délicieux jardins des environs de Naples, et non un gros Hollandais sur sa Hollandaise dans un sale entresol. Les degrés de passion sont les mêmes, voyez l'effet.¹⁹²

Now, in February 1811, the inadequacies of this earlier view are clearly acknowledged by Stendhal:

Quoique les tempéraments de Cabanis nous paraissent très peu prouvés, il est à croire que le bilieux, le flegmatique, le sanguin, le mélancolique, le musculaire et le nerveux prennent le même plaisir et la même peine d'une manière différente. Ce qui est vrai de l'un de ces tempéraments ne l'est pas de l'autre.¹⁹³

In this note of February 1811, we find a clear restatement of the physiologist's contention that 'les impressions que font sur nous les mêmes objets n'ont pas toujours le même degré d'intensité' — a phenomenon which Cabanis attributes in no small measure to the role of temperament.¹⁹⁴ While Stendhal recognises the hypothetical aspect of what he regards as a pioneering thesis, he is nonetheless prepared, by concluding thus that different individuals 'prennent le même plaisir et la même peine d'une manière différente', to subscribe to the implications of what Cabanis postulates.

Once again, the letters to Pauline Beyle provide a valuable insight into Stendhal's mind. From a letter dated 13 April 1810, it appears that Pauline has responded to her brother's exhortations and embarked on a reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. 'Je suis convaincu,' writes Stendhal, 'que le baron Cabanis t'a ennuyée. As-tu été frappée des caractères des quatre tempéraments? Tâche d'observer cela dans la nature.'¹⁹⁵ Some ten months later, suspecting still that his sister has found Cabanis heavy going, Stendhal sends her an extract, as he puts it, 'de la partie la plus essentielle: les tempéraments':

C'est incomplet, mais cette science commence. Dans cent ans, on fera là-dessus de bons livres que nous ne lirons pas.¹⁹⁶

These remarks convey not only Stendhal's new-found enthusiasm for Cabanis, but the altogether new premium which he has come to set on the latter's discussion of the temperaments. In February and March 1811, together with his friend Louis Crozet, Stendhal painstakingly extracted the descriptions of the temperaments from the 'Sixième Mémoire' of Cabanis's work, *De l'influence des tempéraments sur la formation des idées et des affections morales*, dividing these into 'caractère physique' and its corollary, 'caractère moral'.¹⁹⁷ It was a labour whose fruits were not to have been of a purely intellectual kind. The following month, we find the two friends once more bent over a joint enterprise, this time committing to paper plans for an assault by Stendhal on the virtue of his cousin by marriage, Alexandrine Daru. The result is the so-called 'Consultation pour Banti', drawn up to guide Stendhal in his deliberations over whether and how best to seduce Mme Daru.¹⁹⁸ What is striking is the evidence which we find already here of the reading and note-taking sessions in which Stendhal

and Crozet had been engaged some weeks earlier. Mme Daru, we read, has all the characteristics of 'un tempérament ardent'; she is not given to 'la rêverie mélancolique'; her father has 'un caractère très sanguin'; her husband, Pierre Daru, is choleric and, like his wife, lacking in any 'melancholy' quality.¹⁹⁹ As it happened, Stendhal would never put to the test the ardour of Mme Daru's temperament, the sanguinity of her father, or the cholera of her husband. That he should be ready to press into service concepts so clearly derived from Cabanis in the perilous business of wooing his protector's wife, however, says something about the store which he was now setting by temperament as a guide to human character and conduct.

In August 1811, the influence of Cabanis is evident once more in a number of notes on the passions grouped together by Stendhal and Crozet. Here, we find Stendhal returning to the question which had troubled him some six years earlier: that of establishing a common measure by which to gauge the intensity of passion. Observing that 'l'homme est en général poussé par cinq ou six passions qui tour à tour sont dominantes,' he goes on to conclude:

Par les connaissances théoriques que nous possédons, nous parvenons bien à distinguer ces six forces; mais nos connaissances sont trop vagues pour que nous puissions apprécier avec exactitude leur intensité. Par conséquent, nous ne pouvons connaître la résultante = la conduite de l'homme.²⁰⁰

In this short but very significant statement, we find the renunciation of Stendhal's earlier belief that some 'mathematical' principle could be applied in the study of the human heart. Man's nature, it was increasingly clear to him, would not fit conveniently within the confines of any simple theorem. The recognition of this fact alone represents a major development in Stendhal's conception of man. To the questions that he had posed — but left unresolved — in 1805 and 1806, he now provides some semblance of an answer:

La même passion, aux yeux de Dieu, s'il existait, est peut-être différente dans chaque individu; tout ce que nous pouvons faire, c'est de les voir différentes dans les tempéraments différents. Voir la description que nous avons faite en suivant la plupart des idées de Cabanis; il est clair que l'amour dans *Calon* et dans *Bitche* est extrêmement différent.

Il paraît que certaines passions ne peuvent pas prendre et pousser dans certains tempéraments; on se figurerait difficilement l'avarice passion dominante d'un sanguin.²⁰¹

In its open-minded tone, this passage marks a clear departure by Stendhal from his erstwhile quest for neat and all-encompassing certainties. What is more, the suggestion that certain passions and certain temperaments are mutually exclusive, or, put another way, that particular passions are the preserve of particular temperaments, constitutes an outright denial of his earlier claim that each man, by his very nature, 'renferme en lui le

germe de toutes les passions.²⁰² For it had, we recall, been Stendhal's express belief that each passion was a definable phenomenon, uniform and universal. 'Je sais bien qu'une certaine passion p a un effet p', he had asserted confidently in August 1803.²⁰³ This belief in the fundamental uniformity of passion had led him to conclude that *circumstance alone* must account for the differing degrees to which particular passions are experienced from one individual to the next. 'Quelles sont les circonstances propres à porter chaque passion à son maximum?' he had pondered amid his early notes on dramatic characterisation and plot.²⁰⁴ Nor was there any method, it had seemed then, for matching particular passions to particular individuals. 'Lorsque j'aurai fait un plan,' Stendhal had noted in April 1803, 'essayer successivement à chaque personnage tous les vices et toutes les vertus. Voir ceux qui leur conviennent.'²⁰⁵

The important point about the extracts cited from Stendhal's notes and correspondence of 1811 is that they demonstrate the extent to which his philosophy of man was evolving during a period when his thought is generally held to have remained unchanged. The role played by Cabanis in this evolution, and the degree to which it marks a departure from Helvétius, are of particular significance. Hence the remark which we find scribbled by Stendhal on a volume of Vauvenargues in 1811:

Un hom[me] avec un esprit ordinaire qui dès l'âge de dix ans mettrait *tout* son bonheur à faire la guerre par ex., serait probablement un génie militaire. Son génie serait modifié par son tempérament, sanguin: Condé; bilieux; V[auvenargues].²⁰⁶

The insertion of the tentative 'probablement', and the insistence on the modifying role of temperament, underline Stendhal's considerable departure here from his earlier belief, as expressed in 1803, that one had only to set one's mind to it in order to become a great genius, warrior, geometer or poet, according to one's preference.²⁰⁷ The body, Stendhal was increasingly to recognise, has its own laws and its own logic, however inscrutable. Hence the reflection, consigned to his diary of 27 October 1813, on the dramatist Charles Collé, 'à qui il n'a manqué qu'une plus grande force de tête [...] et les passions fortes d'un bilieux, pour être bien près de Molière.'²⁰⁸ Here was a rationale that was to exert a powerful and enduring influence upon Stendhal's thought. 'Or, pour faire un homme supérieur,' he will argue much later in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, 'ce n'est pas assez d'une tête logique, il faut un certain tempérament fougueux.'²⁰⁹

Let us return, with these remarks in mind, to Stendhal's notes of 1810 and 1811, in which we find a reawakening of his interest in philosophy. For here, in the 'Classification des états de l'âme' which he draws up in August 1811, we discover a whole new emphasis on passion as the product of an *organism*:

Passions simples.

Besoins physiques: faim, soif, sommeil, chaleur, coït. Un homme n'est susceptible de passions qu'autant que ces besoins sont satisfaits.

[...]

Voir la description des tempéraments page... Cette description doit être suivie des Qualités de l'âme.²¹⁰

Consideration of physical man must, it is now clear, *precede* that of 'moral' man. Once more, we note that Stendhal's philosophical conviction leaves room for a significant element of faith. 'Nous prenons tout cela pour vrai,' he writes, on completing the review of the temperaments undertaken with Crozet in March 1811, 'nous n'avons pas assez de données pour juger du degré de confiance à accorder à ces assertions.'²¹¹ In 1812 still, he hesitates over the degree of certainty which can be ascribed to some thoughts on the nature of pleasure and pain as they relate to the temperaments: 'En 1812 les tempéraments nous paraissent trop peu prouvés pour que nous puissions y appliquer la théorie ci-dessus.'²¹²

Such reservations, however, were not to diminish the esteem in which Stendhal would now come to hold Cabanis and his work. To the passages on temperament extracted from the latter in 1811, we find appended, some two years later, the following reflection:

Je pense en 1813, à Sagan que nous étions trop sévères envers Cabanis. Il fallait voir dans son livre des observations et non des assertions. Peut-on nier à un astronome qu'une comète par lui observée a fait tel mouvement? Il dit l'avoir vue; la cause de ce mouvement, il l'ignore.²¹³

The same sentiment is expressed in a subsequent note, which we find in Stendhal's diary of September 1813, where he cites Cabanis on the nature of sensibility before adding:

Cet auteur n'a pas tout le tort que Crozet et moi lui trouvons; ses torts sont dans la forme; il affirme trop, et montre trop comme étant prouvées des choses qu'il devait donner comme des aperçus singuliers, comme des révolutions singulières vues dans les astres.²¹⁴

It is, then, as a practised observer of reality, an exponent of that all-important art of *seeing*, that Stendhal comes to view this *médecin-idéologue* who serves as a guide to the physiological nature of man. From 1811 onward, a version, however rudimentary, of Cabanis's theory of temperament becomes increasingly integral to Stendhal's perception both of his own character and of human nature in general. Hence the proliferation of labels — 'bilieux',²¹⁵ 'mélancolique',²¹⁶ 'sanguin',²¹⁷ 'flegmatique'²¹⁸ — by which he now seeks to make sense of himself and of those around him. In *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Stendhal would claim that, during the Russian campaign, he carried with him a copy of Cabanis, 'et devinant ses idées à travers ses

phrases, je cherchais des exemples dans les figures de tant de soldats qui passaient auprès de moi en chantant...'²¹⁹ Later, towards the end of 1813, Stendhal would undertake afresh the reading of a number of Molière's plays and interpret their characterisation and plot with an eye to the role of temperament.²²⁰ *Les Femmes savantes* in particular he would qualify as a 'Comédie fondée solidement sur les principes médicaux des tempéraments.'²²¹ His dramatic ambition revived, he was by now convinced that any accurate representation of human reality on stage must take cognisance of the physiological dimension in man. Hence his palpable dissatisfaction with Schlegel's *Cours de littérature dramatique*, in whose margin he scribbles the criticism: 'Manque de physiologie et de la doct[rine] de l'intérêt. Tout cela vague, faute de physiologie.'²²²

The means which he afforded of observing *others* was, however, only part of what Cabanis had to offer his newly appreciative student. For Stendhal, as we have seen, would not hesitate to discern in himself certain characteristics of the temperaments (melancholic and bilious notably) as he finds them defined by Cabanis. Thus, of his discretion with regard to the women he has loved, Brulard will recall: 'J'ai éprouvé absolument à cet égard tous les symptômes du tempérament mélancolique décrit par Cabanis.'²²³ His amorous disposition,²²⁴ his sensibility,²²⁵ his sexual discretion,²²⁶ his timidity,²²⁷ his lack of memory,²²⁸ his very skin-type,²²⁹ all will in turn find a physiological touchstone in the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*.²³⁰

It is only after his readings of Cabanis — readings which, as we have said, span the decade 1805 to 1815 — that one can say Stendhal has all the essential ingredients of his philosophy. On both of the occasions when, in 1813, Stendhal defines the sum of the philosophy required of the dramatist, Cabanis features alongside Helvétius, Tracy and Hobbes (the latter for his definition of laughter only): 'I see no other springs de goût-raisonneur que la VIII^e section de *l'Homme*, Hobbes sur le rire, and myself sur le sourire, la table analytique de Cabanis par Tracy et la *Logique* du même.'²³¹ Some ten years later, when it falls to Stendhal to provide a review of the *Œuvres complètes de Cabanis* for the *New Monthly Magazine* of April 1823, he will be more effusive still in his assessment, hailing the physiologist as 'ce grand philosophe', 'l'un des fondateurs de la philosophie française.'²³²

In Cabanis's theory of the temperaments in particular, Stendhal discovered (or rediscovered, since 'temperament' itself was a far from novel notion)²³³ a principle whose chief virtue lay in its simplicity and in its ready applicability across the whole range of human experience and endeavour. In his analyses of theatre, of music, of the fine arts, of national character, of love, Stendhal would consistently acknowledge the

important role of physiology. The deference to Cabanis which is to be found in his private writings from 1811 onwards was to become in turn an essential feature of his published work. The shift in focus to which this bears witness, from a pseudo-mathematical to a pseudo-physiological perspective on man, is of fundamental importance for any appreciation of Stendhal's intellectual development. Michel Crouzet, one of the few scholars to recognise the full impact of Stendhal's 'conversion' to physiology, sums up his evolution in the following terms:

L'itinéraire de l'égotiste révolté va de l'algèbre à la biologie: ce sont deux fois; de la confiance en l'infinie plasticité de l'homme entièrement *acquis*, sinon construit volontairement, à la reconnaissance de l'instinct du fœtus, et des tempéraments, et même de l'hérédité. De l'apologie de la conscience universellement claire au sentiment d'un *donné* définitif de l'économie corporelle cachée dans d'obscures profondeurs.²³⁴

Stendhal would never, of course, give the dramatic expression he had envisaged to the store of ideas within which Cabanis's theories are brought to bear. But the latter do claim their place in works which go to the very heart of Stendhal's considerations on human nature. The digressions on temperament which one finds in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and *De l'Amour*, far from being mere 'padding' — as Margaret Tillet claims²³⁵ — bespeak a very real concern with the role of physiology in determining human character, taste and behaviour. For in such determinism Stendhal clearly believed. 'Le bilieux,' writes the author of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'est forcé aux grandes choses par son organisation physique.'²³⁶ It is the role of the painter, he argues, to express 'par les formes de son personnage le caractère que ses organes le forcent à avoir.'²³⁷ Stendhal's choice of verb in both these instances is far from gratuitous. The previously held notion that one could *create* oneself, that one could *forge* a character in which desirable passions would be cultivated, is undermined now by a new, increasingly deterministic resignation to character as it is defined by the intrinsic qualities of temperament. As the author of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* will recognise, 'une partie de la biographie des grands hommes doit être fournie par leur médecin.'²³⁸

In thus acknowledging what Diderot had taken to be the fundamental lacuna in Helvétius, Stendhal is far indeed from the philosophy of his earliest mentor. 'Interrogez le médecin,' Diderot had urged in his refutation of *De l'Homme*, 'et il vous dira que le caractère qu'on a n'est pas toujours celui qu'on montre, et que le premier est le produit de la fibre raide ou molle, du sang doux ou brûlant, de la lymphe épaisse ou fluide, de la bile âcre ou savonneuse, et de l'état des parties dures ou fluides de notre machine.'²³⁹ As with Diderot so with Cabanis, the overriding conception is, as Sergio Moravia puts it, 'that of a man fully reducible to his own physical unitary

"organization" without dualistic, metaphysical, or spiritualistic residuals.²⁴⁰ The comparison which Stendhal draws in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* between Leonardo da Vinci and the *médecins-idéologues*, Cabanis and Pinel, is instructive in this regard. For all three are upheld as pioneers of 'une partie de la science de l'homme, qui même aujourd'hui est encore vierge: la connaissance des faits qui lient intimement la science des passions, la science des idées, et la médecine.'²⁴¹ It is in this sense that Leonardo da Vinci attains his full status in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*. For it is to Leonardo's enduring credit, argues Stendhal, that he, alone among his peers, recognised the essential inter-relationship between the physical and the moral realms of human experience:

Le vulgaire des peintres ne considère dans les larmes qu'un signe de la douleur morale. Il faut voir que c'en est la marque *nécessaire*. C'est à reconnaître la nécessité de ce mouvement, c'est à suivre l'effet anatomique de la douleur depuis le moment où une femme tendre reçoit la nouvelle de la mort de son amant jusqu'à celui où elle pleure, c'est à voir bien nettement comment les diverses pièces de la machine humaine forcent les yeux à répandre des larmes, que Léonard s'appliqua. Le curieux qui a étudié la nature sous cet aspect voit souvent les autres peintres faire courir un homme sans lui faire remuer les jambes.²⁴²

Stendhal's language here, with its insistence on *necessity* and its evocation of the human anatomy as a composite 'machine', explicable in terms of identifiable laws, has strong overtones of mechanistic determinism. The importance of anatomy to the painter or sculptor is underlined by Stendhal on a number of occasions.²⁴³ Here, however, his considerations go far beyond the *aesthetic* aspect of artistic representation. As a model of empirical scruple, Stendhal goes so far as to deem Leonardo a forerunner of the new pioneers in the physiological sciences:

Je ne connais que deux écrivains qui aient approché franchement de la science attaquée par Léonard: Pinel et Cabanis. Leurs ouvrages, pleins du génie d'Hippocrate, c'est-à-dire de faits et de conséquences bien déduites de ces faits, ont commencé la science.²⁴⁴

What Stendhal is extolling in both of the passages cited is, in essence, that same empirical approach to knowledge, through observation and experiment, which he had held from the outset to be the foundation of any sound scientific or philosophical method.²⁴⁵ What is significant about these extracts, as they reflect Stendhal's thinking in 1817, is that philosophy and science — in particular medical science — no longer constitute separate modes of inquiry, but are coalesced into a single 'science' of man which takes on now its fullest meaning. Physiology becomes the ground on which Science, Philosophy and Art meet. The sometime ideal of the *poète-philosophe* is expanded now by Stendhal to embrace a whole new area of consideration: the ideal henceforth will be the *poète-philosophe-médecin*. The title of the chapter of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* in which Stendhal calls attention to Leonardo's method and

achievement is at once a transcription of Cabanis's title and a profession of philosophical faith:

Chap. LXI. Léonard voit les rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme, fondements de toute bonne philosophie.²⁴⁶

The implications of this statement, and the marked development in Stendhal's conception of man to which it attests, provide the subject for our considerations in the following chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. See, for example, *JL*, II, 36-37, 58-59. On Stendhal's reading of Mirabeau, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 195-201.
2. See *OI*, I, 166-168; *Corr*, I, 170-175. It is noteworthy that here again Stendhal's motivation springs from no attraction to 'philosophy' for its own sake. The reasoning behind his resolute sortie to purchase Tracy is made clear in his diary. 'Je vais au *Philinte de Molière* [...]. Il m'a enflammé pour la vertu [...]. L'enthousiasme de vertu est si fort, et je sens si bien qu'on ne peut avoir de la vertu qu'en proportion de son esprit, et que, dans les ouvrages, la vertu des personnages est une grande partie, que, malgré la neige, je vais chez Courcier, quai de la Volaille, acheter la première partie de Tracy, et que, sans feu, je viens d'en lire les soixante premières pages' (*OI*, I, 166-167). The same event is recounted in a letter to Pauline of 1 January 1805 (*Corr*, I, 174-175).
3. *OI*, I, 173.
4. *Corr*, I, 172-174. On this first principle of Ideology, see Van Duzer, p. 5; Boas, pp. 4-5, 24-28.
5. *Corr*, I, 173. See on this point Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 73 n. 16; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 266-268; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 57-58 et passim.
6. *Corr*, I, 171-172.
7. *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. III i: *De la Logique*, ch. 4, p. 226. On Stendhal's reading of Tracy, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 164-166, 283-286; Adams, pp. 47-77; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 67-86; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 429-431 n. 7; Crouzet, *Raison*, passim.
8. See J.-C. Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Destutt de Tracy sur la cause première de toute erreur', *Symposium*, vol. IV, no. 2 (1950), pp. 358-365.
9. *Corr*, I, 244-245. It is clear that Stendhal, far from formulating a stable philosophy in these early years, lurches from one 'revelation' to the next — in Condillac (*Ibid.*, I, 16, 36-37), Helvétius (*JL*, I, 112, 124), Hobbes (*JL*, I, 353, 365) and Tracy (*Corr*, I, 170-175; *OI*, I, 173) in turn.
10. See *Corr*, I, 248-249, 263-264; *OI*, I, 363-364. See also on these points Picavet, pp. 307, 313-317, 340-341, 365-366; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 255; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 75-78; Blin, *Roman*, p. 121 n. 2; Smith, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Bankruptcy of Sensationalism', pp. 203-204; Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Destutt de Tracy sur la cause première de toute erreur', pp. 358-360.
11. It is arguable that the unravelling of memories in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* exhibits something of the debt contracted to Tracy's *Logique* in 1805. See, for example, *HB*, II, 142. See also on this question Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 331.
12. *Corr*, I, 246.
13. *OI*, I, 363-364.
14. See Chapter IV.
15. *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. III i: *De la Logique*, ch. 3, pp. 219-220.

16. *Corr*, I, 246.
17. G. Chinard, *Jefferson et les Idéologues d'après sa correspondance inédite avec Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, J.-B. Say et Auguste Comte* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press; Paris: PUF, 1925), p. 7.
18. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 165-166.
19. See Blin, *Personnalité*, p. 8.
20. It is on this, its very starting-point, argues C. Smith ('Destutt de Tracy and the Bankruptcy of Sensationalism'), that the ambitions of Ideology were to founder. On Tracy's philosophy in general, see the comprehensive analysis of Picavet, pp. 293-398.
21. *Raison*, p. 107. The 'vacant' value of Ideology as a *method* rather than a *science of man* is recognised by Crouzet, who notes that 'l'idéologie dans la mesure où elle définit une pédagogie, enseigne moins un savoir que les moyens de le découvrir' (p. 363). That said, 'Ideology' as a *movement* did, of course, imply a whole conception of man and nature, society and morality, religion and politics. On this broader aspect, see above, Chapter I; Van Duzer, pp. 43-83; Cailliet, pp. 165-210; Boas, pp. 1-22; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 42-47, 95-99. See also on this question the comprehensive, and regrettably untranslated, Moravia, *Il Pensiero degli Idéologues. Scienza e Filosofia in Francia (1780-1815)*.
22. *JL*, II, 182. See Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 6: 'L'idéologie au sens large se dit science de l'homme: le Beyliste l'interprète en science du moi...'
23. *OI*, I, 363, 365, 369.
24. *Ibid.*, I, 429.
25. *Corr*, I, 263-264.
26. See *ibid.*, I, 171; II, 132. See on this point Lichtheim, p. 167; Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', pp. 200-202.
27. *Op. cit.*, p. 68.
28. *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Larousse, 1866-77), vol. IX, p. 549.
29. *JL*, I, 433.
30. *Ibid.*, I, 369.
31. See much later in *De l'Amour* (II, 197) Stendhal's reference to 'les froids philosophes qui, en fait de passions, ne vivent presque que de curiosité et d'amour-propre.'
32. *JL*, I, 321.
33. *Ibid.*, II, 6.
34. *Ibid.*, II, 18. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 21: 'les gens froids quoique sages ne peuvent pas dire ce qui est sur les passions fortes qu'ils n'ont jamais éprouvées.'
35. Stendhal will be upholding this distinction still in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (I, 244).

36. *JL*, III, 95. On this pamphlet, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 583-599.
37. *Personnalité*, p. 527.
38. See Picavet, p. 302; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 59, 113-116; Barth, pp. 2-3.
39. *JL*, II, 180.
40. Introduction, *De l'Amour* by Destutt de Tracy, p. lvi.
41. *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 252-253. One can set against this overly simplified analysis M. Crouzet's assertion that it is 'en Romantique que Stendhal lit les Idéologues, les deux attitudes sont en continuité et en complémentarité l'une par rapport à l'autre' (*Raison*, p. 4).
42. See on this point Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 37; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 12-15. Stendhal's identification — or lack of such — with Ideology can be measured, too, by the fact that he remains, as Crouzet points out (pp. 15-16), 'un isolé', disinclined to penetrate the society of the Idéologues or to play any role in the soon-to-dwindle fortunes of the *Décade philosophique*. On the dearth of references to this journal in Stendhal's writings, see *ibid.*, pp. 15, 908 n. For a comprehensive study of an intellectual circle which would have been only too keen to engage the services of a militant young 'philosophe', see J. Kitchin, *Un journal "philosophique": La Décade (1794-1807)*. See also M. Régaldo, 'La *Décade* et les philosophes du XVIII^e siècle', *Dix-huitième siècle*, vol. II (1970), pp. 113-130; Picavet, pp. 20-100; Cailliet, pp. 247-272.
43. *De l'Amour*, I, 27 n. 1. Cf. the reference to Tracy's chapter on love which we find in a later footnote: 'Le lecteur trouvera dans ce chapitre des idées d'une bien autre portée philosophique que tout ce qu'il peut rencontrer ici' (*Ibid.*, II, 111 n. 1).
44. *Op. cit.*, p. 190.
45. *R et S*, 255.
46. *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
47. See, for example, *JL*, I, 344, 372; II, 18, 21, 78, 102; *Corr*, I, 126, 160.
48. *Op. cit.*, p. 49.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 100. Cf. Picavet, p. 576: 'Stendhal fait l'idéologie de l'amour.'
50. *HB*, II, 54.
51. *Le Cœur de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 255. See also *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 25.
52. *JL*, I, 130.
53. *OI*, I, 710, 711.
54. *Romans*, II, 556. All of this gives point to the distinction drawn by J.-C. Augendre (*La critique beyliste d'Helvétius*, p. 234 n. 52) when he writes: 'Au sens strict, le beylisme se définit donc comme *pathologie* et non comme *idéologie* (du grec *pathos*, affection, passion).' Cf. the same critic's judgment of Stendhal in 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', p. 260: 'La

"passion" constitue donc bien le concept fondamental de son dispositif philosophique.'

55. *Op. cit.*, p. 86.
56. *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 165.
57. Cited by Chinard, Introduction, *De l'Amour* by Destutt de Tracy, p. xliv. On the testimony of Tracy's daughter-in-law, see also Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 285-286; A. Thibaudet, *Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Stock, 1936), p. 69.
58. See Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 285.
59. *Loc. cit.*
60. *Corr.*, II, 819.
61. See *ibid.*, I, 170-175, 247-252. See also *ibid.*, I, 603. This 'pedagogical' exploitation of Tracy's work was, of course, consonant with the spirit in which the latter had been conceived. For the *Elémens d'idéologie* were to have served first and foremost as a practical manual for use in the ill-starred Ecoles Centrales. In this capacity, Tracy's *opus* was to have provided a 'scientific' method for explaining — and, by extension, improving — the formulation and relation of ideas.
62. 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', p. 237; "'Ideology" from Destutt de Tracy to Marx', p. 365. Kennedy points rightly to the fact that Stendhal 'ultimately found [Ideology's] rigor too confining, and so used it more as a method than as a system' (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 331).
63. *Op. cit.*, p. 74.
64. *R et S*, 255-256.
65. 'Aux sources de l'énergie stendhalienne', p. 99.
66. *Op. cit.*, p. 55. See M. Crouzet's perceptive treatment of this question: *Raison*, pp. 99-129. Tracy's Ideology, argues Crouzet, has a morally and psychologically edifying value for Stendhal, offering at once an ideal image of himself — 'l'image de ce qu'il doit être' (p. 105) — and a symbol of scrupulous reasoning — 'le symbole de la bonne philosophie' (p. 114).
67. See *S d'E*, 33.
68. Introduction, *De l'Amour* by Destutt de Tracy, pp. xlvi-lvii.
69. *HB*, II, 23. Tracy himself defers — though not without reservation — to Condillac as the founder of Ideology. See Picavet, pp. 22-23; Rosen, pp. 330-331; Madinier, pp. 47-58.
70. *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 116.
71. Though they mask somewhat his own deference to physiology and his esteem for Cabanis, these terms, which are of Tracy's coinage, define broadly the distinction that obtains between the *Elémens d'idéologie* and the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. See Picavet, pp. 302, 572; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, p. 162; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 59, 103, 112-116.

- 192-193; S. Matsuki, 'Stendhal et Cabanis', *Etudes de Langue et Littérature françaises*, Tokyo, XII (1968), p. 19. Cabanis upholds the same distinction when he defines 'la physiologie, l'analyse des idées et la morale' as 'les trois branches d'une seule et même science, [...], *la science de l'homme*' (*Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* [Paris, 1844; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1980], p. 62). In this sense, R. Adams (p. 48) makes a useful point when he asserts that the two philosophers divided the study of man between them, 'Cabanis to emphasize the emotional and unconscious aspects, De Tracy the logical and conscious. Though they dug from opposite sides of the hill, it was one tunnel at which they were working.' See also on this question Picavet, p. 314 n. 2; Cailliet, p. 135.
72. See, for example, *JL*, III, 299-300; *H de P*, II, 41-42 n. 1, 46, 60. Like Tracy himself, Stendhal would come to recognise the primacy of physiology, deferring to Cabanis and to those other physiologists who, in the early 1800s, found themselves at the cutting edge of a new philosophy of man and medicine. See, on this question, Rosen; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 237-243; Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle'; 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*: Changing Eighteenth-Century Models of Man's Image', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XXXIX, no. 1 (1978), pp. 45-60; E.H. Ackerknecht, 'Elisha Bartlett and the Philosophy of the Paris Clinical School'; 'Broussais or A Forgotten Medical Revolution', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. XXVII (1953), pp. 320-343. On the philosophy of Cabanis specifically, see Picavet, pp. 176-292; Cailliet, pp. 126-130; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, *passim*.
73. *Op. cit.*, pp. 72, 76.
74. Cabanis brings at times a futuristic, almost 'science-fiction', element to Stendhal's view of man. See *H de P*, II, 37 n. 1, 70 n. 1, 79-80 n. 3; *Italie*, 387-388. Cabanis contributes significantly in this sense to the 'immense credit' which, as F.W.J. Hemmings observes, 'Stendhal was prepared to extend to science in its application to human affairs' (*Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 27). For all the kinship that exists between Stendhal's thought and the philosophy of preceding generations, it is important to recognise the *forward-looking* aspect of his reading of Cabanis, the new era which was to have been inaugurated by defining the psycho-physiological basis of human nature. See on this question Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 120-125, 192-193, 223-225, 274, 592-593, 597-599; Vartanian, 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2152.
75. See Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 81-85; Kennedy, A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution, pp. 59-60; A. Thomson, *Materialism and Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: La Mettrie's 'Discours préliminaire'* (Geneva: Droz, 1981), p. 56 *et passim*; Moravia, 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*.'
76. See *Le Roman expérimental* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1971), p. 74.
77. *HB*, I, 14. The description of Cabanis's work as an 'ouvrage immortel', an 'œuvre immortelle', appears on a number of occasions. See *Rossini*, I, 64 n. 1; *CA*, V 185; III, 409.
78. *JL*, III, 181.
79. *Personnalité*, p. 475 n. 4. J.-C. Alciatoire (*Stendhal et Helvétius*, p. iv) likewise anticipates a study of Stendhal and Cabanis which appears never to have been published.
80. See Delacroix, pp. 11-16, 66-67, 280-285; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 90-136; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, *passim*; Crouzet,

Raison, pp. 592-681. Of all Stendhal's commentators, it is Crouzet who best appreciates the importance of Cabanis and the science of physiology for Stendhal. For the latter is, Crouzet rightly argues, 'l'un des premiers de tout son siècle, en avance sur ce point, à ne pouvoir prononcer sans un vibrato d'initié et de zélote, le mot fatidique de "physiologie", qui sans doute soutient et même remplace, sans l'éliminer, la non moins fatidique "logique"' (*Raison*, p. 592).

81. *Op. cit.*, pp. 160, 271, 321.
82. See *ibid.*, pp. 408, 433, 443, 494-495.
83. See *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1914), pp. 264-269.
84. *Op. cit.*, p. 238.
85. *Op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.
86. *L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, pp. 48-49. The omission of Cabanis from this list is all the more curious since, in the *Table alphabétique* to the Divan edition of Stendhal's works, Martineau records more than 70 references to Cabanis, a tally exceeded by few. The frequency of Stendhal's references to Cabanis is, by contrast, pointed out by a number of scholars. See Cailliet, p. 136 n. 79; Stein, p. 107 n. 23; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 104 n. 14.
87. *Op. cit.*, p. 44.
88. *Op. cit.*, pp. 42, 283 n. See in similar vein Alter, p. 161; E. Henriot, *Stendhaliana* (Paris: Crès, 1924), pp. 34, 50, 72; J. Marsan, *Stendhal* (Paris: Cahiers Libres, 1932), pp. 35, 39.
89. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 169-171, 287, 408, 443, 494-495; Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 592 n. 1; Matsuki, pp. 25-33.
90. See on this point Matsuki, pp. 27-29.
91. See the review of Cabanis which it fell to Stendhal to write for the *New Monthly Magazine* of April 1823: *CA*, I, 95-97.
92. *JL*, II, 141. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 61.
93. H. Dumolard (*Pages stendhaliennes* [Grenoble: Rey, Arthaud, 1928], p. 6) and E. Cailliet (p. 143) erroneously attribute Stendhal's first mention of Cabanis to a letter of August 1805.
94. *OI*, I, 195.
95. *Rapports*, pp. 103-104.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.
97. On the contrary, he finds in the notion of 'instinct' further evidence that self-interest is the invariable motivating force in all human or animal endeavour: 'Donc, dans le cas de l'*instinct* comme dans tous les autres, l'individu suit encore ce qui lui semble le mener à son plus grand bonheur' (*OI*, I, 196). See on this point Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 170.
98. On the 'step beyond Condillac' which Cabanis effects, see Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 25-26, 27.

99. *Rapports*, p. 523.
100. *OI*, I, 196. With his theory of instinct, Cabanis now provided an explanation which seemed to account for the behaviour of 'le cailleteau ou le perdreau, qui, traînant encore l'œuf dont il vient de sortir, court après les grains et les insectes; le chat et le chien, qui cherchent, les yeux encore fermés, la mamelle de leur mère...' (*Rapports*, p. 533). Stendhal will echo this idea much later, in 1829, when he evokes 'l'instinct du jeune poulet, qui, au sortir de la coquille, a l'idée de manger un grain de blé...' (*JL*, III, 183). Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 125: 'Les oiseaux de la grande famille de gallinacés marchent en sortant de la coque. On les voit courir diligemment après le grain, et le béqueter sans commettre aucune erreur d'optique.'
101. 'Dans cette société que Tracy voulait fidèle à l'éthique de la raison,' writes F.M. Albérès, '[Cabanis] montre que l'instinct peut et doit prendre place' (*Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 94).
102. *De l'Amour*, I, 170 n. 1.
103. *CA*, I, 57. See Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 113.
104. *OI*, I, 195. We may dismiss the suggestion by M. Josephson (p. 81) that towards 'the end of 1804, we find [Stendhal] spending many of his nights, not at parties and balls, but at the Ecole de Médecine, reading the still unpublished treatises of Dr. Cabanis...' There is no evidence of such nocturnal sorties by Stendhal to the Ecole de Médecine in 1804 to consult a work which had, of course, been published in 1802.
105. *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 271.
106. *JL*, II, 184. This is not the original note, which has been lost, but a copy which Stendhal took the trouble to transcribe more than a year later. See *OI*, I, 399-400, 1288 n.
107. See Stendhal's diary entry of 24 January 1805: 'Je vais au Panthéon, je lis le premier discours de Cabanis sur les *Rapports du physique et du moral*' (*OI*, I, 195).
108. *Rapports*, pp. 79-80.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
110. *JL*, II, 184.
111. *Ibid.*, I, 157.
112. *Corr*, I, 47.
113. *Ibid.*, I, 52. See on this question Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 48-54.
114. The essence of 'moral man' lay in education and emulation, argued Helvétius. See Delacroix, pp. 8 n. 1, 44; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, p. 13: 'Any man who was "communément bien organisé" could be made into a genius, for geniuses were made not born.' See also on this point Creighton, pp. 716-724.
115. See *De l'Homme*, vol. I, sec. II, ch. 13, p. 277; ch. 14, p. 284. See also *ibid.*, ch. 15, p. 290: 'Qu'on présente, dis-je, à divers hommes une question simple, claire & sur la vérité de laquelle ils soient indifférens, tous porteront le même

jugement, parce que tous appercevront les mêmes rapports entre les mêmes objets. Tous sont donc nés avec l'esprit juste.'

116. 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', p. 217.
117. See *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 24, pp. 309-326.
118. See E.C. Ladd, 'Helvétius and D'Holbach: "La moralisation de la politique"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XXIII, no. 2 (1962), pp. 221-238. See also on this question Lough, pp. 374-376; Frankel, pp. 57-59.
119. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. III, ch. 1, p. 342; ch. 2, p. 353.
120. *De l'Homme*, vol. II, sec. X, ch. 1, p. 611. See Cumming, *Helvétius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), pp. 200-217; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 13-14, 183; Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity*, pp. 3-5; Van Duzer, pp. 44-58; Gay, pp. 512-516. 'Tout dépend de l'éducation,' insists Stendhal, defining the protagonists of *Les Deux Hommes* as products of 'l'éducation philosophique' and 'l'éducation dévote' respectively (*Théâtre*, I, 242-243). See also *ibid.*, I, 249, 402, 446-447. The simplicity of the determinism envisaged by Stendhal in this context is worthy of note. See below, Chapter IX.
121. *OI*, I, 394; *Corr*, I, 264, 292, 326.
122. Against Helvétius's denial of natural disparities within human nature, writes H. Delacroix (p. 6 n. 1), 'Cabanis protestera par ses théories de l'instinct et du tempérament comme données biologiques internes, [...], par ses théories du climat et du régime comme données biologiques externes.'
123. Diderot's refutation of *De l'Homme* provides a valuable insight into the various aspects of this question. 'L'organisation bonne ou mauvaise,' argues Diderot against Helvétius (p. 365), 'constitue entre les hommes une différence que rien peut-être ne saurait réparer. Les anatomistes, les médecins, les physiologistes vous le démontreront par un nombre infini de phénomènes...' On the view of man that is challenged by Diderot and Cabanis in turn, see Passmore, 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought.'
124. *JL*, II, 96.
125. See *ibid.*, I, 433, 342; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 169-170; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 107. Cf. *Théâtre*, II, 12: 'Pour connaître mon sujet, lire Cabanis. Deux ouvrages: *Le moral et le physique*, et le recueil qu'il vient de publier récemment. Montrer une consultation. [...] Les médecins montrent tout leur ridicule devant la malade qu'ils croient *mélancolique*, et, comme telle, hors d'état de suivre leurs raisonnements.' One can adduce evidence from various letters and notes to suggest that Stendhal did know something of Cabanis a considerable time before he records his reading of the *Rapports* in January 1805. See, for example, his remarks on 'nerve fluid' (*Corr*, I, 150); on the stimulant effects of coffee (*JL*, I, 183); on the nervous system as a key to human sensibility (*Corr*, I, 174); on the relationship, enhanced through diet, between health and happiness (*OI*, I, 112-113); on the physical and moral states as influenced by temperament and the lower stomach (*OI*, I, 189); on the possibility that an '*homme-singe*' might be created through some programme of eugenic engineering (*JL*, I, 250). Cf. Cabanis on the same: *Rapports*, pp. 134; 386-387; 90, 264-266; 206; 114-115; 298-300. The last of these examples gives evidence once again of the 'science fiction' element which physiology brings to Stendhal's thought.
126. *Corr*, I, 920.

127. *R et S*, 262.
128. See *Corr*, I, 184, 191, 197, 224, 228, 240, 279, 285, 298-299; *OI*, I, 272, 315, 331 n. Cf. the quasi-physiological definition of man which will find its way into *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*: *JL*, III, 299-300; *H de P*, II, 41-42 n. 1.
129. *JL*, II, 181. See on this point J.-C. Alciatore, 'Stendhal, Destutt de Tracy et le précepte *Nosce te ipsum*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. XIV, no. 1 (1953), p. 114.
130. *JL*, II, 184.
131. See, for example, *ibid.*, II, 72, 181. Once more here the mathematical language which Stendhal employs — *unité, mesurer, quantité* — is jarringly at odds with his subject.
132. *JL*, I, 375.
133. The problem, as G. Blin recognises, 'tenait à ce que l'irréductibilité des individus [...] lui refusait tout principe commun qui lui permît d'appliquer aux données le médium numérique. [...] Mais il n'avait pas été long à reconnaître que les hommes demeurant proprement incomparables du fait des différences de finalité qu'ils introduisent dans leur amour de la vie, le manque ici de tout étalon, l'impossibilité d'évaluer, fût-ce à partir de leurs effets, le désir et l'impression, rendaient oiseuse sa recherche' (*Personnalité*, pp. 472-473).
134. *OI*, I, 400.
135. *Ibid.*, I, 196-197.
136. *Corr*, I, 233.
137. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 112. On the highly sympathetic portrait of the melancholic — inspired jointly by Cabanis and Pinel — which is presented in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (II, 58-63), see Arbelet, *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal*, p. 270; Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Pinel', pp. 125-126. Stendhal would see himself as melancholic and bilious by turns, or as a compound of both at once. See, for example, *OI*, I, 720, 766; II, 63; *HB*, I, 19, 25, 175. Cf. *JL*, III, 235, where he also discerns an 'élément sanguin' in his temperament.
138. See *OI*, I, 152, 315; *Corr*, I, 162. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 190-191, 229, 241-242. See on this question M. Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 662-663: 'Comme si la biologie venait en renfort au "mal du siècle" chez Stendhal et le justifiait c'est vers le mélancolique que se tournent les préférences du Beyliste.' Stendhal's later remarks on the Italian character bear out this point; much more so still the self-analysis which one finds in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*. See, for example, *JL*, III, 20-23; *HB*, I, 19, 25, 33, 175. Cf. the ambivalent assessment of his melancholy tendencies in Stendhal's diaries of 1806 (*OI*, I, 469) and 1811 (*Ibid.*, I, 738-739). On the 'image "romantique" du corps' which Cabanis in parts to Stendhal, see M. Crouzet, 'Littérature et politique chez Stendhal', *L'Information littéraire*, XXXII^e année, no. 3 (1980), p. 105; *Raison*, pp. 592-681 *passim*.
139. *Rapports*, pp. 83-84. See also the later evocation by Cabanis (p. 349) of 'ces âmes vives et ardentes, livrées sans réserve à tous les transports de leurs désirs; ces esprits tout à la fois profonds et bizarres, qui, par la puissance d'une méditation continuelle, sont conduits tour à tour aux idées les plus sublimes et aux plus déplorables visions...' Cf. the description which Stendhal offers of the

'caractère mélancolique' in the *Promenades dans Rome (Italie, 1053)*. Though the melancholic temperament is — as Cabanis (*Rapports*, pp. 286-287) and Stendhal (*H de P*, II, 59-60) both assert — close to the bilious in its physiological features, F.M. Albérès appears to confuse the two in her discussion of this question. See *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 109 n. 43. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, pp. 81-85.

140. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 287; *OI*, I, 363.
141. *OI*, I, 425, 394.
142. *Corr*, I, 261.
143. *Ibid.*, I, 263.
144. *Ibid.*, I, 264.
145. *Ibid.*, I, 312.
146. *Ibid.*, I, 326.
147. *Ibid.*, I, 272.
148. *Rapports*, pp. 337-409.
149. *Corr*, I, 316.
150. While J.-C. Alciatoire ('Stendhal et Pinel', p. 120 n. 24) finds here an echo of Cabanis, V. del Litto (*La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 287 n. 62) discerns the influence of Pinel, whom Stendhal had begun reading in January 1806.
151. *OI*, I, 302.
152. *Rapports*, p. 409.
153. *Ibid.*, pp. 386-387.
154. *Corr*, I, 257. A similar sense appears to underpin a note which Stendhal pens as early as May 1803: 'Quand je voudrai traduire en vers français l'*Ugolin* du Dante, me laisser souffrir de la faim après m'être échauffé avec du café' (*JL*, I, 183).
155. *OI*, I, 440. Cf. *H de P*, II, 77: 'On sait que Voltaire prenait douze ou quinze tasses de café par jour. L'usage de ce genre de boissons stimulantes [...] fait prédominer les forces sensitives.'
156. *Italie*, 248. Cf. *OI*, II, 18: 'Le café pris dans ces circonstances me rend sanguin.' To the end, Stendhal would retain the same view of the moral state as a precarious balance of regiminal factors. See the description in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* (I, 11) of a visit to the Sistine Chapel ruined by 'un excès de café'.
157. Cf. *M de T*, II, 505: '[...] dans les moments de passion, la lorgnette du raisonnement est entièrement troublée; il ne peut plus apercevoir rien de ce qui existe réellement.' See also *JL*, II, 18, 21 ('Tous les hommes agissent suivant ce qui leur paraît et non suivant ce qui est'), 302-303.
158. *JL*, I, 248.
159. *Ibid.*, III, 196. On the fragment in question, see V. del Litto, *ibid.*, III, 413 n.

160. *OI*, I, 367. See M.A. Simons, who, in citing this example, signals the 'extrême susceptibilité de l'esprit, dont la vision claire et distincte peut être facilement brouillée par l'état d'un organe, ici, l'estomac' (*Sémiotisme de Stendhal* [Geneva: Droz, 1980], p. 210).
161. The consequences of such an argument for a disciple of Helvétius were serious indeed. On this point as on others, the reasoning to which Stendhal subscribes through Cabanis is anticipated by Diderot, who, in his critical analysis of *De l'Homme*, states the case with force: 'Vous persuaderez-vous bonnement que la nature des humeurs, du sang, de la lymphe, la capacité des vaisseaux de tout le corps, le système des glandes et des nerfs, la dure-mère, la pie-mère, la condition des intestins, du cœur, des poumons, du diaphragme, des reins, de la vessie, des parties de la génération, puisse varier sans conséquence pour le cerveau et le cervelet?' (*Op. cit.*, p. 366).
162. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 321.
163. See *ibid.*, p. 287.
164. *Corr*, I, 354. See later, in the same letter, Stendhal's suggestion that his sister choose for a husband 'un homme [...] dont le caractère changera tous les dix ans avec le physique.' For the beneficent effects of tea, one need look no further than Cabanis's 'Huitième Mémoire', where the physiologist describes the 'particules narcotiques ou sédatives' which are properties of the drink and which can act as 'un calmant direct' on the human organism (*Rapports*, p. 388).
165. *Corr*, I, 534.
166. *Ibid.*, I, 535. Cf. *H de P*, I, 89 n. 1: 'il n'y a pas de bonheur sans la santé.' On the relationship between health and happiness, see Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 206; on the 'humours', see *ibid.*, pp. 350-351.
167. See Imbert, 'Etat présent des études stendhaliennes', pt. I, p. 168; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 440; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 101-230 *passim*; Bosselaers, *Le Cas Stendhal*, *passim*. See also on this question Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 617-621.
168. *Rapports*, p. 206.
169. *Corr*, I, 540.
170. *OI*, I, 951. On the role of the diaphragm and its interplay with the nervous system, see Cabanis, *Rapports*, pp. 589-590.
171. *OI*, I, 112-113. On the question of diet and its effects, see Simons, pp. 209-211; Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 34-35.
172. On '[la] recherche de ce bonheur impossible avec notre corps', see *Corr*, I, 214, 278, 292, 343, 649.
173. *Ibid.*, I, 214.
174. Stendhal is more precise still in his letter of 4 March 1806: 'Par la nature de nos nerfs, le bonheur extrême, lorsqu'on y parvient, ne peut pas durer plus d'une heure' (*Ibid.*, I, 292). Cf. *ibid.*, I, 278: 'Crois que cet état d'extase que tu te figures peut-être, [...], l'hom[me] d'après sa nature ne peut le trouver que deux ou trois fois dans sa vie et une heure ou deux chaque'; *ibid.*, I, 343: 'cela remplit la vie non d'émotions de roman qui sont physiquement impossibles (d'après la nature des nerfs, qui ne peuvent pas être tendus longtemps au même

degré [...]), mais d'un contentement raisonnable.' See in the same vein the letter dated 14 July 1812: 'Il n'y a jamais de position délicieuse. Rien de ce qui est excessif ne peut être permanent' (*Ibid.*, I, 649).

175. See *Stendhal et Helvétius*, p. 49; *Stendhal et Maine de Biran*, p. 17.
176. *OI*, I, 506.
177. *Ibid.*, I, 1045.
178. *Rapports*, p. 590.
179. *Ibid.*, pp. 370, 381.
180. *OI*, I, 499.
181. See, for example, *Corr*, I, 354; 540; *OI*, I, 475.
182. *Corr*, I, 544. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 713: '[...] il faut, pour la santé morale encore plus que pour la physique, faire cent lieues tous les six mois...' See also *Romans*, I, 562: 'Il faut que je tue mon cœur à force de fatigue physique, se disait [Julien] en galopant dans les bois de Meudon.' On the therapeutic effects of smoking, see *OI*, I, 1045.
183. See, for instance, *JL*, II, 206; *OI*, I, 344-345; *Corr*, I, 230-231.
184. Among the very sporadic references to these philosophers which are to be found during the period in question, see *Corr*, I, 345, 352, 354, 495, 496; *OI*, I, 474, 478, 490, 491 n.
185. Though the conception of *Letellier* dates from as early as 1803, the project was to exercise Stendhal's mind at intervals for some two decades. It is, as R. Alter (p. 68) puts it, 'the gear in which he gets stuck in his futile efforts to become a playwright.' See, for example, *OI*, I, 577, 599, 601, 604, 652, 663, 885.
186. *Ibid.*, I, 578.
187. *Ibid.*, I, 622; *JL*, II, 295-296. See Vigneron, 'Stendhal disciple de Chateaubriand', pp. 61-62.
188. *OI*, I, 623; *JL*, II, 296-297.
189. See, for example, *JL*, I, 159, 240-244, 447-449.
190. See *ibid.*, I, 157, 160-161.
191. *Ibid.*, I, 390.
192. *Ibid.*, II, 95-96. There is a curious irony in the fact that H. Martineau (*L'Œuvre de Stendhal*, p. 44) should suggest this very passage as the point by which Stendhal's ideas were essentially cast in their definitive mould.
193. *JL*, II, 315.
194. *Rapports*, p. 79. See also *ibid.*, pp. 81-85, 260-300.
195. *Corr*, I, 562.
196. *Ibid.*, I, 605.

197. *JL*, II, 324-331.
198. For the 'Consultation' and the separate character portrait of Pierre Daru, see *OI*, I, 1058-1079, 1617-1626 nn.
199. See *ibid.*, I, 1059, 1061, 1062, 1066, 1073, 1078-1079.
200. *JL*, II, 352.
201. *Ibid.*, II, 353-354.
202. *Ibid.*, I, 157. On this point again, Stendhal's objection to Helvétius, like that of Cabanis, is anticipated by Diderot in his critical analysis of *De l'Homme*: '*Les hommes de constitution différente sont susceptibles des mêmes passions. Cela est faux de tout côté. On ne se donne pas toutes les passions. On naît colère, on naît insensible, on naît brutal, on naît tendre, et les circonstances excitent ces passions dans l'homme, et quand elles seraient communes à tous les hommes ils ne les auraient point au même degré*' (*Op. cit.*, p. 455).
203. *JL*, I, 237.
204. *Ibid.*, I, 188.
205. *Ibid.*, I, 144.
206. *Ibid.*, III, 328. On Stendhal's reading of Vauvenargues in 1811, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 414.
207. See *Corr*, I, 52; *JL*, II, 125.
208. *OI*, I, 895.
209. *M de T*, I, 123.
210. *JL*, II, 355-358. Cf. Stendhal's earlier and much more abstract treatment of the same question: *ibid.*, I, 444-450.
211. *Ibid.*, II, 330.
212. *Ibid.*, II, 316 n. 1.
213. *Ibid.*, II, 331 n. 1; *OI*, I, 879.
214. *OI*, I, 889. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 134.
215. *OI*, I, 660, 663, 687, 689, 697, 700, 720, 895, 897; *Corr*, I, 621, 658; *JL*, II, 334, 361, 399, 401, 405; III, 20, 267, 268, 269, 328, 369.
216. *JL*, II, 340, 386; III, 20-23; *OI*, I, 738.
217. *OI*, I, 766, 869; *JL*, II, 399, 410; III, 20, 235, 328.
218. *OI*, I, 666, 867. Though Stendhal, in line with Cabanis, admits of six temperaments, he accords the bilious, melancholic, sanguin and phlegmatic much greater salience than the nervous and athletic.
219. *H de P*, II, 40. Though it scarcely afforded him the leisure to philosophise, and though the instance which he cites here is apocryphal (see P. Arbelet's note, *ibid.*, II, 441), the Russian campaign must have given Stendhal ample opportunity to observe at first hand what he could take to be the signs of

temperament at work. It certainly served, as we shall see, to reaffirm his perception of his own character as he believed he had found it defined by Cabanis. His correspondence from Russia carries some echo of the physiologist. See, for example, the letter from Moscow dated 2 October 1812 (*Corr*, I, 658).

220. See *JL*, II, 399, 401, 405, 410, 420.
221. *Ibid.*, II, 399.
222. *Ibid.*, III, 288.
223. *HB*, I, 19.
224. 'Mais l'*amour* (comme l'entend Cabanis) formait le grand mobile de mon caractère...' (*OI*, I, 363); '[...] pour l'amour j'ai le tempérament mélancolique de Cabanis' (*HB*, II, 61).
225. 'Toutes mes expériences me rappellent la citation de Cabanis à propos de Mozart: la sensibilité se comporte à la manière d'un fluide...' (*Corr*, I, 847).
226. 'Par pudeur de tempérament mélancolique (Cabanis), j'ai toujours été à cet égard d'une discrétion incroyable, folle' (*HB*, I, 25).
227. 'J'avais un tempérament de feu et la timidité décrite par Cabanis' (*Ibid.*, I, 33).
228. 'La chose qui me manquera le plus tôt lorsque je vieillirai, ce sera la mémoire. Le passage suivant de Cabanis est une description rigoureuse de ce qui se passe en moi' (*OI*, I, 888). Stendhal goes on to cite an extract from Cabanis's theory of sensibility. (Cf. *Rapports*, p. 134.) On the significance of this extract, see below, Chapter VIII.
229. 'J'emprunterai pour un instant la langue de Cabanis. J'ai la peau beaucoup trop fine, une peau de femme...' (*HB*, I, 236).
230. See, in addition to the examples cited, *ibid.*, I, 175: '[...] j'eus toujours l'habitude d'une discrétion parfaite que j'ai retrouvée dans le tempérament mélancolique de Cabanis.' On the place of Cabanis in Stendhal's autobiographical reflections, see Chapter IX.
231. See *JL*, II, 385; III, 28-29. Later editions of the *Rapports* contained a comprehensive 'Table analytique' by Destutt de Tracy.
232. *CA*, I, 96.
233. Not only temperament, but climate, diet, organic disposition, and heredity had, as A. Levi points out (pp. 234-238), an established place in post-Renaissance moral philosophy. The problem was one of codifying these factors within a strictly empirical science and freeing them of their more fanciful connotations.
234. *Raison*, p. 595.
235. *Op. cit.*, p. 71. H. Delacroix (p. 66) is of a very different mind on this question, arguing that to Cabanis 'Stendhal doit sans conteste possible, la doctrine des tempéraments dont il a fait un des principes fondamentaux de la psychologie et d'une manière générale, la considération de l'homme physique.' See in similar vein the early assessment of A. Bussière, in Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 78.
236. *H de P*, II, 46. See also *JL*, II, 327.

237. *H de P*, II, 47.
238. *Ibid.*, II, 60.
239. *Op. cit.*, p. 283.
240. 'From this perspective, the science of man cannot be represented in the first place other than as a general physiology' ('Cabanis and His Contemporaries', p. xviii).
241. *H de P*, I, 244.
242. *Ibid.*, I, 244-245. Stendhal's insistence on Man as the very 'stuff' of Art is noteworthy. As M.A. Simons observes (p. 113), 'tout grand artiste se distingue par sa connaissance de l'homme [...]: pour Stendhal et, dans une certaine mesure pour toute l'époque classique, il n'est d'art qu'anthropocentrique.'
243. See Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 145-150.
244. *H de P*, I, 245.
245. We have earlier observed how Francis Bacon is recognised by Stendhal to be the model of scientific empiricism. In *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, the English philosopher is presented, however, as no more than a successor to Leonardo in this respect: 'Or, cent ans avant Bacon, Léonard de Vinci avait écrit ce qui fait la grandeur de Bacon; son tort est de n'avoir pas imprimé. Il dit: "L'interprète des artifices de la nature, c'est l'expérience; elle ne trompe jamais; c'est notre jugement qui quelquefois se trompe lui-même. Il faut consulter l'expérience, et varier les circonstances jusqu'à ce que nous en ayons tiré des règles générales, car c'est elle qui fournit les règles générales"' (*H de P*, I, 248-249). See also *ibid.*, I, 179, for 'l'idée de Léonard, que toute science ne consiste qu'à voir les circonstances des faits.'
246. *Ibid.*, I, 393.

CHAPTER VI

MECHANISM AND NATURALISM: CABANIS IN THE ASCENDANT

Commencer par le commencement: Italian Painting and the Lessons of Physiology

Stendhal's reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* brings a new and definitive dimension to his conception of human nature. Cabanis gives flesh, nerves and viscera to the abstracted 'machine' of other thinkers for whom sensibility, though considered physical in its origin and nature, continues to suggest, as Sergio Moravia puts it, 'a deep gap between the bodily organism and a meta-organic being or function (be this Buffon's or Condillac's AME, or Helvétius's ESPRIT [...]), responsible for man's higher emotional and intellectual activities.'¹ In Cabanis, this lingering vestige of traditional dualism is abolished and replaced by a unitary-organic definition of man. With the endorsement of an advancing medical science, Cabanis undertook to dispel the distinction between body and mind, claiming, in one of his more notorious assertions, that the brain is an organ equipped to secrete thought 'de même que l'estomac et les intestins à opérer la digestion, le foie à filtrer la bile, les parotides et les glandes maxillaires et sublinguales à préparer les sucs salivaires.' He goes on to draw from this an uncompromising definition of man's supposed 'higher faculties':

Nous voyons [...] les impressions arriver au cerveau par l'entremise des nerfs: elles sont alors isolées et sans cohérence. Le viscère entre en action; il agit sur elles: et bientôt il les renvoie métamorphosées en idées, que le langage de la physionomie et du geste ou les signes de la parole et de l'écriture manifestent au dehors. Nous concluons avec la même certitude que le cerveau digère en quelque sorte les impressions; qu'il fait organiquement la sécrétion de la pensée.²

By providing a vision of man which, referring everything to the physical organism, takes account of the innate and the instinctive, the irrational and the unconscious,³ Cabanis gives Stendhal not so much a new direction as a whole new point of departure. Foremost among the conclusions that he will draw from the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* is the contention that the study of human nature must take as its starting-point the study of human physiology. 'En politique comme dans les arts,' we read in a fragmentary note appended by Stendhal to a volume of Shakespeare,

on ne peut s'élever au sublime [...] sans connaître l'homme, et, pour conn[âître] l'hom[me], il faut avoir le courage de commencer par le commencement, c'est-à-dire par la physiologie.⁴

The note in which this remark features was to reappear, in a form very close to the original, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*.⁵ In both cases, Stendhal ventures a quasi-physiological definition of man's nature in terms of what he calls 'la vie organique et la vie de relation'.⁶ The conception of man — as a being divisible into *corps*, *tête* and *cœur* (or *âme*) — which had characterised his early philosophical deliberations is transformed now and given a much less abstract expression:

Le nerf *grand sympathique* est la source de la vie des organes, la respiration, la circulation, la digestion, etc., etc. Le cerveau est la source de la vie de *relation*, ainsi nommée parce qu'elle nous met en relation avec le reste de l'univers. [...] Les mouvements causés par le *grand sympathique* sont involontaires: il y a de la volonté dans tout ce qui vient du cerveau...⁷

We are back here, in essence, to Hobbes's distinction between 'vital' and 'animal' motion. What is important, however, is the *form* in which Stendhal now expresses this idea. For the attempt to trade in the vague abstractions of 'head' and 'heart' in return for a more physiologically sustainable definition translates the store which Stendhal has come to set by man as a physical organism. In the discussion of the sanguine temperament which occasions the passage cited above, the author of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* echoes Cabanis's central tenet that 'le physique et le moral se confondent à leur source; ou, pour mieux dire, le moral n'est que le physique, considéré sous certains points de vue particuliers'.⁸ Having sketched the physiological, intellectual and affective characteristics which accompany the sanguine temperament, Stendhal goes on to conclude:

Le médecin, qui verra les signes physiques, s'attendra aux effets moraux. Le philosophe, qui trouvera les signes moraux, sera confirmé dans ses observations par l'habitude du corps.⁹

This simple but far-reaching assertion takes as its foundation one of the major planks upon which Cabanis rests his thesis. For it was the latter's objective, as Emile Cailliet notes, 'de porter les préoccupations de la philosophie dans la médecine et celles de la médecine dans la philosophie'.¹⁰ Thus, in the preface to the *Rapports*, Cabanis writes:

Ici, le moraliste et le médecin marchent toujours encore sur la même ligne. Celui-ci n'acquiert la connaissance complète de *l'homme physique*, qu'en le considérant dans tous les états par lesquels peuvent le faire passer l'action des corps extérieurs et les modifications de sa propre faculté de sentir: celui-là se fait des idées d'autant plus étendues et plus justes de *l'homme moral*, qu'il l'a suivi plus attentivement dans toutes les circonstances où le placent les chances de la vie, les événements de l'état social, les divers gouvernements, les lois, et la somme des erreurs ou des vérités répandues autour de lui.¹¹

Despite the welter of putative sources which Stendhal cites in support of his

assertions in this domain,¹² he remains for his grasp of physiology heavily indebted to Cabanis. This is not, however, to suggest that Stendhal approached the highly specialised science of physiology with any rigour or real insight. His knowledge in this area remains, by his own avowal, superficial and approximate. 'Ce que je dis ici de mon tempérament,' he writes in his diary of 8 September 1811, 'est donc tiré du peu que je sais en histoire naturelle.'¹³ On visiting the Natural History Museum in Florence towards the end of the same month, he would note: 'Je vois avec plaisir des yeux d'un ignorant les muscles et les nerfs, qui sont exprimés très nettement.'¹⁴

These self-avowed limitations notwithstanding, it is important to recognise that the nature and emphasis of Stendhal's 'materialism' undergoes a profound change in the transition from Hobbes to Cabanis.¹⁵ For there is a very substantial distinction to be made between the philosophy expounded by these two thinkers. There has been an almost universal tendency among scholars to neglect the distinctions between those philosophers who are held to have influenced Stendhal's thought. We find the names of Hobbes, Helvétius, Condillac, d'Holbach, Tracy and Cabanis cited quite indiscriminately, as though they were so many purveyors of the same essential corpus of ideas. Thus Stendhal is dubbed a 'disciple of the Ideologues and the eighteenth-century mechanists', or a 'loyal disciple of Helvétius and the Ideologists',¹⁶ with no recognition of the problems which this poses for any complete or consistent appreciation of his thought. 'Hobbes, Condillac, Helvétius, Cabanis, Tracy sont les seules autorités qu'il invoque, et il leur resta fidèle jusqu'au dernier jour,' writes Arthur Chuquet.¹⁷ Yet one *cannot*, in any meaningful sense of the term, remain 'faithful' to all of these thinkers at once. Part of our purpose in this chapter is to demonstrate the critical importance of distinctions that are to be made between and among such thinkers, and to refine thereby our understanding of what a reading of them had to offer Stendhal.

It is a curious irony of language that the term 'materialism', as applied to a great metaphysical thinker like Hobbes, should denote such a highly abstractive philosophical scheme, so apparently removed in its terms of reference from the concrete realities of the observable world.¹⁸ Matter in motion may be all very well as a *principle*; but how does it correspond to *observed reality*? This was no easy issue to resolve, as Stendhal had discovered to his chagrin in wrestling with the precepts of Hobbes's philosophy and attempting to relate these to reality as he perceived it. The endeavour, as we have seen, was to last only as long as the drafting of the *Filosofia Nova*: the matter of a few short weeks.

Cabanis, on the other hand, brings to Stendhal a theory which could be readily related to the world around him. For this reason, he would exercise a much more

meaningful and a much more enduring appeal for a mind which, as Stendhal himself concedes, needs to *see* what it *thinks*. 'J'ai la qualité la plus essentielle peut-être à l'homme qui veut devenir poète,' we read in Stendhal's notebook for August 1803, 'une imagination excessivement vive, qui voit tout ce qu'elle pense. La preuve est que je ne puis pas faire d'abstraction complète.'¹⁹ The sketches and diagrams with which Stendhal adorns his manuscripts provide, of course, the most striking evidence of this tendency. It is a tendency, moreover, which is apparent from the outset in his reading of Hobbes, when he recognises his proneness to conceive of ideas as *images*. 'Presque tous nos souvenirs sont *images*, du moins chez moi qui aime à voir,' he notes in a digression relating to Hobbes's use of the word 'conception'. He gives an example: 'Au mot de *son* je vois la grande cloche de saint André en balan[çant].'²⁰ No less does the abstract idea of 'study', prompted by the same reading of Hobbes, conjure up for Stendhal a very concrete image: 'Cette idée est image chez moi. Je me figure *my great-father* à son bureau vert dans son cabinet sur la terrasse, lisant.'²¹

Under the influence of Cabanis, this tendency to translate the most abstract notions into concrete terms would be given renewed impetus. In the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, Stendhal encountered a thinker who eschewed abstraction to concentrate upon a world of concrete, visible realities. It is noteworthy that, in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, it is Cabanis, not Hobbes, who will be dubbed 'le père du matérialisme.'²² Stendhal's claim, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, that he took a copy of Cabanis with him on the Russian campaign is, in this sense, a very meaningful one.²³ For the simple fact of being in society with other human beings — whether it be on the steppes of Russia or in the salons of Paris — allowed him to put the physiologist's theories to the test. He might misread the signs, he might even distort the theories themselves;²⁴ but he would have the impression of renouncing, as he puts it, 'de vaines conjectures' for '[des] connaissances positives.'²⁵ It is not without significance that the notes on temperament which Stendhal had extracted from Cabanis with his friend Crozet in 1811 were to be found among his luggage on the Silesian campaign of 1813.²⁶

The reflections on temperament which proliferate (from 1811, notably) in Stendhal's writings do appear to bear out these observations. Whether it be a matter of judging himself,²⁷ or his friends and acquaintances,²⁸ or a particular *génie*,²⁹ or a dramatic character,³⁰ or a historical figure,³¹ or a whole people or nation,³² the principles remain as applicable as they are *apprehensible*. 'Tous les amours, toutes les imaginations,' Stendhal will assert with confidence in *De l'Amour*, 'prennent dans les individus la couleur des six tempéraments.'³³ Though an infinite number of possible permutations will determine the precise hue of passion in any given case, the same broad categories could provide a telling index for the discerning eye. While she

over-schematises the issue, crediting Stendhal with an easier passage through the School of Reason than we have seen to be warranted, Francine Marill Albérès has some point in asserting: 'Stendhal avait déjà appris l'art du raisonnement, il apprendra dans Cabanis l'art de l'observation.'³⁴

There is a further important sense in which Cabanis was to appeal to Stendhal's mind in a way that Hobbes could never have done. Stendhal was, as Maurice Larkin observes,³⁵ intensely preoccupied with *l'homme supérieur* and the factors to which the latter owed his outstanding qualities. The notion that human potential and achievement are, in part at least, the product of one's organic constitution provides Stendhal with some means both of accounting for the obvious disparities that exist between men and of rationalising the superior talents of the extraordinary individual. The six broad categories of temperament proposed by Cabanis did not, as Stendhal recognises, preclude an infinite number of possible '*combinaisons*'.³⁶ The fundamental datum of temperament was then overlain with a whole range of regional, climatic and regiminal factors; before educative processes, political régimes, historical moment or chance came into play. It is as the result of this complex amalgam of innate and environmental influences that each individual lives out his own very particular destiny.

Cabanis thus furnishes a much more substantial and comprehensive basis for explaining human character and behaviour than had the thoroughgoing environmentalism of a thinker such as Helvétius, with his exclusive insistence on education and circumstance. Michel Crouzet is well founded in his judgment of Cabanis as 'le plus synthétique' of all Stendhal's *maîtres*, 'puisque'il admettait l'interaction du moral et du physique, de l'acquis et de l'organique, du milieu naturel et du milieu humain, de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur.'³⁷ It was in the reduction of a complex and bewildering world to a number of strong, clear principles that the attraction of Cabanis lay. In the theory of the temperaments as Stendhal integrates it into his view of man, Rémi Bosselaers discerns 'le sens du relatif, du complexe, de l'interpénétration des facteurs, sens auquel s'alliait d'ailleurs, par le plus étrange des contrastes, la tendance à la systématisation, à la schématisation généralisante.'³⁸ Thus the 'great achiever', the 'man of action', becomes synonymous for Stendhal with the bilious temperament,³⁹ the lover and artist with the melancholic.⁴⁰ Such designations were of particular significance for an aspiring man of letters. For in the theories of Cabanis, Stendhal comes to recognise at last some means whereby cognisance might be taken of the irrational dimension in man, a means whereby the Philosopher, if he could not *be* the Poet, might at least arrive at a better understanding of the factors that made the poet what he was. 'Pour traiter les problèmes qui s'offrent à lui, ceux de la création et plus tard ceux de l'amour,' writes Francine Marill Albérès,

Stendhal abandonne l'enseignement d'Helvétius et de Tracy pour recourir à une explication physiologique et positive de tout ce qui semble irrationnel chez l'homme, le génie et la passion. La solution physiologique apportée par Cabanis le séduit par la facilité qu'elle présente. Le tempérament de l'homme suffit à motiver ses productions littéraires et artistiques.⁴¹

The privileged status accorded in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* to Cabanis, and to a lesser degree Pinel, underlines very clearly the alliance which Stendhal had by then come to recognise between philosophy and physiology. It is notable that his definition of the 'philosopher' expands from this point to admit a number of eminent medical practitioners. Thus, in the *Vie de Rossini*, the Neapolitan doctor Domenico Cotugno will be deemed a 'philosophe, car ce grand médecin Cotugno était digne de ce titre.'⁴² In similar vein, we find the physician Luigi Cabonargi fêted by Stendhal, in a letter of 1835, as a 'vrai philosophe'.⁴³ In a subsequent letter, written to Domenico Fiore in 1839, it is the anatomist Luigi Metaxà — 'un philosophe de soixante-trois ans' — whom we find celebrated in these terms.⁴⁴

Stendhal's respect for the advancing science of physiology, with all its apparent clinical scruple, is not difficult to appreciate. Though he is aware of the tentative character of a science still in its infancy, physiology provides him as an adult with that haven from hypocrisy which he had sought in mathematics as a child. In this sense, Cabanis provides the counterpoint *par excellence* to the charlatanry and obscurantism with which Restoration France becomes synonymous for Stendhal. The point is clearly made in a contribution to the *London Magazine* of September 1825:

Toute la jeunesse d'ici lit l'ouvrage immortel de Cabanis sur *les rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*. Le clergé en est furieux, aussi donne-t-il chaque année des places de professeur dans les séminaires publics aux imbéciles et aux hypocrites qui ont tenté de réfuter Cabanis.⁴⁵

Again in the *New Monthly Magazine* of November 1826, Cabanis is presented as a champion of philosophical probity and, *ipso facto*, an enemy of the ruling '*parti dévot*'.⁴⁶ All that might tend to confirm 'l'influence des *causes physiques*' and to substantiate 'les méchantes doctrines de Cabanis,' declares Stendhal, is outlawed by an establishment engaged in a holy war against the progress of science:

Plusieurs hommes de science, dont l'existence dépend des traitements de quelques places insignifiantes, ont dû refuser de publier leurs récentes découvertes physiologiques, de peur d'être accusés de jeter une lumière nouvelle sur les *rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*.⁴⁷

The years 1805 and 1811 respectively occupy a crucial place in the charting of Stendhal's philosophical development. For it is through Cabanis, as we have argued, that he comes to acknowledge the deficiency in the tools with which he has sought

hitherto to construct his definition of man. Cabanis, Stendhal would claim in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, was one of those authors who helped him to 'complete his education.'⁴⁸ The physiologist's name, moreover, appears repeatedly in the course of reading which he prescribes for his sister Pauline's instruction,⁴⁹ as it would appear among those few chosen authors who, Stendhal reflects, would have provided a privileged Italian youth with a sound education had that country benefited from the establishment of an Ecole Polytechnique under Napoléon.⁵⁰ Though he might continue, through allegiance to his earlier division of man, to cling to that 'dualistic residue related to the parlance of a body and of a spirit' which, according to Sergio Moravia,⁵¹ had been the mark of Cabanis's sensationalist predecessors, Stendhal would nonetheless evince an increasingly acute awareness of man's physical constitution as a determining agency in human affairs. Thus, in a review of François Broussais's *De l'irritation et de la folie* for the *New Monthly Magazine* of September 1828, he takes the opportunity to praise an 'ouvrage dans lequel les rapports du physique et du moral sont établis sur les bases de la médecine.' It is, he asserts pointedly, 'un livre plein de faits et d'observations. Il attaque les nouveaux philosophes de l'école de MM. Royer-Collard et Cousin, auxquels il donne le nom de "Kanto-Platoniciens".'⁵²

This defence of medical philosophy against the 'fiction poétique' of the 'philosophes qui sont en guerre avec Condillac et Cabanis'⁵³ had, by 1828, become an established feature of Stendhal's writing. Though the *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase* reflects already something of this stance, it is in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* that Stendhal gives the first clear articulation of his philosophy as it had evolved by the end of the Empire and the first years of the Restoration. Contained here is a whole corpus of ideas that were to find expression and development throughout the range of Stendhal's later work. In its pages, writes Maurice Bardèche, 'celui qui sait lire découvre déjà tout.'⁵⁴ The point is vigorously endorsed by others. For Paul Arbelet, *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* can be considered 'le plus substantiel, le plus riche en idées' of all Stendhal's works,⁵⁵ whilst for Pierre Martino it is 'un livre de pure idéologie', 'la clef de toute son œuvre critique.'⁵⁶

In a work which undertakes to rationalise the canons of taste governing the production and appreciation of the visual arts throughout the ages, however, it is easy to overlook the extent to which Stendhal's ideas both derive from and reaffirm a much broader conception of human nature. It has been an unfortunate tendency of some critics to perceive this latter dimension as peripheral, even superfluous, to the substance of the work. Thus, for example, Margaret Tillett, for whom Stendhal's observations on wider questions such as national temperament and education are nothing more than an otiose excursion into 'borrowed theories and generalizations.' There is, declares Tillett, 'nothing more boring than dated pronouncements on national temperament and

education.⁵⁷ Certainly, there was little that was new by 1817 in the relativity of taste as a principle, or in the notion that contingent factors such as climate, education and physical constitution had a modulating role to play in the determination of individual and national character. To find in such factors nothing more than an, irksome superfluity, however, is to misappreciate the way Stendhal perceived his task and the manner in which he defined — or, more appropriately, refused to define — the boundaries of his subject. For Stendhal's whole endeavour — and, one can rightly say, his whole achievement — in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* was precisely to inscribe the fine arts within a context that was constrained by no narrow technical limits, but addressed the full range of social and cultural influences which impinge upon the artist. Stendhal's originality here lies, as D.F. Wakefield argues, not in invention but in exploitation:

Where Stendhal differs [...] from his eighteenth-century precursors is that he brings these social and cultural factors directly to bear on the visual arts, whereas for most earlier writers the latter were of only incidental concern. Stendhal was one of the first writers to recognize that the arts were in a state of constant interplay with other human activities. Indeed, one of his great strengths as a writer is his refusal to divide things up into separate compartments; he was never tempted to detach arts, music or any other creative activity and to raise it on an artificial pedestal.⁵⁸

With this in mind, let us return to the question of what *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* reveals about Stendhal's conception of man. For there has, as we have suggested above, been a tendency towards misapprehension here, with regard in particular to the contribution of Cabanis. Thus the latter is often seen as nothing more than a ready source of plagiarism, a lesser Carpani or Lanzi,⁵⁹ used by Stendhal to give a semblance of physiological legitimacy to his observations on 'moral' man.⁶⁰ The influence of Cabanis, however, is not restricted to those borrowings — on the temperaments notably — which incorporated verbatim into the work, but, as our discussion will attempt to make clear, informs the whole of the philosophical logic which underpins Stendhal's thesis throughout.

When *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* was first conceived in 1811, the influence of Cabanis was in its ascendancy.⁶¹ At a moment when Stendhal and Crozet were extracting wholesale from the 'Sixième Mémoire' of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*,⁶² the former entered a significant note in his diary. 'Nos jugements sont exclusifs et tranchants,' he writes:

Je ne vois rien de si sot, par exemple, que le voyage de M. Creuzé. Mais il faut ajouter à chaque phrase ces mots: "pour notre caractère et notre tempérament." [...] Son récit est bon pour ceux qui lui ressemblent, le nôtre pour les êtres formés par le même climat, la même éducation, etc., etc., que nous.⁶³

Such remarks betoken a clear preoccupation with the relativity of human character. Taste becomes a function not only of education or cultural environment but of one's very organic constitution, as it is determined from within by temperament, from without by climate. The diary entry in question belongs to a period during which, as we have noted, Stendhal was increasingly concerned to apply the theories of Cabanis, or at least to seek evidence for them, in the examples of humanity which he has before him.⁶⁴ It is a period, too, in which man is seen more and more by Stendhal as a constituent and indissociable part of *Nature*. As Nature herself varies from place to place, so too does *human nature*. Thus, in the same diary of March 1811, Stendhal — writing, as he points out, 'dans un appartement parfaitement convenable' — reflects upon what might be gained from a visit to Sicily, where 'la nature humaine [...] est aussi forte et aussi curieuse à étudier que celle des plantes et des rochers.'⁶⁵ A similar suggestion is present in the designation of Cimarosa, in the same diary entry, as 'cette belle plante napolitaine.'⁶⁶

One did not, however, have to journey so far afield in order to encounter marked variations in human nature. Travelling from Paris to Rouen in April 1811, Stendhal notes in his diary: 'Le climat a changé cinq ou six fois pendant notre voyage; en g[éné]ral, il a été froid et désagréable et contraire à mon imagination.' He then goes on to establish a pointed comparison between the habitat and character of the Parisian and Rouennais respectively:

On voit que le sol est bien supérieur à celui qui environne Paris et qui présente l'emblème exact de la chaleur des âmes de ce pays-là.⁶⁷

On the same trip, Stendhal suggests a further *rapprochement* between physical landscape and human character. 'Les habitants des côtes,' he reflects, 'doivent avoir l'esprit moins étroit que les habitants de l'intérieur.'⁶⁸ Though the argument which Stendhal adduces in order to sustain this suggestion is highly tenuous, a heightened sensitivity to the relationship between man and the wider environment is once again in evidence. On his journey to Italy in the late summer of the same year, Stendhal will pursue this parallel between geographical location and human character. The *arte di godere* which he encounters in Milan, he concludes, is not a reasoned attitude but springs rather from the prevailing climate and recent government.⁶⁹ Even that most fleeting expression of human sentiment, laughter, is invested with a quasi-physical root which defines it from one place to another. 'Quelle différence cette diversité du sol sur lequel il croît introduit-elle dans le rire?' muses Stendhal in his diary of 17 February 1813.⁷⁰

These few examples demonstrate what was to become an increasingly marked

feature of Stendhal's thought: the identification between human nature and experience on the one hand, and the wider world of natural phenomena on the other. To liken something as intangible as laughter to vegetation was to suggest that no aspect of the human condition was impervious to the influence of a wider realm of Nature. In *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, human intelligence likewise finds itself defined as an organic entity. 'Mais les philosophes,' writes Stendhal, 'savent que l'esprit humain est une plante fort délicate que l'on ne peut arrêter dans une de ses branches sans la faire périr.'⁷¹ In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, a similar perspective is applied to the fine arts, 'cette espèce d'écume' which, Stendhal asserts, is 'le produit charmant d'une fermentation générale et profonde dans un peuple.'⁷² In a note scribbled on a volume of Shakespeare, Stendhal takes up and develops this notion:

Les beaux-arts sont le produit d'une fermentation dans un peuple. Il ne faut pas croire qu'en imitant par les moyens artificiels l'écume produite par cette fermentation l'on aura les mêmes effets. D[omini]que.⁷³

As Emile Talbot points out, there is nothing original in such use of the plant analogy to describe the creative process.⁷⁴ For natural metaphors of this sort, however, Stendhal would develop a marked predilection which extends far beyond the artistic context. 'La société,' we read in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, 'est une fleur de plaisir qui ne peut naître que lorsque l'eau de la source, troublée par la tempête des révolutions, a déposé le limon de l'esprit de parti, et repris peu à peu sa première transparence.'⁷⁵ The celebrated concept of 'crystallisation' itself is, of course, but the incorporation into the sphere of human emotions of a mineralogical phenomenon, a metaphor in which Jean Théodoridès discerns the influence of the naturalist Victor Jacquemont.⁷⁶ To interpret such images as mere rhetorical conceits, however, would be to misunderstand something of Stendhal's intention. Man does not exist *in vacuo*. He is no longer for Stendhal an abstract mathematical value, but a physical organism, the variable and unpredictable result of a complex interplay of air and earth, temperament and environment. In his diary of February 1815, Stendhal makes the following entry:

Un vent chaud succédant à un vent froid me donne une sensibilité vive pour la musique qui me porte presque à verser des larmes. La sensibilité physique est sur les côtes, en dessous des côtes, entre les côtes et le bassin, et sur les dernières côtes.
En février 1815, I [am] working to the temp[éraments].⁷⁷

This attempt to run even the finest sensibilities to ground, to define for them a place, quite bereft of mystique, in the mundane world of physical reality, is an important feature of the lessons in physiology which Stendhal had absorbed (even if, as we noted in the preceding chapter, he is not always quite as ready to embrace the implications of this rationale). Man is neither above nor outside Nature, but is inscribed

within the natural order and is subject to the laws which govern natural phenomena. Such is the very premise upon which *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* rests. The contribution of Cabanis in this respect, far from being incidental, is central to Stendhal's conviction. For it is the physiologist's express contention that man is no less a part of the natural order than animals, vegetables or minerals, and that means should be sought of evolving a single science which would embrace Nature in its entirety. R.W. Hepburn reflects an important aspect of this rationale when he writes:

To count man as part and parcel of nature emphasizes the continuity of the human, animal, organic, and inorganic worlds and suggests that human behavior may be amenable to the same kinds of investigation that are effective in studying other domains of nature.⁷⁸

One of the most striking examples of this notion of a unified nature as it relates to Stendhal is to be found in the chapter of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* which immediately precedes the discussion of the temperaments. Reflecting on the desirability of combining 'l'inexorable sagacité du philosophe et la science physiologique du grand médecin,' Stendhal goes on to speculate, portentously, about the future place of chemical and electrical properties within the study of man. Might one not some day, he ponders, be able to measure with scientific precision man's innermost thoughts?

Cette chose, si difficile en 1789, sera peut-être assez simple en 1900. Qui sait si l'on ne verra pas que le phosphore et l'esprit vont ensemble? Alors on trouvera un phosphoromètre pour les corps vivants. Peut-être parviendra-t-on à saisir entre le galvanisme, l'électricité et le magnétisme, certains fluides dont on entrevoit tout au plus l'existence.⁷⁹

The identification between man and the natural world is such, Stendhal is here suggesting, that human beings may be explicable in terms not only of animate Nature but of *inanimate* Nature too. The continuum is complete. Stendhal's reflections here echo closely those of Cabanis, who concludes from the results of experiments carried out on corpses that 'la quantité de phosphore qui se développe après la mort est proportionnelle à l'activité du système nerveux pendant la vie. [...] Il paraît même que l'organe nerveux est une espèce de condensateur, ou plutôt un véritable réservoir d'électricité, comme de phosphore.'⁸⁰ Stendhal is doing more in the above passage, however, than merely aping Cabanis's pioneering interest in phosphorus, electricity and the like.⁸¹ He is laying the ground for a much more general — and, *in cauda venenum*, an altogether more radical — point, which serves as a conclusion to the chapter in question and a prelude to the pages on physiology drawn largely from Cabanis:

Enfin il faut se figurer que ce n'est que pour la commodité du langage que l'on dit le physique et le moral. Lorsqu'on a brisé une montre, où est allé le mouvement?⁸²

L'Homme machine

If one were seeking a single passage in Stendhal with which to substantiate his reputation as an uncompromising materialist, one would be hard pushed to better the foregoing. Certainly, Louis Crozet, entrusted with the publication arrangements for *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, felt constrained to mitigate the audacity of the passage in question by adding what he describes in a letter to Stendhal as 'une note emphatiquo-comique':⁸³

On sent fort bien qu'on ne parle ici que de *l'être vivant*, et de l'intime liaison qui, *pendant la vie*, rend le physique et le moral *inséparables*. A Dieu ne plaise qu'on veuille nier l'immortalité de l'âme, la plus noble consolation de l'humanité!⁸⁴

In describing the human economy in mechanistic rather than animistic terms, in banishing the ghost so unequivocally from the machine, Stendhal was, of course, challenging the whole basis of an incorporeal soul. The analogy of the clock was a familiar enough item in the repertoire of eighteenth-century mechanistic materialism.⁸⁵ La Mettrie, to cite but the most notorious example, had employed it to predictable ends in *L'Homme machine*.⁸⁶ The mechanistic language and imagery which are to be found in Stendhal echo something of La Mettrie's iconoclastic intent, evidencing as they do a desire to 'deflate the conceits of mankind,' to undercut the claims of Christian dogma and the anthropocentrism which they implied.⁸⁷ Set against the tendency to see man as an elevated being, with a 'soul' that is the repository of some essential quality (a perception which, we recall, bedevils his 'materialism' from the outset), there is in Stendhal a countervailing tendency to drag man down, to consign him to an abjectness that he shares with other elements of the material universe. To relegate man to the status of machine was to deny him any intrinsically higher realm, function or destiny than those reserved for all other components of the physical world.⁸⁸ Hence the definition of friendship which, in a letter written from Moscow to Félix Faure in October 1812, Stendhal frames in the stark language of animal attraction and physico-chemical affinity: 'Deux corps se rapprochent; il naît de la chaleur et une fermentation, mais tout état de cette nature est passager.'⁸⁹ Hence, too, the assertion, made in a letter of June 1810, that 'la connaissance de la machine nommée homme' should be acquired as the anatomist acquires knowledge of corpses: heedless of 'la mauvaise odeur', the philosopher must 'dissect' man and study, part by part, his moral characteristics — 'passions, goûts, caractères' — with the same scientific rigour as the anatomist applies in studying 'la forme des muscles, nerfs, etc., etc.'⁹⁰ The unhappy lot of those, 'machines vicieuses' called men, we recall, had early constituted for Stendhal a

powerful argument against a beneficent deity.⁹¹ Much later, in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, he holds still to this line of reasoning, shifting the weight of moral responsibility from man to the forces that act upon and against him:

Malgré les malheurs de mon ambition, je ne crois point les hommes méchants; je ne me crois point persécuté par eux, je les regarde comme des machines poussées, en France, par la *vanité* et, ailleurs, par toutes les passions, la vanité y comprise.⁹²

For all that, however, Stendhal is no 'mechanist' in any true philosophical sense of the term. For he reserves the licence to ascribe to man an unpredictable, spontaneous, 'inspirational' quality, the capacity, through his powers of reason, passion or instinct, to give the lie to any hollow mechanistic logic. The concept of 'mechanism' sits ill with the dynamic, energetic, wilful qualities which Stendhal so prizes in those human beings for whom he reserves his admiration. For the 'mechanist', writes D.G. Charlton,

Nature is a perfectly-ordered machine, operating in a fixed, unaltering way in accordance with the laws of mathematics. It is a perfect 'clock', [...] a completed and immutable system, determined in all its operations, generating no novelties, and in that way it is passive, not active in the manner of "animism" earlier.

The mechanist's world is, as a result,

a somewhat grey, geometric world, composed in essence of such monochrome abstractions as "extension" and "motion".⁹³

One need not insist upon the distance which separates such a world from that which is evoked in Stendhal's writings, with all their deference to the human being's capacity for 'inspired' self-assertion through individualistic endeavour and creative energy. We have seen, in the distortions which he visits upon Hobbes and Helvétius alike, Stendhal's failure to subscribe to the full implications of a mechanistic conception of man. For the latter, by its very definition, demands the consistent reduction of human reason, sentiment and behaviour to knowable and invariable laws of causal necessity.⁹⁴ To retain any realm within which these laws might not apply, where autonomy of will and spontaneity of endeavour are ascribed to the human being, is to confound the world-picture of the mechanist with the orthodox view of human nature with which it takes issue.

For this reason, one is compelled to qualify Robert Niklaus's suggestion that Stendhal's fascination was reserved for a notion of man 'reduced to a clockwork mechanism, a compound of intellect, emotion and sensuality which can be accurately gauged.'⁹⁵ That Stendhal was fascinated by the 'mechanics' of man and society, there can be no doubt; that he sought laws (self-interest, environmental determinism, heredity, historical moment), and an idiom ('la machine nommée homme'; 'la force du

ressort'; 'la *machinerie* [sociale])⁹⁶ to account for human nature and experience in these terms, is equally clear. Yet there is a point beyond which he considers a mechanistic explanation of the world injurious to what is most precious in man; a point beyond which his fascination is engaged not by what is seen to be in keeping with pre-ordained mechanical laws, but rather by what appears to *transcend* or to fall *without* such laws: in events, the *unpredictable*, 'l'*imprévu*, le divin imprévu';⁹⁷ in men, the *exceptional*, the individual of extraordinary genius, talent or energy.⁹⁸ Any view, however partial, of Stendhal's world cannot but confirm that his fascination is compelled less by those who are seen to bear their determinism with fortitude than by those who, in asserting themselves through wilful energy, appear to challenge its very basis.⁹⁹

The more tightly one circumscribes the notion of 'mechanism', the more Stendhal escapes it. The definition of man as a machine was, of course, pursued quite literally by a number of eighteenth-century determinists, in the wake of Descartes's designation of animals as ingenious machines.¹⁰⁰ The philosophy which M.E. Carcassonne ascribes to Stendhal, 'cette philosophie matérielle qui [voyait] partout machines, rouages et ressorts,'¹⁰¹ is one, however, which the latter embraced only fitfully and superficially at best. Though he does on occasion evoke the metaphor — by then commonplace — of the 'man-machine',¹⁰² his perception of the living being is much more akin to Cabanis's 'machine vivante'¹⁰³ than to the 'relatively undifferentiated, dynamically inadequate notion of machine' which, as Aram Vartanian argues, characterised the mechanistic philosophy of a thinker such as La Mettrie.¹⁰⁴ The point is one which Michel Crouzet recognises when he discerns in Stendhal's physiological materialism 'le recours à une substance, à une pseudo-substance, *la vie*, cette "valeur radicale" du 19e siècle ou mieux, ce "quasi-transcendental" qui constitue [...], du côté de l'être, un horizon inaccessible de la connaissance.'¹⁰⁵ As Crouzet rightly notes, Stendhal's continued use of the term '*âme*' in this context — 'avoir une *âme*, de l'*âme*, exprimer son *âme*, avoir une *âme* de telle qualité, parler à l'*âme*, montrer son *âme*' — takes him far beyond any literal mechanistic materialism.¹⁰⁶ Though he might seek at times to reduce humanity to the 'clockwork mechanism' evoked by Niklaus and Carcassonne, man remains ever for Stendhal, in Crouzet's fine expression, 'un tout supérieur à ses parties.'¹⁰⁷

The difficulty which Stendhal encounters in adhering to any consistent mechanico-materialist definition of man is symptomatic of the wider problem posed for philosophers who, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had the task of redefining man's place in a scheme of things bereft of moral design. As I.F. Knight argues, the development from Cartesian mechanism, with its view of animals as unconscious automata, to the later 'vital mechanism', with its insistence on an active organism equipped with the powers of purposive motion, did not resolve 'the philosophical

problems raised by mechanistic materialism.' Instead, it left philosophers more than ever 'caught between contradictory intellectual commitments':

on the one hand, they wanted to integrate man fully into the order of nature, to explain man and all his works in terms of mechanical laws just as they explained the phenomena of physics; on the other hand, as residuary legatees of the Western humanist tradition, they were concerned to preserve man's uniqueness as a rational and moral being.¹⁰⁸

Such is the dilemma of which Stendhal in turn partakes. The preponderant role which he assigns at times to the faculty of reason, together with his ineradicable conception of *l'âme* as the repository of some indefinable quality of 'self', fly in the face of any strict mechanistic materialism. Do not the very *deficiencies* of the human economy militate against a mechanistic view of man? So much, certainly, is suggested in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, where Stendhal contrasts the human organism — in its unreliability, its susceptibility to fault — with the watch to which he had compared it in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*:

Bréguet fait une montre qui pendant vingt ans ne se dérange pas, et la misérable machine, à travers laquelle nous vivons, se dérange et produit la douleur au moins une fois la semaine.¹⁰⁹

In illustrating, by means of this simple analogy, the inadequacy of the man-machine equation, Stendhal was in tune with a current of informed opinion that had been growing since the mid-eighteenth century. For it seemed increasingly clear, to those engaged in the medical sciences particularly, that living organisms exhibited an irreducible vitality, a dynamic quality which could not, as Sergio Moravia observes, be adequately accounted for by the 'mechanical presuppositions and mathematical procedures employed with success in other branches of knowledge.'¹¹⁰ Moravia puts the question confronting the eighteenth-century *médecin-philosophe* thus:

Could one really believe that life is nothing but the movement of solid and liquid parts; that organic matter is identical with inert matter; that the living being is really devoid of principles and forces that are in some way active; in short, that the organism is really a *machine*, functioning according to processes and laws of an exclusively physical and mechanical nature?¹¹¹

The answer to this question was increasingly, towards the turn of the century, to be a negative one. 'The undeveloped state of chemistry and biology was,' as John Lough suggests, 'responsible for the definition of man as a machine, common to all materialist philosophers of the eighteenth century.'¹¹² It was inevitable, therefore, that progress in these fields should bring about some revaluation of man as a component of the natural world. As R.E. Schofield argues, the late eighteenth century, with its advances in the medical and natural sciences, is characterised by a 'flight from mechanism', an 'escape from mechanical reductionism, in which causation is sought in undifferentiated matter,

motion, and forces...'¹¹³ Physiology in particular, as Schofield observes, broke away from the mechanistic theory by developing an 'empirical nosology' and 'erecting a barrier of vitalism behind which it defined its own problems and modes of investigation.'¹¹⁴

Beyond Mechanism: Cabanis and the Vital Self

Of this 'escape from mechanical reductionism', Cabanis provides a case in point. Reluctant, as Aram Vartanian points out, 'to commit himself, lexically or conceptually, to iatromechanism,' Cabanis 'nowhere uses the expression *homme machine*,' preferring instead 'the somewhat ambiguous coinage: *l'homme physique*.'¹¹⁵ For it was his contention that there existed within organic systems '*des forces qui ne sont proprement ni mécaniques, ni chimiques,*' but which argued instead for what he postulates — taking care to avoid any suggestion of a spiritual 'essence' or 'soul' — as '*un principe, ou une faculté vivifiante, que la nature fixe dans les germes...*'¹¹⁶ The language is tentative and approximate; but it serves to support Vartanian's view that, between the *homme machine* and the *machine vivante*, 'there was, undeniably, a considerable distance which reflected the evolution of physiology and medicine from 1750 to 1800.'¹¹⁷ By the turn of the century, under the influence of Bordeu and the Vitalists of the Montpellier Medical School notably, important changes had been wrought in the conception of life and the living organism, changes that would filter to Stendhal through his reading of Cabanis and his lively interest in the medical theories of his day.¹¹⁸ Moravia sums up of the development in a passage that is worth quoting *in extenso*:

As for the living individual, it is no longer (not even metaphorically) a *machine*, but an *être sensible*. It is an organic being made up of flesh, nerves, and muscles; possessing dynamic forces and impulses; and characterized by processes that have nothing to do with the working of a machine. This image of the living being, opportunely elaborated (by Cabanis especially) would soon be contrasted, not only to the iatromechanical model of the man-machine, but also to Condillac's model of the man-statue. Unlike the machine and the statue, the living organism does not lead a life which is exclusively determined by the external environment and its modifications. Made up of sentiment and dynamic centers, Bordeu's man possesses an internal vitality and activity as well. His organs carry out determined functions, produce determined sensations, and interact among one another independently from external stimuli. Whereas the sensationalist school stressed (in ways sometimes exaggerated or not adequately justified) the importance of the external *milieu*, Bordeu and the Vitalists centered attention on the organic *intérieur* of man — a notion which some late eighteenth-century *philosophes* would find very stimulating.¹¹⁹

How, then, does all of this relate to Stendhal? The answer is: in a very significant way. For his thought moves between the poles outlined above, between the view of man as a simple — inert — product of his environment (a view dear to the current of eighteenth-century thought represented by Condillac and Helvétius) and a point much closer to the 'dynamic-vitalistic' conception of man described by Moravia and reflected to some degree in the pages of Cabanis.¹²⁰ For Stendhal clearly came to see the organism not as a 'mere intermediary between *milieu* and *âme*', but, to remain with Moravia's terms, as the 'active protagonist of a complex vital phenomenology.'¹²¹ Though much closer to the former position in his earliest reflections, Stendhal is disposed, under the influence of Cabanis, to integrate into his view of man a whole range of inherent qualities — *instinct, temperament, hereditary dispositions*, and an ill-defined vital '*ressort*'¹²² — which suffice to abolish the notion of man as a *tabula rasa* and to set in train an *interactive* relationship between the individual and the environment, in contradistinction to the one-way process posited by Condillac and Helvétius. To the 'one-sided and over-abstract [...] epistemological psychology of Locke and Condillac,' writes Aram Vartanian, Cabanis was to bring a 'concrete energetic basis.'¹²³ One need reflect only momentarily upon Stendhal's notions of *énergie, force d'âme, volonté* and the like to recognise that these develop in ways which the influence of *external* forces alone is patently inadequate to explain. No scholar has better expressed the significance of this development in Stendhal's thought than Michel Crouzet. For it is the case, as Crouzet notes, that

le disciple des Idéologues, pour qui le moi se déploie comme une suite de relations extrinsèques à partir d'une "nature" pauvre et "rase", va dévier vers la proclamation d'un déterminisme intrinsèque, d'une auto-production du moi, d'un fond ténébreux et puissant qui produit tout sans être produit.¹²⁴

It is this notion of an 'intrinsic determinism' which has no discernible source *outside* man that comes to distinguish Stendhal from the mechanistic philosophers who had early inspired his thinking. 'Penser l'homme en termes mécaniques,' writes Michel Delon, 'c'est le réduire à l'état d'automate, ensemble de pièces détachées, soumis à une nécessité extérieure.' Delon goes on:

La méthode prônée et mise à l'œuvre par les sensualistes et les matérialistes est analytique, elle divise, décompose et se condamnerait ainsi à ne rien comprendre aux forces qui constituent la vie.¹²⁵

Of Stendhal's desire to apply just such a method to the study of man we have seen evidence in an earlier chapter. In the writings which predate his interest in physiology, his language is much more suggestive of a mechanistic conception of man:

Chercher à décomposer toutes les forces qui font agir les hom[m]es...

[...] je combine ces forces [les passions] dans des proportions différentes; elles

produisent des actions.

Je sais bien qu'une certaine passion p a un effet p'.

[...] un léger changement dans la tête en fait un grand poète, un grand guerrier, un grand géomètre, etc.¹²⁶

Such extracts from Stendhal's early writings echo the mechanistic definition of the 'will' as nothing more than a link in a chain of causal necessity, the *involuntary* processing, through desire and aversion, of the stimuli to which the individual is exposed at any given moment. As Stendhal's thought develops, however, it becomes increasingly removed from any such conception of the will as a passive, not to say redundant, faculty. For all his early ambition to reduce human character and sentiment to their barest, most clinical terms, Stendhal will prove sensitive to a view of the living self as an entity animated by principles which defy any simple deterministic explanation.¹²⁷ The notion of an obscure inner force, or *ressort*, will come to constitute an important factor in his concept of energy notably. One might, like Helvétius, hold self-interest as it is perceived and directed by reason to be the ultimate arbiter of all that man might be or do. Yet it became clear to Stendhal that no faculty of reason, however enlightened, could suffice to stifle the *irrational* impulse within man, or to provide any invariable, predictable *model* of human behaviour applicable to all.¹²⁸ Within this perspective, Stendhal, as F.P. Bowman acknowledges, would come to insist upon the 'blind' force of energy as a vital component of man:

If he still defines happiness in terms of enlightened self-interest, its pursuit involves recourse to irrational or inspired action; the 'naturel' which can lead to happiness tends to be the contrary of 'la logique'...¹²⁹

The importance of Cabanis as a counterpoint to Helvétius in all of this is crucial. For Stendhal's philosophy as it evolves under the influence of Cabanis, far from endeavouring to reduce humanity to some all-embracing mechanical régime, retains a respect for the vitality, the uniqueness, even the mystery and unpredictability, of the living organism.¹³⁰ Rooted in 'la zone des ténèbres biologiques ou énergétiques,' the vitality of the individual, as Michel Crouzet observes, will take on for Stendhal a mysterious quality, existing 'indépendamment de toute cause, comme effet pur et mystère, que les causes externes peuvent favoriser, jamais créer.'¹³¹ The distinction is critical. For it opens the way towards a much fuller appreciation of human nature as the point of intersection between a predetermined *moi* and a relentlessly pervasive environment. In contrast to the static, reductionist vision of man propounded by the mechanists, Cabanis opens up to Stendhal, as Francine Marill Albérès asserts, 'un univers en mouvement',

une vision plus complexe et plus riche de l'espèce humaine, en la montrant soumise à des lois à la fois poétiques et scientifiques, en la reliant à son milieu

physique et à son cadre naturel.¹³²

The notion of the physical and natural environment is an important one. The most telling insights into human nature were to be had, Stendhal would come to believe, by no amount of cogitation about man and matter, but by comparative anatomy within and between the species and by the extension to man of the natural sciences.¹³³ Nature, as we shall see, becomes a central criterion in Stendhal's appreciation of the individual and of society alike; *le naturel* furnishes a standard to be brought to bear against all aspects of human sentiment and behaviour. The very concept of the *natural* as an overriding value which is there to be observed or betrayed by man has no place within mechanistic determinism as understood above. Within the latter perspective, the distinction between nature and artifice is rendered redundant by the fact that all our actions, from the simplest to the most contrived, are the necessary — *natural* — result of a given set of determining factors. The distinction which E.B. Tenenbaum signals in Stendhal between 'natural' and 'socially conditioned behavior'¹³⁴ would, in this sense at least, have meant little to Hobbes or Helvétius. Still less would these philosophers have endorsed the further distinction, to be found in the same critic's discussion of Stendhal, between 'conscious self-creation' and 'natural impulse.'¹³⁵ Yet in this notion of the 'natural' as a realm apart, a repository of the purest form of selfhood, Stendhal will discover an *ultima ratio* of sorts, a means of measuring man against himself (his own inner nature), his fellow men (human nature in general), and a much vaster notion of Nature in which humanity is viewed as but part of a universal scale of being.

From the Idea of Matter to the Science of Nature

For these reasons, we contend, and in the light of what has been argued in Chapters IV and V above, Stendhal's 'materialism', if it is to be further defined, can more properly be termed 'naturalistic' than 'mechanistic'.¹³⁶ For man is much more akin for Stendhal to plant or animal than to machine, and will be integrated, even at this basic level of analogy, into a dynamic world of Nature, rather than forming part of any clockwork realm of 'bodies in motion', 'statue-men' or 'man-machines'.¹³⁷ Through the ascendancy which Stendhal comes to grant Cabanis over his predecessors, Helvétius and Condillac, he takes sides in a debate between 'mechanism' and 'organicism' which, as D.G. Charlton observes, constitutes an important element of French philosophical thought in the later eighteenth century. For a significant shift was taking place between 'the old machine model of the natural world' and 'the new organicist model':

The utterly predictable *order* of nature was being replaced by the unpredictable, dynamic *power* of nature, capable of throwing up novelties and variations not fixed in advance. Creative energy from *within*, not static design from *without*, was increasingly being perceived as a fundamental characteristic of the natural world.¹³⁸

In his reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, with all that work's anticipations of Lamarck and later theories of transformism, Stendhal bears witness to what Charlton describes as 'the gradual replacement of the mechanistic concept of nature by a new concept, by a re-interpretation that saw nature as creative, dynamic, organic, and self-developing.'¹³⁹ Man, endowed as he is for Stendhal with vital properties and conscious purpose, brings something *to* the world in which his destiny is played out; he is emphatically not the mechanical man who would be required to sustain the 'grossly simplified mechanical materialism'¹⁴⁰ of La Mettrie, Condillac or Helvétius, with all their substantial affinities to Hobbes.¹⁴¹

With the exception of La Mettrie, whom Stendhal appears never to have read, these are the thinkers to whom he owes his 'materialism' in its earliest — metaphysical — form. From none of these philosophers, however, does Stendhal evolve any notion of man as a *physical* entity. The whole thrust of Cabanis, from the first words of his *Préface*, is in this respect new for Stendhal. 'L'Etude de l'homme physique est également intéressante pour le médecin et pour le moraliste: elle est presque également nécessaire à tous les deux.'¹⁴² Man must be studied as a living, breathing, eating, reproducing animal. 'La nature produit l'homme avec des organes et des facultés déterminées':¹⁴³ such is the principle which, for all its truistic aspect, informs the whole approach and substance of Cabanis's philosophy, with its stress on man as an intricately organised creature of flesh and blood.¹⁴⁴ Whereas Stendhal's 'materialism' in its earliest expression is defined more by what it *denies* than by what it *affirms*, his thinking takes on a much more positive aspect with Cabanis.

Materialism, in the sense in which the term has been employed in our discussion thus far, is a *philosophical construct*, a model imposed *upon* the world rather than a verifiable representation *of* it.¹⁴⁵ The materialism of Hobbes provides a striking case in point. Predicated, as Samuel Mintz puts it, upon a 'gratuitous and unproved' assumption (the 'assumption that there can be no other substance but matter'), Hobbes's 'philosophical system was a grand imaginative conception — a complex structure of ideas having unity, order, coherence.'¹⁴⁶ While such qualities may be commendable from a strictly rationalistic point of view, materialism thus conceived is no more susceptible of definitive demonstration than the dualism with which it takes issue.¹⁴⁷ To this extent, even the most cogent of materialist theses remains, as W.D. Oliver observes, 'a metaphysical postulate' rather than 'a conclusion of empirical

investigation.¹⁴⁸ The argument is well put by R.G. Collingwood, who maintains that, from a scientific point of view, materialism, as it passed from Renaissance to Enlightenment and beyond, was 'from first to last an aspiration rather than an achievement.' Failing experimental confirmation in the laboratory, argues Collingwood, 'the scientific credit of materialism was maintained by drawing very large cheques in its own favour on assets not yet to hand.' Whatever the materialists' respect for empirical principles, they were left in the end with a theory which amounted in large part to 'simple bluff'.¹⁴⁹ A point which is tellingly demonstrated by the closing exhortation of La Mettrie's *L'Homme machine*:

Concluons donc hardiment que l'Homme est une Machine; & qu'il n'y a dans tout l'Univers qu'une seule substance diversement modifiée.¹⁵⁰

Naturalism, in the sense in which the term may be applied to the early nineteenth-century *médecins-idéologues*, can be rescued from the above charge. For it denotes the apprehension of reality through observation and experiment rather than hypothesis. It is, as Sergio Moravia defines it, a philosophical stance in which 'l'observation se présente avant tout comme une réaction à l'abstrait, au système.'¹⁵¹ The concern is to observe and draw conclusions from natural phenomena, not to advance any ultimate definition of Nature itself.¹⁵² 'Cabanis's model of acceptable explanation,' writes Martin Staum, 'stressed observed relationships among phenomena rather than understanding of the essence of objects.'¹⁵³ E.H. Ackerknecht echoes this point, discerning in the same Cabanis 'an antitheoretical attitude' which issues in the cult of a singularly anti-philosophical Hippocrates, a Hippocrates who 'had revolted against the philosophers, a Hippocrates free from hypothetical subtleties, a Hippocrates that had found the true method of thought and observation, the greatest physician of all times.'¹⁵⁴

Naturalists, like materialists, of course, come in all shapes and philosophical guises. The task of marking out the ground between the two has provided a source of sometimes acrimonious debate among philosophers.¹⁵⁵ Between the 'materialistic and mechanistic metaphysics'¹⁵⁶ of Hobbes, however, and the 'psychophysiological naturalism'¹⁵⁷ of Cabanis, there is a world of difference waiting to be defined by Stendhal scholars who cite the names of these two philosophers in tandem, as though their respective philosophies — and, by extension, their influence upon Stendhal — were but variations on a theme. Let us consider briefly, therefore, the distinctions that obtain here, before going on to draw some conclusions about the relative contributions of these two philosophers to Stendhal's thought.

Though his critics never tired of levelling the charge of materialism against his

work, Cabanis himself disavowed the label. One may conclude, as does Martin Staum, that this was more than just a gesture of appeasement towards the censors.¹⁵⁸ While Cabanis made no secret of his anticlericalism, his denial of the materialist charge is explicit even in writings not destined for public consumption.¹⁵⁹ The repudiation of materialism in this case seems to have rested on genuine philosophical grounds. Claiming not even to understand the meaning of the designation 'materialist', Cabanis, as Staum puts it, chose to maintain 'a kind of Newtonian agnosticism on the ultimate constituents of the universe.'¹⁶⁰

The primacy of open-minded empiricism over rationalism lies, as has been argued above, at the very heart of Cabanis's philosophical enterprise.¹⁶¹ This, as Michel Crouzet acutely observes, poses something of a problem for the coherence of Ideology as a philosophical doctrine: 'On dit les idéologues "matérialistes": peut-être, mais en fait ils sont cloués à leur propre piège; s'ils le sont, ils ne peuvent pas le dire pour rester cohérents avec leur méconnaissance absolue de la métaphysique.'¹⁶² The point is a highly pertinent one. For it identifies the crucial sense in which Cabanis is to be distinguished from Hobbes and from the whole range of materialist philosophers who, though they may belong, broadly speaking, to an 'empirical' tradition, take as their starting point some metaphysical concept of matter upon which they elaborate their theses. The approach is one that is studiously shunned by Cabanis, whose remarks on Hobbes are particularly noteworthy in this regard. For if the merits of Hobbes as a thinker are recognised by Cabanis, it is as a *thinker* precisely that he is criticised. Among Hobbes's limitations, Cabanis signals the fact that the English philosopher 'était entièrement étranger à plusieurs parties des sciences,' and that his achievement must be seen to lie 'dans les matières de pur raisonnement.'¹⁶³

All of this is germane to our concern. For Cabanis, as Moravia points out, was engaged in a philosophical endeavour 'de type nouvellement "naturaliste".'¹⁶⁴ As physician and philosopher both, it was his aspiration to preside over 'la fondation tant souhaitée d'une rigoureuse science de la nature.'¹⁶⁵ Observation and experiment — 'une sorte de méthodologie du regard'¹⁶⁶ — were to provide the primary data of a scientific naturalism that would refute or substantiate what had been achieved by 'l'analyse rationnelle' alone.¹⁶⁷ 'Peut-être avons-nous passé l'âge des plus brillants travaux d'imagination,' writes Cabanis, with implicit criticism of his more rationalistic predecessors.¹⁶⁸

Though, by 1800, such aspirations had something about them already of the *déjà vu*, they bespoke a growing concern to better understand the nature of man by better understanding man's place within Nature.¹⁶⁹ Thus the medical considerations of Cabanis the physician were indissociable from a philosophical conviction that all

phenomena are part of some over-arching natural order wherein a common method of scientific inquiry holds good for all things and all events: man 'must be observed and analyzed like any mineral or vegetable.'¹⁷⁰ Naturalism, as I.F. Knight puts it, 'may be defined as the belief that nature is all-embracing, that nothing exists apart from it, that all man's endeavors — in science, in morality, in religion, in social organization — must rest upon the principles of nature.'¹⁷¹ Defining the said 'principles of nature' was therefore (and here we must be mindful of the overriding aspiration of Cabanis and his compeers to effect thoroughgoing social and moral reform) the first step in redefining man.¹⁷²

It would be a misleading simplification to suggest that there is no common ground between mechanism and naturalism as we have sought to distinguish these above. If we take as our points of reference Hobbes and Cabanis, then the distance between the two is indeed substantial. From the metaphysics of Hobbes to the physiology of Cabanis, however, there are many gradations and continuities. The title of La Mettrie's treatise and the boldness with which he sustains his mechanistic idiom,¹⁷³ for example, should not obscure the fact that he, like Cabanis, was a physician sensitive to the human organism and at pains to define man within a continuous scale of Nature.¹⁷⁴ D'Holbach, Diderot, Condillac, Helvétius, all alike may be considered inheritors of Hobbes and forerunners of Cabanis. All alike, too, may (with the qualified exception of Condillac) be deemed 'naturalists' in the sense that they admit of no discontinuities in Nature — between animal and human nature, or between the physical and 'moral' aspects of man — and of no intrusion of the supernatural into an all-embracing natural realm.¹⁷⁵ Distinctions, where they obtain between such thinkers, are often those of emphasis and imagery rather than of philosophical conviction.¹⁷⁶ 'Tout se tient dans la nature' was the conviction of a La Mettrie, an Helvétius or a Diderot long before it informed the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*.¹⁷⁷

It is upon the extremes of our scale, however, Hobbes and Cabanis, that we wish to focus for the purposes of this discussion; and here, we submit, a distinction such as we have established is warranted and helpful.¹⁷⁸ For it allows us to contrast Stendhal's reading of Hobbes with his reading of Cabanis, and to measure the relative contribution of each of these philosophers to his thought. Read within the space of a few months, it was the fate of the one to be consigned to near-oblivion, of the other to be celebrated to the end as a pioneer in the study of man. From Hobbes, as we have seen, Stendhal derived a metaphysical philosophy with which he was patently ill at ease, and which issues in the confusion and contradictions of his reading notes. From Cabanis, he inherits a much more readily apprehensible world picture which, for all its lack of range and depth in Stendhal's hands, allows him to remain firmly anchored in a real and observable world, using his powers of perception and comparison without being

spirited into the realms of abstract reasoning. Hobbes, in his mechanistic materialism, lacks a biological dimension.¹⁷⁹ Cabanis, by contrast, develops a physiological psychology wherein the body organic is everywhere the touchstone, refusing conspicuously to adopt, as Vartanian puts it, 'any metaphysical position as regards the nature of reality.'¹⁸⁰ With his reflections on animals, plants, climate, soil, air pressure, temperature, electro-magnetic forces and the like, Cabanis gave Stendhal licence to extend his considerations on man to the whole of observable nature and to seek empirical confirmation for precepts which could be tried and tested in the *real* world.¹⁸¹

Here lay the future direction of philosophy according to Stendhal. It was a direction, moreover (and this is the crucial point), in which the layman could partake of the inquiry as readily as the specialist. For once observation and experiment have yielded their results, it falls to any who so choose to verify these, to seek what Stendhal calls the 'concomitance d'effets.'¹⁸² Hence the diary entry of 20 July 1813, in which Stendhal writes:

Cabanis ne prouve point qu'un homme à teint jaune ait nécessairement ce que nous appelons le caractère moral bilieux; il dit seulement qu'il l'a vu. C'est à nous d'y regarder si nous voulons.¹⁸³

Later, in his diary for September 1813, he would write in similar terms of the physiologist:

Il a voulu être au niveau des connaissances en 1900. Il a laissé aux autres le soin de prouver.¹⁸⁴

Both of these diary entries give a clear insight into the revised judgment which Stendhal would come to pass on physiology in the period following his re-reading of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* in 1811. Here was a 'philosophy' whose very *strength* lay in its refusal to furnish definitive conclusions, to take refuge in remote metaphysical 'certainties'. M.A. Simons recognises the crucial stimulus which physiology delivers to Stendhal's perception of the world when she writes:

Il lit Cabanis, Pinel et Gall, et tente d'évaluer leurs théories à la lumière de ses observations dans le monde, et, non seulement dans les salons, mais dans la rue, en diligence, sur un bateau, sur le champ de bataille, bref, d'après nature; et dans les arts, à commencer par l'art dramatique: il scrute la physionomie des acteurs, leurs poses, leurs mouvements.¹⁸⁵

Here, in sum, is Cabanis's contribution to Stendhal. For the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* provided him with a comprehensive manual against which human reality in all its variegated forms might be measured. 'Tâche d'observer cela dans la nature,' Stendhal urges his sister Pauline, referring to Cabanis's theory of the temperaments in April 1810.¹⁸⁶ Alongside this theory, with all its range of attendant

variables directly affecting human sensibility, Hobbes's analysis of the passions could only seem primitive and removed from reality.¹⁸⁷ While *Human Nature* is deemed, as we have seen, 'le discours d'un hom[me] de bon sens qui n'a pas assez approfondi sa matière, ou des vérités sans objet,'¹⁸⁸ the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* was to become for Stendhal an 'immortel ouvrage', one of the foundation stones of modern philosophy, and the basis on which he would come to define himself, in 1829, as 'un philosophe de l'école de Cabanis.'¹⁸⁹ It is in the reader of Cabanis — not in the reader of Hobbes, Tracy, Helvétius, or any other of Stendhal's acknowledged *maîtres à penser* — that is to be found the 'naturaliste' whom Hippolyte Taine would extol thus:

on n'a pas vu que sous des apparences de causeur et d'homme du monde, il expliquait les plus compliqués des mécanismes internes, qu'il mettait le doigt sur les grands ressorts, qu'il importait dans l'histoire du cœur les procédés scientifiques, l'art de chiffrer, de décomposer et de déduire; que le premier il marquait les causes fondamentales, j'entends les nationalités, les climats et les tempéraments; bref, qu'il traitait des sentiments comme on doit en traiter, c'est-à-dire en naturaliste et en physicien, en faisant des classifications et en pesant des forces.¹⁹⁰

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. 'Cabanis and His Contemporaries', p. xxii. This is a subtlety which M. Crouzet appears to overlook when he defines the philosophy of Helvétius as 'un "monisme sensualiste", où il demeure que l'esprit est la même chose que le corps sous un autre nom...' (*Raison*, p. 991 n.). In principle, this judgment is correct; but, as D.W. Smith argues (*Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 185-201), Helvétius's neglect of the *physical* aspect of man, his 'obsession with abstract logic rather than physiological fact' (p. 193), made him appear little more than 'a pseudo-scientist, a rationalist in the Cartesian tradition' (p. 189). This was, as we have seen, a major bone of contention for Diderot in particular. See also on this question Gay, pp. 515-516; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 123-124. The point is important for an appreciation of Stendhal's development from a *metaphysical* to a *naturalistic* conception of man. It is worth noting that Crouzet is closer elsewhere (*Raison*, pp. 605-607) to the position of Moravia and Smith. On the metaphysical character of Helvétius's materialism and some of the problems which this entails, see Plekhanov, pp. 103-104, 117-118.
2. *Rapports*, pp. 137-138. See on this point Madinier, pp. 67-68; J.T. Merz, *A History of European Scientific Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Dover, 1965), vol. II, pp. 469-471; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', p. 14; Acton, 'The Philosophy of Language in Revolutionary France', p. 200.
3. See *Rapports*, pp. 502-503: 'Ainsi, beaucoup de mouvements s'opèrent dans l'économie animale, à l'insu du *moi*, mais cependant par l'influence de l'organe sensitif. Il faut donc considérer les nerfs comme pouvant recevoir les impressions qui déterminent certains mouvements, sans que le point du centre cérébral où se forment les idées et les déterminations volontaires aperçoive ces mouvements et ces impressions.' See on this point M. Crouzet, according to whom Cabanis provides Stendhal with 'une définition "psychosomatique" de soi' (*Raison*, pp. 593, 617-618). See also Madinier, pp. 63-65; Rosen, pp. 334-335.
4. *JL*, III, 299-300.
5. See *H de P*, II, 41 n. 1.
6. *Loc. cit.*
7. *Loc. cit.*
8. *Rapports*, p. 78. Cabanis, as G. Madinier (p. 64) observes, 'conçoit le physique et le moral comme formant une totalité psycho-physiologique indivisible.' This remark sums up one of the fundamental tenets of Ideology. D'Holbach, too, maintains as much: 'L'homme est un être purement physique; l'homme moral n'est que cet être physique considéré sous un certain point de vue, c'est-à-dire, relativement à quelques-unes de ses façons d'agir, dues à son organisation particulière' (*Système de la Nature ou Des lois du monde Physique & du monde moral* [London: 1771], vol. I, part I, ch. 1, p. 2). See on this point P. Naville, *Paul Thiry D'Holbach et la philosophie scientifique au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), pp. 224-227.
9. *H de P*, II, 42.
10. *Op. cit.*, p. 233. 'C'est sur ce point,' Cailliet concludes, 'que se réalisera sa "contribution" positive à l'esprit philosophique.'

11. *Rapports*, p. 42.
12. See *H de P*, II, 41 n. 1; Arbelet, *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiat de Stendhal*, pp. 259-260; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 106; Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 18. M. Crouzet rightly stresses the rhetorical value of physiology for Stendhal, the "'scientificité" de parade" (*Raison*, p. 601) which he derives from it.
13. *OI*, I, 737.
14. *Ibid.*, I, 785. On Stendhal's shortcomings as a student of physiology, see Matsuki. Such shortcomings do not undermine, of course, the very real significance which this science, however superficially apprehended, would assume in Stendhal's conception of man.
15. It is not the case, as M.G. Brown (p. 68) asserts, that Stendhal 'a commencé par la physiologie': he came relatively late to this science, embracing its value wholeheartedly only after 1811. His genuine and abiding respect for the physiologist should not mask his initial indifference to *l'homme physique*, or the highly selective and superficial nature of his eventual interest in this field. The same critic is inaccurate, on a number of counts, in asserting (pp. 68-69) that Stendhal, 'après avoir soigneusement étudié l'homme dans son physique et dans sa psychologie, quitte Helvétius, Hobbes et Cabanis pour Montesquieu, Bentham, Malthus et Tracy...'
16. Alter, p. 139; May, *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 262.
17. *Op. cit.*, p. 73.
18. See on this point D.W. Hamlyn, *Sensation and Perception: A History of the Philosophy of Perception*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: The Humanities Press, 1963), pp. 56-57.
19. *JL*, I, 217.
20. *Ibid.*, I, 354 n. 1. See the concrete examples whereby the convert to Ideology seeks to convey his reasoning to his sister Pauline: *Corr*, I, 170-174, 178-179, 184, 214, 248-250. Stendhal early gives evidence of a need, as M. Crouzet observes, to seek out the 'référence concrète' (*Raison*, p. 255): 'La raison ne peut être indépendante des choses...' (*Ibid.*, p. 257).
21. *JL*, I, 356 n. 1. In 1840 still, while working on *Lamiel*, Stendhal will remark: 'Le penchant naturel de l'imagination de Dom[ini]que est de voir, d'inventer des détails caractéristiques' (*OI*, II, 367). This, of course, constitutes something of a paradox in an author so loath to portray the concrete world in any detail. See below, Chapter VII, for a discussion of this question.
22. *S d'E*, 56. Cf. F.A. Lange, who, in *The History of Materialism* (bk. I, sec. 4, p. 93), defines Cabanis as 'the father of the materialistic physiology.'
23. *H de P*, II, 40. See above, Chapter V. See also on this point Simons, p. 89.
24. On some of the distortions and contradictions which occur in Stendhal's application of Cabanis's theories, see Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 27-28.
25. *H de P*, II, 40.
26. See V. Del Litto, *En marge des manuscrits de Stendhal. Compléments et fragments inédits (1803-1820)* (Paris: PUF, 1955), pp. 207-208.

27. *OI*, I, 720, 766; *JL*, II, 420; III 235.
28. *OI*, I, 660, 666, 756; *JL*, II, 324-325.
29. *OI*, I, 663, 895; *JL*, III, 269, 328; *H de P*, II, 53-54 n. 1, 63.
30. *JL*, II, 340, 399, 401, 405, 410; *H de P*, II, 81.
31. *H de P*, II, 43, 44 n. 1, 46, 79-80 n. 3.
32. *Corr*, I, 621; *JL*, II, 386; III, 20, 22, 23.
33. *De l'Amour*, I, 217.
34. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 91-92.
35. *Op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.
36. *H de P*, II, 38.
37. *Raison*, p. 337.
38. *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 37.
39. 'Le bilieux est forcé aux grandes choses par son organisation physique' (*H de P*, II, 46). See on this point Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 29.
40. 'L'amour est toujours pour lui une affaire sérieuse' (*H de P*, II, 61). See Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, p. 31.
41. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 108.
42. *Rossini*, I, 21.
43. *Corr*, III, 133.
44. *Ibid.*, III, 311.
45. *CA*, V, 185-186.
46. Though the sciences had progressed apace since the turn of the century, the place of honour accorded by Stendhal to Cabanis remains secure amid the most eminent philosopher-scientists of the 1820s. Cabanis is cited favourably alongside Cuvier, Saint-Hilaire, Fourier, Laplace and a host of other *savants* of the day. See Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 179-180, 262; 'Stendhal et les savants de son temps', *Première journée du Stendhal Club*, ed. V. Del Litto (Lausanne: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1965), pp. 147-158.
47. *CA*, III, 228-229. See Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 262. Cf. *Mél. Journ.*, 114: 'Les jésuites qui règnent en France détestent Condillac, Cabanis, etc.'
48. *HB*, I, 8-9 n. 2.
49. See *Corr*, I, 264, 292, 326, 562, 605, 626.
50. *Italie*, 145-146. Stendhal's point here is, of course, open to doubt, given Napoleon's repressive treatment of the *Idéologues* under the Empire. It is significant in this respect that Stendhal should define the works of Cabanis,

Tracy, Say, Malthus, Bentham and Helvétius not as philosophical disquisitions but as 'les bons livres sur la politique' (*Ibid.*, 246). On the fate of Ideology under the Consulate and Empire, see Van Duzer, pp. 149-165; Cailliet, pp. 256-272; Boas, pp. 1-22; Barth, pp. 8-13; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 75-111; "'Ideology" From Destutt de Tracy to Marx', pp. 354-365.

51. 'Cabanis and His Contemporaries', p. xxii.
52. CA, III, 408, 411. Broussais's work, writes Stendhal in a later contribution to the same journal, constitutes nothing less than 'une attaque hardie contre Platon' (*Ibid.*, III, 443). On Broussais's defence of 'the materialistic legacy' of Cabanis against 'the idealistic reaction of the 1820's', see Ackerknecht, 'Broussais or A Forgotten Medical Revolution', p. 327.
53. CA, III, 411-412, 424.
54. *Op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
55. Preface, *H de P*, I, lxxi.
56. *Op. cit.*, pp. 79, 88.
57. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.
58. *Stendhal: The Promise of Happiness* (Oxford: The Newstead Press, 1984), p. 35. Cf. the same critic's *Stendhal and the Arts* (London: Phaidon, 1973), pp. 12-13: 'All the ingredients of Taine's environmental theory ("race, milieu, moment") are present in the *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*.' See also on this question Martino, p. 84; M. Régaldo, 'Un touriste "idéologue": Stendhal à Bordeaux', *Stendhal à Bordeaux (1838)*, ed. S. Jeune (Bordeaux: Société des Bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1986), p. 50.
59. On Stendhal's plagiarism of Carpani and Lanzi, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 412, 430-439, 448 n. 107, 473, 479-480 n. 3, 483-484.
60. See, for example, Arbelet, *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal*, pp. 266-268; Wakefield, *Stendhal and the Arts*, p. 9; Berthier, *Stendhal et ses peintres italiens* (Geneva: Droz, 1977), p. 63. Cf. R. Bosselaers's somewhat laboured defence of Stendhal on this point (*Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 37-40).
61. On the genesis of the project, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 429-445, 479-501.
62. See *JL*, II, 324-331.
63. *OI*, I, 657-658. The reference is to Creuzé de Lesser's *Voyage en Italie et en Sicile fait en 1801 et 1802*, in which the author displays a marked antipathy towards Italy. See V. del Litto, *ibid.*, I, 1396 n.
64. See, from Stendhal's diary alone, *OI*, I, 660, 663, 666, 720, 737, 738-739, 756, 766, 823, 865, 867, 888-889.
65. *Ibid.*, I, 669.
66. *Ibid.*, I, 670.
67. *Ibid.*, I, 675.

68. *Ibid.*, I, 676.
69. *Ibid.*, I, 736.
70. *Ibid.*, I, 839.
71. *H de P*, I, 74-75 n. 1. Cf. the elaborate analogy between plant life and the creative human intelligence in the essay 'Qu'est-ce que le romantisme?', drafted by Stendhal in 1818 (*JL*, III, 110).
72. See *Corr*, I, 839; *Italie*, 28.
73. *JL*, III, 298. See also *Italie*, 1343 n.
74. *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, p. 140.
75. *Italie*, 166.
76. See *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 80-81.
77. *OI*, I, 929. For the powerful effects of music on the human organism, see Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 546.
78. 'Philosophical Ideas of Nature', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. V, p. 454. 'Man, animal, vegetable,' writes L.G. Crocker in relation to d'Holbach: 'all follow the same inviolable laws of the recombinations of matter' (*An Age of Crisis*, p. 87).
79. *H de P*, II, 37. The final sentence, which we have cited here as part of the text, is provided by Stendhal in a footnote.
80. *Rapports*, pp. 268-269.
81. See *ibid.*, p. 506: 'Les dernières expériences de l'Ecole de Médecine de Paris, celles qui, depuis encore, ont été faites en Angleterre, et surtout celles de l'illustre Volta sur le galvanisme, paraissent démontrer sans réplique l'identité parfaite du fluide auquel on a donné ce nom, avec celui qui produit les phénomènes de l'électricité. J'ai toujours été, je l'avoue, très-porté à penser que l'électricité, modifiée par l'action vitale, est l'agent invisible qui, parcourant sans cesse le système nerveux, porte les impressions des extrémités sensibles aux divers centres, et de là, rapporte vers les parties motrices l'impulsion qui doit y déterminer les mouvements. [...] Il est même possible qu'après avoir sagement circonscrit les faits relatifs à l'influence du magnétisme sur l'économie vivante, on parvienne, en les comparant avec ceux du galvanisme et de l'électricité proprement dite, à déterminer avec précision le degré d'analogie qui rapproche ces deux fluides, ou de dissemblance qui peut les faire considérer encore comme essentiellement distincts dans l'univers.'
82. *H de P*, II, 37-38. Stendhal comes very close here to the argument adduced by Diderot in his *Eléments de physiologie*. See Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 244-245.
83. *Corr*, I, 1245.
84. *H de P*, II, 38 n. 1.
85. On the classic imagery of the clock, see J.E. Schlanger, *Les Métaphores de l'organisme* (Paris: Vrin, 1971), pp. 51-60; Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, p. 244.

86. See A. Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme machine': A Study in the Origins of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1960), pp. 35, 190; Thomson, *Materialism and Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: La Mettrie's 'Discours préliminaire'*, p. 44. See also on this point Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. I, p. 167; Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1124; T.L. Lott, 'Hobbes's Mechanistic Psychology', in Van Der Bend, *Thomas Hobbes: His View of Man*, p. 68.
87. See Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme machine'*, p. 36. See more generally on this question Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 71-106; Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, pp. 183-207; Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 20-22.
88. 'La conséquence du matérialisme est de miner à la fois théoriquement et pratiquement la notion d'homme,' write A. Becq and M. Delon. See "'Le matérialisme du XVIII^e siècle" dans "l'histoire de la littérature" de la première moitié du XIX^e siècle', *Images au XIX^e siècle du matérialisme du XVIII^e siècle*, ed. O. Bloch (Paris: Desclée, 1979), p. 18.
89. *Corr*, I, 659. On the well-established analogy of fermentation, see Spink, pp. 217-219.
90. *Corr*, I, 576. The ring of eighteenth-century mechanistic materialism about such remarks is strong. Cf. La Mettrie: 'L'Homme est une Machine si composée, qu'il est impossible de s'en faire d'abord une idée claire, & conséquemment de la définir'; '[...] l'Homme n'est qu'un Animal, ou un Assemblage de ressorts...' (*L'Homme machine*, ed. cit., pp. 151, 186).
91. *JL*, I, 254-255.
92. *S d'E*, 5. Cf. *Romans*, I, 1220: 'Ce fut dans ces dispositions hautes et vraiment philosophiques, voyant les Français du XIX^e siècle sans haine ni amour et uniquement comme des machines menées par le possesseur du Budget, que Leuwen et Coffe entrèrent à la préfecture de Caen.'
93. *New Images of the Natural in France*, pp. 68-69.
94. On the 'automated machine' that is man for Hobbes, see C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962), pp. 31-34. See also Polin, pp. 53-66.
95. *A Literary History of France: The Eighteenth Century, 1715-1789* (London: Ernest Benn; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 366.
96. *Corr*, I, 576; *H de P*, II, 35; *CA*, III, 203.
97. *M de T*, I, 93.
98. See, for example, the letter to Adolphe de Mareste of 21 December 1819: 'tout pesé, j'aime mieux les hommes extraordinaires que les ordinaires' (*Corr*, I, 1000).
99. E.B. Tenenbaum (p. 64) suggests as much when she argues that life as Stendhal depicts it offers 'only two alternatives: a struggle for volitional self-creation [...] or a passive acquiescence to impulse that requires an abdication of the will.'
100. See the chapter 'From Cartesian Mechanistic Biology to the Man-Machine and Evolutionary Materialism' in Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 203-288.

101. *Op. cit.*, p. 601.
102. See, in addition to the above examples, *H de P*, I, 245; II, 44-45; *Italie*, 381, 1221; *HB*, II, 25, 279; *OI*, I, 169; II, 231; *De l'Amour*, II, 83.
103. See on this point *Rapports*, p. 206: 'c'est un besoin général pour la machine vivante de sentir et d'agir: et la vie est d'autant plus entière que tous les organes sentent et agissent plus fortement, sans sortir toutefois de l'ordre de la nature.' It is tempting to discern in these lines something of what would inspire the author of *De l'Amour* (II, 209) to declare: 'Vivre, c'est sentir la vie; c'est avoir des sensations fortes.'
104. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2164. Stendhal's reading of Hobbes had foundered upon his inability to grasp and to apply the mechanistic principles on which the latter's philosophy rests. See on this question Polin, pp. 55-61; R.S. Peters, 'Thomas Hobbes', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. IV, pp. 36-37. On the aspects of La Mettrie's philosophy which prefigure that of Cabanis, see, in addition to Vartanian's article, Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 165-167.
105. *Raison*, p. 610. '[...] la vie est la profondeur énigmatique du moi...'
106. *Ibid.*, p. 611.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 624. In this sense, Stendhal's thinking departs from the mechanistic model of the clock, which, as J.E. Schlanger (p. 52) points out, denotes 'un tout qui est égal à la somme de ses parties.'
108. *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 110 n. 3, 111. The question is discussed at length in Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 203-288; *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme Machine'*, pp. 13-39. See also Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 73-74, 78-87. On La Mettrie's extension to man of Descartes's *bête machine*, see K. Gunderson, 'Descartes, La Mettrie, Language, and Machines', *Philosophy*, vol. XXXIX, no. 149 (1964), pp. 193-222. See more generally on this question P. Delaunay, 'L'Evolution philosophique et médicale du biomécanisme', *Le Progrès médical*, no. 34 (1927), cols. 1288-1293, 1338-1343, 1368-1384.
109. *Italie*, 381. Cf. Schlanger, p. 51: 'Le type antithétique de la vie organique, c'est l'horloge abstraite, symbole du mécanisme mort.'
110. 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*', p. 45. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 487: 'Les médecins les plus éclairés ont, avec raison, banni de la science des êtres vivants toutes ces applications précipitées qu'on a tenté d'y faire plus d'une fois des théories purement mécaniques, physiques ou chimiques; ils n'ont pas eu de peine à prouver combien les résultats en sont vagues, incertains, insuffisants...'
111. 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*', p. 49. On the frequency of the mechanical analogy in medicine and its implications, see Spink, pp. 215-225.
112. *Op. cit.*, p. 365.
113. *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in An Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), pp. 191-192. Cf. P.M. Heimann and J.E. McGuire, 'Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers: Concepts of Matter in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences*, vol. III (1971), pp. 234-236. See also B. Russell's introduction to Lange's *The History of Materialism*, pp. v-xix.

114. *Op. cit.*, p. 192. See on this question J. Schiller, 'Queries, Answers and Unsolved Problems in Eighteenth-Century Biology', *History of Science*, vol. XII (1974), pp. 192-195; R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), pp. 133, 135-136; Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', pp. 1089-1098; Vartanian, 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2165. The process whereby physiology emerged in Stendhal's day as a science in its own right is charted by Schiller in 'Physiology's Struggle for Independence in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *History of Science*, vol. VII (1968), pp. 64-89.
115. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2158.
116. *Loc. cit.* See *Rapports*, p. 185, where Cabanis readily acknowledges the 'voile mystérieux' which is drawn across this 'principe' or 'faculté vivifiante'. On the conflicting tendencies to which this gives rise in Cabanis's thought, see Staum, 'Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', pp. 6, 13, 24-25; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 20-21; Plongeron, pp. 401-403. 'Pas un instant,' writes E. Cailliet (pp. 127-128) of Cabanis, 'on ne cesse de s'en tenir aux données de l'organisme vivant. Ce n'est plus de statue qu'il s'agit, en effet.' Cf. Cabanis's reaction to Condillac as evoked by Picavet (p. 260): 'Rien en effet ne ressemble moins à l'homme que ces statues que l'on fait sentir et agir; rien ne ressemble moins à la manière dont se produisent sensations, désirs et idées, que ces opérations partielles d'un sens, agissant dans un isolement absolu du système, et privé même de cette influence vitale, sans laquelle il ne saurait y avoir de sensation.' See also on this point Madinier, p. 64. On the 'vital principle', see King, pp. 160-161; T.S. Hall, 'On Biological Analogs of Newtonian Paradigms', *Philosophy of Science*, vol. XXXV (1968), pp. 18-19.
117. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2165. F.P. Bowman (p. 86) likewise stresses the 'fundamental changes in man's way of conceiving the universe between 1750 and 1850.' The world, he writes, 'was no longer conceived of as static, but as dynamic, undergoing constant change [...] In a like way, existence was conceived of, not as mechanistic, but as organic.'
118. 'With all due respect for proven facts,' writes S. Moravia, 'it had to be admitted that the organism possesses something that we may call a "force" — being careful to emphasize that it is *sui generis*, "intelligent", or at least capable of executing functions that no blind "mechanical" motor could' ('From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*', p. 54). On Stendhal's interest in the medical theories of his day, see Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 101-230.
119. 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*', pp. 58-59. For a clear and succinct discussion of this question, see Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology.' On the coexistence and overlap between mechanism and vitalism in the period, see also Schiller, 'Queries, Answers and Unsolved Problems in Eighteenth-Century Biology', pp. 192-193. The same is discussed in relation to Diderot by Wartofsky.
120. 'Cabanis and His Contemporaries', p. xxv. The extent to which Cabanis was influenced by vitalism is a subject of debate among historians of medical philosophy. See Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 8-9, 78-79 *et passim*; Vartanian, 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', pp. 2157-2158; Moravia, 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*' pp. 59-60; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 20-22. Vartanian argues (*loc. cit.*) that Cabanis's writings are 'suffused with vitalistic language. He speaks of *énergie vitale*, *forces vitales*, *mouvements vitaux*, [...] *les phénomènes de la vie*, etc.' To the notion of 'vital energy' in particular Stendhal would, as we shall see, prove attentive.

121. 'From *Homme Machine* to *Homme Sensible*', p. 59.
122. See, for example, *H de P*, II, 35, 123 n. 1; *Italie*, 1444 n.
123. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2151.
124. *Raison*, p. 346.
125. 'La théorie de l'énergie à Coppet', *Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël et le groupe de Coppet*, ed. E. Hofmann (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation; Lausanne: Institut Benjamin Constant, 1982), p. 442.
126. *JL*, I, 392, 225, 237; II, 125.
127. 'We sometimes get the impression, especially in the materialist writings,' observes L.G. Crocker, 'that men are being studied as if they were things, to which one merely attaches certain attributes' (*An Age of Crisis*, p. 199 n. 39a). The impression is much less strong in Cabanis than in his materialist predecessors. The anthropology that is developed in the *Rapports*, with its insistence on dynamic individual qualities and its deference to man's *inner nature*, demonstrates that the revolt against dualism did not have to issue in a view of humanity crudely reduced to the mechanics of matter in motion. See also on this point Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 143.
128. See E.B. Tenenbaum's (p. 54) well-founded assertion that 'Stendhal redefines self-interest to include goals that do not seem conducive to happiness in any rational, predictable way.'
129. *Op. cit.*, p. 77. Bowman writes of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a period which ushered in a new 'dynamic conception of the self', 'the move from a philosophy of substance to one of force, via the notion of a *pouvoir personnel*...' (*Ibid.*, p. 86).
130. Cabanis recognises that everything in man does not operate with Newtonian precision. There are contradictions, anomalies, unexplained phenomena, such as 'ces dispositions vagues de bien-être ou de mal-être que chacun éprouve journellement, et presque toujours sans en pouvoir assigner la source, mais qui dépendent de dérangements plus ou moins graves dans les viscères et dans les parties internes du système nerveux...' (*Rapports*, p. 118). Such remarks must have struck a chord in a reader so acutely alive to the unforeseen variations in his moods and thoughts. See on this point F.M. Albérès, who asserts that Stendhal's diary provides an 'écho fidèle' of Cabanis in this respect (*Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 99).
131. *Raison*, p. 345.
132. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 92. In Cabanis, writes Albérès, Stendhal discovers a world based on 'des rapports précis entre l'homme et l'ambiance, le tempérament et le climat, la coutume et la nature' (*Loc. cit.*).
133. See *De l'Amour*, I, 56 n. 1, 111 n. 1, 219-220.
134. *Op. cit.*, p. 34. Many of the problems implicit in Stendhal's conception of determinism stem from what Tenenbaum (p. 35) calls his 'triple allegiance to impulse, culture, and volition' — or, put another way, his failure to define with precision and consistency the boundaries separating the *natural*, the *social*, and the *rational*.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 34. Tenenbaum signals 'Stendhal's ambivalence regarding, on the one

hand, the relationship between the individual and his society and, on the other, the conflicting forces of intrinsic impulse and conscious volition within the individual himself (*Ibid.*, p. 36).

136. We understand here by 'mechanistic' materialism the reductionist conception of man implicit in Hobbes's system of bodies in motion, for example, or Condillac's animated statue, or La Mettrie's man-machine. Such definitions of man are, as we have argued, to be distinguished by substantial degrees from the more naturalistic philosophy espoused by Cabanis. On the problems of applying mechanistic concepts to the biological sphere, see M.O. Beckner, 'Mechanism in Biology', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. V, pp. 250-252; Broad, pp. 43-44, 46; Schiller, 'Queries, Answers and Unsolved Problems Problems in Eighteenth-Century Biology', p. 192 n. 48.
137. It is useful to cite in this context D.G. Charlton's suggestion that, by the later eighteenth century, "organism" was becoming the decisive "analogy", "image", "metaphor", in European thinking' (*New Images of the Natural in France*, pp. 77-78).
138. *Loc. cit.*
139. *Ibid.*, p. 72. See on this point in general P.C. Ritterbush, 'Organic Form: Aesthetics and Objectivity in the Study of Form in the Life Sciences', *Organic Form: The Life of an Idea*, ed. G.S. Rousseau (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 38-42.
140. Vartanian, 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2164. While R. Niklaus (p. 124) describes La Mettrie's philosophy as 'an extreme mechanistic materialism that Descartes would have decried', J.G. Brennan (p. 267) writes of the 'rather naïve mechanical materialism' that was a product of the French Enlightenment as a whole. See also on this point Anchor, pp. 71-74. On the 'vague mechanism' of La Mettrie, see Thomson, *Materialism and Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: La Mettrie's 'Discours préliminaire*, p. 117.
141. See on this question Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, pp. 18, 32-33, 86, 272; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 14, 77, 78, 115, 165; Thomson, *Materialism and Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: La Mettrie's 'Discours préliminaire*, pp. 148-155. S. Goyard-Fabre (p. 166) reduces the materialism of La Mettrie and d'Holbach to '[un] jeu de mouvements donnés et reçus', 'une mécanique glacée'.
142. *Rapports*, p. 41. A reproach to Cabanis's philosophical predecessors is evident from the outset: 'Comment, en effet, décrire avec exactitude, apprécier et limiter sans erreur les mouvements d'une machine et les résultats de son action, si l'on ne connaît d'avance sa structure et ses propriétés' (*Ibid.*, p. 42).
143. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
144. F.P. Bowman (p. 78) makes an important point when he notes the advance which the Idéologues mark in this respect upon their predecessors. For the former, through Cabanis and Pinel notably, extend their purview to 'the problem of sympathy, of energy and movement, of insanity, enlarging their definition of man who becomes more varied, individualised, complex. If their psychology remains essentially biological, it becomes markedly less mechanistic.'
145. In this sense, the metaphysical materialism of Hobbes can be said to resemble the mathematics of Condillac: both are, in the terms of A. Vartanian, systems 'imposed on physical reality' which do 'not necessarily express its essential content' (*Diderot and Descartes*, p. 179). That metaphysical materialism had

been no more able than mathematics to advance Stendhal's understanding of the world around him is clear from our conclusions in Chapters III and IV.

146. *The Hunting of Leviathan*, pp. 18, 67. Hobbes's philosophical system, writes Mintz (p. 154), had 'a logical coherence which only a contrary premise could disturb'; to move from Hobbes's definition of man to that of his opponents was merely to substitute 'one hypothesis for another'.
147. La Mettrie, too, offers a case in point. On the *hypothetical* nature of the man-machine thesis, see Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme Machine'*, pp. 14-20, 23-24. See the 'Avertissement de l'Imprimeur' which accompanies La Mettrie's treatise and in which, deference to the censor notwithstanding, he writes revealingly: 'Si les conséquences, que l'Auteur en tire, sont dangereuses, qu'on se souvienne qu'elles n'ont qu'une Hypothèse pour fondement. En faut-il davantage pour les détruire?' (*Ibid.*, pp. 141-142).
148. 'Can Naturalism Be Materialistic?', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. XLVI (1949), p. 609.
149. *Op. cit.*, p. 105. See on this point Plekhanov's critique (pp. 103-104, 117-118) of the metaphysical materialism expounded by Helvétius. Cf. Frankel (pp. 85, 95) on Diderot.
150. *L'Homme Machine*, p. 197. On the hypothetical, unverifiable nature of eighteenth-century materialism, see the same author's *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 169-173.
151. 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1118.
152. A.C. Danto defines naturalism as the belief that all objects and events are susceptible of explanation through methods best exemplified in the natural sciences. 'In all other respects naturalism is ontologically neutral in that it does not prescribe what specific kinds of entities there must be in the universe or how many distinct kinds of events we must suppose to take place.' This, argues Danto, is what makes naturalism compatible with, but distinct from, the various forms of materialism with which it has been confused. ('Naturalism', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. V, p. 448.)
153. *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 6-7.
154. 'Elisha Bartlett and the Philosophy of the Paris Clinical School', pp. 51-52.
155. On the difficulty of defining the boundaries between materialism and naturalism, see Sheldon; Oliver; J. Dewey, S. Hook, E. Nagel, 'Are Naturalists Materialists?', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. XLII (1945), pp. 515-530. Naturalism, writes Sheldon (p. 254), may be 'just materialism over again under a softer name.' Plekhanov's essay on d'Holbach yields a number of interesting remarks on this question (pp. 3-8). See also Plongeron; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 22-23.
156. Karskens, p. 47.
157. Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme Machine'*, p. 129.
158. *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 304-305.
159. See, for example, the letter to Mme de Staël cited by Staum, *loc. cit.*

160. *Ibid.*, p. 304. 'J'ignore les causes,' writes Cabanis, 'mais l'observation m'apprend que tout s'opère dans la nature d'une manière régulière et constante; que, dans des circonstances absolument semblables, les faits sont toujours les mêmes' (*Du degré de certitude de la médecine*, cited by Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1115). It is of this aspect of Cabanis's thought that Stendhal takes account when he revises his opinion in the physiologist's favour in 1813. See *OI*, I, 879, 889 n. On dissecting a Russian and a Spaniard, writes Stendhal in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (II, 36), the physiologist discovers a disparity in the size of their lungs. This, however, is only the first step in establishing a psycho-physiological theory. 'L'autre partie est une simple concomitance d'effets. Un obus part, nous voyons une maison du village sur lequel on tire, fumer, et prendre feu. Il est absolument possible que ce soit un feu de cheminée; mais il y a à parier pour l'obus. C'est dans l'examen sévère et microscopique des concomitances que gisent les découvertes à faire.' It is in this spirit of empirical scepticism that Stendhal is again careful, as we have noted, to qualify his discussion of the temperaments: 'Tout ce que j'avance, c'est qu'on trouvera souvent ces circonstances physiques à côté de ces dispositions morales' (*Ibid.*, II, 42).
161. A number of the metaphysical postulates on which Cabanis refused to pronounce are examined by P.M. Heimann, 'Voluntarism and Immanence: Conceptions of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. XXXIX, no. 2 (1978), pp. 271-283.
162. *Raison*, p. 33.
163. *Rapports*, pp. 76-77. The weakness of Hobbes's physical philosophy in the eyes of his more empirically-minded successors was, as E.A. Burt (p. 163) observes, that it was the fruit of 'deductions from general principles without careful and exact experimental verification.'
164. 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1145. 'The goal,' writes M.S. Staum, 'was to improve both individual and species, while accepting the inevitable variations of sensitivity, and to establish ethics on the basis of nature' ('Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', p. 3).
165. Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1145. On the 'new naturalism' of which Cabanis was a leading exponent, see *ibid.*, pp. 1129-1151; Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 59, 68, 113.
166. Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1121.
167. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 77. On the enthronement of analytical observation as the philosophical method *par excellence*, see Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle.'
168. *Rapports*, pp. 48-49.
169. For Cabanis and his fellow *médecins-philosophes*, 'la réalité naturelle est foncièrement unitaire, et chaque science est liée aux autres d'une façon organique' (Moravia, 'Philosophie et médecine en France à la fin du XVIII^e siècle', p. 1095). See also on this question Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 20-48.
170. L. G. Grocker, 'Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 3. Cf. *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 86-88. On the same notion as expounded by La Mettrie, see Vartanian, 'Trembley's Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.

171. *The Geometric Spirit*, p. 110. This depends for any precise meaning, of course, on what one understands by 'nature'. And Knight does acknowledge the 'bewildering variety of philosophies' that may be accommodated within naturalism thus defined. On the 'philosophical heterogeneity' of the term 'naturalism', see Danto, p. 448; L.R. Furst and P.N. Skrine, *Naturalism* (London: Methuen, 1978), pp. 1-9. For a discussion of what eighteenth and early nineteenth-century philosophers understood by the term 'nature', see Cassirer, pp. 37-92; Gusdorf, pp. 429-503; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 71-106.
172. See on this question the wide-ranging remarks of Plongeron. See also Lichtheim, pp. 167-168; Barth, p. 3.
173. See *L'Homme Machine*, pp. 151: 'L'Homme est une Machine...'; 155: 'tout dépend de la manière dont notre Machine est montée'; 180: 'voilà une Machine bien éclairée!'; 186: '[...] l'Homme n'est qu'un Animal, ou un Assemblage de ressorts...'; 191: '[...] les Animaux [sont] de pures Machines'; 196: '[...] une Machine immortelle est une chimère...' On the boldness of La Mettrie's polemic, see Lange, bk. I, sec. 4, pp. 63-64.
174. See Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme Machine'*, pp. 14, 18-20, 22, 25-27, 157, 186, 193-194; *Diderot and Descartes*, p. 268; Wartofsky, pp. 305-308. On the shortcomings of La Mettrie's physiology in relation to that of Cabanis, see Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme Machine'*, pp. 34-36, 123, 129. 'La Mettrie has by no means neglected the specifically vital characteristics of the organism; but at the same time he remains entirely convinced that these are knowable to science only insofar as they are seen *sub specie machinae*' (*Ibid.*, p. 20). See also on this point Lange, bk. I, sec. 4, pp. 67-68.
175. See on this question the studies by Gellner and Wartofsky.
176. The highly rhetorical value of many mechanistic and naturalistic images, what J.E. Schlanger terms their 'plasticité argumentative', militates against any hard and fast distinction. See *Les Métaphores de l'organisme*, pp. 47-49, 57-60.
177. On the 'cosmological monism' of Diderot, see Wartofsky. See also on this point Niklaus, pp. 215-216. Cf. Helvétius, *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 16, p. 223: 'tout se tient dans l'univers.'
178. The distinction finds some support in M.S. Staum and J.G. Brennan respectively. Despite the many readings of Cabanis as a 'bold mechanical materialist,' writes Staum, the latter 'never declared that the world was material or that human beings were moral automata ruled by pleasure and pain' (*Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, p. 6). Cabanis comes much closer, in fact, to the definition of the 'naturalist' as it is found in J.G. Brennan: 'To the naturalist, Nature is the basic reality, and the natural is the ultimate category. From Nature arise both mind and matter, and to Nature both must be referred as their ultimate source. Nature is all that there is; *no supernatural order exists.*' See the chapter 'Mind, Matter, and Nature', *op. cit.*, pp. 238-292, esp. pp. 239, 276. As the *Lettre à M. F[auriel] sur les causes premières* of 1806 attests, Cabanis was prepared to carry such a view of Nature to a point suggestive of panpsychism. See appendix to *Rapports*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 615-662; Picavet, pp. 279-286; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 7, 9, 179, 298-303; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 20-21. The judgment of F.A. Lange (bk. II, sec. 1, pp. 242-243) is worth citing in this respect: 'As a philosopher, indeed, Cabanis was anything but a Materialist. He leaned to a pantheism bordering on the Stoic doctrine, and regarded the

knowledge of 'first causes' [...] as impossible.'

179. See Laird, pp. 120-121.
180. 'Cabanis and La Mettrie', p. 2150. On the 'metaphysical agnosticism' which Cabanis shared with his fellow Idéologues, see Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', p. 31.
181. See Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', pp. 140-141. Though Stendhal's philosophical predilections do, as we have argued, leave room for a substantial element of faith, the question of empirical verification remains an important one in principle. See, for example, *JL*, II, 315, 330, 331 n. 1. See likewise the remark on Gall's phrenology in *H de P*, II, 64.
182. *H de P*, II, 36.
183. *OI*, I, 879.
184. *Ibid.*, I, 889 n.
185. *Op. cit.*, p. 113.
186. *Corr*, I, 562. It is worth noting that, some twenty years on, Stendhal would apply in precisely the same manner the theories of the physiologist and ethnologist, William Frédéric Edwards, who refines and amplifies a number of Cabanis's pioneering theses. See *Italie*, 1159; *M de T*, I, 177-183; II, 29-35. Cf. the letter from Edwards to Stendhal: *Corr*, III, 542-544. M. Régaldo ('Un touriste "idéologue": Stendhal à Bordeaux') considers the *Mémoires d'un touriste* as a 'voyage anthropologique' in which are brought together the time-honoured theory of climate and the emergent concept of 'race'.
187. The variability of passion, which Stendhal found ratified in Cabanis and which he would hold thereafter to correspond to observed reality, had no equivalent in Hobbes's mechanical theory. For the latter, as M.J.J. Karskens observes (p. 53), provides a *standard model* of human nature according to which 'passions (and actions) become calculable and comparable, because they can be analysed as accelerations of a standard motion...'
188. *OI*, I, 457.
189. See *CA*, I, 96; III, 409; V, 185; *Rossini*, I, 64 n. 1; *JL*, III, 181.
190. *Introduction à l'Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, p. 54. Taine's encomium is a generous over-statement. Stendhal was neither the first nor by any means the most rigorous exponent of the 'naturalism' with which he is here credited. See on this question Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 307-311; *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal*, pp. 259-271 *et passim*. In a letter of 18 October 1875 to Albert Collignon, Taine writes of Stendhal and Sainte-Beuve as 'les deux fondateurs de la critique psychologique et de l'histoire naturelle de l'homme' (Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 180).

CHAPTER VII

MAN, NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE: FROM PHILOSOPHY TO THE NOVEL

In Search of Animal Man: The 'Great Chain' and the 'State of Nature'

We argued in Chapter VI that the 'naturalism' of Cabanis and his fellow *médecins-philosophes* owes much to the notion of a unified nature, a concept that was far from new at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ Stendhal himself appears from the earliest to subscribe to a secularised version of that classic notion of a 'Great Chain of Being' which, next to the word 'Nature', as A.O. Lovejoy puts it, 'was the sacred phrase of the eighteenth century, playing a part somewhat analogous to that of the blessed word "evolution" in the late nineteenth.'² In a notebook entry penned on 19 August 1803, Stendhal, citing the Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus, divides Nature into three simple categories: 'Les animaux sentent, vivent et croissent. Les végétaux vivent et croissent. Les minéraux croissent.'³ Though there is nothing remarkable about this definition, it does, if only by omission, sanction an identity between man and animal which would find an echo elsewhere in Stendhal's early writings. In an entry to his diary on 26 August 1806, he records how he is struck by the 'esprit', the 'physionomie humaine', of a mandrill to which he has been feeding pastilles in the Jardin des Plantes.⁴ The account contrasts curiously with the 'vie purement animale' of a German family whom he describes in a letter from Harburg in the following year, or with the 'animal parisien' whom he had set out to observe at close quarters as a young philosopher-playwright in the capital.⁵

Such examples in themselves are of only minor interest. The suggested absence in each case, however, of any rigid demarcation line between man and animal appears to be more than rhetorical contrivance. As early as September 1803, Stendhal had consigned to his notebook a remark which demonstrates in striking terms the proximity which he recognised between the human and animal realms, and suggests a consanguinity between man and the higher primates notably:

On trouvera tôt ou tard par l'hygiène les moyens d'augmenter ou de diminuer la vivacité de l'esprit; alors, s'il est vrai que l'extrême vivacité du singe soit le seul obstacle à ses progrès, on pourra en faire un homme, et peut-être qu'un jour un homme-singe lira ceci.⁶

This short passage, remarkable in the boldness of its hypothesis for 1803 (when theories of evolution and biological transformism were still very much in their

infancy),⁷ is among the most arresting to be found in Stendhal's early writings. Implicit within it is the notion that the higher animals might, to borrow the terms of Peter Gay, be 'stunted, undeveloped, potential human beings.'⁸ To suggest as much was, of course, to strike at the very core of a conventional wisdom which, abetted by Christian doctrine, reserved a place apart for humanity within Creation. The idea was not new. It had been anticipated most notoriously by La Mettrie, who held that a primate taught to talk 'seroit un Homme parfait, un petit Homme de Ville, avec autant d'étoffe ou de muscles que nous-mêmes, pour penser & profiter de son éducation.'⁹ By minimising — indeed going so far as to abolish — the distinctiveness of man's nature vis-à-vis other anthropoids, by lowering to such a degree his estate in the scheme of things, Stendhal was early lending his mind to a view, prevalent in a current of eighteenth-century scientific and philosophical thought, which called into question the allegedly clear-cut and unbridgeable divisions between animal species.¹⁰ In so doing, he was subscribing to a notion which challenged the Christian proposition that man was the *telos* of universal design, that all Creation was subordinate to his moral purpose.¹¹ The implications of such a view, as L. G. Crocker puts it, were 'revolutionary'; for its net conclusion — already clearly latent, in Stendhal's case, in the passage cited — was to 'derive man from *below*, rather than from *above*.'¹²

The note from Stendhal's journal of September 1803 raises once more, too, the question of when he first read, or at least became acquainted with, the philosophy of Cabanis. For, in the conclusion to his chapter on the temperaments, the latter contends precisely that the process of '*hygiène*' which could be used for the betterment of animal and plant species should be employed in the improvement of mankind. The physiologist-moralist charged with implementing such 'hygienic' reform 'doit considérer l'espèce humaine comme un individu dont l'éducation physique lui est confiée; [...] il faut en un mot que l'hygiène aspire à perfectionner la nature humaine générale.' To these bold statements, Cabanis adds the no less bold injunction:

Il est temps, à cet égard comme à beaucoup d'autres, de suivre un système de vues plus digne d'une époque de régénération: il est temps d'oser faire sur nous-mêmes ce que nous avons fait si heureusement sur plusieurs de nos compagnons d'existence; d'oser revoir et corriger l'œuvre de la nature.¹³

Both the passage cited from Stendhal's notebook and the foregoing lines from Cabanis provide a similar view of human nature as part of a wider Nature within which man and animal are distinguished more by *degree* than by *kind*. Both, moreover, foreshadow a footnote which we find in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, and in which the influence of Cabanis is clear. Here, Stendhal will borrow from the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* an anecdote concerning 'un homme si mobile qu'il se sentait forcé de répéter tous les mouvements et toutes les attitudes dont le hasard le

rendait témoin.¹⁴ To this Stendhal adds:

C'est le défaut des singes, qu'un régime suivi pourrait peut-être guérir. L'homme agissant *au hasard* a fait du même animal l'énorme chien de basse-cour et le petit carlin. Il faudrait un prince qui eût pour l'histoire naturelle la passion que Henri de Portugal avait pour les découvertes maritimes...¹⁵

Two points emerge clearly from these remarks. The first is Stendhal's evident belief that a programme of eugenic engineering could hold out to man the possibility of exercising control over the evolution of animal species. The second is the suggestion once again that man and monkey are comparable in ways that go beyond their basic anatomical similarities. Some thirteen years before the publication of these remarks, Stendhal had entered in his notebook the following definition of 'la légèreté': 'défaut produit par une curiosité ou désir de connaître excité également par tous les objets.' To this he had added: 'La légèreté extrême se voit chez les fous et chez les singes.'¹⁶ If the monkey can be raised to the level of man, it is clear that man can — and in some instances does — descend to the level of the monkey.

This mobility of individuals and of species, their potential to progress or to regress, to move upwards or downwards in the scale of being, though it is again clearly adumbrated in *La Mettrie*,¹⁷ anticipates the theories of biological evolution and transformism which would come into their own in the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ The image for Cabanis, and, through him, for Stendhal, was one of human and animal nature transported, in the words of Martin Staum, 'from the fixity of Being to the flow of Becoming.'¹⁹ The idea is given expression in an arresting paragraph which Stendhal would incorporate once more into *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*. 'Peut-être, dans quelques siècles,' he muses,

l'hygiène considérera-t-elle l'espèce humaine comme un individu dont l'éducation physique lui est confiée. Peut-être qu'après avoir pris tant de peine pour avoir des haras, d'excellents chevaux, et de bons chiens de chasse, nous chercherons un jour à créer des Français sains et heureux...²⁰

It will be observed that this is a clear reiteration of Cabanis's assertion, cited above, that it behoved man to deploy his science in the correction of 'la nature humaine générale.'²¹ The statement, complete with examples, is drawn almost verbatim from the work published by the physiologist some fifteen years earlier. Quite apart from the moral import of Stendhal's remarks, which should not be overlooked, this consideration of the human species 'as an individual' raises questions which would be taken up by later nineteenth-century positivism,²² when Cabanis's vision of a 'perfectionnement progressif de l'hygiène particulière et générale' would be given new currency in the light of more advanced evolutionary theory.²³

The concern with the eugenics of the canine species and with the lessons for man that might be drawn therefrom is one to which Stendhal returns. 'Pour qui a des yeux,' he declares in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'toute l'histoire naturelle est dans l'histoire des diverses races de chiens.'²⁴ This remark, laconic almost to the point of obscurity, anticipates the much fuller development which would be given to the same idea in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*. There, in considering the various 'races' of men indigenous to France, Stendhal would return to the canine model. Reflecting on the many types of dog that evolution has spawned, he is struck by how rare it is to find 'un chien de race pure. Les animaux dégradés qui remplissent les rues proviennent du mélange fortuit de toutes les races.'²⁵ Stendhal's language here bespeaks awareness of a concept that is conspicuously absent from his early writings: that of *race*.²⁶ What is of a piece, however, with remarks made some three to four decades earlier is the quite undistinguished place allotted to man in the continuum of Nature. Hence the unflattering conclusion which Stendhal draws from the dramatic evolution that the canine has undergone over the course of time:

Malgré le désagrément de la comparaison, ce que nous venons de dire de l'espèce canine s'applique exactement aux races d'hommes, seulement comme un chien vit quinze ans et un homme soixante, depuis six mille ans que dure le monde, les chiens ont eu quatre fois plus de temps que nous pour modifier leurs races.²⁷

While the tone in which these remarks are couched suggests something of Stendhal's characteristic delight in shaking the complacency of his reader, the idea itself is one to which he clearly gave mature reflection. In penning the *Promenades dans Rome*, he likewise has recourse to the analogy between man and dog. How does it come about that the Neapolitan and the Florentine are so vastly different in their manners, that Sienna is alive with gaiety, whilst Arezzo exudes passion?

D'abord, les races d'hommes sont différentes. Supposez deux îles de la mer du Sud que le hasard d'un naufrage a peuplées des chiens lévriers et de barbets; une troisième est remplie d'épagneuls; une quatrième, de petits chiens anglais mopses. Les mœurs sont différentes. Grâce au saugrenu de la comparaison, vous saisirez toute l'étendue de la différence que l'expérience établit entre le flegmatique Hollandais, le Bergamasque à demi fou tant ses passions sont vives, et le Napolitain à demi fou tant il suit avec impétuosité la *sensation du moment*.²⁸

Crude though the ethnology may be, the thrust of Stendhal's thinking here could not be clearer. Nor should we lose sight of just how novel such a theory would have been a few short years before Stendhal rehearses it *à sa façon*. By the time he came to write the *Promenades dans Rome* and *Mémoires d'un touriste*, the natural and human sciences were developing apace in France. Stendhal's acquaintance with a number of natural scientists²⁹ allowed him to substantiate, however modestly, his knowledge in these domains. To the notion that man formed part of a 'chain', proceeding by continuity and gradation from the lower to the more sophisticated forms of natural life, he needed,

however, no conversion. Already, in a letter written to Pauline Beyle in April 1805, the idea is very clearly evoked. In advising his sister not to hope to inspire any natural sympathy among those whom he disparages as 'les secs', he points out to her that, 'pour avoir pitié, il faut se mettre à la place et il ne se reconnaissent pas dans nous.' He then goes on to illustrate the point in the following terms:

On voit tuer une mouche sans peine, on frémit de voir mater un bœuf; ce serait bien pis si on voyait tuer un orang-outang.³⁰

The implications latent in such a remark, as in the earlier suggestion that one might forge a man from a monkey, were far-reaching. The identification that is suggested here between man and the higher apes, in a scale descending through cattle to the lower orders of insects, strikes again at the heart of the Christian notion of a place apart for humanity within Creation. At a moment when biological evolutionism had not yet supplied the evidence necessary to sustain the thesis, Stendhal here echoes something of the eighteenth-century claim that Nature was but one material variously modified. As early as the mid-eighteenth century, the naturalist Buffon, whom Stendhal read at an early age,³¹ had attacked the whole basis of genera and species, contending that Nature was composed of 'individuals' alone, individuals linked from one end to the other of the natural scale by subtle gradations only.³² Buffon's comparison between man and the orang-outang in particular provided, as L.G. Crocker observes, a powerful means of assailing the view that man's difference from the animals lay in his physical organisation.³³ This fact should not, of course, obscure Buffon's overriding intention, which was to defend the concept of the *Homo duplex*, separating animal man from moral and rational man, and demonstrating the latter's uniqueness in terms of his range of consciousness and essential spiritual dimension.³⁴ In others, however, Buffon's basic thesis would find more uncompromising proponents. La Mettrie, with sharp polemic intent, held that Nature had used a single and same dough in which the yeast alone was varied.³⁵ Mankind, La Mettrie claimed, was but a collection of more or less clever monkeys with Newton at their head.³⁶

Though his position, like that of Buffon, requires qualification,³⁷ Rousseau too, in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* — the work which would prompt Stendhal, in 1803, to seek signs of the human passions in animal behaviour³⁸ — had argued for the kinship between *Homo sapiens* and the higher apes, namely the orang-outang and chimpanzee.³⁹ He was echoed in this by the naturalist Charles Bonnet, who, for all his religious scruple, went so far as to see in the much vaunted orang-outang not only physical but mental resemblances to man. Here lay proof positive, argued Bonnet, of the Leibnizian axiom *Natura non facit saltus*, Nature makes no leaps.⁴⁰

All of this forms the essential back-drop to an image of Man and Nature that is recognisably Stendhal's from the earliest. In his endeavour to penetrate the depths of the 'human heart', he hit at once upon the obstacle of a civilisation which, it became clear to him, did more to obfuscate than to elucidate human nature. The essence of man, Stendhal was to conclude (and it would remain a feature of his thinking thereafter), lay closer to the realm of Nature than advanced social *mores* conspired to suggest. 'Quelle société me servira de base?' he writes among some of his earliest notes on dramatic characterisation.

La moins compliquée qui ait été observée, les sauvages chasseurs d'Amérique.
Chez les sauvages chasseurs d'Amérique, tous les liens naturels existent. On y trouve aussi les liens sociaux, on y trouve aussi toutes les passions, mais quelques-unes aussi légères que possible.⁴¹

Liens naturels, liens sociaux, passions: here was a clearly graduated scheme of what Stendhal took to be the fundamental ingredients of social man. It was on the apprehension and depiction of these, he believed, that his success as a playwright would rest:

Tout le poète dramatique est dans la connaissance:
1° des liens naturels;
2° des sociaux;
3° des passions;
4° de la manière de les opposer de façon à produire un effet de tel genre.⁴²

Such was the theory. There remained, however, the considerable problem of uncovering the 'natural' in social man. Stendhal's early notes provide a number of colourful suggestions for possible experiments upon man which find some echo in the then emergent science of anthropology.⁴³ In particular, he is concerned by the question of whether man's desires, pleasures and passions, as they have evolved within civilised society, are akin to those experienced in an earlier state of nature. Part of the difficulty here for Stendhal lies, as we saw in Chapter V, in determining just what such a 'state of nature' might comprise. The problem, as L.G. Crocker observes, was not new. The same question of man's natural state had exercised the minds of eighteenth-century thinkers 'obsessed with the notion that by going back to the "origin" of things we can explain their "nature".' For it was firmly believed that there existed, as Crocker puts it,

a universal human nature which is prior — logically or historically — to society. This fund of basic universality remains indestructible in the social state. The question is, of what does it consist?⁴⁴

Stendhal in turn poses the question; but, as the entry in his notebook for 27 August 1804 attests, he is unable to provide any semblance of a response:

D[emande]: Qu'est-ce que *l'état de nature* relativement à nos passions?

R[éponse]: Où trouver cet *état de nature*? Je ne l'ai jamais vu. Qu'est-ce que c'est?⁴⁵

Stendhal's inability to hazard even the most approximate response to this question leads him, in the same notebook entry, to consider ways in which such a 'state of nature' might be simulated:

Si j'étais roi, je tâcherais d'éloigner tous les hommes d'une certaine quantité d'îles toutes isolées. J'y ferais élever des enfants pris à la mamelle par des femmes et des hommes muets avec les ordres les plus sévères de ne rien apprendre à ces enfants, de les empêcher de mourir seulement. Dès qu'ils pourraient se passer de secours, je retirerais mes muets. Je les abandonnerais dix ans. Ensuite j'irais les observer.⁴⁶

This desire to apprehend humanity before society has exerted any factitious influence over it, to strip away the obstructive layers of acculturation in order to throw human nature into relief, would, of course, long haunt Stendhal. One finds here early intimations of a concern with society and the individual which would find expression across the range of his later published writings.⁴⁷ What is also to be found in these early reflections on man, natural and social, is, as we have suggested above, an echo of the concerns that exercised anthropology in the first years of the nineteenth century. Louis François Jauffret, founder in 1799 of the first French anthropological association, the *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme*,⁴⁸ envisaged indeed an experiment almost identical to that imagined by Stendhal. The experiment, as G.W. Stocking explains, was conceived to determine the characteristics of 'natural man' by observing infants 'placed from their birth in a single enclosure, remote from all social institutions, and abandoned for the development of ideas and language solely to the instinct of nature.'⁴⁹

While Jauffret's proposed experiment was limited in its range, another prominent philosopher-anthropologist and member of the *Société* took a broader and more ambitious view. Degérando's *Considérations sur les diverses méthodes à suivre dans l'observation des peuples sauvages* was an anthropologist's handbook which proposed to lay the ground for a return, through the study of primitive peoples, to 'le berceau de la société humaine.'⁵⁰ Since man in a more primitive state finds his nature subjected to fewer modifying influences, held Degérando, he presents a more transparent object of study than civilised man. What Stendhal describes as 'liens naturels', Degérando writes of as 'variétés naturelles', which, he claims, are to be ascribed to climate, physical organisation and habit. 'Ici le développement des passions et des facultés de l'esprit se trouvant beaucoup plus limité,' Degérando concludes, 'il nous deviendra bien plus facile d'en pénétrer la nature, d'en assigner les lois essentielles.'⁵¹

In his early concern to rediscover 'natural man', Stendhal thus finds himself close

to the cutting edge of a new science. If Degérando's memoir can, as Stocking contends, be taken as a 'capsule summation' of anthropology in his day,⁵² then Stendhal's early notebooks reveal just to what extent he was, as a layman, in tune. For several centuries, of course, the savage had occupied a place in the French and European cultural imagination, the focus, as Georges Gusdorf puts it, of 'mythes' and 'nostalgies' alike.⁵³ One need, of course, look no further than Rousseau for this perspective on the savage.⁵⁴ Now, for the first time, however, was primitive man to be looked upon as an object of serious study. Though Rousseau himself had urged as much, his whole appreciation of the savage was, as Gusdorf notes, informed by a personal bias and a tendency to mythologise which militated against objective analysis.⁵⁵ As Gusdorf neatly puts it: 'L'initiative de l'école idéologique marque le moment d'une démystification; le savoir concernant les sauvages accède enfin à la positivité.'⁵⁶

If one subscribes to Gusdorf's analysis, then one is led to conclude that Stendhal's concern with the primitive is at once something more — *empirically* — and something less — *romantically* — than the 'opposition nature-société de type rousseauiste' which Michel Crouzet discerns in his thought.⁵⁷ For Stendhal's recourse to primitive man is conceived as part of his broader enterprise to *know* man; his concern to track human nature to its source is conceived less as a celebration than as a *science*: 'la seule bonne science', 'la plus belle science qui existe', '[la] seule science que j'aie à apprendre.'⁵⁸ Nor did one have to flee society in order to recover something of the individual *sub specie naturae*. Even within the social order, Stendhal held, the observer can tend towards what is most 'primitive', perceiving within the same community gradations whereby the authenticity of human nature may be signally altered. 'C'est en effet chez les paysans qu'il faut commencer l'étude difficile des tempéraments,' he would write in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*; 'l'homme riche échappe avec trop de facilité à l'influence des climats; c'est compliquer le problème.'⁵⁹ In distinguishing thus the degrees of 'human nature' that are exhibited within different social strata, Stendhal does not so much recall Rousseau as anticipate those later Realists and Naturalists who, as Maurice Larkin observes, would choose to focus their investigations on the manual classes:

Here, if anywhere, it was argued, Man's animal nature would be seen most clearly, uncomplicated and unadorned.
The middle and upper classes, by contrast, were seen as too thickly coated with the veneer of civilised behaviour for the animality within them to be so easily portrayed...⁶⁰

If the manual classes proper never provided a canvas for Stendhal's art, they would remain nonetheless — and for the precise reason stated by Larkin — the object

of an enduring philosophical interest. If Stendhal's letter to Mérimée of 23 December 1826 tells us much about the limitations of the novel as a forum for philosophising about human nature,⁶¹ his works of non-fiction left him at liberty to expatiate on those questions which had exercised his mind from the earliest. Thus in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* he explores a parallel between the remotest backwaters of contemporary humanity and the celebrated heroes of the ancient world. 'Où trouver les anciens Grecs?' he asks:

Ce n'est pas dans le coin obscur d'une vaste bibliothèque, et courbé sur des pupitres mobiles chargés d'une longue suite de manuscrits poudreux; mais un fusil à la main, dans les forêts d'Amérique, chassant avec les sauvages de l'Ouabache. Le climat est moins heureux; mais voilà où sont aujourd'hui les Achilles et les Hercules.⁶²

The value of such remote communities as repositories of human nature in the raw was clear to Stendhal, as it had been to Degérando. In *De l'Amour*, he returns to the anthropologist's concern with authentic primitive society, echoing something of the ambitions of anthropology and ethnology in the 1820s to accede to full 'scientific' status:

On devrait établir à Philadelphie une académie qui s'occuperait uniquement de recueillir des matériaux pour l'étude de l'homme dans l'état sauvage, et ne pas attendre que ces peuplades curieuses soient anéanties.⁶³

What could not be *preserved* could not be *observed*; and what could not be observed could at best be speculated upon. Yet the value of speculating upon what men *might* be in some other state was dubious indeed. Returning to his notes of 1804, we find Stendhal little advanced by his imaginary schemes. Having troubled over the numbers and sexual composition of his desert island castaways, he writes:

Chercher à deviner, d'après ce que nous savons, ce que nous les trouverions faisant après dix ans d'abandonnement.
Voilà tout ce que je puis faire, avec les observations sur les animaux, pour avoir l'idée de *l'état de nature* ou du *commencement de la société*.
Les voyages, les recherches que Buffon, Montesquieu et J[ean]-J[acques] ont faites d'après eux peuvent me servir.
Je ferai donc la description du *commencement de la société parmi les hommes*.⁶⁴

This might indeed be as close as one could come to a knowledge of primitive man. Stendhal takes no account, however, of the extent to which he is in breach here of his own empirical principle, formulated in a letter to Pauline Beyle some weeks beforehand, in which he had enjoined his sister to 'voir *l'homme dans l'homme et non plus dans les livres*'.⁶⁵ The proper study of mankind might, for Stendhal as for Pope, be Man;⁶⁶ but he clearly remains captive to conflicting aspirations, rejecting the social man whom he *could* observe in favour of a remote 'natural' man for knowledge of

whom he must rely on the accounts of others, or on his imagination pure and simple. Stendhal is acutely aware of the contradiction, and on a number of occasions exhorts himself to forsake his books and to study man at first hand. 'On est bien autrement convaincu de ce qu'on a vu,' he writes in a notebook entry dating from August 1803, 'que de ce qu'on a lu.'⁶⁷

Nothing, however, proves more elusive in all of this early period than the human nature which Stendhal is attempting to stalk. No sooner does he establish what he considers a bearing on his subject than the ground shifts from beneath him, leaving him as far as ever from his objective. 'Je connais mieux l'homme,' he declares on 29 January 1803, 'surtout depuis vingt jours que je médite Helvétius.'⁶⁸ Several days later, the judgment is reaffirmed in more enthusiastic tones still: 'Helvétius m'a ouvert la porte de l'homme à deux battants.'⁶⁹ Being an 'anthropologist' in a rented room in Paris, however, was not to satisfy Stendhal for long. In a note penned some weeks after these words of praise for his newly discovered mentor, he rebels against the whole principle of observing man through the eyes of others:

J'ai vingt ans passés, si je ne me lance pas dans le monde et si je ne cherche pas à connaître les hommes par expérience *je suis perdu*. Je ne connais les hommes que par les livres, il y a des passions que je n'ai jamais vues ailleurs. Comment puis-je les peindre? mes tableaux ne seraient que des copies de copies.
Toute ma science, ou du moins une grande partie, est de préjugés. Si tous les auteurs que j'ai lus s'étaient accordés à supposer une passion qui n'existe pas, j'y croirais.
Encore un an ou deux et j'ai pris mon pli, il faut renoncer à être un grand peintre de passions.⁷⁰

Such an urgent analysis of his situation early in 1803 is worthy of attention. Lending an instructive insight into the young Stendhal's self-perception, these remarks go a long way towards explaining his relief when, in spring 1804, after a spell in his native Grenoble, he returns to Paris vaunting 'l'expérience acquise à Gr[enoble], où j'ai vu l'homme dans l'homme et non plus dans les livres.'⁷¹ Throughout the spring and summer of 1804, his journal carries the echo of this new-found satisfaction.⁷² Of Grenoble he writes again on 9 June 1804: 'c'est là que j'ai vu la nature, tout le reste est cru d'après les livres...'⁷³ The impression of progress in this domain was, however, to be short-lived. A matter of days after penning this thought, Stendhal confronts once more the prospect of being 'réduit à peindre en regardant mon modèle par les yeux des autres.'⁷⁴ The only sound position in a sea of doubt, he concludes, is one of a self-imposed anthropological agnosticism:

Regarder tout ce que j'ai lu jusqu'à ce jour sur l'homme et sur les hom[m]es comme une prédiction. Ne croire que ce que j'aurai vu moi-même.⁷⁵

Much of this is, of course, quite academic. Stendhal's observation of man, whether in books or in the real world, is never the methodical, empirical affair that his remarks might at times suggest. The foregoing examples are worth citing precisely because they demonstrate the malaise which attends his endeavour to take a bearing on human nature. There is always *another* way, a better way which *would* produce the desired results, were it accessible to him. 'Si je n'étais pas trop vieux, à mon âge, ou si j'étais plus riche, sous quelque prétexte j'irais me mettre dans une pension,' he writes to his sister in August 1804.

C'est là vraiment qu'on étudie les hommes. On est trop longtemps avec eux pour qu'ils aient (généralement) la force de se déguiser. Je me sens fou pour connaître le caractère des hommes. Je ne sais pas où cela me mènera...⁷⁶

Where it would lead was, all too often, back to square one. From the tribesmen of the Americas to the Balzacian world of the boarding-house, 'real' man contrives to elude Stendhal — or, more precisely, remains ever the inhabitant of his imagination. For he feels constrained to seek verification of human nature *outside* the orbit of his own observation and experience, in an *elsewhere* in which man escapes (or *had* once escaped, or *would* escape) the insidious distortions that are wrought upon the needs and passions of the *civis*. As Michel Crouzet astutely observes of Stendhal,

il se sert du même concept fondamental de "nature" comme d'un point vers lequel remonter, ou descendre est nécessaire pour se placer dans la vérité pure de l'homme et de soi. La nature est saisie uniquement par la discordance entre la société artificielle, et autre chose: le faux renvoie à *quelque chose* qui a été vrai, ou devrait être vrai, à une antériorité ou une supériorité.⁷⁷

The accessible is all too often synonymous with the factitious, whilst the 'natural' takes on a conditional, almost hypothetical character. In a notebook entry dated 29 July 1804, Stendhal turns his mind to that peculiarly human trait, vanity. 'Un succès de vanité n'était originairement qu'un assignat, une promesse de plaisir,' he reflects:

Voilà quelle serait la vanité de trente jeunes filles et de trente jeunes garçons qu'on aurait transportés dans une île au moment de leur naissance et qui auraient été soignés par des muets de la façon la plus égale possible jusqu'au moment où ils auraient pu se nourrir par eux-mêmes. Ils tireraient vanité par exemple de bien tirer le fusil à la cible parce que ce talent leur promettrait du gibier et la jouissance qu'on a à le manger. A un degré de civilisation de plus, les plaisirs contre lesquels on pourrait l'échanger.⁷⁸

The almost unbroken flow of conditional tenses here is commentary in itself. Within the logic of Stendhal's remarks, the *degré de civilisation de plus* constitutes a key element. For it is by just such 'degrees' that are to be determined the differences between man in a 'state of nature' and man within advanced civilised society. 'Vanity' Stendhal had defined some time before as 'la suite inévitable de toute civilisation perfectionnée.'⁷⁹

Now he goes a stage further, echoing Rousseau's contention⁸⁰ that 'vanity' is the passion which most sharply defines human nature as it has evolved within civilised society, the very counterpoint of what is *natural*:

Quelle différence y a-t-il entre ces jouissances de *vanité* et les plaisirs naturels que nous pouvons observer surtout chez les animaux?⁸¹

The adverb *surtout*, with its suggestion once more of *degree*, conveys something here again of the continuity which Stendhal held to obtain between the human and animal realms. Vanity and animal pleasure are, in this sense, at separate ends of the same broad, but unbroken, spectrum. We have observed above how the reading of Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* prompted Stendhal to seek instances of passion in the animal world. 'Chercher dans les bêtes les passions des hommes et tâcher d'y apercevoir leurs fondements naturels,' he writes in August 1803. 'Les taureaux, les cerfs se battent avec acharnement par jalousie.'⁸² The value of the animal realm as a 'model' in the investigation of human nature lay for Stendhal in the fact that animals, though they had clearly *evolved*, could not be seen to have *perfected* themselves. The distinction was potentially crucial, allowing man, once his points of reference in the animal world were secured, to measure his present against his former — natural — 'self':

Les animaux peuvent nous être d'une grande ressource pour ces recherches parce qu'il paraît qu'ils ne se perfectionnent pas, ou du moins ce perfectionnement n'a point été vu par nous.⁸³

Though the view of animals as an authentically primitive analogue to man is one to which Stendhal would hold with conviction, this notion of perfectibility remains an important distinguishing feature of humanity.⁸⁴ But why should mankind benefit from a capacity for self-improvement that is denied his animal kin? In seeking to answer this question, Stendhal puts his finger, as others had done before him,⁸⁵ on language, the capacity to affix names to objects, as the key to man's progress beyond the purely animal state. Far, however, from rejoicing in the fact, he questions, paradoxically, the beneficial nature of human perfectibility. 'Par le moyen des noms,' he writes in his notebook for June 1804, 'les hommes surpassent infiniment les bêtes brutes en science et dans les avantages qui les accompagnent, et en *erreurs*, et dans les maux qu'elle cause [*sic*].'⁸⁶

Shades once more of Jean-Jacques. Not only does Stendhal diminish thus the triumph of human reason over brute nature; he goes so far elsewhere as to attribute a raw faculty of 'reason', an *intellect* of sorts, to animals themselves. Writing to his sister Pauline in February 1805, he waxes insistent, fresh from his reading of Tracy, upon the benefits of right reasoning:

Tu vois que c'est là l'instrument général nécessaire à tout et que tout le monde a une logique plus ou moins bonne [...].
Même les chats, en prenant une souris, en ont une.⁸⁷

Under the influence of Cabanis, Stendhal, as we have already noted, had extended to mankind the instinct evident in the behaviour of animals, promoting this indeed to the status of 'l'un des plus grands motifs des actions de l'homme.'⁸⁸ Here he reverses the process, ascribing plainly to the animal realm what had been defended throughout the ages as the appurtenance of man alone. In his reflections on the nature of human sentiment, or 'passion', Stendhal would be more prone still to insist upon the kinship between man and animal. Never is this more clearly the case than in *De l'Amour*, where his argument is sustained at times by allusions to the wider world of animal nature. Describing the physiological effects of love upon the human economy — 'un commencement de folie, une affluence du sang au cerveau, un désordre dans les nerfs et dans le centre cérébral' — he adds, by way of illustration: 'Voir le courage éphémère des cerfs...'⁸⁹ In the subsequent chapter '*De la pudeur*' (XXVI), he adduces in like fashion evidence to support his argument. 'Chez quelques animaux,' he observes, 'la femelle semble se refuser au moment où elle se donne.' In this instance, however, Stendhal goes much further still, concluding: 'C'est à l'anatomie comparée que nous devons demander les plus importantes révélations sur nous-mêmes.'⁹⁰

This consistent reduction of the distance between human and animal nature can be seen as a fundamental aspect of Stendhal's view of man, as it carries from his earliest private writings through to the latest of his published works. Not only apes and monkeys, but bulls and stags, dogs and horses, lions and tigers, wolves, goats and sheep, foxes and pigs, even worms and insects,⁹¹ have lessons to impart to man on his character, on his conduct, and on the Nature to which his being is inextricably bound. In a letter of 10 January 1838 to the botanist Adrien de Jussieu, Stendhal concludes with a remark which, for all its flippant humour, is consonant with his view of human nature at its most reflective:

On dépense de l'argent pour avoir un kangouroo au Jardin des Plantes, pourquoi ne pas avoir à Paris cette autre rareté un Allemand homme d'esprit?⁹²

Naturalism: A Problem of Definition

The foregoing pages, we suggest, are important for two principal reasons. In the first place, they confirm Stendhal's adherence to a naturalistic conception of man which

gained ground through the work of Cabanis and other physicians-cum-natural scientists in the early years of the nineteenth century. Through his *physiologie philosophique*, Cabanis, as Emile Cailliet points out, 's'attache à mettre en relief le côté animal de l'homme.'⁹³ To subscribe to Cabanis was to endorse an 'animalistic psychology of man' which eschewed the old hard and fast distinctions between the various orders of Nature and deprived humanity of any privileged station above and beyond the animal realm.⁹⁴

The second and related sense in which these pages are important lies in the logical implication of the ideas advanced. Did not an animal basis of mind imply a physiological basis of morals?⁹⁵ Cabanis and Tracy, in defining their science of Ideology as part of the wider science of zoology,⁹⁶ were certainly at pains to argue as much. Theirs was an endeavour, as Emmet Kennedy points out, 'to convert the study of thought into a natural science with all the allure of certitude and uniformity which philosophy and politics clearly lacked.'⁹⁷ To posit physical sensibility as the motor force of the human economy was to reduce moral responsibility to an idiom that had nothing in common with any innate conscience or 'revealed' appreciation of good and evil.⁹⁸ Everywhere in Stendhal's thoughts on this question there is recourse to the same idea that 'moral' responsibility is a function not of some innate sense of right and wrong, but of a whole complex of psycho-physiological stimuli rooted in the laws of nature. Morality, taught the 'bible' of Cabanis, began with no immortal soul but in the nerves and diaphragm.⁹⁹ The will with which Stendhal lends himself in turn to this rationale places him firmly in line with the new philosophical naturalism that issued from the clash of scientific reason and religious doctrine in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Donald King describes thus the process to which Stendhal bears witness:

Alors les sciences de la nature se créent pour résoudre les problèmes laissés dans l'incertitude par la faillite de la foi. La physiologie naissante refuse à l'homme son ancien rang divin, "un peu inférieur aux anges" pour lui accorder une place dans le règne animal, soumis aux lois de la nature. L'esprit philosophique, qui avait étudié l'homme au point de vue moral, se transforme en esprit scientifique qui le considère comme un phénomène de l'histoire naturelle.¹⁰⁰

Within a literary perspective, such a development would reach its apogee with Zola and the Naturalist movement of the later nineteenth century. When set alongside the case of Stendhal, however, this poses an inescapable problem. In Stendhal the *idéologue* we may, as a number of commentators (Zola included) have claimed, discern a bridge from eighteenth-century rationalism to the 'naturalism' of a later generation; but through Stendhal the *novelist* we negotiate no easy transition between the two. For it cannot reasonably be argued that Stendhal fits the mould of what we have come to understand by 'naturalism' in the literary sense of the term. His novels would suffice

from the outset — as Zola promptly decreed¹⁰¹ — to demolish any such suggestion, just as would his lack of a rigorously defined method of presenting and developing his philosophical ideas across the range of his other works. And yet there are important senses, as Zola in part (though only in part) recognised, in which Stendhal does indeed prefigure the Naturalism of a later generation.¹⁰² The concern to puncture illusion and to pursue a truth that has its roots in observed reality alone; the vision of a humanity governed by heredity, environment and the pressures of the moment; the kinship between man, the animal kingdom and the wider realm of Nature; the contention that 'moral' man was but 'physiological' man under another name, and should be 'dissected' in like manner; the refusal to censure conduct that is determined by factors beyond the control of the individual; sobriety of perception reflected in a literary style eschewing affectation: all are aspects of the future 'Naturalism' which run deep in Stendhal.¹⁰³ "'La science moderne, seule religion du XIX^e siècle" — de qui est cette formule? Non pas de Zola, mais de Stendhal,' recalls with point F.W.J. Hemmings.¹⁰⁴

Whatever Zola's well documented admiration for Stendhal, he was unsparing in his assertion that the latter had deployed 'une psychologie pure, dégagée de toute physiologie et de toute science naturelle.'¹⁰⁵ What grounds Zola had for such a claim we shall consider presently. For the moment, it may be noted that his assessment is far from commanding universal sympathy among Stendhal's critics, a number of whom have gone to the opposite extreme in proclaiming their author a Naturalist *avant la lettre*. Witness, for example, the judgments of Stendhal advanced by Albert Collignon and Adolphe Paupe respectively:

Ainsi, longtemps avant M. Taine et même avant Sainte-Beuve, on le voit pratiquer en tous ses ouvrages, et sans la réduire en système, la théorie devenue célèbre de la race, du milieu et du moment.¹⁰⁶

La théorie de la race, du milieu et du moment, se trouve éparsée dans l'œuvre de Stendhal. L'auteur de *Rouge et Noir* n'en a pas fait un corps de doctrine à part et complet; il l'a plutôt définie, en détail et à l'occasion, dans ses ouvrages de critique et d'histoire, et mise en action dans ses romans.¹⁰⁷

Both of these assessments, while they may share the same kernel of truth, state the case in such crude terms that they raise more questions than they resolve. For while neither is prepared to relinquish Stendhal's claim (and it is a rightful one) to be a 'theorist', albeit *sui generis*, of *race*, *milieu* and *moment*, neither accounts in any adequate way for the integration of the said theory into his works. While Collignon's lack of discrimination may be construed as a sin of omission, Paupe's distinction between Stendhal's critical and fictional writings runs the risk of over-schematising, while it fails to provide any satisfactory account of what such a distinction implies. How do the ideas which Stendhal develops disparately across the range of his writings cohere into

what can rightly be termed a theory? How, and to what degree, are these ideas translated by Stendhal from one *genre* to another, from historical and critical writings to the novel?

These are questions which must be addressed, and which lead us inescapably to consider the manner in which Stendhal himself viewed the integration of philosophical theory into the novel. The question is not an easy one, but it is called forth as much by Zola's remarks as by those of Collignon and Paupe. This much may be said at the outset: Stendhal, by the time he came to publish his earliest works, recognised — indeed was intensely committed to the principle — that hereditary and environmental factors, in all their variegated forms, exercised a crucial influence over human character and conduct. The fact is, however, that, where the novels at least are concerned, this remains a *principle*. For all Stendhal's declared fondness for '*le petit fait vrai*', he nowhere in his novels shows himself inclined to descend into the particularities of exactly *which* influences are at work and exactly *how* they bear upon his characters. Thus, while Matthew Josephson can hold Stendhal to be 'one of the most philosophical' of novelists, Martin Turnell can state categorically that the same Stendhal 'never used the novel to propound or to illustrate philosophical theories.'¹⁰⁸

Prima facie, one might tend closer to Josephson's Scylla than to Turnell's Charybdis. Stendhal's novels rest upon, and are informed throughout by, his philosophical beliefs and concerns.¹⁰⁹ What Turnell seems correct in suggesting, however, is that the explicit and laboured translation of philosophy into the novel is nowhere Stendhal's intent.¹¹⁰ The qualification is an important one. Among Stendhal's early critics notably, the charge was commonplace that he merely transposed philosophy into the novel. Thus for Elme Caro, Stendhal's novels '*ne sont guère que la mise en œuvre de ses théories*', whilst his *dramatis personae* remain '*des théories plutôt que des personnages*.'¹¹¹ To argue as much, however, is wholly to misconstrue Stendhal's conception of the novel. For he never sets out, as he had done in his youth, to breathe life into a philosophical treatise. Nor indeed is it evident that he regards the novel, in Gita May's terms, as 'a means of illustrating and testing, by way of narrative examples', his ideas and beliefs.¹¹² Whatever Stendhal's views on the natural and social determinism at work upon man — and his views on the subject are both deep-rooted and enduring —, the Stendhalian hero is never just a theory made flesh, never, to adopt Zola's parlance, '*un simple résultat*', '*un produit de l'air et du sol, comme la plante*.'¹¹³

In one sense, of course, Stendhal's protagonists may all be considered, like Julien Sorel, so many '*belles plantes*';¹¹⁴ but they are more, much more, besides. The interest

of Stendhal's novels resides precisely in the fact that his characters are agents, to all appearances autonomous (though the opposite suggestion is frequently, if subtly, at work), situated within a given time and place, and issued with the challenge of asserting themselves, of mastering the circumstances — material, personal, familial, social, moral, economic, political — in which they find themselves. Though he pushes his contention much too far in claiming — astonishingly — that Stendhal 'was not materialistic enough to believe that individuals are conditioned by social factors,' D.F. Wakefield is, of course, stating the obvious when he asserts that Stendhal was no determinist in the mould of a Zola or a Taine.¹¹⁵ Though Julien Sorel's character is *marked* by his environment, it is not — in any explicit sense at least — *explained* by it. Julien is, as Wakefield puts it, 'propelled through life by an inner moral dynamism which has no obvious source outside himself.' The point is developed:

It is this element of the inexplicable and unpredictable (*l'imprévu*) which makes him, in Stendhal's words, "a superior being"; he is no mere puppet reacting to external circumstances. In fact, like Fabrice and all Stendhal's heroes, Julien has a certain weightlessness, a lack of consistency which enables him to act out of character and respond to each new situation in an unexpected manner.¹¹⁶

Though the expression 'out of character' begs questions for the environmental determinist which the critic does not address,¹¹⁷ these remarks take account of the fact that Stendhal's protagonists are never allowed to become laden with the ballast of philosophical theory, that they retain throughout a capacity to act in ways which do not appear to be governed by any pre-ordained determinist principle. E.B. Tenenbaum, one of the few critics to consider the problem of determinism in Stendhal's novels, notes quite rightly that 'social conditioning plays a considerably smaller role in the depiction of his protagonists than it does in his theoretical statements about personal identity.' Tenenbaum goes on to argue that what most clearly distinguishes Stendhal from other French 'realists' is precisely 'the capacity of the Stendhalian hero to transcend the influence of his environment.'¹¹⁸

The redundancy of ready labels such as 'Realist' or 'Naturalist' in Stendhal's case is all too clear. 'The peril of schematization,' as Victor Brombert puts it, 'is particularly great in dealing with a protean writer such as Stendhal.'¹¹⁹ Yet some broad working distinctions are required if we are to advance from the much too embracive assessments of Zola, Collignon and Paupe towards a more nuanced reading of Stendhal's novels. At the risk of replacing one schematic fallacy with another, one might argue that Stendhal the novelist is interested less in portraying the ways in which the hero is *conditioned* by circumstances, than the means whereby he *responds* to those circumstances, with all their inherent laws of cause and effect. 'Il y a une manière d'émouvoir qui est de montrer les *faits*, les *choses*, sans en dire l'effet,' Stendhal had written in his diary as

early as 1805, taking Mme de Staël to task for being burdensomely philosophical in *Delphine*.¹²⁰ Certainly, the deliberate construction of settings in which might be played out the philosophical ideas explored in his other writings nowhere forms part of Stendhal's conception of the novel. A convinced believer in the power of the environment to shape human character Stendhal may be; but the environment which furnishes the theatre for his novels is a highly rarefied one, in which material detail appears often as a mere appendage to the protagonists' self-consciousness, where the world of concrete reality seems, as Georges Blin puts it, 'anecdotique, hors jeu, sans conséquence.'¹²¹ Blin goes further on this point, concluding of Stendhal:

Il ne donne, en effet, jamais le décor comme cause, ni le contexte comme texte, ni l'environnement comme milieu agissant. Et quand il condescend à attirer notre attention sur le théâtre de l'aventure, ce n'est point qu'il espère déterminer par là le héros, le résoudre — comme fait Zola — par l'extérieur [...]. [...] Le schéma tait naturellement ces causalités d'ambiance dont un Zola devait se désoler que l'auteur du *Rouge* les eût laissées pour compte.¹²²

Blin rests much of his case here upon an analysis of the scene, chosen by Zola to illustrate Stendhal's excessive abstraction, in which Julien seizes the hand of Mme de Rênal in the garden at Vergy.¹²³ Of this scene, Zola writes:

Or, le milieu n'apparaît pas une seule fois. Nous pourrions être n'importe où, et dans n'importe quelles conditions, la scène resterait la même, pourvu qu'il fit noir.¹²⁴

Blin's intention, in returning to this episode, is to demonstrate that, contrary to Zola's charge, there is a very significant amount of concrete detail: 'les grandes chaleurs'; 'la nuit [...] fort obscure'; 'le ciel chargé de gros nuages, promenés par un vent très chaud' — which, Stendhal tells us — 'semblait annoncer une tempête'; 'les gémissements du vent dans l'épais feuillage du tilleul, et le bruit de quelques gouttes rares qui commençaient à tomber sur ses feuilles les plus basses.'¹²⁵ Such is the clearly delineated *arrière-plan* against which the drama will unfold. Blin's purpose in recalling all of this, however, is not what it might seem. For, he argues, these descriptive elements denote no grand scheme of naturalistic determinism at work, but amount instead to so many 'données circonstancielles' which contribute at the level of *action* alone to an event 'dont la causalité réelle est à chercher ailleurs'¹²⁶ — specifically, as Blin goes on to assert, 'dans le champ de lutte des deux volontés.'¹²⁷ The physical conditions of the scene affect Julien's resolution to seize Mme de Rênal's hand not at the level of *intention* (his decision was, it may be recalled, taken the previous evening), but at the level of *execution* only.

The net effect of Blin's analysis is at once to refute and to endorse Zola's criticism. To refute it by demonstrating that there is indeed significant recourse to material detail,

where Zola claims there is none; to endorse it by contending that the same material detail is itself a function of plot, that it nowhere enters into the domain of intentionality, nowhere *determines* the characters or the action upon which it attends. In an author so apparently committed to the deterministic precepts of Helvétius, Tracy and Cabanis, this refusal to invest the material world with any clearly defined power to determine character and conduct poses a problem. 'Tous les maîtres de Stendhal,' as Michel Crouzet affirms, 'lui lèguent l'idée d'un déterminisme absolu et général.'¹²⁸ Yet where is the 'partisan d'Helvétius'¹²⁹ in an author so unconcerned to relate the setting, characterisation and action of his novels to the extended material environment? Where is the 'philosophe de l'école de Cabanis'¹³⁰ in a novelist who does not trouble to establish any clear *rappports* between the physical characteristics and the moral disposition in his protagonists?

Such questions have been the object of a surprising critical neglect, given the willingness of Stendhal's commentators to dub him a spokesman for Ideology and continuator of the deterministic materialism of the eighteenth-century *philosophes*. Where consideration has been given to the question of philosophy in Stendhal's novels, it has tended to concentrate upon the minutiae of specific influences to the exclusion of more general questions of approach and internal consistency.¹³¹ Where the broader questions *have* been addressed, the results have been far from satisfactory. 'Jamais on n'expliquera une page du *Rouge et le Noir* à l'aide de Cabanis ou de Destutt de Tracy,' concludes René Girard, dismissing out of hand any link between the 'théories de la jeunesse' and the 'romans de la maturité.'¹³² No less sweeping in his tone, Henri Martineau advances the quite opposite view, claiming that all of the characters in Stendhal's novels remain true to principles derived from Helvétius and Cabanis.¹³³ Beyond such bold generalities, however, neither critic ventures. Francine Marill Albérès makes a more sustained, though not altogether happy, attempt to discover the hand of Cabanis in Stendhal's novels. Among the more insightful judgments advanced in this regard is the assertion that the Stendhalian hero undergoes, 'à côté de l'expérience externe, une expérience interne, et à coté de l'action volontaire et raisonnée, un automatisme inconscient qui échappe au contrôle du moi.'¹³⁴ This Albérès ascribes, plausibly enough, to 'le rôle de l'inconscient' which Stendhal had first encountered in Cabanis.¹³⁵ Can one go so far, however, as to see Stendhal's novels as a dramatisation of Cabanis's philosophy? Albérès suggests as much when she writes:

Décantées par le temps, estompées par le souvenir, les idées du médecin Cabanis ont pris figure humaine pour le romancier Stendhal, se sont incarnées en Julien Sorel ou en Fabrice, d'abstractions elles sont devenues hommes.¹³⁶

It is, of course, reasonable to propose that such a major and lasting influence upon

Stendhal's thought as that of Cabanis should provide an informing principle in his interpretation of the world. As the *Vie de Henry Brulard* attests, Stendhal's allegiance to Cabanis's theories remains undiminished to the end.¹³⁷ Yet, in taking account of what she perceives as Cabanis's influence on the novels, Albérès overlooks the obvious objection to her argument: the lack of any clear attempt by Stendhal to make the connection (inviolable for Cabanis) between the physical and moral characteristics of his protagonists. The painter, Stendhal had decreed in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, must bring out the *moral* character of man through a faithful representation of the *physical*.¹³⁸ Was it not incumbent upon the novelist to do likewise?

If one returns, with this in mind, to the physiological discussion of the temperaments as presented in chapters XCII-XCIX of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, one is at a loss to discover anything that can be said with certainty to prefigure characterisation in the novels. How, it might be asked, does an author register the presence or absence in his heroes of capacious lungs, a voluminous heart or an excess of bile? The difficulty of such an undertaking is, of course, only too clear. There are, however, numerous indices of outward appearance — height, physical form, facial characteristics, complexion, eyes, hair, skin, muscular conformation — which, as Cabanis argues, provide the discerning observer with a guide to the temperament prevalent within the individual. The *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* furnish a veritable manual of physical characterisation, a storehouse of descriptions that could readily have been transposed into the novel.¹³⁹

How, then, do we account for Stendhal's *insouciance* in this domain — an *insouciance* which goes to the point, as Georges Blin observes, of assigning to his protagonists the same bland, almost interchangeable features?¹⁴⁰ Not only are the physical portraits of Stendhal's heroes and heroines unremarkable, they are, as Blin points out, liable to inconsistency.¹⁴¹ It would require much contrivance, and a distortingly high degree of selectivity, to bring these 'identikit' heroes, these 'incorporeal figures', as C.P. Snow calls them,¹⁴² into line with Cabanis's contention that

à telles apparences extérieures, c'est-à-dire, à telle physionomie, taille, proportion des membres, couleur de la peau, habitude du corps, état des vaisseaux sanguins, [correspondent] assez constamment telles dispositions de l'esprit, ou telles passions particulières.¹⁴³

All of this raises the central question of what Stendhal understood to be the function of the novelist. And here it must be remembered that, whatever his avowed view of the novel as a 'mirror', Stendhal never disengages himself from the belief that Art brings its own particular focus to Reality. As we read in the *Vies de Haydn, de*

Mozart et de Métastase, 'tous les arts sont fondés sur un certain degré de fausseté.'¹⁴⁴ The point is one which finds more forceful expression on other occasions. 'Tout ouvrage d'art est un *beau mensonge*,' declares Stendhal in an article on Walter Scott and *La Princesse de Clèves*.¹⁴⁵ 'Un ouvrage d'art,' he insists once more in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'n'est qu'un beau mensonge.'¹⁴⁶ Hence the near impossibility, as Stendhal argues in relation to the pictorial arts, that 'la nature présente une action telle qu'on n'ait qu'à la copier pour faire un tableau.'¹⁴⁷

As of the painter, so of the novelist. Both must tailor, embellish, *select* their reality. 'En général,' writes Stendhal in his notes for *Lucien Leuwen*, '*idéaler* comme Raphaël *idéalise* dans un portrait pour le rendre plus ressemblant.'¹⁴⁸ This paradox takes us some way towards an appreciation of the truth, the 'nature', which Stendhal was seeking to convey through his novels — or, more accurately perhaps, towards some understanding of the truth which he was *not* attempting to convey. His impatience with the so-called '*naturalistes*' who, in painting,¹⁴⁹ fear to embellish their subject carries over into his preoccupations as a writer. 'Naturalism' represents for Stendhal a sort of 'zero degree' of the novelist's art. Hence the self-reproach which we find in a note consigned to the manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen*: '*For me*: Tu n'es qu'un *naturaliste*: tu ne choisis pas les modèles, mais prends pour *love* toujours Métilde et Dominique.'¹⁵⁰

One could not at the same time be a servant of Art and a slave to Reality. As F.C. Green asserts, Stendhal 'would never have admitted the possibility of that so-called identification of life and art which was the ideal of the later Naturalists.'¹⁵¹ His whole point of departure is different. 'Il faut observer les passions dans l'homme qui existe,' Stendhal had written in 1804, 'pour pouvoir les mettre dans mes êtres plus beaux que nature.'¹⁵² The novel, no less than the theatre, would be an excursion for Stendhal into that perennial object of his concern, the 'human heart.' No less than the theatre, too, it must avoid becoming a mere *copy*, however faithful, of observed reality. It is the novelist's task to *reinterpret* the world: neither to impose his own experience unduly upon his art, nor to withdraw to such a distance that he takes no part in *shaping* the 'reality' that it is his to represent. The balance is a fine one. 'Je cherche à raconter,' Stendhal would write, in drafting his response to Balzac's review of *La Chartreuse de Parme*: '1° avec une idée, 2° avec clarté ce qui se passe dans un cœur.'¹⁵³

Here, in this brief statement of his objectives as a literary artist, we glimpse the real theatre of the Stendhalian novel. His instinct as a novelist is, as he intimates on undertaking *Lamiel*, to opt for the '*résumé moral* d'une action' at the expense of material realism.¹⁵⁴ 'L'habit et le collier de cuivre d'un serf du Moyen Age,' he

declares in an article on Walter Scott and the *Princesse de Clèves*, 'sont plus faciles à décrire que les mouvements du cœur humain.'¹⁵⁵ Nor is such a judgment restricted to the novel as a specific literary form. Stendhal's defence of *Rome, Naples et Florence* as a study of Italy is that it describes not landscapes and stones, but 'l'état des têtes et des cœurs en Italie, la force du ressort et le sens dans lequel il est dirigé.'¹⁵⁶

For all their self-righteous tone, such remarks are more than statements of principle. For, related to Stendhal's conception of what art should be, there is another, altogether more idiosyncratic, reason for his reticence over material detail. It is an aversion, pure and simple, to physical description. 'Occupé du moral,' he concedes in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, 'la description du physique m'ennuie.'¹⁵⁷ Later in the same work, he describes the Salon de Tracy of which he was an *habitué* in the 1820s. Noting, however, that he has concentrated his attentions on the characters of various guests to the exclusion of the physical setting, he concedes: 'J'ai oublié de peindre ce salon. Sir Walter Scott et ses imitateurs eussent sagement commencé par là, mais moi, j'abhorre la description matérielle.' To which is added the still more telling remark: 'L'ennui de la faire m'empêche de faire des romans.'¹⁵⁸

Little wonder, then, that the novels to which Stendhal did turn his hand should so readily occasion the charge of lacking 'substance' in their characters and setting. Stendhal, argues C.P. Snow, could not 'immerse himself in an actual, living, realised world, either romantic or unromantic, the world of human beings of flesh and bone. He didn't breathe what a fellow-countryman of his later called "the odour of man."¹⁵⁹ The fellow-countryman in question is, of course, Zola, whom Snow cites approximately here from the preface of *L'Assommoir* ('le premier roman sur le peuple, qui ne mente pas et qui ait l'odeur du peuple'). The judgment has some foundation. For if Stendhal — and, in his likeness, the Stendhalian hero — had a decided distaste for anything, it was for the odour of man such as later 'realist' writers would feel bound to evoke it.¹⁶⁰ If Zola can be accused of misunderstanding Stendhal, writes F.W.J. Hemmings, 'the imagination quails to conceive how Stendhal would have reacted to *L'Assommoir*.'¹⁶¹

Material reality, clearly, had to be incorporated into the novel as into any other form of art; but Stendhal's 'copy of nature', where it occurs, seems little more than a grudging capitulation to necessity. 'Eh! je le sais bien, morbleu! qu'il faut imiter la nature; mais jusqu'à quel point? voilà toute la question.' The exasperation that is betrayed by this remark, which we find in the article on Walter Scott and *La Princesse de Clèves*,¹⁶² takes a more defiant form in the 'Projet d'article' which Stendhal penned for the prospective Italian readership of *Le Rouge et le Noir* in 1832, and where he raises a banner to the lack of material description in his novel. Here, he declares, the reader will not find 'deux pages à décrire la vue que l'on avait de la fenêtre de la chambre où était le

héros; deux autres pages à décrire son habillement, et encore deux pages à représenter la forme du fauteuil sur lequel il était posé.¹⁶³

Against such an aversion, the most firmly established principles of determinism must yield. That Stendhal should have been able to see in *Armance* — of all novels — '*l'étude de la nature*'¹⁶⁴ says much about the degree to which he had evolved his own highly rarefied conception of the 'nature' that should be distilled through the novel. 'On ne trouvera pas ici des paysages composés,' boasts the author of the *Chroniques italiennes*, 'mais des vues prises d'après nature...'¹⁶⁵ In *Lucien Leuwen* likewise, Stendhal claims to have copied 'les personnages et les faits d'après nature.'¹⁶⁶ To write a successful novel, he contends, one must 'peindre des caractères qui soient dans la nature.'¹⁶⁷ Such protestations of 'naturalism' are, it is clear, meaningful on their own terms only. For Stendhal, as Robert Vigneron observes, 'la nature est la nature humaine plutôt que la nature matérielle, et c'est à la vérité des caractères, des passions et des mœurs qu'il s'attache avant tout.'¹⁶⁸

It is important to recognise that, in this sense at least, Stendhal's excursions into 'fictional' literature over a forty-year period represent something of a continuum. For what is clearly to the fore in the novels and short stories is the same highly abstractive conception of man which had been such a feature of his early writings (and which, as we have argued, Stendhal had succeeded in correcting, from a *philosophical* point of view, through his reading of Cabanis and his increased awareness of the physiological dimension in human affairs). But Philosophy was no more Art for the later novelist than it had been for the aspiring dramatist. Thus Stendhal never successfully integrated — never, in truth, sought to integrate — his evolving vision of man, as a creature of flesh and blood, into his fictional writing, as he had done, for example, into *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, *De l'Amour* or the portraits of Italy. Instead, his notions of characterisation and plot continue to draw upon the same principles as his earliest literary projects, principles whose durability requires to be recognised by the student of Stendhal's novels. For the notes and marginalia which afford an insight into the literary composition of the latter are replete with the vestiges of much earlier endeavour.

Part of the bridge between the notes and draft projects of the early 1800s and the writings of some three and four decades later is the fact that Stendhal held with such remarkable — if ill-advised — tenacity to his dramatic ambitions. *Letellier*, as F.W.J. Hemmings reminds us, remained on the stocks from 1803 until 1821, and perhaps beyond.¹⁶⁹ When Stendhal determined finally to relinquish his ambition to become a playwright and turned to the novel instead, he did so largely *within the terms* of the enterprise which had occupied him, on and off, for some two decades. There is no doubt, of course, that Stendhal developed and greatly refined his sensitivity to the

complexities of human nature; but, from playwright to novelist, he made no leap in the conception of his essential undertaking: to explore the workings of the human heart.¹⁷⁰ What makes for dramatic interest, in 1835 as in 1805,¹⁷¹ is the internal struggle between passions themselves, or the classic conflict of reason and passion. Thus, on the manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal notes:

PLAN. — Je cherche une action *probante*, *id est* sacrifice de la seconde passion à la première.¹⁷²

Hence, too, the dilemma in which the novelist places his hero vis-à-vis the object of his burgeoning affections:

Son esprit se croyait fondé à mépriser madame de Chasteller, et son âme avait de nouvelles raisons chaque jour de l'adorer comme l'être le plus pur, le plus céleste [...].
Le combat de son âme et de son esprit le rendait presque fou à la lettre, et certainement un des hommes les plus malheureux.¹⁷³

Here speaks not only the Stendhal who had coined the notion of 'crystallisation' some dozen years earlier, but — more particularly — the Stendhal who, as early as October 1803, had deemed the height of dramatic interest to lie in pitting the dictates of the head against the impulses of the heart.¹⁷⁴ The same Stendhal, as late as 1840, in his plans for *Lamiel*, would echo more clearly than ever the language and preoccupations of his youth. Having concluded in 1803 that the passions occupied their place in a range of conflicting elements within man — reason, habit, social obligation, familial and personal ties —, the ageing novelist would turn his mind to the same conflictual divisions within natural and social man.¹⁷⁵ *Passions, combats de passion, liens, habitudes*: all are the stuff of Stendhal's earliest deliberations, which we find surfacing once more amid his notes of January 1840.¹⁷⁶

Philosophy in the Novel: A Cannon-shot at a Concert

To resume, then, Stendhal never transcended in his novels a vision of man which has its roots deep in a much earlier period of his thought. Such enduring allegiance to his primary notions on the depiction of human nature could only conduce to a type of novel in which the physical environment would play a subordinate—or, in Robert Alter's terms, 'minimal but tactically efficient'—role.¹⁷⁷ The thoughts and sentiments of Stendhal's characters hold centre stage throughout; everything else appears as a function of the latter only. 'Le décor a toujours une valeur relationnelle,' writes Hans

Boll-Johansen, 'il constitue un support à l'analyse psychologique. Seuls les éléments ayant la valeur de signes référentiels intéressent Stendhal.'¹⁷⁸

Therein lies one of the features which, as F.W.J. Hemmings observes, lend to Stendhal's writing its 'exquisitely archaic patina.'¹⁷⁹ Another of those features is the chasteness with which the novelist conceives of his subject. For Stendhal obeys to the end an aesthetic imperative formulated in his youth.¹⁸⁰ The subject must retain nobility: base 'realism' was in Stendhal's eyes as reprehensible as it was gratuitous.¹⁸¹ How can best be described the process of falling in love? The author of *De l'Amour*, as we have seen, puts it thus:

Il y a une cause physique, un commencement de folie, une affluence du sang au cerveau, un désordre dans les nerfs et dans le centre cérébral.¹⁸²

The author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, however, puts it rather differently. In evoking Mme de Rênal's nascent affections for Julien, Stendhal, in the 'Projet d'article', tells his potential reader:

Peu à peu, l'âme simple de Mme de Rênal sympathise avec l'âme généreuse, fière, orgueilleuse de Julien.¹⁸³

The difference between these two descriptions of the same phenomenon is striking. It reveals something of the transformation, the chastening process, which Stendhal's language undergoes in passing from overtly 'philosophical' works such as *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and *De l'Amour* to the novels. The phenomenon of 'crystallisation', contends the author of *De l'Amour*, 'vient de la nature qui nous commande d'avoir du plaisir et qui nous envoie le sang au cerveau...'¹⁸⁴ It is, however, in a quite different manner that the author of *Le Rouge et le Noir* will describe the same process as experienced by Mme de Rênal towards Julien:

La générosité, la noblesse d'âme, l'humanité lui semblèrent peu à peu n'exister que chez ce jeune abbé. Elle eut pour lui seul toute la sympathie et même l'admiration que ces vertus excitent chez les âmes bien nées.¹⁸⁵

Between the exclusively cerebral experience described here and the physiological process evoked in *De l'Amour*, there is indeed little in common. Jean Mélià, in his early study of Stendhal's thought, quite fails to take account of this distinction when he writes:

Pour Stendhal, en effet, l'âme n'est pour rien dans les choses d'amour. Le corps seul règne en maître. L'amour est une fièvre et, comme la fièvre, l'amour naît, s'aggrave, s'affaiblit ou s'éteint de par lui-même. L'amour n'est qu'une impulsion physiologique dont les conséquences influent sur le cerveau.¹⁸⁶

In principle, this is indeed so. To argue as much, however, is to appreciate only *one* aspect of love as Stendhal portrays it. For all Stendhal's 'philosophical' definitions of love as a *maladie*, a fit subject of study for the comparative anatomist and physiologist, he retains a whole lexicon of abstraction with which to convey the same phenomenon. If the former image is prevalent in his non-fictional writings, the latter comes into its own in his novels and short stories.

All of this, of course, merely serves to confirm an image of Stendhal which, in Georges Blin's words, 'décourage de le regarder comme un précurseur du naturalisme.'¹⁸⁷ But we return here to the point made earlier, about Stendhal's refusal not only to employ, but even to *perceive*, the novel as a forum for philosophy. The paramount task of the novelist, he makes clear on a number of occasions, is to narrate, to entertain, to move — not, as Blin puts it of Zola, to produce a 'fichier documentaire', 'la leçon de choses pour cours du soir.'¹⁸⁸ The novel for Stendhal was, as Howard Clewes observes, 'partly a vehicle for his own views on human nature, politics and philosophy; but they must, he knew, conform to the art.'¹⁸⁹ If politics in the novel is a pistol-shot at a concert, laboured philosophising would, one suspects, have had the effect for Stendhal of a thundering cannon.

It is instructive to recall, within this perspective, Stendhal's early criticism of Mme de Stael's *Delphine*, which, he had complained, 'fait trop sur l'âme (sur mon âme) l'effet d'un cours de philosophie.'¹⁹⁰ Nor is this the only occasion where philosophy is evoked by Stendhal as an unwelcome intrusion in a work of literature. His judgment of Egisthe in Voltaire's *Méropé* is revealing: 'Ce jeune homme parle en philosophe, ce qui détruit l'illusion.'¹⁹¹ The balance between the licence which the literary medium affords and the imperatives which it imposes is a question which clearly exercises Stendhal's mind. Nor would the criterion of his judgment in this regard vary between his reading of *Delphine* in 1805 and his self-perception as a novelist in later years. On the manuscript of *Lamiel*, we find a telling reflection on the place of philosophy in the novel:

Si le récit est trop chargé de philosophie, c'est la philosophie qui fait l'effet de la nouveauté à l'esprit, et non le récit.'¹⁹²

The novelist, it is clear, is confronted with a choice *between* philosophy and narrative, not with the possibility of incorporating both in equal measure, or of transmuting one into the other, as the later Naturalists would strive to do. In the margin of the same manuscript of *Lamiel*, Stendhal makes clear his view that philosophy in the novel could have a place only *at the expense of* narrative, not as any complement to it:

Maxime: Sur chaque incident se demander: faut-il raconter ceci philosophiquement ou le raconter narrativement selon le système de l'Arioste?¹⁹³

Henri Martineau surely betrays the letter and spirit both of this remark when, in his preface to the *Romans et Nouvelles*, he asserts of Stendhal: 'il exposait, et nous gardons fidèlement ses propres expressions, que *raconter narrativement* ne saurait le satisfaire, mais qu'il a toujours cherché à *raconter philosophiquement*.'¹⁹⁴ This is to distort beyond recognition the sense of the remark in question. Yet Martineau is not alone in thus misrepresenting Stendhal's thought on this matter. Pierre Martino goes still further in a similar interpretation of the same remark:

C'est que le dessein essentiel du roman n'est pas pour Stendhal d'ordre littéraire; il est proprement philosophique; il ne s'agit point du tout de divertir l'imagination, ou de flatter agréablement la sensibilité amoureuse.¹⁹⁵

Such assessments reveal a surprising insensitivity to Stendhal's thoughts on this question. For, as C.W. Thompson acknowledges, Stendhal became increasingly concerned as a novelist to 'éviter les réflexions philosophiques que multipliaient Balzac et George Sand, de ne raconter qu'"en action" et d'atteindre l'idéal d'une narration "narrative".'¹⁹⁶ Amid his notes for *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal defines his conception of the novel in unequivocal terms: 'Or, la première qualité d'un roman doit être: raconter, amuser par des récits...'¹⁹⁷ Philosophy, by contrast, is a *trap* into which the unwary novelist may fall.¹⁹⁸ In the letter to Mérimée which provides the famous 'key' to the reading of *Armance*, Stendhal hesitates over the quality of his novel. 'Ce roman est trop *erudito*, trop savant,' he fears.

A-t-il assez de chaleur pour faire veiller une jolie marquise française jusqu'à deux heures du matin? *That is the question*. [...] Si le roman n'est pas de nature à faire passer la nuit, à quoi bon le faire?¹⁹⁹

With the last of his novels as with the first, Stendhal remains acutely aware of the limits to which didacticism may be pushed. The self-consciousness which is evident at times in his notes and marginalia suggests the perils more than the benefits of being a novelist schooled in Helvétius, Cabanis *et al.* In a marginal note consigned to a copy of the *Promenades dans Rome* and dating from the writing of *Lamiel*, we read once more: 'Le roman est quelque chose qui fait passer la nuit.'²⁰⁰ In another note from the same period which relates to *Lamiel* specifically, Stendhal writes: 'On ouvre un tel livre pour avoir: 1° des récits; 2° des récits amusants.'²⁰¹ Such remarks, lending as they do a valuable insight into Stendhal's conception of his craft, should put us on our guard against defining him too readily as a philosopher-novelist. Unsure of the success with which he portrays the thoughts and actions of his characters in *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal compares his approach to that of Fielding:

[...] Fielding décrit à la fois les sentiments et actions de *plusieurs* personnages, et *Dominique d'un seul*. Où mène la manière de Dominique? Je l'ignore. Est-ce un

perfectionnement? Est-ce revenir à l'enfance de l'art, ou plutôt tomber dans le genre froid du personnage philosophique?²⁰²

The verb *tomber* should no more go unnoticed here than the epithet *froid*. In such 'philosophical characters' Stendhal's novels may appear, *prima facie*, to abound. Yet it is notable that, if his protagonists *think* themselves philosophical, Stendhal seizes every opportunity to lay bare their self-delusion, to debunk, with a sometimes savage irony, the very notion of 'philosophy' as a means of negotiating life's vicissitudes.²⁰³ Nor is the above the only occasion where the *lapsing* into philosophy by the novelist is thus condemned by Stendhal. In *De l'Amour*, we read that 'la rêverie' — which is 'le vrai plaisir du roman' — 'est innotable.'

La noter, c'est la tuer pour le présent, car l'on tombe dans l'analyse philosophique du plaisir.²⁰⁴

The choice — and it is presented clearly as such — is between 'la plus haute philosophie' and 'le laisser-aller des sensations tendres.'²⁰⁵ As a novelist, Stendhal believed that his sympathies should lie considerably closer to the latter than to the former. Nowhere is this more clearly spelt out, nowhere is the fundamental incompatibility between narrative art and philosophy evoked with more point, than in a note consigned by Stendhal to the manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen*:

[...] jamais de réflexion philosophique sur le fond des choses qui, réveillant l'esprit, le jugement, la méfiance froide et philosophique du lecteur, empêche *net* l'émotion. Or, qu'est-ce qu'un roman sans émotion?²⁰⁶

A case could readily be made for the same selective interpretation of philosophy in Stendhal's novels as Peter Jones makes, in *Philosophy and the Novel*, for, say, *Anna Karenina*.²⁰⁷ What we are primarily concerned with here, however, is Stendhal's own declared intentions; and for that reason it is important to take account of those occasions when he broaches the question in explicit terms. For the conclusion is inescapable that Stendhal considers philosophy to be inimical to the first principle of the novel.²⁰⁸ We are back here, it is clear, to that perennial conflict between the 'poet' and the 'philosopher' which had so preoccupied him from the earliest and had never been successfully resolved. It is for this reason, we would submit, that Pierre Martino gives a highly misleading account of Stendhal's art when he writes:

[...] il ne serait pas mauvais de rayer le mot roman, toutes les fois qu'on parle de *Rouge et Noir* ou de la *Chartreuse de Parme*; on lui substituerait par exemple ce mot d'*étude*, dont quelques romanciers naturalistes essayèrent de faire la fortune.²⁰⁹

We are at some remove here from what Stendhal himself would have accepted as a description either of his intention or of his achievement in the novels in question. We

have already had occasion, moreover, to consider what Zola, as the standard-bearer of those same 'romanciers naturalistes', would have made of such an assertion. As Henri Delacroix rightly observes, 'l'artiste, le conteur' in Stendhal work not in tandem with, but in opposition to, 'l'analyste.'²¹⁰ 'J'aime à la folie,' writes the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'les contes qui peignent les mouvements du cœur humain, bien en détail, et je suis tout oreille.'²¹¹ Had Zola required a single phrase from Stendhal to sum up his misgivings, he might have found it here.

So too, of course, Balzac. For it is interesting — if unsurprising — to note that, in his letter of 5 April 1839 to the author of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, the latter remarks, with some understatement: '[...] il manque le côté physique dans la peinture de quelques personnages.'²¹² What *is* surprising is how little store Balzac appears to set by this criticism. He clearly recognises — and respects — the distance that separates them both in their distinctive approaches to the novel. For he adds at once: 'mais c'est un rien, quelques touches. Vous avez expliqué l'âme de l'Italie.'²¹³

Such indulgence from the 'roi des romanciers'²¹⁴ must have come as reassurance indeed. It is interesting nonetheless to note that, on re-reading *Le Rouge et le Noir* in February 1840, Stendhal would be moved to remark: 'Il manque la description physique et pittoresque des personnages.'²¹⁵ The judgment is revealing. For if there is some regret here at the dearth of physical description, it is significant that this is prompted by the notion that the work is less engaging, less *colourful* as a result, not by the fact that environmental determinism is inadequately portrayed. A similar inference may be drawn from a remark which Stendhal makes in one of three drafts of the letter written in 1840 in response to Balzac's flattering appraisal of *La Chartreuse de Parme*:²¹⁶

On me dit depuis un an qu'il faut quelquefois délasser le lecteur en décrivant le paysage, les habits. Ces choses m'ont tant ennuyé chez les autres! J'essaierai.²¹⁷

Determinism in the Stendhalian Novel

Returning now to the assessments of Collignon and Paupe, we are better placed to appreciate their deficiencies. For they fail to recognise anything of the circumspection and discrimination that are required in the discussion of Stendhal's 'naturalism'. Before defining Stendhal's novels as demonstrations of *race, milieu* and *moment*, one must first take account of his contempt, in theory as in practice, for what Georg Lukács calls

'mere naturalistic realism.'²¹⁸ Stendhal, as we have said, is a firm believer in the *principle* of environmental and hereditary determinism, just as he believed in the power of historical moment to determine the destiny of men. Of these faces of determinism, it is the latter that is the most overtly present in his novels.²¹⁹ 'Du temps de l'Empereur,' he declares in a letter of 19 March 1831 to Alberthe de Rubempré, 'Julien eût été un fort honnête homme.'²²⁰ In the novel itself, we are assured that the same Julien 'peut aller loin, *si fata sinant*.'²²¹ An authorial comment which is echoed by Julien's retrospective estimation of himself: 'Moi seul, je sais ce que j'aurais pu faire... Pour les autres, je ne suis tout au plus qu'un PEUT-ETRE.'²²² Condemned likewise to bear all the weight of an 'uncashed potentiality' (in the apt expression of Michael Wood),²²³ Lucien will be to the July Monarchy what Julien had been to the Restoration: 'un jeune homme qui peut-être un jour sera quelque chose', 'un brillant *peut-être*', resolved to prove his mettle, 'd'être un homme estimable et de servir la patrie, si l'occasion s'en présente.'²²⁴

Such remarks are pregnant with the suggested power of historical moment and circumstance to determine the destiny of the individual, leaving the reader ever in Stendhal's novels with the task of reconciling, in Victor Brombert's words, 'ce qui a été avec ce qui *aurait pu* être.'²²⁵ For there is in all of Stendhal's writings 'a certain speculative quality', a refusal to draw too firm a distinction between what is, has been, will be, and what *might* be.²²⁶ The point is admirably captured by Jean-Pierre Richard, when he writes of Stendhal: 'Il suggère que nos actes sont bien au-dessous de ce que nous sommes, et que ce que nous sommes est bien au-dessous de ce que nous aurions pu être, de ce qu'en réalité nous étions.'²²⁷ Is this the self-indulgent illusion of the Stendhalian hero, or the conviction of Stendhal himself? The answer, in relation to the protagonists of the novels at least, is never unambiguously provided. What is certain, however, is that Stendhal's whole appreciation of the era in which he lived is informed by such tensions between reality and possibility, by a keen awareness of the 'principles of instability, evanescence, and transformation' which, argues Brombert, were those of Stendhal's generation.²²⁸ The great energising force of the Revolution in particular is an aspect of his day to which he would remain to the end acutely sensitive.²²⁹ Here lies the gravitational pole towards which so much of the conditional tense in Stendhal's writing pulls. Thus, in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, we find him, in characteristic fashion, measuring a young Mâcon lawyer not by what he is *now* but by what he could have been *then*:

Il agit; il vaudrait mieux si les institutions étaient plus fortes, il serait Fox ou Pitt. Du temps de l'empereur, il eût été conseiller d'Etat comme M. Chaban, et eût administré la province de Hambourg.
[...] Sous Napoléon il eût du moins été forcé d'être sous-lieutenant ou garde d'honneur.²³⁰

This is but one occasion among many when Stendhal airs what had long become for him a stock theory on the ebb and flow of social opportunity. Personal qualities alone, he had early read in Helvétius, do not suffice to make the admirable man: 'il faut de plus se trouver, comme les Codrus & les Regulus, heureusement placé dans des temps, des circonstances & des postes où nos actions puissent beaucoup influer sur le bien public.'²³¹ Historical moment, Stendhal comes in turn to reason, has power, as the final arbiter in human destiny, to determine not only personal fortunes but the very character of men and nations. In the *Mémoires sur Napoléon*, we find one of the most emphatic statements of historical determinism in all of Stendhal's writings:

La France qui cherchait des hommes dans toutes les classes de la société, trouva des génies dans des positions qui, d'ordinaire, ne fournissent que des avocats ou des officiers subalternes. Si Louis XVI eût continué à régner, Danton et Moreau eussent été des avocats; Pichegru, Masséna et Augereau, des sous-officiers; Desaix, Kléber, des capitaines; Bonaparte, Carnot, des lieutenants-colonels ou colonels d'artillerie; Lannes et Murat, des marchands chapeliers ou des maîtres de poste. Siéyès eût été grand-vicaire et Mirabeau, tout au plus, un négociateur subalterne, un chevalier d'Éon.²³²

The tide of hypotheses with which Stendhal here sweeps away the *reality* of an era gives some measure of what he took to be the precarity of history, the 'unpatterned chaos of possibilities'²³³ awaiting to be unleashed at any point in the course of human affairs. 'La nature représente toujours le même potentiel d'action,' as Michel Delon puts it, 'mais l'histoire est justement ce jeu de passage du virtuel à l'actuel, puis, inversement, du visible au latent.'²³⁴ The remark is made in relation to Mme de Staël, but is eminently apt to describe the conception of history which so often finds expression in the pages of Stendhal. The latter's protagonists, as Martin Turnell argues, 'are the direct product of their age and are only comprehensible when seen in relation to it.'²³⁵ None, of course, is more alive to the power of moment and circumstance to determine the individual's fate than Julien Sorel. Yet, for all that, the prudent critic hesitates on this point. For so much in Stendhal's novels is conveyed through suggestion that it is difficult to be sure where determinism, whatever its guise, begins and ends. One recalls the letter to his sister Pauline, written in the full flush of his enthusiasm for the deterministic thinkers of preceding generations, in which he urges her to learn from a critical observation of others:

Cherche le chemin que tu aurais dû tenir, si tu avais été à leur place, pour éviter les habitudes de la tête et du cœur (ou le caractère) qu'ils se sont données.²³⁶

Coming away from a reading of Stendhal's novels, one might ask just such a question of his characters. *Might* they have done it another way? Might some other result have issued from the 'unpredictable, twisting affair, full of unseen alternative routes, *other roads*',²³⁷ that is the Stendhalian hero's lot? Fabrice at Waterloo may, to

those with a fondness for allegory, say much about the plight of man in a baffling world, 'knocked about by events for which he isn't responsible';²³⁸ but where exactly lie the boundaries of Fabrice's *responsibility for himself*? 'Grand Dieu! Puis-je me répondre de rien sur moi-même?' exclaims Lucien Leuwen.²³⁹ 'Quelles que fussent les idées de Lucien,' we are elsewhere told, 'il n'était pas maître de ses actions.'²⁴⁰ As of the irresolute Leuwen, so of that repository of single-minded will-power, Julien Sorel. 'La cruelle nécessité, avec sa main de fer,' we read in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 'plia la volonté de Julien.'²⁴¹ The point is as pertinent to Stendhal's autobiographical and critical writings as it is to his novels. For he early prefigures a feature of his fictional protagonists by projecting himself into *other* characters and *other* circumstances, and attempting to gauge what his conduct *would have been*.²⁴² To what extent is man free to 'invent' himself before his destiny becomes a foregone conclusion? On which side are ranged the more powerful forces if 'character' for Stendhal is, as Michael Wood puts it, 'the ground where history and psychology meet and do battle'?²⁴³

To the whole of Stendhal's world, both real and fictional, the question may be put. How is one to reconcile, in Brombert's words, the 'satisfied acceptance of circumstances with the tensions of a will bent on affirming itself in the very process of living'?²⁴⁴ In posing the question, we must bear in mind, however, that it is a question which Stendhal himself never came close to resolving. Certain circumstances, he held, call forth certain human beings. 'Il est impossible,' he declares in a letter of 22 March 1806, 'de s'imaginer un Richelieu dans une petite ville où tout le monde travaille pour vivre huit heures par jour et sept jours de la semaine.'²⁴⁵ Yet this in no way appears to obviate the role which Stendhal continues to accord the *will* as an initiative and directive faculty. We have traced in his early writings the opposing tendencies of free will and determinism, between *responsibility for* ('on peut se corriger de tout')²⁴⁶ and *resignation to* ('on ne peut se refaire et malheur à qui tâche')²⁴⁷ the self. Stendhal the novelist of the 1830s would be no nearer to resolving this question than had been Stendhal the apprentice playwright of 1803. If his novels yield no answer, it is because they have no answer to yield. 'Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous? Qui le sait?' Such is the philosophical agnosticism expounded by the author of the *Promenades dans Rome*.²⁴⁸ If the question of man's inscrutable destiny is despatched in that instance as a pretext for recourse to the ready pleasures of Mozart and Correggio, it returns in more pointed guise to the autobiographer reflecting upon his life in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*. Here, as C.W. Thompson recognises, Stendhal cannot escape 'une confrontation entre l'idée qu'il se faisait de son sort et sa conception de sa liberté.'²⁴⁹ From the very outset, the problem is posed:

Après tout, me dis-je, je n'ai pas mal occupé ma vie. *Occupé!* Ah! C'est-à-dire que le hasard ne m'a pas donné trop de malheurs, car, en vérité, ai-je dirigé le moins du monde ma vie?²⁵⁰

What Stendhal could not account for in life, he does not presume to account for in fiction. This is what makes it altogether so difficult to resolve the question of personal responsibility as it relates to the characters and conduct of his protagonists. Here, once more, we are in the presence of a Stendhal who refuses to pronounce definitively on the nature of human experience, who refuses to *systematise* reality. In the 'Projet d'article' for *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Stendhal offers an account of Julien's character, or at least of what he considers those elements essential to an understanding of the novel's broad outline. What he tells us by way of introduction to Julien is worthy of note:

Comme il est inférieur à ses frères et à son père dans l'art de manier la hache [...], il en est méprisé; Julien est battu par ses frères et par son père, il les hait. [...] Comme, dans sa famille, il est l'objet, le but constant des coups de poing et des plaisanteries, cette âme profondément sensible et sans cesse outragée, devient méfiante, colère, envieuse même pour tous les bonheurs dont elle se voit barbaquement privée, fière surtout, plus fière que M. de Rênal avec sa belle maison, ses richesses, son carrosse, sa noblesse et toutes les croix qui pendent à sa boutonnière.²⁵¹

If this rapid sketch succeeds in setting up the poles around which Julien's early life in Verrières will gravitate, it is inadequate to account in any but the most superficial way for Julien's *character*. For we are plunged at once *in medias res*, being offered no reason *why* Julien should be so different from his siblings. As we are further told, 'son âme est généreuse'; he has 'un grand caractère.'²⁵² To suggest that these qualities are due, in their remotest origin, to an inability to wield an axe would clearly be nonsense, requiring the defense of an untenably narrow conception of determinism. Yet Stendhal is brought close to such a suggestion by the weight which is placed on the repeated — and overstretched — conjunction *comme*. What is irreducible in Julien when fathers and brothers are removed? What makes him such an unmitigated exception within his family? What of the wider environment in which he and they alike bathe?

The example is worth citing, for it demonstrates the negligent attitude which Stendhal appears to sanction vis-à-vis the determinants of character and conduct in his fictional creations. Is Julien beaten because he is different, or is he different because he is beaten? The conclusion which we, the reader, must draw is that Julien's character both *predates* and is the *result of* his family upbringing, that he has a given basis of character upon which the few influences specified above have gone to work. We must conclude, too, that we are dealing here with a character who, by the time we meet him, is somehow ready to assume a substantial measure of personal responsibility. Where does the dividing line fall between being the victim of one's circumstances and the master of one's destiny? Where does necessity yield to gratuity? Stendhal sees no need, even by implication, to negotiate the problem. What of heredity? Stendhal had long recognised the gaping weakness in Helvétius's theory that environment alone had the

power to determine character. To broach the issue, as he would in the course of the novel, by entertaining doubts over his hero's paternity may heighten the intrigue,²⁵³ but it is scarcely satisfying from any rigorously naturalistic point of view. One imagines what such a character profile would have become in the hands of a Zola. Stendhal, by contrast, seems prepared to depart at will from the logical implications of his avowed philosophy. Martin Turnell is one of the few commentators to recognise the importance of this point when he writes:

Stendhal's conception of character is an example of the way in which he discarded philosophical theories when they came into conflict with his artistic vision. The materialism implicit in the work of the philosophers whom he admired led logically to determinism, to the belief that character is nothing but the product of environment. It would be an understatement to say that Stendhal did not accept this view. *Le Rouge et le Noir* is based on the contrary view — on the view that genius is absolute and inexplicable.²⁵⁴

However valid this judgment, it would be wrong to conclude from it that Stendhal fails to provide *any* pointers towards the determinism which his protagonists undergo. Before we are invited quite to view Julien as the agent of his own destiny, we are given a very significant insight into his character. Whatever deal has been struck between M. de Rênal and Sorel *père*, we learn, Julien will not abase himself to eat with the former's servants. Stendhal explains:

Cette horreur pour manger avec les domestiques n'était pas naturelle à Julien, il eût fait pour arriver à la fortune des choses bien autrement pénibles. Il puisait cette répugnance dans les *Confessions* de Rousseau.²⁵⁵

Here we have powerful *inherent* character traits — ambition and resolution — in conflict with an *acquired* character trait, an easily wounded dignity.²⁵⁶ Julien's revulsion at the prospect of dining with the household servants may not be 'natural', but it is powerful enough, we are told, to make him put his whole future at risk. If this is the price to be paid for social advancement, then he will flee, enlist in the army and renounce all hope of attaining the object of his already considerable ambitions.

Such is the glimpse which Stendhal gives us into Julien's mind at this early juncture. While a distinction between inherent and acquired characteristics is clearly made, it is implied that the same acquired characteristics have the capacity to determine the individual in even the most testing circumstances. If one sets the instance in question alongside a number of passages from the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, one may be more inclined still to stress the power, according to Stendhal, of acquired character. For Stendhal's autobiography is not just an account of the person he is and has been; it is an account, too, of the person — or persons — he *might have become*.²⁵⁷ Pervading his childhood reminiscences is the notion that the most apparently insignificant happenings can radically alter not only the course of one's life, but one's very being.²⁵⁸ Nor is this

formative role reserved by Stendhal for the overbearing influences of family, education, and the wider environment; a single school lesson, a book, a conversation, even a chance remark, all have the power to exert a far-reaching influence on the individual.²⁵⁹ Had his family appreciated this, they could have made of the young Henri Beyle what they wished, whilst he, 'comme une mouche dans les toiles d'araignée,'²⁶⁰ would have been powerless to resist:

Si mes parents avaient su me mener, ils auraient fait de moi un niais comme j'en vois tant en province. L'indignation que j'ai ressentie dès mon enfance et au plus haut point, à cause de mes sentiments espagnols, m'a créé en dépit d'eux le caractère que j'ai.²⁶¹

Such a remark raises again the question of the boundary between self-determination and impotence in the face of one's destiny. Though Stendhal feels no need to account here for the *source* of the Spanish sentiment by which he defines himself in this instance (again we join *in medias res*), his reflection serves to underline what he clearly took to be the precarity of character in its formative phase. Thus, of his earliest instruction, he writes elsewhere in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*:

Sans mon goût pour la volupté, je serais peut-être devenu, par une telle éducation dont ceux qui la donnaient ne se doutaient pas, un *scélérat noir* ou un coquin gracieux et insinuant, un vrai jésuite, et je serais sans doute fort riche. La lecture de *la Nouvelle Héloïse* et les scrupules de S[ain]t-Preux me formèrent profondément honnête homme...²⁶²

In the light of the above, it is easier perhaps to accept Julien Sorel's character as the product of his self-administered 'education'. Yet one does not have to look far to find instances in Stendhal which destabilise any easy theory of acquired character. To remain within the context of the novel, let us consider very briefly an incident from *La Chartreuse de Parme* in which Fabrice, returning from Waterloo, lunges, dagger drawn, at a young Genevan by whose stare he feels insulted. 'En ce moment de passion,' we are told, 'Fabrice oubliait tout ce qu'il avait appris sur les règles de l'honneur, et revenait à l'instinct, ou, pour mieux dire, aux souvenirs de la première enfance.'²⁶³ Any acquired 'self' is here shed in a flash, leaving only what is irreducible in Fabrice's character. There is no more elaboration by Stendhal in this case than in the earlier case of Julien; but, taken together, the two instances raise a number of questions about the nature and limits of what is determined in human behaviour. The more so, perhaps, if one bears in mind a judgment on Julien which appears relatively late in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, and in which his will-power is described by Stendhal as 'l'un des plus beaux traits de son caractère; un être capable d'un tel effort sur lui-même peut aller loin, *si fata sinant*.'²⁶⁴ Here we have, it seems, an already defined character in search of a road to self-fulfilment. Yet any such road, it is suggested by Stendhal, is crossed by so many other diversionary routes down which the 'self' may be propelled at any

moment. When Julien is stung by a rebuke from M. de Rênal, Stendhal's simple authorial comment is: 'Ce sont sans doute de tels moments d'humiliation qui ont fait les Robespierre.'²⁶⁵

Innate disposition, acquired characteristics, instinct, Fate, and the merest accidents of chance: all are present, as vying influences, in the view of man which Stendhal articulates through the novel. Yet one emerges with no clear notion of the point at which the *acquired* self gives way to the *intrinsic* self, or of the circumstances in which *neither* is empowered to prevail over the much wider notion of an ineluctable Destiny.²⁶⁶ Instead, the overwhelming impression is of a Stendhal who leaves the freedom of his characters open-ended, providing the reader with no clearly or consistently defined reasons why they should be trammelled in the determination and execution of their will. As C.W. Thompson argues in relation to *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Stendhal — more through intuition, perhaps, than philosophical persuasion — articulates 'une attitude morale où le sujet agit librement et à ses risques, tout en acceptant d'avance l'idée d'un ordre qu'il ne peut pas, et ne doit pas essayer d'éluder.'²⁶⁷ The frankly paradoxical terms in which scholars are thus obliged to take account of this aspect of Stendhal's fiction signal the difficulty of seeking not only in *La Chartreuse de Parme* but in any of the novels a definitive solution to the problem of free will and determinism. Georges Blin goes to the heart of this problem when he asserts of Stendhal:

Même s'il admet par ailleurs, sur le plan théorique, avec ses tuteurs sensualistes et avec Montesquieu ou Cabanis, que le physique conditionne, et dès lors explique le caractère moral, comme romancier il se fait le champion d'une sorte de parallélisme qui sauvegarde chez ses héros la liberté, voire la gratuité, tant de leurs décisions que de leur effective conduite. Ici, l'indépendance du personnage à l'égard de son hérité, de son passé et de son contexte matériel ou social représente assez bien l'autonomie que Stendhal romancier reconnaît, en définitive, à la vie psychologique.²⁶⁸

The reconciliation of the 'will' with the principle of determinism is, as we have argued, one of the most difficult areas of Stendhal's thought. Implied across the range of his reflections on the will is a challenge to the Idéologues' conception of volition as nothing more than the 'conséquence immédiate et nécessaire' of an irresistible impulsion towards pleasure and away from pain.²⁶⁹ Just as Hobbes had maintained before him, Destutt de Tracy argued that any notion of a 'free' faculty of will was untenable. We saw in Chapter IV Tracy's contention that it was 'un véritable *non-sens* de prétendre que la volonté est libre de naître.'²⁷⁰ Cabanis, for whom 'le *moi* réside exclusivement dans la volonté,'²⁷¹ defines the will in rigorously physiological terms; no more here than in the case of Tracy does it take on the aspect of a self-generating faculty:

Les impressions dont se tire le jugement sont transmises par les extrémités sentantes ou reçues dans le sein du système; le jugement se forme de leur comparaison, la volonté naît du jugement.²⁷²

Interpreting this central aspect of the Idéologues' doctrine as a deficiency, Gilbert Chinard points out that it 'tends to reduce men to the condition of robots deprived of free will or of individuals with a personality entirely "conditioned" by physical and external circumstances.'²⁷³ To suggest that Stendhal's novels are a restatement of Ideology is to take no account whatever of the gulf which separates the image of man evoked by Chinard from the Stendhalian protagonist as described above by Blin.²⁷⁴

This divide in Stendhal between the theorist of Ideology and the novelist, if it does not resolve the problem under discussion, sums up very clearly the terms in which it must be posed. While the distinction which Blin establishes between philosopher and novelist²⁷⁵ recalls something of Paupe, his argument is, of course, quite different. The strict material determinism that is evoked by Paupe²⁷⁶ has no place in this interpretation of a protagonist who remains free throughout — *liberté, gratuité, indépendance, autonomie* are the terms employed by Blin — to be purposeful, or even purposeless, in his resolutions and actions.²⁷⁷ Yet one has the impression that Blin in turn pushes his contention a degree too far. For there is little that can be concluded 'en définitive' in this regard. We have maintained that philosophy in its laboured particulars has no place in Stendhal's novel. Too much, however, is conveyed through suggestion and intimation for commentators to find security in categorical pronouncements on this question.

Let us return, by way of illustration, to the scene from *Le Rouge et le Noir* which is singled out for consideration by Zola and Blin alike. Why, asks the latter, do 'les facteurs d'*atmosphère*' which have earlier been outlined pass unnoticed in Stendhal's narrative? The answer which Blin proposes is seductively simple:

L'auteur du *Rouge* n'a pas besoin d'évoquer préalablement et par bilan suivi l'ambiance pour la raison déterminante qu'il n'établit point de continuité de celle-ci aux êtres dont il surveille le comportement.²⁷⁸

The key term here is, of course, *continuité*; yet, in the garden scene which Blin once more uses to support his argument,²⁷⁹ the suggested discontinuity between atmosphere and characters is not, strictly speaking, borne out. For there is one detail upon which Blin, somewhat surprisingly, omits to comment. On the evening in question, we are told by Stendhal, Julien is struck by something odd in the behaviour of Mme de Rênal and Mme Derville. Our first response is to put this down to Julien's own highly enervated state as he anticipates the battle of wills to come. Yet Stendhal, having by now evoked the meteorological setting, allows himself one final authorial comment before the protagonists sit down together and the drama proceeds to unfold. 'Elles

jouissaient,' he tells us of the two young women in Julien's company, 'de ce temps, qui, pour certaines âmes délicates, semble augmenter le plaisir d'aimer.'²⁸⁰

Though we should not wish to overstress the significance of this detail, it does serve to demonstrate the lightness of touch, the suggestiveness, and, above all, the ambiguity with which Stendhal addresses the question of environmental determinism in the novel. While it is the case, as Blin observes,²⁸¹ that the episode in question is perceived almost entirely from the perspective of its instigator, Julien, it does depend for its whole significance upon Mme de Rênal's capitulation to her would-be suitor's advances. The use of the verb 'sembler' makes the remark all the more tantalising; for it allows Stendhal to suggest his idea, then to withdraw without confirming or denying it. Nothing further is spelt out; but for the reader of *De l'Amour, l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* or the Italian travelogues, there is food for thought in Stendhal's remark.

Much more so still for the reader of the 'Consultation pour Banti', that singular document in which Louis Crozet, at Stendhal's behest, drew up a strategy in April 1811 for the latter's projected seduction of Alexandrine Daru, wife of his cousin and protector, Pierre Daru.²⁸² For, in this most unlikely item of literature, we find not only some echo of the scene in the garden at Vergy, but a striking anticipation of and response, *point for point*, to the later accusation by Zola that Stendhal is oblivious to all of those factors — 'le paysage, le climat, l'heure de la journée, le temps qu'il fait, la nature en un mot'²⁸³ — which conspire to make up the natural environment in its widest sense. 'Nous ne croyons pas qu'on puisse attendre qu'elle se donne,' reason the would-be seducer of Mme Daru and his accomplice:

elle sera emportée dans un moment de trouble, à la campagne, l'été, à huit heures du soir, deux heures après un bon dîner où elle aura beaucoup parlé.²⁸⁴

Nor is the parallel that may be drawn here restricted to the scene in question from *Le Rouge et le Noir*. In *Lucien Leuwen*, more than in any other novel, Stendhal evokes atmosphere in such a way as to raise questions about the determinism to which his protagonists are subject. In a number of instances, the author assigns an active role to Nature as a conspirator in the unfolding relationship between Lucien and Mme de Chasteller. On one notable occasion — whose drama does not match the Vergy scene from *Le Rouge*, but which will be dubbed 'cette fatale soirée' (for Mme de Chasteller), 'cette soirée décisive' (for Lucien)²⁸⁵ — Mme de Chasteller is more forthright in her advances to Lucien than she will subsequently judge to have been prudent. A garden ball, a midnight supper, a beautiful moon and a calm landscape: such, we are told, is the setting for this encounter, to which Stendhal adds:

Cette nature ravissante était d'accord avec les nouveaux sentiments qui cherchaient

à s'emparer du cœur de madame de Chasteller, et contribuait puissamment à éloigner et à affaiblir les objections de la raison.²⁸⁶

The line is a fine one between a Nature which is merely in tune with the character's sentiments, and a Nature which is instrumental in inspiring them, which exercises, as Hans Boll-Johansen puts it, 'un rôle actif comme catalyseur des sentiments.'²⁸⁷ In the episode which ensues, it is worth noting that Mme de Chasteller will commit her 'fatal' indiscretion at a moment when she is 'tellement agitée, [...] et entraînée à son insu par le ton de gaieté que la conversation avait pris au souper...'²⁸⁸

The clear echo that is to be found here of the 'Consultation pour Banti' is present again in a subsequent episode that takes place at the woodland *café-hauss*, *Le Chasseur vert*. With the sun setting behind the trees and the Bohemian music contributing to a general atmosphere of gaiety, we are told: 'C'était une de ces soirées enchanteresses, que l'on peut compter au nombre des plus grands ennemis de l'impassibilité du cœur.'²⁸⁹ It is, Stendhal suggests, 'peut-être à cause de tout cela' that Lucien, 'comme entraîné par un mouvement involontaire,' declares the sincerity of his attachment to Mme de Chasteller.²⁹⁰ Had they not been in full view of all, we are told, their conversation would have resulted in an embrace which neither would have had the power to resist. 'Tel,' declares Stendhal, 'est le danger de la sincérité, de la musique et des grands bois.'²⁹¹

Tongue-in-cheek though it may be, this sort of aside to the reader, with the doubts that Stendhal leaves hanging over the motivation of his characters ('peut-être à cause de tout cela... *comme* entraîné par un mouvement involontaire'), is precisely what makes it so difficult to arrive at any definitive judgment on the degree to which they are to be considered self-determining. For there are moments in all of the novels when the protagonists, far from responding consciously to a set of clearly defined stimuli, appear to be driven by an 'automatic pilot' of sorts which robs them of responsibility for — even *awareness of* — their 'chosen' course of action. Octave, when he acts decisively on one notable occasion, does so 'par un mouvement que, malgré sa philosophie, il était loin de s'expliquer.'²⁹² At another significant moment in the unfolding drama, we read of the same Octave: 'Il se sentait entraîné, il ne raisonnait plus...'²⁹³ This apparent removal from Stendhal's protagonists of full and clear-eyed responsibility for their actions is never more evident than in an interchange between Clélia and Fabrice in *La Chartreuse de Parme*:

— O mon unique ami! lui dit-elle, je mourrai avec toi. Elle le serrait dans ses bras, comme par un mouvement convulsif. Elle était si belle, à demi vêtue, et dans cet état d'extrême passion, que Fabrice ne put résister à un mouvement presque involontaire. Aucune résistance ne fut opposée.²⁹⁴

The suggestion that the characters are responding mechanically here to impulses that it is not in their power to resist, though it is strong, is not *quite* confirmed by Stendhal, who once more leaves open the question of moral responsibility through the insertion of *comme* and *presque*. The overriding impression, however, heightened by the switch from active to passive mood in the final phrase, is of an obscure realm of motivation into which the characters themselves have no conscious insight. Thus, when M. de Rênal asks his wife what she thinks of their newly appointed preceptor, we are told: 'Par un mouvement presque instinctif, et dont certainement elle ne se rendit pas compte, madame de Rênal déguisa la vérité à son mari.'²⁹⁵ In her relations with Julien, too, Mme de Rênal is far from being at the helm of her own decision-making. The tactical advances and retreats that centre on the garden at Verger illustrate well the manner in which Stendhal chips away at the self-determination of his protagonists. For throughout this crucial series of encounters we find stressed not Mme de Rênal's moral responsibility, but rather her *passivity*: she is 'transportée du bonheur d'aimer', 'égarée par une passion qu'elle n'avait jamais éprouvée', 'enlevée par ce bonheur charmant', 'entraînée au hasard par des images contradictoires et douloureuses', 'exaltée par les transports de la volupté morale la plus élevée.'²⁹⁶ Even when it is *she* who takes the active initiative and gives impetus to the evolving drama, she seems considerably less than the clear-sighted agent of her own destiny: 'Enfin, malgré ses résolutions, elle se déterminà à paraître au jardin.'²⁹⁷ What value 'resolution', we may ask, when it is so easily overturned? Thus, of a Mme de Rênal who has 'resolved' to respond to her suitor's advances with cool politeness, we read: 'Tremblante de le perdre à jamais, sa passion l'égara jusqu'au point de reprendre la main de Julien...'²⁹⁸

More interesting still, perhaps, is the case of Julien himself. At no point in the novel does he feel called upon to exercise greater self-mastery than in these decisive confrontations; yet, as events unfold, he finds himself as much the *object* as the *instigator* of his own actions:

Enfin, comme le dernier coup de dix heures retentissait encore, il étendit la main et prit celle de madame de Rênal, qui la retira aussitôt. Julien, sans trop savoir ce qu'il faisait, la saisit de nouveau.

Il fut troublé, sa pensée ne fut plus à lui, il approcha sa joue de ce joli bras, il osa y appliquer ses lèvres.²⁹⁹

Here we find no clear-eyed negotiation of a course of action, but rather a blind *automaticity* by which Julien is carried along. Such passages, while they convey well the mental 'short-circuit' that may occur in moments of intense anxiety, raise questions over the degree to which the protagonists are free to determine their course of action and to remain in control of its execution throughout. Nor is the passive mood reserved

for Mme de Rênal alone. 'Pour la première fois de sa vie,' we are told of Julien, 'il était entraîné par le pouvoir de la beauté.'³⁰⁰ This transition from active to passive, at the very moment when he is clasping Mme de Rênal's hand in the presence of her unsuspecting husband, affords a passing glimpse into an aspect of Julien's character. It suggests too, however, that this self-styled Valmont is somewhat less in control of himself than he *believes*.

Nature at large, it is clear, is not the only influence to which Stendhal's characters are exposed. There is an *inner* nature at work, too, and one that can bring its own decisive impetus to events. Nowhere is this better illustrated than on the occasion when Lucien Leuwen, lost for words, responds to Mme de Chasteller's admonitions with the feeblest '*Eh bien?*' Upon which we are told:

Le son de voix avec lequel il prononça ce mot: *eh bien*, eût manqué peut-être au Don Juan le plus accompli; chez Leuwen il n'y avait aucun talent, c'était l'impulsion de la nature, le naturel. Ce simple mot de Leuwen changea tout.³⁰¹

No less than Lucien, Stendhal's other protagonists have to contend with the reality of a 'nature' which, it is suggested, runs deeper than their reason.³⁰² As Gina puts it to Mosca in *La Chartreuse de Parme*: 'il n'est pas en votre pouvoir de changer votre nature'; whatever blame is to be ascribed to his conduct is, she concludes, 'la faute de l'instinct et non pas celle de la volonté.'³⁰³ If the most politically able cannot escape the empire of the natural, then we are not surprised to find it asserting itself fully in those less practised in the ways of artifice. Mme de Chasteller is a case in point. 'Tout l'étonnait,' we read, 'tout effrayait sa retenue de femme, sa...[sic] dans la passion dont elle était victime.'³⁰⁴ Caught in the grip of confusion and self-recrimination when, for a fleeting instant, she falls prey to the temptation to clasp Lucien's hand to her lips, she reflects: 'Dieu! d'où de telles horreurs peuvent-elles me venir?'³⁰⁵ A question to which Stendhal, in a wry marginal note, provides the illuminating reply: '*For me*. De la matrice, ma petite.'³⁰⁶

If we permit ourselves to depart still further here from the text of the novel proper, it is instructive to note what Cabanis has to say on the matrix, or womb, as a seat of female sensibility. For it is the physiologist's contention that 'la sensibilité changeante de la matrice établit toujours entre les deux sexes une distinction dont on aperçoit encore la trace, même dans les cas qui semblent en offrir les signes le plus intimement confondues.'³⁰⁷ Mme de Chasteller's plight, as Stendhal clearly seems to conceive of it, is none other than this. The gulf that is suggested between reason on the one hand, and what is instinctive, primitive, *natural* on the other, provides one of the keys, according to Maurice Bardèche, for understanding the character of Mme de Chasteller:

Cette alternance perpétuelle de l'instinct aux convenances, c'est toute la base psychologique de la conduite de Mme de Chasteller: c'est cette oscillation continuelle qui entretient le mouvement des incidents.³⁰⁸

Bardèche's point about Mme de Chasteller could, of course, be made equally well of Mme de Rênal, Armance de Zohiloff or others among the women who inhabit Stendhal's fictional world. For they remain painfully on their mettle against an instinctual impulse which threatens to assert itself over their most elaborate resolutions.³⁰⁹ Mme Grandet in *Lucien Leuwen* provides a striking case in point. Adopting a strategy of feigned indifference towards Lucien, she resolves to leave ostentatiously unopened a note in his hand. This, however, proves beyond her, as she yields to her impulse to tear open the letter 'avec un mouvement de fureur, et sans s'être pour ainsi dire permis cette action. La jeune femme l'emportait sur la capacité politique.'³¹⁰ Such is what we read in the text itself. In the margin, however, Stendhal provides a 'translation' of this final remark: '*Pilotis*. Exactement la matrice l'emportait sur la tête.'³¹¹

The manuscript of *Lucien Leuwen* furnishes in this sense a rare insight into the way in which Stendhal, while recognising the importance of a physiological determinism which he applies in his conception of character and plot, seeks nonetheless to purge his novel of all explicit reference to this. For the first time in Mme Grandet's life, we are told, 'elle était timide, parce que son âme si sèche, si froide, depuis quelques jours éprouvait des sentiments tendres.'³¹² Again it is to Stendhal's marginal notes that we look for a telling commentary on this rather bland description of Mme Grandet's condition: '*For me*. La matrice, excitée par un jeune homme bien, parlait.'³¹³

The above provide a revealing reminder of how concerned Stendhal is to excise all explicit philosophising from his novels, to leave the reader's imagination unconstrained in this respect. In the introductory pages of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, the *curé* of Verrières is presented as a 'vieillard de quatre-vingts ans, mais qui devait à l'air vif de ces montagnes une santé et un caractère de fer.'³¹⁴ While this might prompt in the reader a fleeting reflection upon the link between climate and character, nothing more is done here by Stendhal to substantiate the clear suggestion that such a link indeed exists. In *Armance* likewise we are told that the heroine possesses 'une volonté ferme, digne de l'âpre climat où elle avait passé son enfance.'³¹⁵ No more here than in the characterisation of Chélan does Stendhal dwell upon the implications of his remark; but a brief marginal note consigned to a copy of *Armance* suggests that such allusions, for all their parenthetic character and brevity, were far from gratuitous. Of the harsh natural environment, 'l'âpre climat', from which Armance issues, Stendhal notes quite simply: 'Ce mot comprend le *moral*.'³¹⁶

It is by measuring thus Stendhal's 'off-the-record' reflections against the text of the novels proper that we arrive at some appreciation of his effort to observe a distance between literature and philosophy. It was not the novelist's role, he clearly felt, to iron out all of the doubts and the questions posed by his characters and their actions; he should be suggestive, not conclusive. Hence the tentative, interrogative tone which Stendhal chooses to strike at moments when he might have given rein to a much more affirmative treatment of his subject. Witness the manner in which he accounts for Julien's emotivity on his arrival at the seminary in Besançon: 'Un philosophe eût dit, peut-être en se trompant: C'est la violente impression du laid sur une âme faite pour aimer ce qui est beau.'³¹⁷ Later in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, the *abbé* Pirard, perplexed by Julien's character, wonders: 'Serait-ce la force du sang?'³¹⁸ The question recalls a remark made in the characterisation of Armance, which demonstrates well Stendhal's concern to leave room for an element of ambiguity that is incompatible with any conception of the novel as a statement of philosophical 'truth':

Je ne sais si c'est au sang sarmate qui circulait dans ses veines, ou à ses malheurs si précoces qu'Armance devait la faculté d'apercevoir d'un coup d'oeil tout ce qu'un changement soudain dans la vie renfermait de conséquences.³¹⁹

The frequent failure of Stendhal's characters themselves to identify the precise source of what motivates them heightens this ambiguity. Like Mme de Chasteller and Mme Grandet, Mme de Rênal quite fails to interpret her own responses for what they are. Electing to sit by Julien's side, we are told, 'Mme de Rênal croit qu'elle agit ainsi par amour pour ses enfants.'³²⁰ It is only afterwards that she will, as Stendhal puts it, *discover* her love for Julien.³²¹ No different in this respect is the case of Octave de Malivert, of whom we are told by a gently mocking author: 'Ce qui est admirable, c'est que notre philosophe n'eut pas la moindre idée qu'il aimait Armance d'amour.'³²²

Even when they succeed in identifying the underlying motivation for their resolutions and actions, a question mark remains over the freedom of Stendhal's protagonists to respond in any *other* way. Repulsed by Mme de Chasteller for having had the temerity to kiss her hand in an unguarded moment, Lucien determines that he will not pay his customary respects on the following day. True to his resolution, he repairs in the evening to a deserted rampart some distance from the Hôtel de Pontlevé. 'Il était plus incertain que jamais,' we are told, about the course to take next, when he hears the chime of a clock which normally accompanies his visit to Mme de Chasteller:

Le son de cette cloche décida Leuwen. Sans se rendre compte de rien, il eut le vif souvenir de l'état de bonheur qu'il goûtait tous les soirs en entendant ces quarts et ces demi-quarts [...]. [...] au son de la cloche, électrisé par cette communauté de sentiments de deux âmes grandes et généreuses, qui fait qu'elles s'entendent à demi-mot, il précipita ses pas vers l'hôtel de Pontlevé.³²³

In the event, circumstances prevent Lucien from seeing Mme de Chasteller, who has gone out, and he retreats once more to the rampart. At no point does it occur to him that he has not been in full control of his behaviour throughout, as he castigates himself for his irresolution. Yet the language by which Stendhal recounts the episode, with its insistence on Lucien's *passivity* — 'décida Lucien', 'Sans se rendre compte de rien', 'électrisé' — , leaves a lingering doubt in the reader's mind. What holds for Lucien, moreover, holds, as we have seen, for the other 'prime movers' in the action of the Stendhalian novel. 'Determined to be master of his fate,' writes E.B Tenenbaum of Julien Sorel, 'he achieves the goals he sets for himself by means of an extraordinary energy and strength of will.'³²⁴ If this is so, however, it is so, as Stendhal is at pains to suggest, only *up to a point*. 'Never was a young man so assured that he was shaping his own destiny, and so hugely mistaken,' concludes F.W.J. Hemmings of the same Julien Sorel.³²⁵ That both of these assessments should appear defensible in their respective contexts testifies to the difficulty of defining the limits of individual responsibility and determinism in Stendhal's novels, and suggests the work which might fruitfully be done on this important question.

Redefining Man's Place

What emerges clearly from the foregoing is a substantial corrective to the notion, advanced by Georges Blin, that Stendhal confers a thoroughgoing autonomy upon his characters in their resolutions and actions. At one level, his protagonists are cerebral gymnasts who go through the most elaborate routines, convinced at times that their fate hangs upon their every least gesture. At other moments, however, there is a suggestion that they themselves are merely part of a grander and much more inscrutable scheme of things, where the control they exert over their own destiny is exposed as an illusion. Julien Sorel's reflections in his prison cell, which Zola was to describe as 'un régal, une débauche de raisonnements,'³²⁶ provide in this regard one of the most self-consciously 'philosophical' passages in Stendhal's fiction. A hunter's boot strikes an ant-hill, reasons Julien, scattering ants and eggs alike:

Les plus philosophes parmi les fourmis ne pourront jamais comprendre ce corps noir, immense, effroyable: la botte du chasseur, qui tout à coup a pénétré dans leur demeure avec une incroyable rapidité, et précédée d'un bruit épouvantable, accompagné de gerbes d'un feu rougeâtre...
 ...Ainsi la mort, la vie, l'éternité, choses fort simples pour qui aurait les organes assez vastes pour les concevoir...³²⁷

Here Stendhal allows himself free rein to indulge in a lofty philosophical commentary upon his hero's plight and the human condition of which it is symptomatic. As Maurice Larkin observes, these lines 'echo a vibrant strand of determinist thought that stretches from La Mettrie, through Cabanis, to Positivism.'³²⁸ The sentiment that man is nothing more than an ant in the path of an indifferent Destiny, though it was as old as philosophy itself, had been given renewed impetus through the materialism of the *philosophes* and advances in the natural and physical sciences.³²⁹ By the nineteenth century, writes F.L. Baumer,

Europeans had eaten of the tree of science, and now saw more clearly than in any previous time the way things were: man, kindred to animals, lost on a grain of sand in an immense and indifferent universe, his sense of his own identity and infinity suppressed, feeling, now that he had lost his innocence, "the tragic absurdity of living."³³⁰

While Baumer relates this state of mind to the later nineteenth century and in particular to what he terms 'the *Fin-de-Siècle* ambience', it has very clearly discernible roots in the philosophy of an earlier generation. The climate of eighteenth-century thought, as L.G. Crocker argues, in fostering the view of man as part of the general fold of nature and of the animal kingdom in particular, had posed the question of human destiny in new and more pointed terms:

Man becomes an accident of nature's productivity, unimportant, contingent, doomed to extinction. His actions are as much events in the natural world as an eclipse of the sun. He is not, in consequence, qualitatively differentiated from the rest of nature.³³¹

Though it might seem to offer more ready solace to the moral nihilist than to the ethical humanist,³³² such a view of man did, nonetheless, have a consoling aspect, and one to which Stendhal was to prove sensitive. For Man, if he is but an insignificant modification of Nature, could not lay claim to any special moral dignity or imperative. His driving principle must be the same as that which propelled all of natural creation — and for that the eighteenth century believed it had grasped the key: *pleasure*. Each is impelled to seek pleasure and to flee pain. There began and there ended the moral dictates of Nature. There lay the principle that united men and animals in an unrelenting and irresistible endeavour to secure the satisfaction of their own individual needs and desires.³³³

Where, one may ask, was the consolation in such an ostensibly bleak conception of humanity? In the fact, concludes Stendhal, that it provides a basis for viewing man and all man's deeds — and *misdeeds* — with a much greater equanimity. For if men are motivated by an ineluctable urge to pursue what they perceive at any moment as their self-interest, then their behaviour can no longer be deemed laudable or

reprehensible in any objective sense. Thus, on losing out to a rival suitor for Mina von Griesheim's attentions in June 1807, Stendhal is able to find *solace* in the unlikely Helvétius, who, as he recounts in a letter to his sister Pauline, 'm'a consolé pendant deux heures.'³³⁴ Much later, in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, Stendhal provides what might be read as a gloss on this remark:

Ce qui marque ma différence avec les niais importants du journal et *qui portent leur tête comme un saint-sacrement*, c'est que je n'ai jamais cru que la société me dût la moindre chose. Helvétius me sauva de cette énorme sottise. *La société paye les services qu'elle voit.*³³⁵

Such a rationale, in which Léon Blum discerns the refusal to capitulate to a sterile, self-pitying *mal du siècle*,³³⁶ was to crystallise fully in Stendhal's mind in the 1820s and 1830s, under the particular influence, it seems, of naturalists such as Georges Cuvier and Adrien de Jussieu.³³⁷ From the earliest, as we have seen, Stendhal had had ample exposure to the notion that self-interest is the governing principle in all men at all times. Not until much later, however, would he attempt to find in this theoretical notion a palliative for all that is least edifying in human nature as it is encountered, in practical terms, from day to day. The point is given its most reasoned exposition in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, where the methods deployed by the naturalist, Stendhal argues, provide a means of overcoming that implacable enemy to peace of mind, *la haine impuissante*:

J'ai entendu dire au célèbre Cuvier [...]: "Voulez-vous vous guérir de cette horreur assez générale qu'inspirent les vers et les gros insectes, étudiez leurs amours; comprenez les actions auxquelles ils se livrent toute la journée sous vos yeux pour trouver leur subsistance."³³⁸

The therapeutic nature of such counsel is clear. One should strive against the animosity that men are so apt at inspiring, not through any semblance of altruism, but *'par pitié pour soi-même*'.³³⁹ Treat man as an object of detached 'scientific' interest, as an insect, and he must become, in principle at least, a more tolerable neighbour.

Au lieu de haïr le petit libraire du bourg voisin qui vend l'*Almanach populaire*, [...], appliquez-lui le remède indiqué par le célèbre Cuvier: *traitez-le comme un insecte*. Cherchez quels sont ses moyens de subsistance; essayez de deviner ses manières de faire l'amour.³⁴⁰

This idea, attributed here to Cuvier, was clearly one which made a significant impact upon Stendhal. Elsewhere he recounts, with some satisfaction, how the same reasoning helps him come to terms with the obstructive officialdom that it is the traveller's lot to encounter. 'J'ai eu de notables difficultés pour le passeport, mais ne me suis point impatienté,' he writes of a trip to Montmélian; 'j'observais les allures du commissaire de police; je l'ai traité comme un insecte.'³⁴¹ Faced with the boors and

bigots of Nancy society, it is to the same reasoning precisely that Lucien Leuwen will have recourse:

"Je devrais les étudier comme on étudie l'histoire naturelle. M. Cuvier nous disait, au Jardin des Plantes, qu'étudier avec méthode, en notant avec soin les différences et les ressemblances, était un moyen sûr de se guérir du dégoût qu'inspirent les vers, les insectes, les crabes hideux de la mer"...³⁴²

The line of reasoning which Lucien seeks to apply in the salons of Nancy is explored by Stendhal, in a somewhat different context, in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*. Here Stendhal considers with regret how his enduring horror of fungus might have been dispelled had he only been informed that this was neither 'pourriture' nor 'corruption', but a perfectly *natural* product:

Si mon grand-père m'eût dit: "C'est une plante, le *moisi* même qui gâte le pain est une plante", mon horreur eût rapidement cessé. Je ne l'ai surmontée tout à fait qu'après que M. Adrien de Jussieu, dans notre voyage à Naples (1832), (cet homme si naturel, si sage, si raisonnable, si digne d'être aimé), m'eut parlé au long de ces petites plantes, toujours un peu signe de pourriture à mes yeux, quoique je susse vaguement que c'étaient des plantes.³⁴³

It is significant that it should once more be the naturalist here who offers Stendhal a means of coming to terms with what is least pleasant in the real world. 'Je devrais aujourd'hui,' Stendhal adds, 'étudier l'histoire naturelle des vers et scarabées qui me font toujours horreur.'³⁴⁴ By the time he came to write the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, Stendhal was in fact equating 'philosophy' — in its *methods* at least — with 'naturalism'. Here, it seemed, was a new and fruitful means of establishing some grip on the material world around him:

A force d'employer des méthodes philosophiques, par exemple à force de classer mes amis de jeunesse par *genre*, comme M. Adrien de Jussieu fait pour ses plantes (en botanique), je cherche à atteindre cette vérité qui me fuit.³⁴⁵

Stendhal nowhere has recourse to the broad canvas of naturalistic imagery that is the preserve of a Balzac or a Zola. The *abbé* Frilair may have something of the fox, Count Altamira of the lion, Du Poirier of the fox, hyena and boar all at once, Lamiel of the gazelle or doe, and Sansfin of the frog.³⁴⁶ But these amount to little more than stock similes that surprise more by their paucity than by their presence. L.F. Hoffmann, in considering this aspect of Stendhal, concludes that there is not a single animal metaphor to be found in the whole of *Armance*.³⁴⁷

Yet there is a deeper 'naturalism' which is sustained across Stendhal's philosophical, moral and social thought, and which is present as an informing principle throughout his writings. Once more the 'Projet d'article' for *Le Rouge et le Noir* provides a revealing insight. For Stendhal is explicit here in affirming man's place

within a natural and 'moral' chain of being, where the same overriding law holds good for all:

L'auteur ne traite nullement Julien comme un héros de roman de *femmes de chambre*, il montre tous ses défauts, tous les mauvais mouvements de son âme, d'abord bien égoïste parce qu'il est *bien faible* et que la première loi de tous les êtres depuis l'insecte jusqu'au héros, *est de se conserver*.³⁴⁸

Stendhal's reasoning here harks back to a remark that is to be found in *Racine et Shakespeare*, where the same image of a universal struggle for survival is evoked: 'La première loi de tout individu, qu'il soit loup ou mouton, n'est-elle pas de se conserver?'³⁴⁹ This is what lends its full charge to Julien's much quoted denial of Natural Law, his insistence that there is no point — unless it be instituted by man himself — where the *laws* of Nature give way to the *rights* of man. In a letter written from Mantua to Adolphe de Marestre in March 1820, Stendhal dilates upon this idea:

"Nous ne pouvons pas être plus libres que nous ne le sommes, me disait un homme d'esprit; mais tout est *de facto* et rien *de jure*. Demain Sa Sainteté peut me jeter dans les cachots de San Leo et confisquer ma fortune; cela sera cruel, mais non pas *injuste*. Il n'y a aucune loi qui le défende."³⁵⁰

These remarks provide an eloquent summation of the Benthamite philosophy which Julien articulates in his prison cell, a philosophy which, whatever its truth, we are told, 'était de nature à faire désirer la mort':

Il n'y a de *droit* que lorsqu'il y a une loi pour défendre de faire telle chose, sous peine de punition. Avant la loi, il n'y a de *naturel* que la force du lion, ou le besoin de l'être qui a faim, qui a froid, le *besoin* en un mot...³⁵¹

It is this highly rationalistic 'naturalism' that was to give rise to such ambivalence in Zola. For the latter clearly recognised that, whatever Stendhal's technical shortcomings as an interpreter of the material world, he had a *philosophical* grasp of man which could not be denied its place at the fountain-head of Naturalism:

S'il est un de nos maîtres, s'il est à la tête de l'évolution naturaliste, ce n'est pas parce qu'il a été uniquement un psychologue, c'est parce que le psychologue en lui a eu assez de puissance pour arriver à la réalité, par-dessus ses théories, et sans le secours de la physiologie ni de nos sciences naturelles.³⁵²

In his endeavour to temper praise with reproach, we discern something of Zola's malaise in judging this maverick naturalist. 'Stendhal, pour moi, n'est pas un observateur qui part de l'observation pour arriver à la vérité, grâce à la logique; c'est un logicien qui part de la logique et qui arrive souvent à la vérité, en passant par-dessus l'observation.'³⁵³ The method Zola could never sanction;³⁵⁴ but the philosophy of which it was a function, and the conclusions to which it led, he could not but endorse:

Notre plus grand romancier, Stendhal, étudiait les hommes comme des insectes étranges, qui vivent et meurent, poussés par des forces fatales; son seul souci était de déterminer la nature, l'énergie, la direction de ces forces; son humanité ne sympathisait pas avec celle de ses héros, il se contentait de faire son travail de dissection, exposant simplement les résultats de ce travail.³⁵⁵

Though it betrays a serious misappreciation of the relationship between Stendhal and the protagonists of his novels, this judgment reveals much about what underlay Zola's recognition of Stendhal as a forerunner of the Naturalist school. For it is here that Stendhal's naturalism most clearly resides, in his view of humanity as an intrinsic part of the natural order and in his conviction that man's moral being, no less than his physiological make-up, was susceptible of explanation through the methods of the natural sciences. Among the points which F.W.J. Hemmings finds contestable in Zola's remarks is the reference to those 'forces fatales' which, the latter claims, govern the affairs of men in Stendhal's world. 'Et a-t-on le droit de parler de "forces fatales",' writes Hemmings, 'chez un écrivain qui opposait constamment à la fatalité l'énergie personnelle?'³⁵⁶ What such a question fails to acknowledge, however, is the fact that 'l'énergie personnelle' *itself* is a type — and a most important type — of 'fatalité', that it forms an intrinsic part of the network of determining influences through which the individual's destiny is played out. As Michel Crouzet puts it, 'le message le plus certain que je reçois de moi-même sur moi-même, c'est mon corps, mon tempérament, qui me définit aussi fatalement et aussi confusément que le signe astral.'³⁵⁷ The influence of Cabanis and his theories of temperament and sensibility would, as we shall see in Chapter VIII, prove crucial in this respect, providing Stendhal with a physiologically ratified notion of personal energy as a 'given', a factor of character *in situ* from the earliest, and indissociable from the concepts of 'Nature' and 'Fate' alike. 'Donnée quasi organique,' as Crouzet recognises,

l'énergie se confond avec la nature, ces *forces* premières que l'Idéologie considère comme "notre seule propriété [...] notre richesse primitive", dont le libre exercice est pour elle la liberté, la possibilité d'être tout ce qu'on peut être; l'énergie c'est la nature en liberté, laissée à la plénitude de son dynamisme et de ses appétits.³⁵⁸

While its insistence on a physiological basis of energy is to be valued, this assessment of Stendhal's celebrated concept must be interpreted with care. For Stendhal's moral ideal rests not, as Crouzet's conclusion ('D'où ses liens avec la sauvagerie, sa férocité')³⁵⁹ might suggest — and as has so often been suggested — on the vision of an unbridled human nature seeking its catharsis through some anarchic release of its energies into the social order.³⁶⁰ Energy was more subtly conceived by Stendhal than this. At its most complete, and its most idealistic, his philosophy is founded rather on a wish to see the forces of human nature harnessed within the social order itself, and producing whatever individual and collective happiness might be attainable.³⁶¹ One of Stendhal's earliest critics, René Doumic, while remaining on the

whole antipathetic, seized upon the importance of this distinction when he wrote of Stendhal:

On fait l'éducation de la volonté: cela consiste à endiguer, canaliser, diriger nos instincts, non pas à les supprimer. Le sage n'est pas celui qui n'a jamais senti les ardeurs du sang; mais c'est Socrate qui dirige vers le bien des instincts qui d'eux-mêmes tendaient vers le mal.³⁶²

Such an assessment does no violence to Stendhal's thought. The classical reference is, moreover, thoroughly apt. To appreciate Stendhal's ethic of energy in its most salutary light, one need do no more than return to the latter's conception of an Ancient world whose morality, 'ne demandant point à ses fidèles de sacrifier leurs passions, mais bien de les diriger d'une façon utile à la patrie, n'avait nul besoin de les rassembler pendant de longues heures afin de graver dans leurs âmes la peur de l'enfer.'³⁶³ The *protest* value of Stendhal's ethic of energy should be borne in mind when seeking to place it in the overall context of his thought. Remote and idealistic though the world evoked here by Stendhal undoubtedly is, it provides a pole towards which his imagination clearly pulls. The classical Roman ethic of *virtus*, combining as it does a fierce personal energy and a social utility both, occupies a high place in Stendhal's moral universe. Where the social dimension is absent or frustrated, the ethic degenerates into an individualistic *virtù*, which, though it may run counter to any commonly perceived standard of morality, derives from an energy that is no less admirable (and no more reprehensible) as a *quality in itself*. Everything comes down in the end to the direction which personal energy is permitted, or obliged, to assume within the prevailing social order.³⁶⁴

In this sense, it can be argued, Stendhal's moral ideal is that which I.F. Knight ascribes to the French *philosophes* generally: 'a naturalistic ethics which would take into account man's natural drives instead of denying their expression, as Christianity tends to do.'³⁶⁵ If he embraced the *philosophes'* ideal, however, Stendhal embraced too the tensions and contradictions implicit within it. 'The real dilemma facing the *philosophes*,' as D.C. Potts observes, 'was that of reconciling the social end they believed to be appropriate to man, with their equally convinced belief in the natural right of the individual to give free play to his instinctive energies.'³⁶⁶ As it passes to Stendhal, this dilemma is compounded, on the one hand, by his failure to define man within a consistently deterministic idiom, and, on the other hand, by advances in the physiological and natural sciences which appeared to militate against any overweening faith in the power of reason to direct human affairs. Stendhal's conception of Natural-man-turned-Social-man remains an uneasy synthesis of opposites, portraying the individual now as part of a natural order — or *disorder* — within which his will is tightly circumscribed by the laws of Nature, now as a rational and moral being invested

with the capacity to forge a private destiny in keeping with the public weal.

While he remains conscious, and wary, of the excesses to which unfettered energy may lead, Stendhal is conspicuous in shifting much of the burden of responsibility from the individual to the social whole. 'Quand je suis arrêté par des voleurs ou qu'on me tire des coups de fusil,' he writes in 1818, 'je me sens une grande colère contre le gouvernement et le curé de l'endroit. Quant au voleur, il me plaît, quand il est énergique, car il m'amuse.'³⁶⁷ Later, in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, Stendhal takes up this same idea in terms more akin to the discourse of the utilitarian reformist philosophers:

L'homme qui vole est coupable; mais la société qui a exposé un de ses membres à la tentation prolongée de voler a une grande part dans la faute commise contre le *bonheur général*. Si l'individu a manqué de force, la société a manqué de prévoyance.³⁶⁸

For all such protestations of collective culpability, however, Stendhal is a thoroughgoing apologist neither of the social reformism of Helvétius and Bentham, nor of Rousseau's belief in the essential goodness of natural man. For he remains only too aware, as Gita May puts it, of those 'forces obscures, irrationnelles, violentes et égoïstes qui risquent à tout moment de prendre possession de notre âme.' Far from being a faithful student of the Genevan philosopher, Stendhal, as May observes, 'a reproché à Rousseau de s'être illusionné naïvement sur le caractère fondamental de l'homme naturel.'³⁶⁹ This does not, however, mean — and it is here that we meet with some considerable difficulty in attempting to define the contours of his thought — that Stendhal was devoid of an idealism which recalls at times Rousseau's concern for the frank expression of man's innermost nature. Though his early visions of humanity would undergo considerable change, and though he would evince a deepening pessimism about the possibility that any such ideal might be realised, Stendhal remained nonetheless convinced that a morality which failed to take account of the exigencies of nature could conduce only to the institutionalisation of private and public unhappiness.³⁷⁰ In the absence of a utopian solution, the tension in his thought is inescapable between a genuine concern for the social order and an equally genuine admiration for the individual of extraordinary energy who threatens to subvert it.³⁷¹ For there remains a fundamental — and, one must conclude, irreconcilable — clash of interest in Stendhal between utilitarian principle, his enthusiastic approval of the 'reward and punishment' rationale upheld by Helvétius and Bentham, and his sympathy for the exceptional individual who stands outside — not to say *above* — the commonalty in his interests and impulses, his *manière d'aller à la chasse au bonheur*, and who is not to be so readily induced by the rewards or deterred by the sanctions that are effective for the run of humanity. The question is one which we are unable to go

further into here, but which will be addressed in a number of its aspects in Chapters IX and X.

Climate, Character and the Invention of Stendhal's Italy

Let us return, for our present purpose, to the question of Stendhal's 'naturalism' as it has been discussed above. For if this is muted in the novels, it comes into its own across the full range of Stendhal's other writings. It has been argued in an earlier chapter that the whole thrust of a work such as *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* was to portray man as an integral part of Nature in its widest sense. This is never better underlined than in a passage where Stendhal, adopting Cabanis's theories on the influence of climate and regimen, takes issue with Helvétius:

La nature de l'air dans lequel nous nageons constamment, la nature des plantes qui font notre nourriture, ou des animaux que nous dévorons, et qui se nourrissent de ces plantes, varient avec le climat. Est-ce qu'on a jamais prétendu que les perdreaux de Champagne valussent ceux de Périgord? Quand Helvétius a nié l'influence des climats, il a donc dit à peu près la meilleure absurdité du siècle.³⁷²

This is, in essence, no more than the reaffirmation by Stendhal of his belief that Helvétius had been mistaken in his exclusive insistence on environment as the formative influence on man. It has important consequences, however, for the logic of the position which Stendhal now adopts. For the philosophy of Helvétius had posited a determinism that was indefinitely modifiable by man and which left the latter, in a very real sense, the architect of his own collective destiny. By denying, at least in part, the legitimacy of Helvétius's claim, Stendhal was in effect reopening the whole question of human responsibility. To what degree was it reasonable to propose that the natural environment exercised real influence over the course of human affairs? Stendhal's response, by the time he comes to write *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, is unequivocal:

Le peintre qui fera Brutus envoyant ses fils à la mort ne donnera pas au père la beauté idéale du sanguin, tandis que ce tempérament fera l'excuse des jeunes gens. S'il croit que le temps qu'il faisait à Rome le jour de l'assassinat de César est une chose indifférente, il est en arrière de son siècle. A Londres, il y a les jours où l'on se pend.³⁷³

The philosophical and moral implications of such a statement are far-reaching. To his remark about the days which conduce to suicide in London, Stendhal adds the bare footnote: 'Vent et brouillards au mois d'octobre.' Contrary to Paul Arbelet's

suggestion, this amounts to more than the stock reiteration of an already worn theme about the frequency of suicides in England:³⁷⁴ it is a recognition of the pervasive influence which Stendhal would increasingly ascribe to Nature in the determination of human affairs. In 1829, the subject would have shifted from suicide to murder, and the theatre of Stendhal's considerations from London to Rome; but the essential point remains the same: 'La *tramontana* (c'est l'incommode vent du nord) porte sans doute à l'assassinat.'³⁷⁵ Nor are sexual *mores* any less subject to the vagaries of climate than suicide or murder. 'Je n'ai pas pu découvrir la cause du *sigisbéisme* autre part que dans la nature,' declares the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1917*, who concludes that the essential difference between Paris and Bologne in the matter of sexual morality 'c'est qu'à Paris l'on pêche par vanité, et à Bologne à cause du soleil.'³⁷⁶ Not that the love experienced in such different latitudes is comparable. As we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'le climat de Naples fait autrement sentir les finesses de cette passion que les brouillards de Middelbourg.'³⁷⁷ In the north, love, if it exists, does so in spite of climate; in the south, '[le] climat fortuné porte à l'amour.'³⁷⁸ Aesthetic sensibility, too, must bow to the exigencies of the natural environment. 'Qui peut aimer le Corrège à Paris lorsqu'il fait un vent de nord-ouest?' asks Stendhal in the *Promenades dans Rome*: 'Ces jours-là, il faut lire Bentham et Ricardo.'³⁷⁹

With examples such as these, Stendhal's writings abound. What is important for our purpose here is that no area of human activity is considered to be impervious to the influence of Nature. Even *in*-activity is explicable in climatological terms: 'On ne sait pourquoi, on ne sait comment, l'air de Rome donne sur les nerfs, inspire l'envie de se reposer, de ne pas travailler.'³⁸⁰ Though the traveller in France might make similar observations, the pervasive effects of Nature are registered most dramatically in Italy.³⁸¹ 'Il est sûr,' writes Stendhal in *Rome, Naples et Florence (1826)*, 'que le climat seul de l'Italie produit sur l'étranger qui arrive un effet nerveux et inexplicable.'³⁸² Thus, in a note dated 5 June 1840, he writes: 'L'air de Rome me rend nerveux comme vous le voyez à mon écriture.'³⁸³ Elsewhere he claims that there is in Naples an 'influence énervante du climat' to which the visitor succumbs despite himself.³⁸⁴ In a letter of March 1818 to Adolphe de Mareste, Stendhal would sum up his Milanese life-style in the following terms:

Enfin, l'Italie me plaît. Je passe, de sept heures à minuit chaque jour à entendre de la musique et à voir deux ballets. Le climat fait le reste.³⁸⁵

But if climate favours artistic sensibility in Milan, it suffices, as Stendhal will make clear in the *Promenades dans Rome*, to destroy it in Paris:

Figurez-vous Paris placé par le hasard à Montpellier ou à La Voulte, près de Lyon. Toute la partie tendre des arts est impossible, ou du moins *stentata*, sous un climat où, trois fois par jour, les nerfs sont *montés* d'une façon différente. Je compare les

nerfs aux cordes d'une harpe. Que va dire Platon et son école?³⁸⁶

Crude though the analogy may be, we are at some remove here — as in all of the examples cited — from the 'dédain du corps,' the 'silence sur les éléments physiologiques de l'homme et sur le rôle des milieux ambiants' which Zola would see in Stendhal as the function of 'une métaphysique qui étudie l'âme comme une abstraction, sans vouloir rechercher l'action que les rouages de la machine humaine et que la nature tout entière exercent évidemment sur elle.'³⁸⁷ On a number of notable occasions, Stendhal, in keeping with the physiological theories of his age, isolates the nervous system specifically as the conduit between Nature at large and human sensibility.³⁸⁸ The power of earth tremors and storms to inspire terror in Italy is, he writes in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'sans doute à cause de l'effet électrique qui agite nos nerfs.'³⁸⁹ As we read in that storehouse of insights into Stendhal's method of composition that are his notes for *Lucien Leuwen*, the Tramontana wind has the capacity to disrupt creative endeavour:

Le 15 avril, la tramontane me faisait mal aux nerfs, je reprends le premier volume [...].

15 avril 1835, abîmé par la tramontane qui règne depuis huit jours...³⁹⁰

In the text of *Lucien Leuwen* itself we find some echo of this when we read of Lucien that 'une journée de vent du nord avec des nuages sombres [...] suffisait pour en faire un autre homme.'³⁹¹ Nor is there any possibility of escape: man is represented as a permeable organism absorbing Nature's influence, as the author of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* suggests, through every pore:

Quand le mistral règne en Provence, on ne sait où se réfugier: à la vérité, il fait un beau soleil, mais un vent froid et insupportable pénètre dans les appartements les mieux fermés, et agace les nerfs de façon à donner de l'humeur sans cause au plus intrépide.³⁹²

In his useful article, 'Stendhal et la météorologie', L. Dufour documents at some length the many references to weather which occur in Stendhal's writings.³⁹³ What does not emerge clearly from this meticulous study, however, is the relationship for Stendhal between weather and the 'moral' state of man. For there are a great many passages in which Stendhal goes beyond the mere recording of weather conditions, using the latter as a *key* to interpreting his own or another's state of mind at a given moment. Witness the diary entry of 28 May 1806, in which he notes quite simply: 'L'étouffé du temps m'accable. La peine me rend machine.'³⁹⁴ Or the 'Journée de gaieté' which he records on 3 February 1809, and which he ascribes to 'un temps de printemps qu'il fait depuis huit jours.'³⁹⁵ Examples such as these are plentiful in Stendhal's private writings from 1806 onwards. 'Il manque une pluie chaude au bonheur des plantes et à celui de mes nerfs,' he notes in his diary of 3 May 1808.³⁹⁶

Just as no fast distinction holds between plant and nerve, none holds between nerve 'physical' and nerve 'moral'. Witness the laconic remark — 'froid du diable, au physique et au moral' — in Stendhal's diary of November 1809,³⁹⁷ or the more developed expression which he gives to the same idea in an entry dated 2 February 1806: 'Après avoir été venté jusqu'aux os, ayant froid, mal à la tête, le cœur aride, et ne désirant rien [...], je suis allé prendre une demi-tasse de café.'³⁹⁸

Stendhal's travel diaries provide a ready forum for the expression of such ideas. The changeable climate of 29 April 1811, when he is journeying from Paris to Rouen, he finds 'froid et désagréable et contraire à mon imagination'; whilst in Nogent, some months earlier, he had relished 'ce beau temps de septembre si puissant sur moi et qui me convie à aimer.'³⁹⁹ Some thirty years on, this same power of weather to impinge upon the intellectual and affective dispositions of man still features large in Stendhal's mind. Thus the author of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* will evoke 'ce climat trop variable qui contribue à nous rendre imbéciles dès soixante-cinq ans.'⁴⁰⁰ More striking still, and more explicitly reminiscent of the work which played a formative role in imprinting such ideas upon Stendhal's mind, is a diary entry of 1835 in which he records the effects of a bath taken to counter-act a state of nervous agitation:

Sur ma machine. *Gnôti Seauton*. Le 16 février, le bain ôte l'irritation nerveuse. Ecrit vingt pages en jouant, et plus d'impatience, d'irritation nerveuse. Bain Saint-Grégoire avec humeur. Influence du physique sur le moral. *I wanted water*.⁴⁰¹

All of this, we would argue, is germane to the broader question of Stendhal's philosophical development. But how does one legislate for wind and water, sun and air? Is man but the passive victim of Nature's every whim, the blind object of forces that lie beyond his ken and control? The question is one which clearly troubles Stendhal and which comes to occupy a salient place in his considerations — moral, social, political and aesthetic — from 1811 most notably.⁴⁰² As he would write in the *New Monthly Magazine* of June 1825, 'l'importante question de l'influence du climat' had been addressed by Hippocrates and brought into vogue by Montesquieu. 'Plus tard, Volney et Cabanis jetèrent de nouvelles lumières sur cette théorie dont une connaissance exacte pourrait être si utile au bonheur de l'humanité.'⁴⁰³

To acknowledge the importance of climate, however, was one thing; to resolve the philosophical difficulties posed thereby, quite another. For, while Stendhal recognises the inescapable logic of the determinism which he posits, he is loath to relinquish whatever measure of control men might exert over their own destiny. 'Montesquieu n'a-t-il pas dit qu'il faut corriger le climat par la loi?' he asks in *Rome, Naples et Florence*.⁴⁰⁴ The same question had already been broached in *l'Histoire de la peinture*

en Italie, where Stendhal argues the futility of disputing the relative merits of Racine and Shakespeare, Rubens and Raphael:

Si le savant a le génie de Montesquieu, il pourra dire: "Le climat tempéré et la monarchie font naître des admirateurs pour Racine. L'orageuse liberté et les climats extrêmes produisent des enthousiastes à Shakespeare."⁴⁰⁵

Though there is no indication here of the mechanisms whereby men might actually set about legislating for climate, the point is an important one. Nor should Stendhal's choice of verbs — 'font naître', 'produisent' — go unremarked. For the clear suggestion here is that man is a product, a 'result' of combining factors, to be understood — as the chemist would understand a compound — by some process of retro-synthesis. Politics, Stendhal goes so far as to argue in 1818, 'est une science qui exige des expériences comme la chimie.'⁴⁰⁶ No less history, which should be written, he claims, 'avec la même sérénité philosophique qu'un traité de chimie':

L'inquisition, l'ultraïsme, le despotisme etc., etc., devraient être étudiés exactement comme les poisons, et leurs antidotes signalés avec le même sang-froid que témoigne sir Humphry Davy lorsqu'il décrit le pouvoir mortel de l'arsenic et de l'acétate de morphine.⁴⁰⁷

In these examples, we find at work the same concern to evolve a theory of motivational psychology as had been evident in Stendhal's earliest writings. What has changed, and in far-reaching ways, is the conception of the human being whose chemistry is to be understood. In the redrafting of *Rome, Naples et Florence* in 1818, Stendhal coins one of the most roundly deterministic definitions of man that are anywhere to be found in his writings:

Un être humain ne me paraît jamais que le résultat de ce que les lois ont mis dans sa tête, et le climat dans son cœur.⁴⁰⁸

What is immediately striking in this statement is the clear re-affirmation, in 1818, of Stendhal's erstwhile division of man into *tête* and *cœur*. In truth, he had never relinquished this. Yet if the basic terms remain the same, their sense has significantly broadened. No more is it a question of a strictly metaphysical contest between abstracted notions of reason and passion: 'head' and 'heart' have come now to denote theatres wherein might be registered the whole gamut of influences which, firmly rooted in the real and concrete world, are at work upon the individual. Man has become, as Michel Crouzet puts it, a 'nature immergée dans la nature et la société.'⁴⁰⁹ Nowhere is this extension of Stendhal's earlier perception of human nature more in evidence than in a short passage from *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* which can be said to contain the sum of his philosophy of man as it had evolved by 1817:

Le climat ou le tempérament fait la force du *ressort*; l'éducation ou les mœurs, le

sens dans lequel ce ressort est employé.⁴¹⁰

The emphasis here is, significantly, Stendhal's own. The remark, in its brevity and far-reaching implications, provides a striking prefiguration of the later definition by Taine of *race*, *milieu* and *moment* as 'le ressort du dedans, la pression du dehors et l'impulsion déjà acquise.'⁴¹¹ This notion of an internal driving force — or *ressort* — which has its seat in the human organism and requires to be guided by some directive, educative process — *sens* — is a much modified version of the interaction of *cœur* and *tête* as Stendhal had earlier sought to define it. It is in this respect that the notions of temperament and innate characteristics, as they are gleaned from Cabanis, confound and complicate Stendhal's earlier, uni-dimensional view of human character as it had been derived from Helvétius. For there is a growing awareness, evident from his earliest published work, that force of character, where it exists, will out. Thus, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, we read:

Dans la monarchie, le fils de Marius, ne pouvant avoir une compagnie, sera Cartouche. Je suppose que les parents donnent le tempérament, le *ressort*; et l'éducation, le *sens* dans lequel il agit.⁴¹²

Again the emphasis is Stendhal's, and again the '*ressort*', or mainspring, of human character is seen as an indwelling quality which requires judicious direction. Piqued by the criticisms of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817* which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of November 1817,⁴¹³ Stendhal took up his pen to defend the aims and achievements of his work as he perceived them. In a letter addressed to the general editor of the *Review*, in which he disputes the charge of 'flippancy' levelled against his book, he makes his point in the following terms:

Or l'état des têtes et des cœurs en Italie, la *force du ressort* et le *sens* dans lequel il est dirigé ne sont-ils pas mieux indiqués dans Stendhal que dans Millin?⁴¹⁴

It is of no little significance that Stendhal should choose to highlight the above aspect as a strength of *Rome, Naples et Florence*. For the definition of man as the sum of his inner qualities plus the means whereby these find expression in a social context comes to inform his perception not only of individual character, but of national character too. In this, Stendhal believed, lay his chief originality as an observer of Italian *mores* in particular and of national temperament more generally. The comparison which is to be found in *De l'Amour* between Corsica, Spain and Italy on the one hand, and France on the other, provides a clear application of the principle in question:

Dans ces climats, où une chaleur brûlante exalte la bile pendant trois mois de l'année, ce n'est que la *direction* du ressort qui manque; à Paris, j'ai peur que ce soit le *ressort* lui-même.⁴¹⁵

We have discussed already the difficulty of assigning any rigorously deterministic

value to Stendhal's novels, and have remarked upon the highly rarefied portrait of human nature that is presented through his fictional characters. It is for these very reasons, however, important to bear in mind that, long before the publication of *Armance*, Stendhal had forged a much fuller definition of human character than he would ever allow himself to spell out in his novels. Nowhere, from the conformation of one's organs through to the air one breathed, could one escape the influence of the real and concrete world. The passage cited above from *De l'Amour*, with its pseudo-physiological account of the effects of excessive heat upon the bilious temperament, demonstrates clearly Stendhal's appropriation of several notions from Cabanis and his application of these within a new context.⁴¹⁶ In a note dating from April 1813, which would in due course be incorporated into the *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase*, the Italian character is defined by Stendhal in the following terms:

Le caractère italien est mélancolique, c'est-à-dire que leurs idées sur le bonheur sont produites par des corps bilieux, quelquefois avec des embarras dans le bas-ventre.

Ce caractère mélancolique est le terrain dans lequel les passions germent le plus facilement. Ce caractère ne peut guère s'amuser que par les beaux-arts.⁴¹⁷

The semantic fields through which this definition runs are highly significant. The moral and aesthetic disposition of the Italian, his conception of happiness and artistic sensibility, are seen as the product of an organic constitution that is evoked in physiological and botanical terms. 'Ideas' are not depicted here as some abstract concept; rather they are an indissociable part of the *corps*, the *bas-ventre*, in which they take root. The resonance between Stendhal's remarks here and the 'Deuxième Mémoire' of Cabanis, *Histoire physiologique des sensations*, is inescapable. For it is the latter's contention that 'certaines dispositions des organes internes, et notamment des viscères du bas-ventre,' may have an intellectually and emotionally uplifting effect upon the individual, lending 'plus d'élévation, d'énergie, d'éclat' to the mind, together with a propensity to 'se nourrir d'affections plus touchantes, ou mieux dirigées.'⁴¹⁸ In the Italian as Stendhal comes to define him, moreover, we find a celebration of that same predisposition towards the arts, of 'ces âmes vives et ardentes, livrées sans réserve à tous les transports de leurs désirs,' which Cabanis expressly equates with the melancholic and passionate temperament as it thrives in the warmer climes of the south.⁴¹⁹ Such language and reasoning alike could have come straight from *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* or *De l'Amour*. Nor would they seem misplaced in Stendhal's earliest musical biographies, which Francine Marill Albérès describes as 'la transposition de la méthode de Cabanis appliquée à des cas concrets.'⁴²⁰ The correspondence between Stendhal's thought and that of Cabanis in this domain requires to be stressed. Worth stressing, too, is the fact that this perspective on the Italian quite specifically dates from a relatively advanced stage in Stendhal's reflections on man. The

importance of the year 1811 — which, when it has not been altogether overlooked, has never been fully appreciated by Stendhal scholars — cannot be overstated in this respect. For it saw the coincidence of two of the most formative influences upon Stendhal's thought: his first truly fruitful reading of Cabanis and his real 'discovery' of Italy.⁴²¹

We have seen already how Stendhal's reading of the 'Sixième Mémoire' of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* in February 1811 gave rise, in his private notes and diaries, to a whole range of applications and examples. It was his stay in Italy, however, in the autumn of the same year, that was to provide Stendhal with a most propitious occasion for putting Cabanis's theories, as he understood them, to the test. From this point, a new and imposing figure was to emerge into the light of Stendhal's conscience and occupy thereafter centre-stage in his imagination: the bilious-melancholic Italian.

Francine Marill Albérès, in considering this question, contends that, having recognised in the Italian his 'type de prédilection', Stendhal was 'heureux d'en trouver une explication dans Cabanis.'⁴²² This, we submit, is a quite misleading assertion, from both a logical *and* a chronological point of view. For the Italian is, to a very considerable degree, a *construct* of Stendhal's imagination, a personage who is *filtered through* the reading of Cabanis and to whose 'invention' the latter contributes substantially.⁴²³ Though Stendhal early fell under the charm of Milanese life, his fulsome praise of the Italian character appears, in the form that would ultimately characterise it, only during and after the trip to Italy which he undertakes fresh from his reading of Cabanis in 1811. It is instructive in this regard to cite part of Stendhal's diary entry for 9 March of that same year, in which he anticipates his forthcoming trip to Italy:

Malheureusement, ce que je connais sur le *caractère italien* est bien faible. [...] Nous allons en Italie pour étudier le caractère italien; connaître les hommes de cette nation en particulier, et, par occasion, compléter, étendre, vérifier, etc., ce que nous croyons savoir de l'homme en général.⁴²⁴

Thanks in no small measure to his reading of Cabanis, Stendhal, by summer 1811, had the raw philosophic material of an ideal; he departed for Italy, it can be argued, in search of a reality against which to match it. In February 1811, prompted by a reading of Mme de Staël's *Corinne*, Stendhal had penned several pages of notes entitled: 'Etudes du caractère italien', adding the significant qualification: 'A vérifier sur les lieux.'⁴²⁵ It is during and in the wake of his trip of autumn 1811 that Stendhal's vision of the Italian as the embodiment of a particular temperament, of Italy as the home of the arts, of his own 'Italian' disposition, was to take its definitive shape.⁴²⁶ In the first of

his published letters from this trip, dated 10 September 1811, Stendhal writes from Milan to his sister Pauline: 'Mais cet amour fou pour la gaîté, la musique et les mœurs très libres, l'art de jouir de la vie avec tranquillité, etc..., tout cela est le caractère du Milanais.'⁴²⁷ In a diary entry dated two days beforehand, Stendhal takes his reflection a stage further, concluding that this same Milanese character, with its '*arte di godere*', is due to the joint influence of climate and government.⁴²⁸ His considerations on this question are not, however, disinterested. For it becomes clear that Stendhal is, all the while, forging an *identification* with the character which he is observing. Thus, in the letter of 10 September 1811 cited above, he declares to his sister Pauline: 'Je vois tous les jours que j'ai le cœur italien, aux assassinats près, dont, au reste, on les accuse injustement.'⁴²⁹ Several days later, in a diary entry dated Milan 16 September 1811, he reflects ruefully:

Je n'ai que le cœur italien; si, en 1800, j'eusse été mêlé dans la société, comme je le suis actuellement et comme je le serais après un mois de séjour à Milan, j'aurais pris les manières italiennes.⁴³⁰

What is particularly noteworthy in all of this is that the 'naturalisation morale' (to borrow Michel Crouzet's expression)⁴³¹ which Stendhal seeks in relation to Italy is accompanied — more than that, ratified — by a *physiological* 'naturalisation' to which his diary and letters from this period stand as testimony. No sooner, indeed, does Stendhal commence his trip than we find him reflecting in his diary upon the bilious nature of his temperament.⁴³² To the same diary, some weeks later, he consigns the thought that his character, his means of seeking happiness, bears a Latin stamp: 'Je suis d'un bonheur sombre et, ce me semble, italien, bien éloigné de la vie facile du sanguin.'⁴³³ As late, indeed, as the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, we will find expressed the same wish to substantiate his moral sympathy with a legitimate physiological claim to Italianness: 'Par ma mère à laquelle je ressemble je suis peut-être de sang italien.'⁴³⁴

It is clear that Stendhal's trip of 1811 plays a crucial role in sustaining this association between his definition of the Italian character and his sense of self. 'Au moment où, ce matin, à 10 heures, nous avons aperçu le dôme de Milan,' he notes in his diary on a subsequent visit to Italy in September 1813, 'je songeais que mes voyages en Italie me rendent plus original, plus *moi-même*.'⁴³⁵ Such reflections, with all the sympathy they exhibit, are a far cry indeed from what Stendhal had written to his sister during his *first* spell in Italy over a decade earlier. Then he had been struck by quite another aspect of the Italian character — or, more precisely, he had interpreted the *same* aspects in a very different way. A glance at his letter to Pauline Beyle of 7 December 1800 reveals a response to Italy which has tended to be eclipsed by the rhapsodic tones of later writings:

Je n'ai jamais vu et je ne m'étais pas formé l'idée d'hommes aussi abrutis que le

bas peuple italien. Ils joignent à toute l'ignorance de nos paysans un cœur faux et traître, la plus sale lâcheté et le fanatisme le plus détestable.⁴³⁶

'Je t'assure que nous regrettons bien la France et la Suisse,' concludes the young second lieutenant; 'au moins là nous aurions affaire à des hommes.'⁴³⁷ Though the 'brutes à figure humaine' who are evoked in this letter may not serve as a representative gauge to Stendhal's earliest perceptions of Italy,⁴³⁸ it is nonetheless true that, by 1811, he was in the process of *reinventing* his Italian. The Italy for which the adolescent Stendhal had recorded his enthusiasm was not the Italy of the people and of violent energy — this was to be an acquired taste — but the Italy of the Saint Bernard Pass, Cimarosa, La Scala, and an as yet unconquered Angela Pietragrua.⁴³⁹ Lacking still here were the crucial physiological and national-geographic references, the 'psychology of race', as George Brandes puts it,⁴⁴⁰ which were to become the hallmark of Stendhal's later writings on Italy. By 1811, however, Stendhal was in possession of the new tools with which to refashion his definition of the Italian. The latter is perceived now as the natural result of a particular climate, temperament; organic disposition. The faults which Stendhal had lamented in 1800 are not eclipsed; they are rather translated now into latent virtues. It is for this reason significant that, as late as March 1812, we find Stendhal consigning to his diary in tentative tones still an idea that was to become the very hallmark of his perception of Italy in relation to France: 'En étudiant les mœurs de l'Italie au XVI^e siècle, je crois voir que la science des convenances s'est perfectionnée, et c'est tant pis pour nous.'⁴⁴¹ Writing from Milan on 29 October 1811, he had reflected upon the ready sociability of the Parisian and compared the latter, in a manner that would become compulsive in his later writings, to his Italian counterpart: 'Les peuples d'Italie, au contraire, sont bilieux, *point aimables du tout*; la canaille italienne est même là plus impatientante de l'univers...' But in those same Italians, Stendhal goes on to add, one finds 'un peuple né pour les arts, c'est-à-dire excessivement sensible.'⁴⁴²

This summary portrait, revising as it does Stendhal's earlier and immeasurably harsher judgment of the common people of Italy, already contains much that will become central to his definitive perception of the Italian character. 'La canaille, qui n'est réprimée par rien, est plus méchante qu'ailleurs,' he declares in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'ce qui ne prouve autre chose sinon que l'homme du Midi est supérieur à l'homme du Nord.'⁴⁴³ The equation between the bilious temperament and excessive sensibility of the Italian, which we find clearly expressed for the first time in 1811, foreshadows the passage from the *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase* in which Italy will be prized as 'la patrie des arts', and the Italian as the embodiment of melancholy passion and artistic fibre.⁴⁴⁴ It is for this reason, we suggest, that Geoffrey Strickland is inaccurate when he asserts that the closest Stendhal 'comes to finding

reasons in nature for the Italians being as they are is to refer occasionally to their "beautiful climate".⁴⁴⁵ Strickland interprets too literally here a term which, in the wake of Montesquieu and Cabanis in particular, becomes a short-hand notation for Stendhal, implying the whole range of natural — geographical, meteorological *and* physiological — influences to which human communities are subject.⁴⁴⁶ Though climate in its strictest sense comes into its own as a factor in determining national character, so too does *temperament*; and it is here that the real development in Stendhal's thinking occurs.

The revised stance which we find Stendhal adopting in 1811 vis-à-vis the Italian is accompanied, in this sense, by a powerful new idea: that the *bas peuple*, or *canaille*, of Italy is the repository of a sensibility physical in origin and conspicuous by its absence in France. As Stendhal puts it in his letter of 29 October 1811, Paris is a city where 'tout est eunuque, jusqu'au maître,' where '[les] choses sublimes sont mortes.'⁴⁴⁷ In comparing the French and Italian peasantry in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, Stendhal will have no hesitation in giving voice once more to the same idea. The French peasant, he concedes, 'a beaucoup plus de *bonté*, et de ce *bon sens* qui s'applique si bien aux circonstances ordinaires de la vie.' But, he counters,

je crois en vérité que le paysan toscan a beaucoup plus d'esprit que le paysan français, et qu'en général le paysan italien a reçu du ciel infiniment plus de susceptibilité de sentir avec force et profondeur, autrement dit, infiniment plus d'énergie de passion.⁴⁴⁸

The significance of this remark lies not in the superiority which it posits — and which will be sustained throughout Stendhal's writings — between the Italian and the French in the matter of sensibility; it lies rather in the concept of *energy* which is intimately associated with this sensibility, and which is defined quite specifically here as an appurtenance of the Italian character. In the case of Stendhal, as in the case of his later apologist, Hippolyte Taine, observes J.-T. Nordmann, 'italianité et énergie tendent à coïncider.'⁴⁴⁹ It may seem otiose to reiterate here what is by now an established canon of Stendhal scholarship. Yet, if the coincidence for Stendhal between Italy and energy has become something of a truism, the *roots* of that coincidence have not received an exhaustive analysis by any means. What we propose in the following chapter is to unearth a number of these roots, and to examine what remains a neglected area of scholarly concern: the role of *physiology* in Stendhal's notion of 'energy' and in his understanding of natural impulse in general.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. On Cabanis's theory of natural unity, see Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, pp. 20-25 *et passim*; 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', pp. 136-137; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 21-22.
2. *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 184.
3. *JL*, I, 230. On this 'schéma trinitaire' and man's place within it, see Schlanger, pp. 69-71.
4. *OI*, I, 457-458. See on this incident Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 93.
5. *Corr*, I, 369, 106. Stendhal exploits the rhetorical value of this *rapprochement* between man and animal. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 347.
6. *JL*, I, 250.
7. See R.W. Burkhardt, 'Lamarck, Evolution, and the Politics of Science'; 'The Inspiration of Lamarck's Belief in Evolution', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. V, no. 2 (1972), pp. 413-438; M.J.S. Hodge, 'Lamarck's Science of Living Bodies', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. V, no. 20 (1971), pp. 323-352; W. Coleman, *Georges Cuvier, Zoologist: A Study in the History of Evolution Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1964), pp. 141-186. See also on this question the general but useful remarks of Larkin, pp. 31-35, 123-126.
8. *Op. cit.*, p. 175.
9. *L'Homme machine*, p. 162. See the chapter 'La Mettrie as a Degraded of Man' in H. Hastings, *Man and Beast in French Thought of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), pp. 94-108. For the philosophical position to which such an idea issued a challenge, see *ibid.*, pp. 13-14, 21-22, 64, 173. See also on this question Gunderson; Vartanian, *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme machine'*, pp. 26-27.
10. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, pp. 183-207, 227-241; Hastings, pp. 150-151, 156-157. The alleged continuum of animal nature had been extended to plant-life as early as the 1740s. See Vartanian, 'Trembley's Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism'; *La Mettrie's 'L'Homme machine'*, pp. 25-26, 217-218 n.; *Diderot and Descartes*, pp. 252-258. See also, and more generally, L.G. Crocker, 'Diderot and Eighteenth-Century French Transformism', *Forerunners of Darwin, 1745-1859*, ed. B. Glass, O. Temkin, and W.L. Straus (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 114-143; Schlanger, pp. 71-77; Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France*, pp. 72-75.
11. Stendhal's early reflections on such questions, it is useful to recall, came in the wake of what Larkin (p. 33) describes as 'the intellectual ferment of the 1790s when public discussion of these issues was no longer inhibited by the official attitudes of a throne-and-altar establishment.' The new intellectual liberalism was, of course, to be short-lived, having lost much of its momentum by the time Stendhal came to commit to paper his first thoughts on the issues in question. See on this point Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 121.
12. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 80.

13. *Rapports*, p. 298.
14. *H de P*, II, 70 n. 1. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 160.
15. *H de P*, II, 70 n. 1. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, pp. 298-300, 422-423.
16. *JL*, I, 454.
17. See, for example, La Mettrie's contention that a slight alteration in the brain, 'Un rien, une petite fibre, quelque chose que la plus subtile Anatomie ne peut découvrir, eût fait deux Sots, d'Erasmus, & de Fontenelle...' (*L'Homme machine*, p. 159). What held for the individual, moreover, held also for the species. See La Mettrie's *L'Homme-plante* as cited by Hastings, p. 102: 'Si le hasard nous a placés au haut de l'échelle, songeons qu'un rien de plus ou de moins dans le cerveau [...] peut sur le champ nous précipiter au bas.'
18. On Cabanis as a forerunner of Lamarck, see E. Guyénot, *Les Sciences de la vie aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. L'Idée d'évolution* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1941), pp. 404-408, 416; L. Roule, *Lamarck et l'interprétation de la nature* (Paris: Flammarion, 1927), pp. 116-121; C. Coulston Gillispie, 'Lamarck and Darwin in the History of Science', in Glass, Temkin, and Straus, *Forerunners of Darwin*, pp. 269-270. For a general discussion of evolutionism in the nineteenth century, see Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 57-91; Georges Cuvier, *Zoologist*, pp. 141-186; Mandelbaum, *History, Man, and Reason*, pp. 77-92; R.N. Stromberg, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 304-324; Baumer, pp. 337-366.
19. 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 143. The study of living phenomena had, by the late eighteenth century, witnessed a fundamental evolution in attitude and assumption. 'The dynamic of living processes,' writes J. Schiller, 'replaced the static of description, and the materiality of experimental facts challenged the metaphysical interpretations inherited from the past' ('Queries, Answers and Unsolved Problems in Eighteenth-Century Biology', p. 195).
20. *H de P*, II, 79-80 n. 3.
21. *Rapports*, p. 298.
22. See Gouhier, pp. 21, 24, 151-152; Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 143; Kennedy, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', p. 227.
23. *Rapports*, p. 300. See the remarks of G.W. Stocking in relation to Saint-Simon and Cabanis, 'French Anthropology in 1800', *Isis*, vol. LV (1964), p. 148.
24. *H de P*, II, 78 n. 1.
25. *M de T*, II, 30.
26. On 'race' as a new term in the philosopher-anthropologist's lexicon, see Gusdorf, p. 493; Régaldo, 'Un touriste "idéologue": Stendhal à Bordeaux', pp. 43-44.
27. *M de T*, II, 30.
28. *Italie*, 668.
29. Foremost among them Georges Cuvier, Victor Jacquemont, Adrien de Jussieu and William Frédéric Edwards. See J. Théodoridès, 'Les relations de Stendhal

- et de Cuvier', *Biologie Médicale*, no. hors série: *Œuvre et relations de Georges Cuvier*, March 1961, pp. xxi-1; 'Stendhal et les savants de son temps', *Première journée du Stendhal Club*, ed. V. del Litto (Lausanne: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1965), pp. 147-158; *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 79-100, 188-191 238-241; F. Michel, 'Jacquemont et Stendhal', *Etudes stendhaliennes*, pp. 344-386.
30. *Corr*, I, 194-195.
 31. See J. Théodoridès, 'Buffon jugé par Stendhal', *Stendhal Club*, 10^e année, no. 38 (1968), pp. 193-202; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 85. See, for example, Stendhal's letter to Pauline Beyle of 19 March 1803: 'Lis l'histoire du cheval, du renard, du paon, du rossignol, du cerf dans M. de Buffon' (*Corr*, I, 62).
 32. See on this point Cassirer, pp. 78-80; Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, pp. 229-230; Coleman, *Georges Cuvier, Zoologist*, pp. 21-23. A fuller discussion of this and related questions can be found in Lovejoy's 'Buffon and the Problem of Species', in Glass, Temkin, and Straus, *Forerunners of Darwin*, pp. 84-113.
 33. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 88.
 34. See Hastings, pp. 46-47, 125-126, 128, 132, 154; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 88-89; Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, p. 26.
 35. See Hastings, p. 100; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 80-81.
 36. See Hastings, p. 157; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 83-84 n. 31; Wartofsky, pp. 316-317. On Buffon and La Mettrie respectively, see J. Roger, *Les Sciences de la vie dans la pensée française du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), pp. 527-584, 487-494; Goyard-Fabre, pp. 158-182.
 37. See Hastings, pp. 111-121; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 94-95, 97.
 38. *JL*, I, 227.
 39. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 235; 'The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*', *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 17, 21-22 n. 8; 'Monboddo and Rousseau', *ibid.*, pp. 45, 50-51; Hastings, pp. 118, 120-121.
 40. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 235; Hastings, pp. 56-57, 126-127, 157-158. Cabanis's praise of Bonnet (*Rapports*, p. 77) is worthy of note in this regard. On the kinship between man and the orang-outang specifically, see Lovejoy, 'Monboddo and Rousseau', *Essays in the History of Ideas*, pp. 38-61; Hastings, pp. 97, 109, 112, 118-119, 125-132, 158.
 41. *JL*, I, 161.
 42. *Ibid.*, I, 160.
 43. See, for instance, *ibid.*, II, 61, 64, 142-143. On the development of anthropology, and for the parallels that may be drawn with a number of Stendhal's early reflections on 'natural man', see Stocking; Gusdorf, pp. 477-503; Plongeron, pp. 405-406.
 44. *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 181.

45. *JL*, II, 141.
46. *Ibid.*, II, 142.
47. The published proceedings of the 1983 *Colloque de la Société des Etudes Romantiques*, 'Stendhal et l'énergie romantique', provide a storehouse of reflections on this aspect of Stendhal's thought. See *Romantisme*, 14^e année, no. 46 (1984); *Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, nos. 110 and 111 (1986). See also on this question M. Crouzet, *Nature et Société chez Stendhal, passim; Stendhal et l'italianité. Essai de mythologie romantique* (Paris: Corti, 1982), *passim*.
48. See Gusdorf, pp. 496-503.
49. *Op. cit.*, p. 135. See also in this regard Plongeron, pp. 405-406.
50. See Gusdorf, pp. 497-498.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 498.
52. *Op. cit.*, p. 140.
53. *Op. cit.*, p. 495.
54. See Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France*, pp. 125-127. On the concept of the 'Noble Savage', see also F.E. Manuel and F.P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), pp. 425-430.
55. *Op. cit.*, p. 496.
56. *Loc. cit.* On the conflicting perceptions of the savage to which the later eighteenth century was heir, see D.G. Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France*, pp. 105-134.
57. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 35.
58. *Corr*, I, 153; 120; *JL*, I, 128. On the 'science of man' as an aspiration of later positivist philosophy, see Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France during the Second Empire*, p. 12.
59. *H de P*, II, 40.
60. *Op. cit.*, p. 132.
61. See *Corr*, II, 96-99; *Romans*, I, 190-192. On Stendhal's attitude towards philosophy in the novel, see below.
62. *H de P*, II, 5.
63. *De l'Amour*, I, 180 n. 1.
64. *JL*, II, 143.
65. *Corr*, I, 121.
66. See *ibid.*, I, 301; *Italie*, 69 n.; *CA*, II, 51.
67. *JL*, I, 237. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 135: 'Etudier les hom[m]es dans l'histoire et dans le monde.'

68. *Ibid.*, I, 112.
69. *Ibid.*, I, 124. Though Stendhal's reading of the philosopher would never be uncritical, G. Strickland's assertion that he was 'lent à goûter Helvétius' is quite at odds with the evidence ('Le bonheur du plus grand nombre', *Stendhal Club*, 29^e année, no. 114 [1987], p. 201). From the moment he opens *De l'Esprit* towards the end of 1802, we find Stendhal lauding 'le profond et non encore apprécié Helvétius' (*JL*, I, 91). Cf. Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 39-46; Alciatore, *Stendhal et Helvétius*, pp. 7-78.
70. *JL*, I, 130. See also *Corr*, I, 132: 'il faut voir les choses par soi-même'; *ibid.*, I, 137: 'Cela vaut mieux que tous les livres, parce que c'est sur la nature.' Cf. the anecdote on the *mores* of the 'Chiriguanes' which Stendhal takes as gospel from Helvétius in a note contemporaneous with these remarks (*JL*, I, 340). The dividing line between empirical doubt and faith, it is clear, remains a shifting one.
71. *OI*, I, 58.
72. 'J'ai vu l'homme dans l'homme et non plus uniquement dans les livres' (*JL*, I, 294). Cf. the journal entry of 24 July 1804: 'Quel avantage n'aurais-je pas de connaître la s[ociété] de Paris seulement autant que je connais celle de Grenoble! C'est ce qui me manque le plus' (*Ibid.*, II, 42 n. 1).
73. *Ibid.*, I, 339. Even in the *Vie de Henry Brulard* (I, 105), we find what appears to be an echo of this visit to Grenoble, 'cette ville que j'abhorrais et que je hais encore, car c'est là que j'ai appris à connaître les hommes.' Though it seems reasonable to link this reminiscence with the notebook entries of 1804, V. del Litto concludes instead (*Ibid.*, I, 324 n.) that Stendhal is referring here to the months spent organising the defence of the Grenoble region in 1814.
74. *JL*, I, 366.
75. *Ibid.*, I, 458. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 31: 'J'ai lu assez de théorie'; *ibid.*, II, 71: '[...] surtout aller dans le monde.'
76. *Corr*, I, 144.
77. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 35.
78. *JL*, II, 64.
79. *Ibid.*, II, 7. See also *ibid.*, I, 414.
80. See Lovejoy, 'The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*', pp. 26-28.
81. *JL*, II, 64.
82. *Ibid.*, I, 227.
83. *Ibid.*, II, 142. 'Lire donc leur histoire par Buffon,' adds Stendhal. 'Le *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* de Rousseau avec les notes.'
84. Stendhal clearly harbours from the outset the belief that it fell to man — the one naturally 'perfectible' animal — to govern, through conscious processes, the evolution of his fellow animals. See, for example, *JL*, I, 250; *H de P*, II, 70 n. 1, 79-80 n. 3. It is worth comparing here Rousseau, who held 'la faculté de se

- perfectionner' to be a crucial distinguishing factor between man and animal. See on this point Lovejoy, 'The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*', pp. 23-25; 'Monboddo and Rousseau', p. 54; Hastings, pp. 115-116; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, p. 94. For this notion of *perfectibility* as it appears from the earliest in Stendhal's writings, see *JL*, I, 32, 321, 327, 334, 360, 361, 365, 390, 404, 476, 478; II, 2, 5, 14-15, 46, 47, 62, 64, 66, 69, 76, 77, 92-93, 111-114, 116, 157-158.
85. Here again La Mettrie provides a notable precedent, though Rousseau and others had made the same point. See Hastings, pp. 101, 115, 120.
 86. *JL*, I, 365. Cf. Hastings, pp. 115-116.
 87. *Corr*, I, 178.
 88. *OI*, I, 195-196; *CA*, I, 57. See above, Chapter V.
 89. *De l'Amour*, I, 56 n. 1.
 90. *Ibid.*, I, 111 n. 1. Cf. *Italie*, 101: 'La forme des os de la tête est laide à Paris; cela se rapproche du singe, et c'est ce qui empêche les femmes de résister aux premières atteintes de l'âge.'
 91. See respectively *JL*, I, 227; *De l'Amour*, I, 56 n. 1; *H de P*, II, 70 n. 1, 79-80 n. 3; *M de T*, II, 30; *Corr*, II, 33; *H de P*, I, 50; *Italie*, 38, 645; *Corr*, I, 1003; *H de P*, II, 36; *R et S*, 109; *Corr*, I, 609-610; *HB*, I, 238 n. 2; *M de T*, II, 26, 27; *Romans*, I, 891.
 92. *Corr*, III, 253.
 93. *Op. cit.*, p. 129.
 94. See Van Duzer, pp. 38-40.
 95. On 'the animal nature of the human mind and the physiological basis of morals' as conceived by Cabanis and the Idéologues, see *ibid.*, p. 59.
 96. See Tracy, *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, Preface, pp. xviii-xix: 'L'idéologie est une partie de la zoologie...' Among the many references to this crucial aspect of Ideology, see Picavet, pp. 301-302, 337; Lichtheim, p. 167; Delacroix, pp. 16, 22; Van Duzer, p. 40; Cailliet, pp. 130-132; Chinard, Introduction, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9; Boas, pp. 25-26, 31; Imbert, *Stendhal et la tentation janséniste*, p. 127; Kennedy, 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', p. 227; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', pp. 13-14.
 97. *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 59.
 98. See *ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
 99. 'Mais c'est peu que la physique de l'homme fournisse les bases de la philosophie rationnelle, il faut qu'elle fournisse encore celles de la morale: la saine raison ne peut les chercher ailleurs' (*Rapports*, p. 95).
 100. *Op. cit.*, p. 49.
 101. 'Il reste dans une abstraction voulue, il met l'être humain à part dans la nature et déclare ensuite que l'âme seule étant noble, l'âme seule a droit de cité en littérature' (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 243). On Zola's reaction to Stendhal, see Hemmings, 'Zola pour ou contre Stendhal'; Blin, *Roman*, pp.

- 34, 40, 45-46, 102-104, 106-107 n. 4, 111-112.
102. See on this point Blum, pp. 282-284; Martino, pp. 305-308; Blin, *Roman*, pp. 54-55.
103. However unsystematic his articulation of these notions, Stendhal does subscribe quite clearly to what M. Crouzet calls 'la *ratio* qui fait appel aux races, aux tempéraments, aux climats, aux gouvernements, aux circonstances historiques...' (*Raison*, p. 332). On the term 'Naturalism' itself, see F.W.J. Hemmings, 'The Origin of the Terms *Naturalisme*, *Naturaliste*', *French Studies*, vol. VIII, no. 2 (1954), pp. 109-121.
104. 'Zola pour ou contre Stendhal?', p. 108. See *CA*, II, 429.
105. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 241.
106. Collignon, pp. 504-505.
107. Paupe, *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, p. 176.
108. Josephson, p. vii; Turnell, pt. I, p. 58.
109. See the quite pertinent remark of I. Howe, p. 77: 'Stendhal is not an ideologue in the manner of Dostoevski nor even a novelist of ideas; nonetheless, ideology and ideas swarm through his books.'
110. V. Brombert asserts with justification that 'any attempt to read [Stendhal's] novels as mere illustrations of his theories is bound to betray both his art and his intellectual attitudes' (*Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 184).
111. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 177.
112. *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, p. 212. Such a perception of his art would surely have led Stendhal to a much more faithful representation of his philosophical principles, to a type of literature more akin to what we understand by 'Realism' as a literary philosophy. See on this question Bardèche, pp. 67-69.
113. See Blin, *Roman*, p. 45 n. 1.
114. See *Romans*, I, 654. 'No ties can reduce them to the state of puppet or victim,' writes V. Brombert of Stendhal's heroes. 'If anything, they seem condemned to a free search for their own reality' (*Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 180).
115. *Stendhal: The Promise of Happiness*, pp. 84, 71.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
117. See V. Brombert's argument that 'there exist hardly any a priori definitions of characters in Stendhal's novels. [...] The void remains to be filled; and this act of filling is the very act of living' (*Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 174).
118. *Op. cit.*, p. 36.
119. 'Stendhal; Creation and Self-Knowledge', *The Romanic Review*, vol. XLIII (1952), p. 193.

120. *OI*, I, 201.
121. *Roman*, p. 45.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
123. *Romans*, I, 266-267. See Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 244; Blin, *Roman*, pp. 102-103.
124. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 244.
125. See *Romans*, I, 265-268; Blin, *Roman*, pp. 102-103.
126. See *Roman*, pp. 103, 106-107 n. 4. L. Dufour, in drawing attention to the dearth of meteorological description in Stendhal's novels, overlooks this key scene from *Le Rouge et le Noir*, but makes a similar point in relation to a scene from *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Stendhal, affirms Dufour, 'ne fait guère allusion aux variations de l'atmosphère. On a de plus l'impression, quand il en parle, que c'est tout à fait par hasard, sauf peut-être une fois, lors de l'évasion de Fabrice où le brouillard joue un rôle dans l'action' ('Stendhal et la météorologie', *Stendhal Club*, 8^e année, no. 32 [1965-66], p. 324).
127. *Roman*, p. 112. Cf. P.-G. Castex, who holds that the material descriptions in question 'concourent seulement à définir une atmosphère d'intimité' between the two main protagonists (Introduction, *Le Rouge et le Noir* [Paris: Garnier, 1973], p. lxxvii).
128. *Raison*, p. 333.
129. See *JL*, III, 412 n.
130. *Ibid.*, III, 181.
131. J.-C. Alciatoire ('Stendhal et Pinel', pp. 124-125, 128-133) argues for links between Stendhal's reading of Pinel and certain behavioural traits of Julien Sorel and Octave de Malivert. C. Liprandi (pp. 120-125), by contrast, focuses his attention upon the similarities of temperament which, he contends, exist between Stendhal and Adrien Lafargue, from whom the former would, of course, draw inspiration in his portrait of Julien Sorel. C. Smith ('Aspects of Destutt de Tracy's Linguistic Analysis as Adopted by Stendhal'), shifting the emphasis from the physiological to the more strictly rational aspects of Ideology, undertakes to demonstrate the transposition into Stendhal's novels of a number of elements of Destutt de Tracy's analysis of language. E. Kennedy (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, pp. 332-333) seeks in turn to identify in Stendhal's narrative method the application of Tracy's model of logical reasoning.
132. *Op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.
133. See Martineau's preface to *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*Romans*, I, 207).
134. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 97.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
136. *Loc. cit.*
137. *HB*, I, 8-9 n. 2, 14, 19, 33, 175, 236.
138. *H de P*, II, 47.

139. See in particular *Rapports*, pp. 81-85.
140. *Roman*, p. 48. Octave, Lucien and Fabrice, Blin notes, 'se prévalent également d'une taille svelte, de grands yeux noirs et de cheveux bouclés allant du blond au châtain', whilst the female protagonists 'sont toutes des blondes aux yeux bleus' (*Ibid.*, pp. 48-49).
141. *Loc. cit.*, n. 8.
142. *The Realists: Portraits of Eight Novelists* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 29.
143. *Rapports*, p. 81.
144. *VHMM*, 181.
145. *Mél. journ.*, 223.
146. *Italie*, 1136. 'Comme les grands artistes en formant leur idéal suppriment certains ordres de détails,' writes Stendhal with measured emphasis, 'les artistes ouvriers les accusent de ne pas voir ces détails.'
147. *Mél. peint.*, 401.
148. *Romans*, I, 1400. Had he happened upon it, such a remark might have posed a problem for Taine, whose contention that the Ideal had no place in Naturalism would have been difficult to square with Stendhal's conception of his art as it is expressed here. On Taine's view of the novelist as 'naturalist', see F.W.J. Hemmings, 'The Origin of the Terms *Naturalisme*, *Naturaliste*', pp. 111-112.
149. See Blin, *Roman*, p. 24.
150. *Romans*, I, 1517 n.
151. *Op. cit.*, p. 287. See also Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, pp. 12-13.
152. *JL*, I, 469. See on this question the chapter 'Art and Reality: The Ideal or The Mirror?' in Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, pp. 46-68 (esp. pp. 63-68).
153. *Corr*, III, 395.
154. See *OI*, II, 354, 361; *Romans*, II, 862.
155. See K.G. McWatters, *Stendhal, lecteur des romanciers anglais* (Lausanne: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1968), p. 74.
156. *Italie*, 1444 n. Cf. *ibid.*, 226: 'Excepté de Brosses, les voyageurs ne se sont pas doutés des mœurs, des habitudes, des préjugés, des diverses manières de chercher le bonheur du peuple qu'ils traversaient, ils n'ont vu que les murs.'
157. *S d'E*, 9. See Stendhal's reference to the Pont Saint-Esprit on his trip down the Rhône as early as 1805: 'J'ai bien examiné tout cela, et le nombre des arches; mais comme ces détails physiques, qui ne sont pas touchants, ne m'intéressent pas, je les ai oubliés. La même chose m'est arrivée dans tous mes voyages' (*OI*, I, 338).
158. *S d'E*, 49. See on this point Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 22.

159. *Op. cit.*, p. 28. It was here, inevitably, that the sticking-point was to come for Zola, of whom G. Blin writes: 's'il tente parfois, et timidement, d'annexer Stendhal au naturalisme, plus souvent il doit lâcher prise, voire porter sentence d'excommunication' (*Roman*, p. 34).
160. That said, people, like their odour, come in all forms and manifestations. It is interesting to note that Zola, while he questioned the temporal verisimilitude of Stendhal's Italy in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, was nonetheless prepared to concede to this work the distinction of being 'certainement le seul roman français écrit sur un peuple étranger, qui ait l'odeur de ce peuple' (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 256). The remark is made, as Hemmings reminds us, by a Zola who had yet to set foot in Italy (*Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 169).
161. *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 13.
162. *Mél. journ.*, 223.
163. *Romans*, I, 703.
164. *Corr*, II, 98.
165. *Romans*, II, 558. Stendhal alludes to himself in his diary of 28 January 1817 as 'l'homme qui aime la peinture de la nature passionnée' (*OI*, I, 969).
166. *Romans*, I, 1398.
167. *Ibid.*, I, 1400. There is much to be gleaned about this conception of 'nature' from Stendhal's admiration for Shakespeare. See Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 28 n. 4.
168. 'Beylisme, romanticisme, réalisme', p. 117.
169. *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 4.
170. See, for example, the preface which Stendhal penned for his *Chroniques italiennes*: 'J'aime ce qui peint le cœur de l'homme [...]. Pour moi, le récit de ces pièces et de ces supplices me fournit sur le cœur humain des données vraies et inattaquables, sur lesquelles on aime à méditer la nuit en courant la poste' (*Romans*, II, 556, 557).
171. See, for example, the note dating from February 1805: 'Il me semble qu'on ne peut point exposer un grand caractère comique sans mettre deux passions qui se combattent' (*JL*, II, 191). On the continuity of Stendhal's thinking in this respect, see Vigneron, 'Beylisme, romantisme, réalisme', p. 110.
172. *Romans*, I, 1409-1410.
173. *Ibid.*, I, 953.
174. 'Rien de si fort que de peindre un homme aussi philosophe que possible et malgré cela toujours entraîné par ses passions' (*JL*, I, 261).
175. See *Romans*, II, 1033-1034; *OI*, II, 353.
176. See again Stendhal's notes of January 1803: 'Il n'y a de vrai caractère que celui qui est fondé sur l'opposition d'un lien et d'une passion. [...] Plusieurs liens opposés à une passion peuvent donner un caractère touchant' (*JL*, I, 95-96).

177. *Op. cit.*, p. 203.
178. *Stendhal et le roman. Essai sur la structure du roman stendhalien.* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), p. 168.
179. *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 21. On the 'archaic' aspect of Stendhal's novels, see Auerbach, pp. 481-482.
180. As early as December 1802, Stendhal resumes thus his conception of the literary medium: 'Les hommes trouvent que la poésie embellit tout ce qu'elle peint, et cela à proportion de la beauté et de la grandeur des sujets; moi, je veux prendre tout ce qu'il y a de grand, de sublime, de touchant dans la nature et le peindre. Je veux pousser l'art jusqu'à sa limite' (*JL*, I, 51). Hence the overriding concern to reflect 'la belle nature' in his early projected works (*Ibid.*, I, 218). See also on this point *ibid.*, II, 91: 'je représenterai *une belle âme* jointe à une excellente *tête*, et qui me fait bien *voir dans la nature* qu'il n'y a que la passion qui fasse travailler la tête.'
181. See Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 13. Some exception might be made here for *Lamiel*, which, as R. Alter (p. 268) observes, 'reflects a more unsparing view of what is implied by realism than does [Stendhal's] previous work.'
182. *De L'Amour*, I, 56 n. 1.
183. *Romans*, I, 708.
184. *De l'Amour*, I, 21.
185. *Romans*, I, 252.
186. *Les Idées de Stendhal*, p. 295.
187. *Roman*, p. 35.
188. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
189. *Op. cit.*, p. 91.
190. *OI*, I, 201 n.
191. The remark is consigned to the margin of Vauvenargues's *Œuvres complètes*, which Stendhal read and annotated in 1811. See *JL*, III, 345-346.
192. *Lamiel*, ed. V. del Litto (Geneva: Cercle du Bibliophile, 1971), p. 16 n. 1.
193. *OI*, II, 354; *Romans*, II, 862.
194. *Romans*, II, 1055.
195. *Op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.
196. *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, p. 94.
197. See *Romans*, I, 1400; II, 1055.
198. See the very pertinent remarks of V. Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 113.
199. *Corr*, II, 97; *Romans*, I, 191. A similar sentiment is expressed in *M de T*, II,

535-536.

200. See Y. du Parc, *Quand Stendhal relisait les 'Promenades dans Rome'*. *Marginalia inédits* (Lausanne: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1959), p. 89.
201. *OI*, II, 354.
202. *Romans*, I, 1407.
203. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 75, 82, 144, 288, 363, 611, 1030; II, 189.
204. *De l'Amour*, I, 65.
205. *Ibid.*, I, 65-66.
206. *OI*, II, 231.
207. *Philosophy and the Novel: Philosophical Aspects of Middlemarch, Anna Karenina, The Brothers Karamazov, A la recherche du temps perdu, and of the Methods of Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
208. Some general aspects of the relationship between philosophy and the novel are discussed by J. Cruickshank in his introductory chapter to *The Novelist as Philosopher* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962), pp. 3-26. This collection of essays concentrates exclusively upon the mid-twentieth century novel. Sadly, no similar enterprise has been undertaken for its nineteenth-century counterpart, though M. Larkin's *Man and Society in Nineteenth-Century Realism: Determinism and Literature* provides a number of pointers as to the directions in which such a study might fruitfully be pursued.
209. *Op. cit.*, p. 180.
210. *Op. cit.*, p. 24. Cf. Blum, pp. 181-190.
211. *Italie*, 370-371.
212. *Corr*, III, 557.
213. *Loc. cit.* See Balzac's colourful analogy in the same letter: 'Je fais une fresque et vous avez fait des statues italiennes.' Zola, interestingly, claimed not to understand the significance of this remark. See Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 237.
214. *Corr*, III, 277.
215. *OI*, II, 366. Cf. the marginal note which Stendhal consigns to a copy of *Armance* in 1831: 'De temps à autre, une ligne de description du mouv[ement] physique faciliterait beaucoup l'intelligence' (*Romans*, I, 1430).
216. See Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 15-68. On some of the broader issues raised by Balzac's appraisal of the novel, see Lukács, *op. cit.*
217. *Corr*, III, 403.
218. *Op. cit.*, p. 83. See *JL*, III, 219: 'La nature est un piano; c'est à l'artiste à en tirer des sons.'
219. This aspect of determinism is prevalent in all of Stendhal's writings, from his biographies through his travels in Italy and art criticism to his novels. His considerations of history are everywhere informed by a belief in the power of

- the moment to determine the destiny of individuals and nations alike. Stendhal exhibits, as M. Wood puts it (p. 150), 'an insinuating sense of the precariousness of seemingly solid, inevitable affairs.' Cf. V. Brombert's description of history in Stendhal as 'an explosive force, the modern manifestation of necessity, a *fatum*, to which man was both the victimized subject and the necessary midwife.' (*Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 42).
220. *Corr*, II, 256. See also the letters to Adolphe de Mareste from the same period: *ibid.*, II, 253-255, 258-263.
221. *Romans*, I, 620. Fate alternates with chance (the terms *destin*, *sort* and *hasard* are never far from Stendhal's pen) in relieving the Stendhalian hero of *part* at least of his capacity for self-determination. On the former, see R. Foster, 'Stendhal as Moralizer', *Shenandoah*, vol. VIII, no. 1 (1956), pp. 27-31; on the latter, J.-B. Barrère, 'Stendhal et le chinois', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, fasc. 92 (1958), pp. 447-451.
222. *Romans*, I, 679. Cf. Pirard's thoughts on Julien: 'J'ignore ce qu'il fera; mais il a le feu sacré, il peut aller loin' (*Ibid.*, I, 417).
223. *Op. cit.*, p. 83. On the anachronistic, *déplacé* aspect of the Stendhalian hero, see Giraud; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 400-407; Turnell, *op. cit.*, pt. I, pp. 66-75; Wood, pp. 139-141.
224. *Romans*, I, 830, 1077, 901. 'Ah! que je voudrais commander un canon ou une machine à vapeur! que je serais heureux d'être un chimiste attaché à quelque manufacture,' exclaims Octave de Malivert (*Ibid.*, I, 104). But he will not, and he is not. 'Ah! si le ciel m'avait fait le fils d'un fabricant de draps, j'aurais travaillé au comptoir dès l'âge de seize ans...' (*Ibid.*, I, 48). In Lucien Leuwen we are likewise presented — 'nous ne savons pas ce qu'il sera un jour' — with an unfulfilled self, as Stendhal plays for all they are worth the doubts which he fosters over his hero's destiny (*Ibid.*, I, 953). Would another route have led Lucien to self-fulfilment? Stendhal poses the question; but, as in the case of Octave and Julien, the answer is far from definitive: 'S'il eût usé sa vie dans le comptoir de son père, il eût peut-être été toute la vie un homme de mérite, connu pour tel d'une personne ou deux' (*Ibid.*, I, 1357). Of all Stendhal's protagonists, Fabrice is the one who comes closest to fulfilling himself in this respect, to being at one with his character and circumstances. For he is least beset by a moral imperative which, in the Stendhalian hero, continually points up the gulf between what he is and what he would like to be (*Ibid.*, I, 1426-1427). From the outset, a ghost which has haunted Julien and Lucien is laid for Fabrice: he has seen action under Napoleon. Though this in itself does not *determine* Fabrice's disposition (for what can be said of his peace with himself holds equally for Gina and Mosca), it has a significance which sets Fabrice apart from Stendhal's other heroes. See on this question Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, pp. 140-144, 184-186; Thompson, *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, p. 174; Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 511-518, 526-527, 552-553.
225. *Stendhal et la voie oblique: l'auteur devant son monde romanesque* (New Haven: Yale UP; Paris: PUF, 1954), p. 38. Stendhal's unrelenting insistence on the *conditional* tense in relation to his protagonists is never better illustrated than in Julien Sorel's reflections in his prison cell. 'Mais aussi, quelle perspective!... Colonel de hussards, si nous avons la guerre; secrétaire de légation pendant la paix; ensuite ambassadeur... car bientôt j'aurais su les affaires..., et quand je n'aurais été qu'un sot, le gendre du marquis de La Mole a-t-il quelque rivalité à craindre? Toutes mes sottises eussent été pardonnées, ou plutôt comptées pour des mérites. Homme de mérite, et jouissant de la plus grande existence à Vienne ou à Londres...' (*Romans*, I, 677). The authorial

intervention on the question of Julien's destiny is instructive too: '[...] l'âge lui eût donné la bonté facile à s'attendrir, il se fût guéri d'une méfiance folle... Mais à quoi bon ces vaines prédictions?' (*Ibid.*, I, 654). Julien's adult life ends thus as it has begun: on a hypothetical footing. What he *might become* is translated in the end into what he *might have been*.

226. See V. Brombert, 'Stendhal, Analyst or Amorisit?', *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 161.
227. *Op. cit.*, p. 70. Cf. Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, pp. 174-175.
228. Introduction, *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 2.
229. See I. Howe's assertion (p. 77) that the French Revolution, for all its ambiguous treatment in Stendhal's hands, provides the 'dominant force' in his novels.
230. *M de T*, I, 132-133. See in the same vein *ibid.*, II, 430: 'Tel jeune homme, qui eût été sous-préfet à Hambourg ou à Rome, fait des articles pour les *Revues*.'
231. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 6, p. 110.
232. *Mém sur Nap.*, 65. Cf. the portrait of Murat in *De l'Amour*, I, 225-226.
233. Brombert, 'Stendhal, Analyst or Amorisit?', p. 161.
234. *Op. cit.*, p. 445.
235. *Op. cit.*, pt. I, p. 64. See also Auerbach, pp. 454-458.
236. *Corr*, I, 193.
237. Wood, p. 57.
238. Snow, p. 32.
239. *Romans*, I, 974.
240. *Ibid.*, I, 944.
241. *Ibid.*, I, 367.
242. See, for example, the notebook entry of 23 July 1804 in which he recalls: '[...] quand je lisais la vie de S[ain]t-Preux, de Brutus, de Gracchus, d'Othello, d'Henri V, je me disais: à leur place j'en aurais fait autant, et je repassais celles de mes actions qui par leur motif ressemblaient aux leurs' (*JL*, II, 39).
243. *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
244. *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 24.
245. *Corr*, I, 309.
246. *Ibid.*, I, 61.
247. *JL*, I, 155.
248. *Italie*, 885.

249. *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, p. 84.
250. *HB*, I, 3. Cf. the first words of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* (I, 3): 'Je vais dire ce que j'ai fait, ou plutôt ce qu'on a fait de moi, depuis trente-quatre ans que je suis dans ce monde.'
251. *Romans*, I, 706.
252. *Ibid.*, I, 707, 712.
253. See on this question G. Durand, *Le Décor mythique de La Chartreuse de Parme: les structures figuratives du roman stendhalien* (Paris: Corti, 1961), pp. 31-33; Adams, pp. 72-73.
254. *Op. cit.*, pt. I, p. 65. Environment, Turnell concludes, 'does not determine a man's *character*, but it does determine his *fate*.'
255. *Romans*, I, 235.
256. Julien's ambition, as we learn elsewhere, is quite *natural*: he is ambitious not through choice, but because 'la délicatesse de son cœur lui fait un besoin de quelques-unes des jouissances que donne l'argent' (*Ibid.*, I, 252). We will be reminded by Stendhal of the 'organisation délicate' of which Julien's character is a function (*Ibid.*, I, 403), and of the acute sensibility which, we are told, is 'une fatalité de son caractère' (*Ibid.*, I, 531, 414).
257. V. Brombert is one of the few critics to recognise the full importance of the conditional mood in Stendhal's autobiographical writings and novels alike. See *Stendhal et la voie oblique*, pp. 35-44; *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, pp. 22, 25-26. See also on this question the pertinent observation of F.W.J. Hemmings: 'Stendhal ne tarit pas, dans la *Vie de Henry Brulard*, sur ce qu'il n'est *pas* devenu...' ("Est-il bon, est-il méchant?" Les catégories morales dans la *Vie de Henry Brulard*, *Stendhal et les problèmes de l'autobiographie. Actes du colloque interuniversitaire (avril 1974)* ed. V. del Litto [Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1976], p. 51).
258. This is a point which is brought out with some insistence in a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 30 January 1803. Vaucanson, Shakespeare, Molière and Milton, argues Stendhal, owe their genius and renown to the conspiracy of apparently inconsequential circumstances through which each came to exercise his talents (*Corr*, I, 51-52).
259. See, among many examples in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, I, 235, 237, 278, 281-282, 293; II, 74-75, 210.
260. *Ibid.*, I, 282.
261. *Ibid.*, II, 3-4.
262. *Ibid.*, I, 280.
263. *Romans*, II, 95.
264. *Ibid.*, I, 620.
265. *Ibid.*, I, 270.
266. See the discussion of this question in Tenenbaum.
267. *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, p. 83. On this

- intractable question of reconciling 'les exigences de la liberté et l'apparence d'un ordre inéluctable', see *ibid.*, pp. 81-84.
268. *Roman*, pp. 106-107. See also *ibid.*, pp. 182-185.
269. Tracy, *Elémens d'idéologie*, vol. I: *Idéologie proprement dite*, ch. 5, p. 46.
270. *Ibid.*, vol. V: *Traité de la volonté et de ses effets*, Introduction, pp. 42-43. See the discussion of Tracy's theory of the will in Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 78-84.
271. *Rapports*, p. 515.
272. *Ibid.*, p. 580.
273. Introduction to Cailliet, p. 16.
274. 'Fort heureusement, l'auteur du *Rouge*, bien qu'il soit resté fidèle à l'habitude de poser le héros avant ses aventures, ne l'a point asservi à ce déterminisme: il est clair même que, si ses créatures montrent tant de ressort, elles le doivent aussi peu à l'adresse d'un ingénieur qu'à la vigueur d'une dialectique, le tenant exclusivement de ce que devant nous elles sont restées libres' (*Roman*, p. 185).
275. E.B. Tenenbaum (p. 27), seeking likewise to account for the disparity between philosophical theory and novelistic practice, distinguishes in Stendhal 'two conflicting attitudes toward conscious volition and two contradictory definitions of the self.' Stendhal, Tenenbaum argues, 'emphasizes the role of environment in the formation of personality yet repeatedly creates protagonists who transcend all cultural norms; and he admires with equal intensity wholehearted acquiescence to impulse and vigorous assertion of the will.'
276. *La Vie littéraire de Stendhal*, pp. 176-177.
277. On the 'subtle interplay of necessity and gratuity' in Stendhal, see Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, pp. 24-26.
278. *Roman*, p. 106.
279. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107 n. 4.
280. *Romans*, I, 266.
281. *Roman*, pp. 106-107 n. 4.
282. See *OI*, I, 1058-1072. For Stendhal's contributions to this text and the fate of the manuscript, see V. del Litto, *ibid.*, I, 1617-1623 nn.
283. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 242-243. In the scene between Julien and Mme de Rênal in the garden at Verger, Zola recognises that Julien's single-minded purpose makes him impervious to the vagaries of the environment. Mme de Rênal, on the other hand, 'devrait subir toutes les influences extérieures.' He concludes: 'Donnez l'épisode à un écrivain pour qui les milieux existent, et dans la défaite de cette femme, il fera entrer la nuit, avec ses odeurs, avec ses voix, avec ses voluptés molles. Et cet écrivain sera dans la vérité, son tableau sera plus complet' (*Ibid.*, p. 244).
284. *OI*, I, 1063-1064. Cf. *VHMM*, 393: 'La chaleur extrême, suivie, le soir, d'une fraîcheur qui rend tous les êtres respirants heureux, fait, de l'heure où l'on va au spectacle, le moment le plus agréable de la journée. Ce moment est, à peu près partout, entre neuf et dix heures du soir, c'est-à-dire quatre heures au

moins après le dîner.'

285. *Romans*, I, 940, 942.
286. *Ibid.*, I, 925-926. Cf. *La Chartreuse de Parme*: 'Par malheur pour le comte, ce soir-là le temps était chaud, étouffé, annonçant la tempête; de ces temps, en un mot, qui, dans ces pays-là, portent aux résolutions extrêmes' (*Ibid.*, II, 154).
287. *Op. cit.*, p. 162.
288. *Romans*, I, 930.
289. *Ibid.*, I, 966.
290. *Ibid.*, I, 966-968.
291. *Ibid.*, I, 967.
292. *Ibid.*, I, 73.
293. *Ibid.*, I, 111.
294. *Ibid.*, II, 437.
295. *Ibid.*, I, 246.
296. *Ibid.*, I, 268, 279, 280, 292.
297. *Ibid.*, I, 282.
298. *Ibid.*, I, 291. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 281.
299. *Ibid.*, I, 267, 278.
300. *Ibid.*, I, 279.
301. *Ibid.*, I, 1035.
302. 'Dès qu'[Octave] était heureux, une sorte d'instinct le portait à se mêler avec les hommes' (*Ibid.*, I, 84); 'Cet instinct de bien-être qui existe toujours chez l'homme [...] fit qu'Octave voulut comme s'empêcher de penser' (*Ibid.*, I, 116); '...[Julien] fut trahi par une irruption soudaine du feu qui dévorait son âme' (*Ibid.*, I, 239); 'Par une fatalité du caractère de Julien, l'insolence de ces êtres grossiers lui avait fait beaucoup de peine' (*Ibid.*, I, 414); 'C'était une fatalité de son caractère d'être extrêmement sensible à ses fautes' (*Ibid.*, I, 531); '[...] la raison n'avait plus aucun empire sur ses actions. Un instinct aveugle le poussait à retarder la décision de son sort' (*Ibid.*, I, 565).
303. *Ibid.*, II, 292.
304. *Ibid.*, I, 1045.
305. *Ibid.*, I, 1019.
306. *Ibid.*, I, 1533 n. See on this point Bardèche, pp. 286-287; Genette, p. 169.
307. *Rapports*, p. 290.
308. *Op. cit.*, p. 287. It is this, too, which was to stir the exasperation of Zola, who writes of Stendhal's characters: 'Quand je le lis, je souffre pour eux, j'ai

souvent envie de lui crier: "Par grâce, laissez-les donc un peu tranquilles; laissez-les quelque fois vivre de la bonne vie des bêtes, simplement dans la poussée de l'instinct, au milieu de la saine nature..." (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 250).

309. See, for example, *Romans*, I, 1007-1008: 'Il est très vrai que dans sa lutte désespérée contre le sentiment qu'elle avait pour Leuwen, madame de Chasteller, mécontente du peu de confiance qu'elle pouvait avoir dans ses résolutions les plus arrêtées, était souvent irritée contre elle-même...'
310. *Ibid.*, I, 1366-1367.
311. *Ibid.*, I, 1583 n.
312. *Ibid.*, I, 1369.
313. *Ibid.*, I, 1584 n. On the significance of these examples for Stendhal's conception of love, see P. Berthier, *Stendhal et la sainte famille* (Geneva: Droz, 1983), pp. 219-220.
314. *Romans*, I, 225.
315. *Ibid.*, I, 56.
316. *Ibid.*, I, 1438 n.
317. *Ibid.*, I, 377.
318. *Ibid.*, I, 441.
319. *Ibid.*, I, 90.
320. See the 'Projet d'article', *Romans*, I, 708.
321. *Ibid.*, I, 709: '[...] Mme de Rênal découvre qu'elle a de l'amour pour Julien, elle se fait horreur à elle-même.'
322. *Ibid.*, I, 75.
323. *Ibid.*, I, 1009. Compare once again Octave in *Armance*: 'Un mouvement instinctif le précipita vers le château' (*Ibid.*, I, 117).
324. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
325. *Stendhal: A Study of his Novels*, p. 118.
326. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 255.
327. *Romans*, I, 692.
328. *Op. cit.*, p. 22.
329. See Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 36-106.
330. *Op. cit.*, p. 396.
331. *An Age of Crisis*, p. 73.
332. For the criticisms levelled against Helvétius in this respect, see Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 67, 77, 165-166, 181-182.

333. Stendhal makes Virgil's axiom the very centre-piece of his philosophy of human motivation. See the elaborate defence of this principle which he commits to paper in 1829: *JL*, III, 178-186. See also *ibid.*, I, 174; III, 335; *De l'Amour*, II, 172.
334. *Corr*, I, 353-354.
335. *HB*, II, 241. Cf. in this context Stendhal's criticisms of Rousseau: *Corr*, I, 128, 161-162, 219, 281.
336. See *op. cit.*, pp. 236-242.
337. On Stendhal's relations with Cuvier, de Jussieu and other natural scientists of the day, see Théodoridès, 'Les relations de Stendhal et de Cuvier'; 'Stendhal et les savants de son temps'; *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 88-91, 240-241 et *passim*.
338. *M de T*, II, 26.
339. *Loc. cit.*
340. *Ibid.*, II, 27.
341. *Ibid.*, II, 175.
342. *Romans*, I, 891.
343. *HB*, I, 238.
344. *Loc. cit.*, n. 2.
345. *Ibid.*, I, 31.
346. See Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, p. 99. The three animal images applied to Du Poirier occur, curiously, within the space of a few lines. See *Romans*, I, 848.
347. 'Les métaphores animales dans *Le Père Goriot*', *L'Année Balzacienne* (Paris: Garnier, 1963), p. 95.
348. *Romans*, I, 707.
349. *R et S*, 109.
350. *Corr*, I, 1017.
351. *Romans*, I, 690.
352. See Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 242-246. 'Il est donc évident,' writes F.W.J. Hemmings, 'que Zola est resté toute sa vie d'homme sous le charme de Stendhal, et non moins évident qu'il a continué, de longues années, à lutter contre ce charme' ('Zola pour ou contre Stendhal?', p. 111). See in this regard the assessment of *La Chartreuse de Parme* which appears in Zola's journal of 1898: 'C'est un livre bien extraordinaire qu'il me semble lire pour la première fois. Je l'avais sans doute mal lu jadis. Il éveille en moi tout un monde d'admiration et d'objections' (Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 234).
353. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, p. 241.

354. There persists to the end, as F.W.J. Hemmings points out, a fundamental misunderstanding 'entre le naturalisme zolien et le réalisme stendhalien' ('Stendhal relu par Zola au temps de "l'Affaire"', *Stendhal Club*, 4^e année, no. 16 [1962], p. 309).
355. Cited by Hemmings, 'Zola pour ou contre Stendhal?', p. 110.
356. *Loc. cit.*
357. *Raison*, p. 594.
358. 'Stendhal et l'énergie: du Moi à la Poétique', *Romantisme*, 14^e année, no. 46 (1984), p. 63. The sense in which Crouzet employs the term 'nature' here is elucidated by his study of Stendhal's Italy. 'La nature qui calcine les êtres et les consume agit comme une fatalité, une révélation intérieure; ce fameux "ressort" en termes beylistes, est bien au fond du Moi la grande force féconde, et pure, l'essence précieuse...' (*Stendhal et l'Italianité*, p. 47).
359. 'Stendhal et l'énergie: du Moi à la Poétique', p. 63 n. 7.
360. Witness the assessments of A. Chuquet (pp. 218, 220) and E. Faguet (p. 15), who define Stendhalian energy as 'la violence', 'la propension au sang, la sauvagerie, la férocité', 'le sang qui monte au cerveau et qui force à tuer avec un accès sauvage de joie folle.'
361. The early notebooks in which Stendhal airs his aspirations as a would-be dramatist are instructive in this regard. For his success was to be achieved, as he declares in July 1804, 'en brisant les fausses vertus qui retiennent nos passions. Tous les plaisirs qui ne nuisent point aux autres hommes. Les femmes, par exemple. Eh! ayez des sérails de filles et de garçons et détrônez les tyrans. Faire aussi l'échelle des vertus suivant leur utilité...' (*JL*, I, 473).
362. *Op. cit.*, p. 132. Cf. May, 'Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', p. 269.
363. *M de T*, II, 136. On this question, see below, Chapter X.
364. See on this question J.G. Shields, "'Si fata sinant" ou la vertu de la virtualité chez Stendhal', *Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, no. 110 (1986), pp. 121-133.
365. *The Geometric Spirit*, p. 114.
366. 'On the one hand, they stressed the role of social engineering, the possibility of using education, public opinion, the laws and punishments to 'modify' the man who was unfortunately born in order to coerce him into becoming a useful member of society. On the other hand, they rehabilitated the passions, protesting against Christian asceticism and the miseries to which its inhibitions gave rise, and representing the passions not simply as the motive force of acts of benevolence, but as the sign of a healthy material organism.' ('French Thought in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Charlton, *France: A Companion to French Studies*, p. 234).
367. *Italie*, 239.
368. *M de T*, II, 481-482.
369. 'Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', p. 269. The counterpoint to Rousseau in Stendhal's world-view is in this sense, of course, Helvétius.
370. See the discussion of *De l'Amour* in Chapter VIII below, and the constant

comparisons between Italy and France which are to be found in Stendhal on the theme of '*le naturel*'.

371. The complexity of Stendhal's thought on this question is recognised by J.-C. Rioux in his article 'L'énergie au pouvoir ou le bon usage de la peine de mort selon Stendhal', *Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, no. 112 (1986), pp. 281-306. On the subtle and difficult relationship between 'liberty' and 'order' in Stendhal, see C.W. Thompson, *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, pp. 21-25 et *passim*.
372. *H de P*, II, 34-35.
373. *Ibid.*, II, 43. Stendhal's remarks here recall Saint-Lambert, whose *Saisons* he had read in 1803 (see *JL*, I, 221; Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, p. 45), and who makes the arresting assertion: 'Des grands crimes dont l'histoire fait mention, la plupart ont été commis dans le temps des fortes gelées' (cited by Mauzi, p. 321).
374. See *H de P*, II, 443-444 n. See also on this question Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. II, p. 100.
375. *Italie*, 1099. One can compare Lucien Leuwen, of whom Stendhal writes: '[...] une journée de vent du nord avec des nuages sombres [...] suffisait pour en faire un autre homme' (*Romans*, I, 1362).
376. *Italie*, 81, 237. See Cabanis's stark conclusion regarding the relativity of 'moral man' and his dependence on climatic conditions: 'L'homme physique des climats glacés ne ressemble point à celui des régions équatoriales: l'homme moral des uns n'est pas celui des autres' (*Rapports*, p. 349). Cf. the caricatural determinism which is evoked by Stendhal in his portrait of the sculptor: '[...] si le ciel l'a fait naître sous un climat brûlant, il aura des extases, créera des chefs-d'oeuvre, et mourra à moitié fou, au milieu de sa carrière' (*H de P*, II, 31).
377. *H de P*, I, 173. Cf. *Romans*, II, 711: 'L'amour est-il le même à Marseille et à Paris?'
378. *H de P*, II, 30.
379. *Italie*, 741. More noteworthy still, as a measure of the relationship between Nature, physiology and aesthetic sensibility, is the question which we cited in an earlier chapter and which appears among Stendhal's notes for a revised edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*: 'Comment juger de la vraie couleur des objets à travers une lunette dont les verres changent de couleur suivant le temps qu'il fait ou le nombre de tasses de café que vous avez prises?' (*Ibid.*, 248).
380. *Ibid.*, 1660 n.
381. 'L'homme du Midi, dans son inaction musculaire, se trouve incessamment ramené à la méditation' (*H de P*, II, 79). In the 'Huitième Mémoire' of the *Rapports* (pp. 348-349), Cabanis signals 'le goût du repos et le genre de vie indolente, inspirés par le sentiment habituel de la faiblesse et par l'impossibilité d'agir sans une extrême fatigue au milieu d'un air embrasé', which characterise the inhabitants of hot climates. The same conditions, affirms Cabanis, 'nourrissent les penchants contemplatifs et donnent naissance à tous les écarts des imaginations mélancoliques et passionnées.' Cf. *Italie*, 1053: 'Le sentiment des beaux-arts ne peut se former sans l'habitude d'une rêverie un peu mélancolique'; *ibid.*, 1088: 'Il faut pour les arts des gens un peu mélancoliques

- et malheureux'; *ibid.*, 138: 'Comment peindre cette émotion! Il faut aimer les arts, il faut aimer et être malheureux.'
382. *Italie*, 448.
383. *OI*, II, 390.
384. *Italie*, 1260. Cf. Cabanis's contention that 'l'application continuelle de la chaleur' serves to 'énerver sans cesse de plus en plus les organes musculaires' (*Rapports*, p. 348).
385. *Corr*, I, 893. One can contrast this statement with the effect which Stendhal had undergone in Brunswick, where he had written in 1808: 'le climat seul me donne de l'humeur de temps en temps' (*OI*, I, 489).
386. *Italie*, 945. In this vision of an all-embracing and pervasive natural environment, Stendhal is close to what G. Lanson describes as the vision of Montesquieu: 'il met les *nerfs* à la place des *passions de l'âme*: il baigne les individus dans les milieux qui les forment et les déforment' (cited by King, p. 78).
387. Talbot, *La Critique stendhalienne*, pp. 242, 240. See on this point King, pp. 125-126.
388. Crude and superficial though Stendhal's reference points may be, his debt to the intellectual and scientific climate of his day on such matters is beyond question. On the preponderant role of the nervous system in the physiology of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see K.M. Figlio, 'Theories of Perception and the Physiology of Mind in the Late Eighteenth Century', *History of Science*, vol. XII (1975), pp. 177-212. See also on this question M.A.B. Brazier, 'Rise of Neurophysiology in the 19th Century', *Journal of Neurophysiology*, vol. XX, no. 2 (1957), pp. 212-226.
389. *Italie*, 920.
390. *Romans*, I, 1402. Cf. the brief but significant diary entries: '2 avril 1829, tempête, nerfs, Azur' (*OI*, II, 105); 'Tramontane, des nerfs' (*Ibid.*, II, 268). See also Stendhal's diary of 11 June 1840, where we read: 'Orage au nord qui me bat les nerfs et m'empêche de porter *Old Mortality* to Earline' (*Ibid.*, II, 391).
391. *Romans*, I, 1362.
392. *M de T*, I, 298. The role of nerves in the human economy, however simplistically conceived by Stendhal, is important. See on this question Bosselaers, *Le Cas Stendhal*, pp. 164-165. In a letter of 20 October 1816 to Louis Crozet, Stendhal, then engaged in the writing of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, laments: 'un accès de nerfs par excès d'attention pour *Michel-Ange* me force à sauter la moitié de mes idées' (*Corr*, I, 831). In a subsequent letter to Crozet, the point is reinforced. 'Le trop d'attention pour *Michel[-Ange]* m'a donné des nerfs si forts que depuis dix jours je n'ai presque rien pu faire' (*Ibid.*, I, 838). It is notable that a similar role is ascribed to the nerves by Cabanis, who devotes considerable attention to the vital function of the nervous system in conveying sense-impressions to the brain. 'Ainsi donc ce sont bien véritablement les nerfs qui sentent; et c'est dans le cerveau, dans la moelle allongée, et vraisemblablement aussi dans la moelle épinière, que l'individu perçoit les sensations' (*Rapports*, p. 90). The nervous system, argues Cabanis in his memoir on the temperaments, thus provides a key to the functioning of the human economy, 'recevant par ses extrémités sentantes les impressions en vertu desquelles il réagit ensuite sur les organes moteurs pour leur faire produire

- les mouvements et exécuter les fonctions' (*Ibid.*, p. 265).
393. *Stendhal Club*, 8^e année, no. 32 (1965-66), pp. 281-324.
394. *OI*, I, 446.
395. *Ibid.*, I, 514.
396. *Ibid.*, I, 504.
397. *Ibid.*, I, 544.
398. *Ibid.*, I, 386.
399. *Ibid.*, I, 675, 627.
400. *M de T*, I, 119.
401. *OI*, II, 231-232. Cf. *Ibid.*, II, 90: 'Grand soulagement nerveux par le *bath*.'
402. Volney, whom Stendhal early read and admired, held that it was only through a knowledge of 'les vents, les pluies, les météores, le climat, etc.' that one could graduate to 'la science de gouverner, d'organiser un corps social, de faire des constitutions' (cited by Plongeron, p. 398). This was also, of course, one of the central implications of Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des lois*. On Stendhal's reading of Volney and Montesquieu, see Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 348-361; 85, 128, 346, 485.
403. *CA*, II, 283.
404. *Italie*, 349.
405. *H de P*, I, 264.
406. *Italie*, 198. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 47: 'le principe des sciences morales, et par conséquent ces sciences elles-mêmes, rentreraient dans le domaine de la physique; elles ne seraient plus qu'une branche de l'histoire naturelle de l'homme.' The view that morals could be thus treated as a *science* was characteristic of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues* alike. It is instructive to compare Helvétius in the preface to *De l'Esprit* (vol. I, p. ii): 'J'ai cru qu'on devoit traiter la morale comme toutes les autres sciences, & faire une morale comme une physique expérimentale.'
407. *CA*, II, 172-173. Cf. Volney's definition of History as 'la science physiologique des gouvernemens' (cited by Van Duzer, p. 123). The Ecoles Centrales, as R.R. Palmer observes, sought to promote history as 'a series of moral and political experiments for the use of posterity' (*The Improvement of Humanity*, p. 256).
408. *Italie*, 238-239.
409. *Raison*, p. 335.
410. *H de P*, II, 35.
411. *Introduction à l'Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, p. 46.
412. *H de P*, II, 123 n. 1.
413. See *Italie*, 1440-1443.

414. *Ibid.*, 1444 n.
415. *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224.
416. See Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 347: 'On ne peut douter que la chaleur ne soit un excitant direct; et si le froid, sédatif et débilitant par sa nature, produit souvent des effets tout contraires, ces effets ne sont évidemment dus qu'à la réaction des organes vivants; et ils se proportionnent toujours à l'énergie qui la caractérise dans chaque cas particulier.'
417. *JL*, III, 20, 386 n. For applications of Cabanis's theories in the *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase* and the *Vie de Rossini*, see Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 104, 183-184.
418. *Rapports*, p. 115.
419. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
420. 'D'une définition Stendhal fait un livre. La critique artistique se réduit pour lui à l'utilisation d'une philosophie matérialiste' (*Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 109). To conclude as much is, as we saw in Chapter IV, to present only *one* aspect, however compelling, of Stendhal's thought. See also on this question Delacroix, pp. 188-189.
421. An indication of the importance of this date for Stendhal's conception of Italy may be had from Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 3, 7, 44, 173, 189, 245, 349.
422. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 134.
423. Though M. Crouzet recognises the substantial element of *invention* in Stendhal's Italy (*Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 2, 6, 10, 18), he does not accredit Cabanis with any clearly defined influence in this respect..
424. *OI*, I, 656-657. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 721: 'Le but de mon voyage [...] est uniquement de connaître les hommes.'
425. *JL*, II, 316.
426. See, for example, *OI*, I, 717-718, 720, 736-737, 738-739, 756, 764, 766, 781, 815, 835, 864; *Corr*, I, 616, 621-622, 649; *JL*, III, 20-23.
427. *Corr*, I, 616.
428. *OI*, I, 736-737.
429. *Corr*, I, 616.
430. *OI*, I, 764. Writing to Pauline in July 1812, Stendhal would claim again of Italy: 'ce pays est d'accord avec mon caractère' (*Corr*, I, 649). In 1818, amid his notes for a second edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, he will write: 'j'ai regret de n'être pas né en Italie' (*Italie*, 275).
431. *Stendhal et l'italianité*, p. 9.
432. *OI*, I, 720.
433. *Ibid.*, I, 766.

434. *HB*, II, 256. The fancy is pursued in this instance with reference to various members of his family who have what Stendhal deems Latin features. On this imaginary filiation, see Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 1-18.
435. *OI*, I, 881. See the note consigned by Stendhal to a copy of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*: 'Je m'aperçois à mon grand étonnement, writing to Viganò, que je pense en italien; je revêts de couleurs italiennes ma pensée' (*Italie*, 1409 n.). On this and related remarks, see K. Ringger, "'Je pense en italien": le symbolisme de l'italien dans le discours stendhalien', *Le Symbolisme stendhalien (Actes du colloque universitaire de Nantes, 21-22 octobre 1983)*, ed. J.-C. Rioux (Nantes: Editions Arts-Cultures-Loisirs, 1986), pp. 51-65.
436. *Corr*, I, 13.
437. *Ibid.*, I, 14. A subsequent letter to Pauline, written in faltering Italian, is scarcely warmer in its appreciation of Italy and her inhabitants. Cursing what he calls 'questo maladetto Paese', Stendhal declares: 'Il mio piu grande desiderio e de lo fugire si lontano que senta mai il suo nome vituperato' (*Ibid.*, I, 15). On these early impressions of Italy, see Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. II, pp. 140-144.
438. Cf. *OI*, I, 180.
439. On Stendhal's early experience of Italy, see C. Dédéyan, *L'Italie dans l'œuvre romanesque de Stendhal* (Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1963), vol. I, pp. 15-20. See also Brombert, 'Stendhal lecteur de Rousseau', pp. 465, 466.
440. *Op. cit.*, p. 226.
441. *OI*, I, 825.
442. *Corr*, I, 621-622.
443. *H de P*, II, 149.
444. See *JL*, III, 20, 386 n. On the natural factors — the 'mille choses de détail' — which conspire to make Italy the *locus* of musical sensibility, see *VHMM*, 393.
445. *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, p. 113.
446. Though the one signifies an *external*, the other an *internal* force, climate and physiology are at bottom indissociable for Stendhal. 'Le climat forme les tempéraments,' he declares in the margin of Destutt de Tracy's *Commentaire sur "l'Esprit des lois" de Montesquieu* (*JL*, III, 374).
447. *Corr*, I, 621.
448. *Italie*, 500.
449. *Op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

CHAPTER VIII

ENERGY: THE PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTOR

The Avatars of Energy

The portrait of the Italian peasant with which we closed the preceding chapter suggests that 'quality of soul' which we have come to associate with Stendhal's concept of energy, that 'principe supérieur de toute vie' which Henri Delacroix, in his informed study, perceives as the essence of Stendhalian energy. While attempting to define what Stendhal understood by 'energy', however, Delacroix recognises the difficulty of assigning a definitive value to the term. 'L'idée d'Energie,' he writes, 'apparaît ainsi comme une idée souple et élastique capable de bien des flexions, de bien des raffinements, de bien des transformations.' The term 'energy', as Stendhal employs it, Delacroix concludes, can be reduced to no single concept, but must be seen as the point where various domains of the author's thought — 'spéculation, biologie, art, psychologie, histoire' — converge.¹

Some seventy years on from the publication of Delacroix's study, the problem of interpreting Stendhal's concept of energy remains. In a recent article, Michel Crouzet has shown just how mercurial is the term 'énergie' in Stendhal's hands. It is, Crouzet argues, a 'signifiant flottant', at once 'approximatif' and 'insituable'.² The meanings that can be assigned to the term, as Crouzet observes, carry it well beyond the range not only of any single definition but of any given semantic field. Energy can be moral, aesthetic, passionate, rational, rhetorical, sexual, and more. In a paper delivered to the 1987 Conference of the Society for French Studies, C.W. Thompson likewise explores a number of the avatars of Stendhalian energy and concludes that the author's exploration of the notion is a great deal richer and more complex than has generally been appreciated. In signalling the work that remains to be done on this question, Thompson argues for no all-embracing definition of energy, but recognises instead Stendhal's tendency 'to stress the affinities between all sorts of energies and their convertibility one to another, whatever their origin or form, whether climatic, racial, social, emotional, physiological or artistic.'³

This shifting, elusive quality of 'energy' accounts in some measure perhaps for the divergence among critics who have sought to identify the point when Stendhal 'discovered' his concept. Victor del Litto, J.-C. Alciatore and Francine Marill Albères trace Stendhal's notion of energy to his early readings of Alfieri, Helvétius and Tracy

respectively.⁴ The same notion of energy, according to Maurice Bardèche, dates from Stendhal's discovery of Renaissance Italy around 1811.⁵ For Paul Arbelet, by contrast, Stendhal's concept of energy takes root in his earliest admiration for the heroes of Ancient Rome; for W.H. Fineshriber, it is an ideal fashioned from the reading of Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*; for Alain Chantreau, it remains a product of imagination diffused through Stendhal's childhood memories as we find them recorded in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*.⁶

The exercise in which each of these critics in turn engages seems a futile one. There is no clearly documented *point* at which Stendhal can be said to have 'discovered' energy; nor is there a particular moment after which the term is employed with any single and consistent meaning. What is clear is that the term and its cognates are used early by Stendhal in a rhetorical sense, to denote a particular literary style and vigour of expression.⁷ Energy as a quality of 'soul', an indefinable inner fibre, is also in evidence from the earliest. There exists an 'énergie de la passion'⁸ which, Stendhal asserts in July 1803, is the 'qualité *sine qua non* genius.'⁹ Prudence, on the other hand, is deemed a 'vertu des âmes sans énergie.'¹⁰ As an aspiring dramatist, Stendhal reflects that he must be able to 'présenter ses caractères dans leurs maximum et minimum d'énergie.'¹¹ Nor does he pass up the opportunity to sound in himself the quality which he is seeking to portray in others. In his own character, as a diary entry of 14 January 1805 reveals, the young Stendhal discerns an 'énergie' which, with his frankness and his republican principles, as he puts it, 'me font croire un Machiavel par les âmes faibles telles que mon oncle.'¹²

This contrast between the 'âme faible' and the resolute — energetic — spirit was, of course, to be a standard feature of Stendhal's repertoire. In his lexicon, energy becomes 'la force', 'la force d'âme', 'la force de l'âme', 'la force du ressort', 'la force des passions', 'la force de volonté', 'la force de vouloir', 'la force de caractère'.¹³ For all his insistence on this notion, however, Stendhal recognised the ambiguities inherent in the term 'force'. In the revised edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, he attempts expressly to clarify his meaning: 'J'aime la force, et de la force que j'aime, une fourmi peut en montrer autant qu'un éléphant.'¹⁴ This simple statement, whose significance has been overlooked in much of the discussion of energy in Stendhal,¹⁵ should be read in conjunction with a note drafted for inclusion in the same revised edition. 'Personne,' Stendhal affirms, 'ne s'avise de demander si Napoléon ou Frédéric II surent bien appliquer un coup de sabre':

La force que nous admirons, c'est celle de Napoléon visitant l'hôpital de Jaffa, ou s'avancant avec simplicité vers le premier bataillon des troupes royales, sur les bords du lac de Laffrey (mars 1815); c'est la force de l'âme.¹⁶

There is apparent in both of these examples a clear attempt by Stendhal to sanitise the notion of 'force', to disengage the term from its more brutish and reprehensible associations. The same is true of yet another note which one finds among Stendhal's revisions of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, and in which a revealing parallel is drawn between two ostensibly very different types of energy:

Dans le genre de l'*opera buffa* comme dans le genre des batailles la seule qualité essentielle au grand homme, c'est la *force*. Au fond du génie de Cimarosa et de Napoléon on trouve une qualité commune, c'est la *force*. Dans un cas l'âme doit mettre sa force à sentir, dans l'autre à agir sur les environnants.¹⁷

This insistence on energy as a vital force, a sort of 'grace' bestowed upon an elect, while it is consonant with Stendhal's notion of the 'happy few', has much that is redolent, too, of the romantic cult of energy as it is to be found in Benjamin Constant or Mme de Staël. Of 'energy' in the romantic sense, and in the particular sense in which it is construed by the Coppet circle, Anne-Marie Jaton writes:

Madame de Staël la définit précisément comme la *force morale* que l'homme peut opposer à la force physique; l'énergie apparaît comme une qualité intérieure de l'être qui définit l'âme et caractérise le moi profond.¹⁸

Jaton's remarks resonate with those of Michel Delon, who, in his article 'La théorie de l'énergie à Coppet', likewise defines energy as 'la force morale que l'homme peut opposer aux forces physiques.' The 'energy' of Staël and Constant is an "'énergie de l'âme'", an "'énergie intérieure'" free of all material connotation, residing in and emanating from a 'dynamisme fondamental de l'âme.' Of energy thus defined, Delon writes: 'Spiritualisme et moralisme se conjuguent pour en faire la force d'âme en combat permanent avec les contraintes physiques ou politiques.'¹⁹

As it may be related in turn to Stendhal, this clean division between the physical and moral worlds poses a problem. It is a problem, moreover, which has never been addressed as such by Stendhal's critics. For if the apologists of energy *à la* Staël were selective in the energy which they extolled, if they cultivated admiration for one *type* of energy to the exclusion of others, Stendhal, for his part, embraces the concept in its unweildy totality. While the tendency of Staël and Constant was to view energy as a moral — indeed *spiritual* — force, the counterpoint to energy in any material or physical sense, the same energy for Stendhal had a decidedly physical dimension, taking its very source from the material world which, as Jaton and Delon argue, the Romantics were at pains to eschew.²⁰ The 'romantic' aspect of Stendhal's cult of energy is substantially tempered throughout by a philosophical principle which militates against just that division within energy — between *forcè morale* and *force physique* — which is evoked above.²¹ If 'energy' appears at the outset for Stendhal as an abstract

concept,²² much like 'passion' or 'character' as he early defines them, it becomes clear, through the reading of Cabanis, that there can be no *moral* expression of an energy that is not first present in *physical* form.²³ Energy need not expend itself in physical exploits; but, in its most elementary state, Stendhal would come to believe, it is the product of a given biochemical constitution and, as such, indissociable from the organism which serves as its seat.²⁴

i. Biological Energy

In his article 'Aux sources de l'énergie stendhalienne', Victor del Litto makes two surprising assertions. Commenting upon the infrequency with which Stendhal employs the term *énergie* before about 1816, he points to the presence of 'un seul exemple dans le journal de 1804.'²⁵ The fact is, however, that Stendhal's diary for that year yields a number of examples which, in conjunction with his notes and letters from the same period, throw light upon the diversity of his early use of the term.²⁶ The second of Del Litto's remarks is more curious still. 'Même dans *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*,' he affirms, 'le mot ne revient qu'à la dernière page du dernier chapitre: "La soif de l'*énergie* nous ramènera aux chefs-d'oeuvre de Michel-Ange..."'²⁷ This, however, is far from accurate. *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* provides, in truth, a whole range of instances in which the term *énergie*, and its cognate *énergique*, are used in the moral and aesthetic senses which we have so come to associate with Stendhal:

[...] l'on n'est pas plus vertueux qu'en 1500, mais moins énergique pour le mal comme pour le bien.

Je vois bien que l'énergie s'est réfugiée dans la classe de la société qui n'est pas polie.

A Rome, comme partout, l'énergie s'est réfugiée dans cette classe [ouvrière].

La poésie d'abord si énergique prit un raffinement affecté; tout devint persiflage, et de nos jours l'énergie eût souillé ses doigts de rose.

On est revenu à ces caractères qui animèrent les poèmes énergiques des premiers et rudes inventeurs, ou on est allé chercher des hommes semblables parmi les sauvages et les barbares.²⁸

For all their significance, the above give only a partial view of Stendhal's application of the concept of energy in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*. More notable still are those passages where, under the scarcely disguised ægis of Cabanis, he uses the term in a strictly *physiological* sense. Bile, we learn, is a highly active humour

which serves 'comme un levain énergétique' within the human economy: 'c'est le tempérament des hommes grands par les *actions*.'²⁹ The phlegmatic temperament, by contrast, is attended by '[des] organes de la génération et un foie qui manquent d'énergie...'³⁰ In the case of the melancholic, we read: 'Les extrémités nerveuses ont une sensibilité vive, les muscles sont très vigoureux, la vie s'exerce avec une énergie constante; mais elle s'exerce avec embarras, avec une sorte d'hésitation.'³¹ As for the nervous temperament, it evinces 'une grande énergie' in 'les opérations qui dépendent directement du cerveau.'³²

Physiological energy, whether by its presence or its absence, thus becomes one of the very touchstones of individual temperament and character. The significance of this fact has been greatly underestimated by Stendhal scholars. The tendency has been to dismiss Chapters XCII to C of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* as a more or less blatant plagiarism of Cabanis, and to conclude from this that they hold little interest other than by demonstrating Stendhal's often less than scrupulous method of exploiting his sources.³³ Paul Arbelet, in his extensive study of what Stendhal owes to others in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, writes of his debt to Cabanis:

Comme il importe assez peu que Beyle, dans cette incursion sur un domaine étranger, ait emprunté peu ou beaucoup, comme d'ailleurs nous ne saurions nous attendre à trouver en lui un physiologiste original ni un médecin compétent, nous ne croyons pas devoir étudier ces emprunts avec la même minutie que ceux faits par Beyle aux critiques d'art ou aux historiens. Quelques indications brèves suffiront.³⁴

Some brief indications are indeed all that Arbelet offers. Of the 500-plus pages which this study comprises, barely half a dozen are devoted to considering Stendhal's very substantial debt to Cabanis. Arbelet's rationale is worth citing, for it is representative of what we have seen to be the refusal by a considerable number of critics to accord any well defined place to Cabanis as a serious influence on Stendhal's thought. The evidence, however, is that, far from being incidental, the theories of Cabanis have a significance which is fundamental to Stendhal's philosophy as it is articulated in his earliest published writings. A glance at *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* confirms the whole new dimension of meaning which the term *énergie* had taken on for Stendhal, the essentially *physiological* character with which he had come by now to invest the notion.³⁵ In neither the moral nor the aesthetic realm is energy to be divorced here from its *physical* source.³⁶ We have seen already how the painter of Brutus must avoid the representation of a sanguinity that would belie his subject.³⁷ The role of the artist, we recall, is to portray 'par les formes de son personnage le caractère que ses organes le forcent à avoir.'³⁸ It is the logic of these remarks precisely that is embraced by Stendhal when he pursues the notion of 'energy' as a crucial factor in human nature and, *ipso facto*, a reality of which the artist must take cognisance:

Les apôtres du Guide, toujours sanguins et élégants, n'ont pas la profondeur et l'énergie de pensée qui sont ici de coutume.
Les plus grands peintres sont pleins de ces fautes-là; Cervantes et Shakespeare sont les seuls grands artistes du seizième siècle qui me paraissent avoir songé aux tempéraments.³⁹

It is by success or failure in thus depicting the outer signs of an inner energy that an artist's renown may hang. Guido Reni's predilection for the sanguin makes him ill-suited to satisfy the 'soif de l'énergie' which characterises the nineteenth century and which can be quenched, Stendhal concludes, only through recourse to the bilious, energetic subjects of Michaelangelo.⁴⁰ As of the painter, moreover, so of the historian. A true representation of human reality, in art or in life, must take account of the full range of relevant indices. By selecting cases from history, Stendhal suggests, one can locate those human 'sites' where temperament and energy converge, the one serving as a guide to the presence, type and degree of the other:

Il est probable, par exemple, que César n'était pas flegmatique, que Frédéric II n'était pas mélancolique, que François I^{er} était sanguin, et qu'un grand général qui aurait fait tant de bien, et qui a fait tant de mal à la France, était bilieux.⁴¹

The influence here of Stendhal's readings in physiology is beyond question. There is a suggestion, as early as January 1806, after Stendhal's second excursion into the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* and his first reading of Pinel,⁴² that he was already relating the notion of energy to a *physical* source. 'Trouver un emploi du temps utile pour les moments où l'on se sent sans énergie, dégoûté, ennuyé par tout,' he counsels his sister Pauline, enjoining her, as we saw in an earlier chapter, to pay particular attention to her diet on such occasions.⁴³ The remark might be less worthy of our attention were it not accompanied by a revealing diary entry dated the same day:

23 janvier, commencement d'énergie; je retrouve mon âme ardente, sombre, aimant le profond comique, colérique, allant avec force, volonté, impétuosité, au fond des pensées. Effet déterminé par une tasse d'excellent café pris chez Mme Cossonnier.⁴⁴

Here the whole moral disposition, the intellectual and artistic *élan* of the individual, is seen to hinge upon a single cup of coffee. For all the apparent extravagance of this idea, the association that is thus established between energy, diet and temperamental qualities recalls Cabanis's 'Huitième Mémoire' — '*De l'influence du régime sur les dispositions et les habitudes morales*' — and prefigures the remarks on diet which Stendhal will incorporate into *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* under the rubric '*Influence du régime*'.⁴⁵ In the wake of his further readings of Cabanis in 1811 and 1815,⁴⁶ Stendhal will develop and give sustained expression to the notion of energy as a physical, almost palpable entity. Hence the array of organic and pseudo-physiological terms and

concepts within which 'energy' comes to find its definition — and, ultimately, its legitimation — for Stendhal. 'Le feu', 'le phosphore', 'la bile', 'l'électricité', 'le magnétisme', 'le galvanisme', 'les nerfs', 'le fluide', 'le fluide nerveux', 'le fluide électrique':⁴⁷ all become part of the same 'discours énergétique' which, in the words of Michel Crouzet, '*physicalise l'âme, médicalise la morale, et établit l'énergie à l'intersection du fait biologique et du fait humain selon les modalités d'une économie quantitative.*'⁴⁸

Reflecting in *Rome, Naples et Florence* upon what distinguishes the spirited brigand from some lacklustre sub-prefect or mediocre army captain, Stendhal advances a provocative argument:

Maïno, voleur d'Alexandrie, a été l'un des hommes les plus remarquables de ce siècle, il ne lui manque que les quatre pages dans la *Biographie*, que le hasard accorde au plus plat sous-p.... . Mais qu'importe la vaine *notation* des hommes aux faits existant dans la nature? Nos ancêtres grossiers ne savaient pas voir l'électricité; en existait-elle moins pour cela? Un jour viendra qu'on admirera et *historiera* la grandeur de caractère, où elle se trouve.⁴⁹

Through the association that is established here between 'électricité' and 'grandeur de caractère', Stendhal suggests that the one as much as the other is an incontrovertible *fact of nature*. Biography, it is clear, must be approached with the same 'scientific' rigour, the same 'sérénité philosophique', as politics or history.⁵⁰ Artistic sensibility, too, is a domain in which the role of the scientist or physiologist would become ever clearer to Stendhal. 'La patrie de Voltaire, de Molière et de Courier est depuis longtemps la ville de l'esprit,' he will write in the *Promenades dans Rome*;

mais le pays entre la Loire, la Meuse et la mer ne peut sentir les beaux-arts. Pourquoi? il aime le *joli* et hait l'*énergie*.
D'où vient cette haine? Peut-être de ce que les nerfs sont montés sur un ton différent deux ou trois fois par jour par un climat trop inconstant.⁵¹

ii. Sexual Energy

Stendhal's insistence upon the term '*énergie*' in the latter instance, together with the clear correlation which he establishes between physiological predisposition and aesthetic sensibility, recall a passage penned a decade earlier, in March 1818, under the title 'Histoire de la poésie':

Pour des âmes efféminées, pour des âmes rouillées par l'étude du grec et rapetissées par la vie monotone du cabinet, et qui ne peuvent souffrir un vers énergique si elles n'y reconnaissent à l'instant une imitation d'Homère; pour de

telles âmes, dis-je, la mâle poésie de Shakespeare, qui montre sans détours les malheurs de la vie, est physiquement insupportable.⁵²

To suggest that any art, of whatever origin or type, may be *physically* unbearable for an audience is to carry to its extreme the idea that artistic sensibility takes root in no ethereal realm but in the body organic itself. What is more striking still in this passage is the clear association which Stendhal endorses between energy and *maleness* on the one hand, debility and *effeminacy* on the other. It is an association to which he has recourse on a number of occasions. 'Je ne conçois pas un homme,' he would declare in the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, 'sans un peu de mâle énergie, de constance et de profondeur dans les idées, etc.'⁵³ The equation is not sustained consistently throughout Stendhal's writings, in the sense that a number of the instances of energy which he cites feature females specifically.⁵⁴ It is true, nonetheless, that much of that same energy which is located in individuals of the female species is distinctly virile in character. 'Le ciel devait à la gloire de ta race de te faire naître homme,' declares Julien Sorel to Mathilde de la Mole.⁵⁵ The remark is in keeping with a division of qualities that is clearly discernible in Stendhal's treatment of the sexes. One need only cite the 'esprit mâle et vigoureux' which he wishes to inculcate in his sister Pauline, or the 'air dur, hautain et presque masculin' that will be exhibited by the same Mathilde de la Mole,⁵⁶ to conclude that the energetic woman is, in Stendhal's world, something of an aberration within her kind.

We draw attention to this because it is wholly consistent with Cabanis's contention that energy is the appurtenance of the male organism, while sensibility is the endowment of the female:

[...] dans l'économie animale il n'y a point d'impulsion énergétique toutes les fois que cette impulsion n'éprouve point de résistance: sa facilité même l'énerve et l'anéantit. Si l'énergie de réaction dépend de celle d'action, à son tour l'action s'entretient par la réaction qui lui succède, et qui devient pour elle un stimulant indispensable. Ainsi, tandis que chez l'homme la vigueur du système nerveux et celle du système musculaire s'accroissent l'une par l'autre, la femme sera plus sensible et plus mobile, parce que la contexture de tous ses organes est plus molle et plus faible, et que ces dispositions organiques primitives sont reproduites à chaque instant par la manière dont s'exerce chez elle la sensibilité.⁵⁷

This passage is noteworthy, for the *énergie* and *vigueur* which are expressly attributed by Cabanis to the male — and which, as terms, are charged with a wholly positive value for Stendhal — are the very counterpoints of the *mollesse* and *faiblesse* which the latter so disdained as attributes of character, and which are here represented as the natural appanage of women. For Cabanis, *la faiblesse*, with its consequent lack of *énergie*, was a defining feature of womanhood. By their nature, argued the physiologist, women are constrained to steer clear of matters which require 'une raison sévère et forte,' where 'l'accent du caractère et de l'énergie ajoute singulièrement à la

puissance de la raison.⁵⁸ Cabanis discourses upon the essential differences in the nature of men and women, drawing therefrom conclusions about the roles to which the respective sexes are suited. 'Il faut que l'homme soit fort, audacieux, entreprenant; que la femme soit faible, timide, dissimulée. Telle est la loi de la nature.'⁵⁹

No feminist charter this. While such views in the early years of the nineteenth century may not surprise us, their defence on serious physiological grounds is worthy of some note. As Anne-Marie Jaton points out, Cabanis found support for his contentions in the medical world of the day, most notably in the theories of the physician Julien-Joseph Virey, who went so far as to conclude that the male sperm itself was the repository of energy. 'Si la femme possède parfois courage et énergie,' writes Jaton, completing the logic of Virey's argument, 'le mérite en est donc à l'imprégnation, et l'être féminin n'est alors que le reflet de l'homme.'⁶⁰

Such, then, is the distinction between 'energy' and 'sensitivity' (where the one is seen to exist as though in inverse proportion to the other) to which Cabanis and Virey lend the sanction of their physiology. When, in his diary of 1 April 1806, Stendhal remarks upon 'cette sensibilité mobile, qui me rend femme et qui est déguisée sous ma facilité à raisonner,'⁶¹ he is echoing closely the image of woman — 'plus sensible et plus mobile' — as we find it in the passage from Cabanis cited above. So too when he invokes 'la raison virile', or accuses the English upper classes of an effeminate sensitivity, or criticises Newton for his lack of 'pensées mâles', for being 'trop grand ennemi des raisonnements téméraires, pour être mâle dans ses discours.'⁶² That Stendhal saw all of this, ultimately, as a question susceptible of physiological explanation is clear from a passage in *De l'Amour*, where he reflects upon the pronounced nature of female sensitivity:

Il a été donné aux femmes de sentir, d'une manière admirable, les nuances d'affection, les variations les plus insensibles du cœur humain, les mouvements les plus légers des amours-propres.
Elles ont à cet égard un organe qui nous manque: voyez-les soigner un blessé.⁶³

Thus far, then, Stendhal appears to adhere faithfully to the theory advanced by Cabanis. As these same notions of energy and sensitivity, with their respective connotations of maleness and effeminacy, are developed by Stendhal, however, they give rise to a much richer and more ambiguous treatment than is endorsed by the near-caricatural distinctions of the physiologists. In recognising Stendhal's conception of 'la raison comme instrument de fermeté, d'activité, devant la passivité docile du sentir,' Michel Crouzet reduces the latter's thought on this question to its simplest terms: 'sentir est féminin, raisonner, masculin, sans doute.'⁶⁴ Such a bald statement, however, takes no account of the manner in which Stendhal at times cuts across and

subverts this same distinction. His females can evince 'classic' qualities of manhood, just as his males can be characterised at times by their apparent femininity.⁶⁵ In such cases, moreover, it is not merely a question of turning the equation on its head, of showing what Albert Thibaudet describes as 'le défaut d'énergie, qui féminise un homme, [...] ou l'excès d'énergie, qui masculinise une femme.'⁶⁶ For Stendhal is much less concerned with the *rule* than with the *exceptions* — and of these exceptions, there are two which hold to the fore in his imagination: the energetic — and therefore anomalous — female; the energetic *and* sensitive Italian, male and female alike.

It is to this question that we propose to devote part of our considerations in this chapter. It will be useful, therefore, to begin by discussing briefly Stendhal's conception of human sensibility. His thinking on this question owes much, it is clear, to an idea which we find recorded in his diary of 24 September 1813. This relates to a passage from Cabanis cited in the *Moniteur* of 16 September 1813, which Stendhal abridges thus:

"Remarquons que la sensibilité se comporte à la manière d'un fluide dont la quantité totale est déterminée, et qui, toutes les fois qu'il se jette en plus grande abondance dans un de ses canaux, diminue proportionnellement dans les autres."
(*Rapports du physique, etc. Histoire des sensations*. Cité au no. 259 du *Moniteur* de 1813.)⁶⁷

This simple passage made a powerful impression on Stendhal. For it would find its way, in a relatively unaltered form, into much of his published work, providing him with a ready 'scientific' means of interpreting the different manifestations of human sensibility which he could observe in himself and in others.⁶⁸ Thus the formula appears as a personal observation in a letter to Louis Crozet from December 1816, while it is given more general application in the *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase* and the later *Vie de Rossini*.⁶⁹ The same notion is transferred from music to painting in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, where Stendhal asserts that 'le fluide nerveux n'a, tous les jours, [...] qu'une certaine dose de sensibilité à dépenser; si vous l'employez à jouir de trente beaux tableaux, vous ne l'emploierez pas à pleurer la mort d'une maîtresse adorée.'⁷⁰ Again in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Stendhal returns to the same thought, incorporating it this time into his criticism of Poussin, whom, he declares, Shakespeare would have reproached in the following terms: "'Ne te rappelles-tu pas que le fluide nerveux ne permet pas que le flambeau de l'attention éclaire à la fois et l'esprit et le cœur?'"⁷¹

The distinction between heart and head, as we have seen already, is never far from the surface in Stendhal. Here, as before, we are presented with a perceived opposition between reason and sentiment, an opposition that appears substantiated by the notion of

a *fluide nerveux* which can dispense itself in limited quantities and in only one of these two theatres at any given time. This same idea is taken up and expanded in an important passage from *De l'Amour*:

Pour moi, j'en reviens toujours aux lois physiques. Le fluide nerveux, chez les hommes, s'use par la cervelle, et chez les femmes par le cœur; c'est pour cela qu'elles sont plus sensibles. [...]

Appiani, qui ne croit à la vertu qu'à la dernière extrémité, et avec lequel j'allais ce soir à la chasse des idées, en lui exposant celles de ce chapitre, me répond:

"La force d'âme qu'Eponine employait avec un dévouement héroïque à faire vivre son mari dans la caverne sous terre, et à l'empêcher de tomber dans le désespoir, s'ils eussent vécu tranquillement à Rome, elle l'eût employée à lui cacher un amant; il faut un aliment aux âmes fortes."⁷²

The terms in which Stendhal couches his thinking here, the relationship that is suggested between 'lois physiques' and 'fluide nerveux' on the one hand, and 'force d'âme' on the other, together with the introduction of a *moral* dimension to the question through the notion of 'vertu', conspire to give this passage a central place in his conception of energy. For one finds here a clear reaffirmation of that pregnant idea which Stendhal had expressed in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, when considering the nature of vital energy and the channels through which it may find expression:

Cela tient aux formes reçues des parents, et au pouvoir de l'éducation. Dans la monarchie, le fils de Marius, ne pouvant avoir une compagnie, sera Cartouche. Je suppose que les parents donnent le tempérament, le *ressort*; et l'éducation, le *sens* dans lequel il agit.⁷³

This statement, together with Stendhal's remarks on the Gallic heroine, Eponine, give a whole new moral range to the questions raised by the actualisation of energy. In neither case does Stendhal expand upon the ethical implications of his assertions; but the recourse to overriding physical laws appears radically to curtail the possibility of any free moral agency. Hence the distinctly deterministic tones in which natural energy is alluded to as a function of the physiological and 'moral' make-up of the individual: 'Cela tient aux formes reçues des parents...'; 'les parents *donnent* le tempérament, le *ressort*...'; 'il *faut* un aliment aux âmes fortes.'

The ethical implications of such remarks will be considered in the final chapter of this study. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that the passage in question from *De l'Amour*, with its reference to sensibility as a preserve of the female and reason of the male, recalls something of Cabanis's distinction between the sexes. Where Stendhal parts company with the physiologist, however, is in presenting the said Eponine as the embodiment not only of passionate sensibility, but of an *energy* that is precluded by the female constitution as Cabanis defines it. Nor is this the only instance in *De l'Amour* where Stendhal cuts across the divide sanctioned by the physiologists. The same 'fluide

nerveux' which is translated into active energy with Eponine is channelled into a frustrated sensibility in the case of 'un artiste romain' whom Stendhal imagines in Paris and to whom he ascribes the following thought:

"Je me déplais infiniment ici; je crois que c'est parce que je n'ai pas le loisir d'aimer à mon gré. Ici, la sensibilité se dépense goutte à goutte à mesure qu'elle se forme, et de manière, au moins pour moi, à fatiguer la source. A Rome, par le peu d'intérêt des événements de chaque jour, par le sommeil de la vie extérieure, la sensibilité s'amoncèle au profit des passions."⁷⁴

iii. Racial Energy

In the passage cited above, we find extended the scope of Stendhal's notion of sensibility. For introduced here are two new considerations which play no part in the preceding examples: geographical location and national character. Although the mouthpiece of Stendhal's thought is a single 'artiste romain', he may be seen to represent the archetypal Italian. We recall how, in a letter from Milan in October 1811, Stendhal defines the Italians as 'un peuple né pour les arts, c'est-à-dire excessivement sensible.'⁷⁵ Some fifteen years later, in his revised edition of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, he reiterates this notion with an implicit reference to Cabanis's theory of sensibility: 'Si l'on voyait les cœurs, l'on trouverait ici plus souvent le bonheur que le plaisir, l'on verrait que l'Italien vit par son âme beaucoup plus que par son esprit.'⁷⁶ It is in just such reflections on the Italian character that the clearest identification between sensibility and energy emerges in Stendhal. His belief in the Italian's predisposition towards feeling at the expense of reason is elsewhere in *Rome, Naples et Florence* subjected to rationalisation:

L'Italien, pour qui la société générale et les jouissances de salon sont impossibles, ne porte que plus de feu, et de dévouement dans ses relations particulières.

On the surface, this appears to be no more than the sort of stock remark that can be found in all of Stendhal's works relating to Italy. What makes this statement particularly significant, however, is the footnote which Stendhal appends by way of clarifying the sense here of the term 'feu':

Cabanis nous apprend que l'homme n'a chaque jour à dépenser qu'une certaine quantité limitée de cette substance, jusqu'ici peu connue, nommée *fluide nerveux*. On ne peut pas dépenser son bien de deux manières; l'homme fort aimable dans un salon le sera moins avec ses amis intimes.⁷⁷

This short passage provides one of the keys to understanding Stendhal's

conception of the Italian. For the terms 'feu' (so often in Stendhal's vocabulary a synonym for 'energy') and 'fluide nerveux' (which is closely associated with 'sensibility') here come together and have their senses fused. The Italian's sensibility is energy — and energy, as we shall see, in its highest form. What is 'la première qualité d'un cœur italien?' By 1818, Stendhal has no hesitation in replying: 'l'énergie.'⁷⁸ The neutrality of the term *cœur* is, moreover, apposite. For there is no obvious distinction to be made in the nature of energy as it is exhibited by the respective sexes in Italy. Discrimination, where it occurs in Stendhal's consideration of the Italian, is not sexual but *racial*. The point is framed in characteristic terms in the *Promenades dans Rome*, where the notions of nerve fluid and energy inform a pointed comparison between the Frenchman and the Roman:

Peut-être il vous amusera par le brillant et l'imprévu de son esprit (je parle toujours du Français de 1780); mais, comme homme, c'est un être moins énergique, moins remarquable, plus vite lassé par les obstacles que le Romain. Amusé toute la journée par quelque chose, le Français ne jouira pas du bonheur avec la même énergie que le Romain, qui, le soir, arrive chez sa maîtresse avec une âme vierge d'émotions; donc il ne fera pas de si grands sacrifices pour l'obtenir.⁷⁹

The contribution of Cabanis everywhere underlies this notion of energy as a quantifiable resource, measurable in terms of its volume and expendability. 'La capacité énergétique de l'individu n'est pas indéfiniment extensible,' notes Philippe Berthier. 'Il dispose d'un certain capital à dépenser, et ce qu'il en utilise d'un côté n'est plus mobilisable de l'autre.'⁸⁰ If we relate this to Stendhal's earliest notions of human nature, we can chart something of the development which his thinking has undergone. For reason and passion, while they may retain the aspect of competing 'faculties', are no longer seen to constitute the bedrock of human nature. Rather they become *channels* through which some vital, energetic property in man is expended. As early as June 1804, Stendhal had suggested that 'l'extrême de l'activité de l'âme' implied '[l'extrême] du repos de la tête.'⁸¹ This crude hypothesis is given a whole new physiological ratification in the idea that the head and the heart serve as *conduits* for something more essential and deep-rooted still within the human constitution.⁸²

All of the foregoing introduces a dimension into the question of energy which is lacking when one approaches it within a purely 'moral' perspective.⁸³ Yet if it is important to recognise the contribution of Cabanis, it is equally important to note where Stendhal departs from the physiologist and pursues the definition of energy on his own terms. For in the examples cited above, Stendhal quite abolishes the distinction upheld by Cabanis between male energy and female sensibility. The Italian becomes the repository not only of extreme sensibility but of *manliness* too. The English, with their predilection for riding, Stendhal writes in *De l'Amour*, 'usent ainsi le fluide nerveux par les jambes et non par le cœur.'⁸⁴ What they boast in athleticism they lose in

sensibility. 'Rien de plus désoccupé au contraire que les jeunes Italiens; le mouvement qui leur ôterait leur sensibilité leur est importun.'⁸⁵ To this greater athleticism, the Englishman, as we read in the *Promenades dans Rome*, adds a more developed faculty of reason and a readier sociability: 'mais, comme homme, il sera fort inférieur au Romain.'⁸⁶ And politically? Where does the Italian stand in relation to the more advanced régimes of Europe? 'Le Romain,' declares Stendhal, comparing the latter once more with his English counterpart, 'est beaucoup plus près des mœurs de la république, et, suivant moi, beaucoup plus homme.'⁸⁷

Italy, it is clear, is the country of exception, the country where the rules that may hold good elsewhere cease to apply. No simple logic, physiological or other, here divides male and female. Just as the Italian man is the embodiment of sensibility, so his female counterpart is remarkable for her energy. 'L'énergie qu'on trouve dans certains caractères de femmes m'étonne toujours,' writes the observer of Italy in *Rome, Naples et Florence*.⁸⁸ 'Le peu d'énergie qu'il y a à Rome,' we read in the earlier edition of the same work, 'est dans les femmes qui rappellent souvent la Sempronia de Salluste.'⁸⁹ Of a certain Bolonese belle, Stendhal can thus reflect in *Rome, Naples et Florence*: 'on pilerait toutes les femmes à sentiment de Paris ou de Londres, qu'on n'en tirerait pas un caractère de cette profondeur et de cette énergie.'⁹⁰

There is no rupture, then, in the Italian character. Male and female, energy and sensibility, head and heart: all cohere within the same idealised image. Stendhal's Italian is, as Michel Crouzet puts it, 'le contraire de *l'homo duplex*, l'homme sans le schisme qui nous engage dans la vie morale et sociale, le vivant intact et cohérent, jamais opposé à la vie, bref l'homme hors conflit.'⁹¹ This essential *coherence* of the Italian runs like a leitmotiv through Stendhal's travels in Italy. Nor is it restricted to the Italian *qua* individual. For all their lack of national identity, no people is more assertively treated as a generic whole by Stendhal than 'le peuple italien':

Comme peuple non civilisé, mais chez lequel l'énergie et la beauté des sentiments et la finesse de l'esprit corrigent l'atrocité ou l'ineptie des lois civiles ou religieuses, il est admirable.⁹²

Distinctions of class and caste are effectively abolished in 'ce pays à sensations' where 'tout le monde est peuple.' Here, all obey the same imperatives. The author of *Rome, Naples et Florence* explains: 'c'est qu'il y a des *fortunes différentes*, mais il n'y a pas de *mœurs différentes*.'⁹³

iv. 'Natural' Energy

Though it is in a social context that the Italian is continually played off against his European counterparts, the explanation for his exceptional character is to be sought on a more elemental plane. For here, Stendhal does not tire of reminding us, we find the representative *par excellence* of Nature, 'l'être le plus naturel de l'Europe'.⁹⁴ Nowhere is the identification between Humanity and Nature more vividly sustained by Stendhal, nowhere is his 'naturalism' more alive, than in the pages that he devotes to considering the Italian character.⁹⁵ Here the human, animal, organic and inorganic worlds are coalesced by Stendhal's language and imagery into one vast continuum. The Italian is at once plant, animal and mineral. '*La pianta uomo nasce più robusta qui che altrove,*' affirms the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*: 'La plante homme naît plus vigoureuse en Italie que partout ailleurs.'⁹⁶ The Italian character, we have noted, is 'le terrain dans lequel les passions germent le plus facilement.'⁹⁷ Italy, we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, is 'la terre où les grands hommes sont encore le moins impossibles,' where the 'végétation humaine' is at its richest.⁹⁸ Thus it is that 'Canova a percé, par hasard, par la force de végétation que l'âme de l'homme a sous ce beau climat.'⁹⁹ Thus, too, that the withering effects of transalpine civilisation upon the Italian's northern counterparts — 'faibles, blonds, étiolés' — is gauged from the vantage point of Italy.¹⁰⁰

Repeated botanical images such as the above are but one of the means whereby the Italian's proximity to nature is evoked. The Latin character is, Stendhal asserts, 'comme les feux d'un volcan.'¹⁰¹ In the *Promenades dans Rome*, he writes: 'Le caractère du tigre peint assez bien la volupté romaine, si l'on veut y joindre des moments de folie absolue.'¹⁰² Italy is 'la nation des *simiotigres*', the land of the 'monkey-tiger'.¹⁰³ The enforcement of the Austrian rule of law here is 'la législation des ânon et des oies appliquée à un peuple de singes malins et méchants.'¹⁰⁴ At the fall of Napoleon's administration, Stendhal reflects in the *Promenades dans Rome*, the *canaille* of Rome could have wreaked havoc: 'Ce peuple, alléché par le sang comme le tigre, eût massacré probablement tous les riches marchands, et ensuite il se serait enivré et endormi au coin des rues.'¹⁰⁵ As for the peasants of Piacenza in 1826,

ils sont encore l'animal méchant, façonné par quatre cents ans du despotisme le plus lâche; et le climat ayant donné du ressort à ces gens-ci, par le loisir, par les jouissances faciles, que la générosité de la nature verse à pleines mains, même au plus pauvre, ces paysans ne sont pas simplement grossiers et méchants, comme les sujets de tel petit prince d'Allemagne, mais s'élèvent jusqu'à la vengeance, à la férocité et à la finesse.¹⁰⁶

Climate from without, energy from within: such are the mainsprings of this Italian whom Stendhal depicts in vividly naturalistic terms. We have seen already how the

energy of the Italian brigand Maïno is likened to electricity, as a phenomenon 'existant dans la nature.'¹⁰⁷ Likewise those Calabrian peasants who are imbued with Nature's force to such a degree that, 'Quand le temps menaçait d'un orage, leur figure, comme agitée d'avance par le fluide électrique, avait un aspect bouleversé.'¹⁰⁸ This attempt by Stendhal to find physical reference points, either in human physiology or in the wider world of natural phenomena, furnishes an important substratum to the portrait of the Italian's 'moral' character. It is on such grounds that we should wish to take issue with Michel Crouzet's assertion that the Italian represents for Stendhal 'une autre chair presque dématérialisée,' that 'le corps méridional puisqu'il est *sentir* avant tout, représente un allègement de la matière, une promotion énergétique, une désincarnation spontanée.'¹⁰⁹ Stendhal's Italian may indeed be the repository of a rarefied sensibility and artistic *élan*. But he is also — and very decidedly — *corps, bas-ventre, poumons, nerfs, bile, fluide nerveux, fluide électrique...*¹¹⁰

All of this goes beyond mere rhetorical contrivance. The overbearing presence of Nature, and the moral neutrality which Stendhal ascribes to it, are central to his philosophy of man as it is advanced through his reading of Cabanis and applied — however exaggeratedly — in his observations of Italian character and customs. In this sense, the discovery of Italy brings an important new dimension to Stendhal's 'anthropology'. For the Italian becomes the new 'savage man', replacing the primitive as the means of shedding light on human nature.

Ne vaut-il pas mieux pour qui aime les curiosités morales, voyager en Italie qu'aux îles de la Cochinchine ou dans l'Etat de Cincinnati? L'homme sauvage ou peu raffiné ne nous apprend sur le cœur humain que des vérités générales qui, depuis longtemps, ne sont plus méconnues que par des sots ou des jésuites.¹¹¹

In order to discover primitive man, one need go no further now than the Isle of Ischia, with its 'sauvages africains', or the Bay of Naples, where 'le paysan napolitain est un sauvage, heureux comme on l'était à Otaïti avant l'arrivée des missionnaires méthodistes.'¹¹² Human nature, in its truest, least adulterated form is still pushed by Stendhal beyond the frontiers of the accessible. '*Pour avoir la nature,*' as Michel Crouzet observes, '*il faut aller en Italie et à l'année 1599.*'¹¹³ What is important, however, is that the site where 'natural' man is to be run to ground has shifted from some ill-defined spatial and temporal *au-delà* to a very specific geographical and cultural location. If Stendhal cannot embrace the Latin of the Middle Ages, he can at least seek vestiges of the latter in what is real and observable in the nineteenth-century Italian.¹¹⁴ 'Le Midi,' as Michel Crouzet puts it, 'c'est l'homme premier et parfait, intact et créateur: mais *il a été* et demeure comme traces.'¹¹⁵

The inaccessibility of the Latin is temporal, then, not geographical. The Italian is

not, like the other 'savage' peoples envisaged by Stendhal, *awaiting* a civilisation which threatens to descend upon and adulterate his nature: the Italian *has been through* a 'civilising' process of sorts and survived. Therein, for Stendhal, lies the uniqueness of this race. Caught in a curious limbo between what he has been and what he might become, the Italian is just cultivated enough to be identified with, just savage enough to escape the most deleterious effects of civilisation and retain something of human nature in the raw. He is at once closer *and* more resistant to civilisation than the primitive. 'Je crois fermement, d'après deux cents anecdotes que je ne transcris pas, et pour cause,' declares Stendhal in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, 'qu'il y a moins à travailler pour faire un peuple civilisé des sauvages du lac Erié que des habitants du Patrimoine de Saint-Pierre.'¹¹⁶

The indeterminate — and variable — place which the Italian occupies between civil society and savagery becomes a recurrent theme in Stendhal's writing. The Neapolitans are 'barbares', the Piacenzan is an 'animal méchant.'¹¹⁷ On the isle of Ischia, one finds 'presque pas de trace de civilisation';¹¹⁸ Corsica and Piedmont are 'ces pays à moitié sauvages';¹¹⁹ the Romagnols and Calabrians retain 'encore un peu de sauvagerie et de propension au sang.'¹²⁰ In his diary of 2 March 1808, Stendhal notes: 'Je trouverais l'homme presque naturel en Calabre.'¹²¹ The *presque* was and would remain a significant qualification. 'La lecture des récits véridiques du capitaine Franklin que j'ai rencontré chez M. Cuvier,' Stendhal would write much later, in his preface to the *Chroniques italiennes*, 'peut m'amuser pendant un quart d'heure, mais bientôt je pense à autre chose.' He explains:

Ces Riccaras sont trop différents des hommes qui ont été mes amis ou mes rivaux. C'est pour une semblable raison que les héros d'Homère et de Racine, les Achille et les Agamemnon commencent à être pour moi du genre bâillatif. [...] J'aime ce qui peint le cœur de l'homme, mais de l'homme que je connais, et non pas des Riccaras.¹²²

Between Lombardy and Sicily, by contrast, are contained all of the lessons required by the student of human nature. While Milan and Florence lean towards the Parisian model, Rome and Naples are closer to Africa. 'Sans doute notre société de Paris vaut mieux,' writes Stendhal ironically at the outset of the *Promenades dans Rome*,

mais nous voyageons pour voir des choses nouvelles, non pas des peuplades barbares comme le curieux intrépide qui pénètre dans les montagnes du Tibet, ou qui va débarquer aux îles de la mer du Sud. Nous cherchons des nuances plus délicates; nous voulons voir des manières d'agir plus rapprochées de notre civilisation perfectionnée.¹²³

Closer to civilised society, perhaps; but not so close as to eclipse Nature. It is in the extent to which one adheres to what is *natural* that one affirms or falsifies one's

humanity. Such is the conclusion which Stendhal draws from his observation of what Maurice Bardèche calls 'cette nouvelle espèce humaine,' or, more properly, 'cette humanité d'avant la chute.'¹²⁴ For in Italy Stendhal discovers a whole new 'state of nature', a whole new 'chain of being' *within* humanity itself: 'Comme les animaux des forêts devant l'homme, les sujets ici ne forment qu'une société fugitive devant les gouvernements.'¹²⁵ Man, according to Cabanis, 'placé par quelques circonstances de son organisation à la tête des animaux,'¹²⁶ is no less subject than the lower forms of animal life to the constraints and impulsions of Nature. The general point is taken by Stendhal and given a much more precise geographical application. 'L'on ne contrarie pas impunément les lois de la nature,' we read in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'surtout en ce pays voisin de l'Afrique.'¹²⁷

Nature Indulged and Nature Denied: Italy, *De l'Amour* and the Seeds of Pessimism

With the foregoing in mind, we may appreciate more fully what makes Stendhal's Italian travelogues so fundamentally different from a work such as *De l'Amour*. 'L'homme n'est pas libre de ne pas faire ce qui lui fait plus de plaisir que toutes les autres actions possibles': such is the fundamental axiom of a '*Physiologie de l'Amour*' which rests on the premise that Nature — and by that must be understood also *human* nature — has laws which man subverts at his peril.¹²⁸ Yet, from start to finish, *De l'Amour* presents us with just such a subversion. What we have in this work is less a representation than a travesty of Nature. As in his considerations of Italy, Stendhal, to borrow the expression of Francine Marill Albérès, '*fait du naturel un absolu*';¹²⁹ but its value is everywhere *evacuated*, defined by its *absence*:

[...] la fermeté d'une femme qui résiste à son amour est seulement la chose la plus admirable qui puisse exister sur la terre. Toutes les autres marques possibles de courage sont des bagatelles auprès d'*une chose si fort contre nature* et si pénible.

La fidélité des femmes dans le mariage lorsqu'il n'y a pas d'amour, est probablement *une chose contre nature*.

Il est *contre sa nature*, il est impossible que l'homme ne fasse pas toujours, et dans quelque instant que vous vouliez le prendre, ce qui dans le moment est possible et lui fait le plus de plaisir.

D'où vient l'intolérance des stoïciens? De la même source que celle des dévots outrés. Ils ont de l'humeur parce qu'ils luttent *contre la nature*, qu'ils se privent et qu'ils souffrent.¹³⁰

The contrast with the Italy of the travelogues could not be more striking. In turning from *De l'Amour* to *Rome, Naples et Florence* or the *Promenades dans Rome*, we move from a world in which Nature is repressed, denied, cut off at every source, to one in which it is given free rein and indulged to excess. As we read once more in *De l'Amour*: 'l'on ne contredit jamais impunément la nature'; the remark, however, carries a very different charge in *this* context.¹³¹ In matters of the human heart, we are told, 'le naturel est de voler au plus grand plaisir.'¹³² Yet the definition of woman as it is framed in *De l'Amour* is that of a creature 'en concurrence avec tous les penchants ordinaires de la nature humaine.'¹³³ Nature has been banished to another place and another time. Thus the laws governing the *rappports* between the sexes in fourteenth-century Provence, 'prenant la nature humaine telle qu'elle est, devaient produire beaucoup de bonheur.'¹³⁴ The sweeping logic of this assertion, with all its implicit criticism of contemporary institutions and conventions, provides one of the guiding principles of a work whose intention is everywhere to point up the contrast between natural impulse and unnatural self-denial. To recognise the rightful claim of the passions, argues Stendhal, is not to incite to licence; it is rather to follow the only route sanctioned by *reason*, and to take a step closer to framing laws and conventions which, 'prenant les hommes tels qu'ils sont, peuvent leur procurer la plus grande masse de bonheur possible.' This concern to *take men as they are* as the first step in legislating for their conduct and welfare is voiced as early as 1803 in a letter to Edouard Mounier.¹³⁵ The remark is made in relation to Montesquieu, whom Stendhal criticises for *describing* political régimes, rather than *prescribing* means whereby they might better legislate for the communities they serve. It is a criticism which would be levelled on more than one occasion by Stendhal against the author of *De l'Esprit des lois*. Hence the rejoinder which, on a copy of the work, he scribbles alongside Montesquieu's title: 'Ou esprit du droit conventionnel que les caprices des hommes ont établi, et non des lois de la nature desquelles l'homme peut tirer le bonheur.'¹³⁶

Read in such a light, *De l'Amour* becomes as much an apologetic of Nature, a plea for what Peter Gay calls 'passionate naturalism', as Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* some years before.¹³⁷ The only release which Stendhal admits from the stifling tyranny of contemporary European *mores* is Italy, 'où tout est naturel.'¹³⁸ It is Italy alone, one might say, that provides the Tahiti to Stendhal's Bougainville. Here, he declares, in by now familiar tones, 'est le seul pays où croisse en liberté la plante que je décris.'¹³⁹ Ranged against Nature in *De l'Amour*, by contrast, we find not the *virtus* of Ancient Rome or the *virtù* of Renaissance Italy, but a 'virtue' that is exposed as counterfeit in all but one of its guises. There is 'ce que le catéchisme appelle la vertu', 'la vertu mercantile des religions', 'la vertu arrangée à l'usage des rois', 'ce qu'on appelle vertu', and, finally, ...'[la] vertu *philosophique*', the latter alone being based upon a reasoned appreciation of man's natural penchants and, as such, offering

no barrier to his potential happiness.¹⁴⁰

What all of the above examples have in common is that Nature is in each case erected into an ill-defined but incontrovertible norm. Such repeated appeals to nature and the natural are given added point through the references to man's physiology and kinship with the animals. For love is no caprice of the will, no factitious invention of human society, but an animal reaction, a rush of blood and disorder in the nervous system, a type of physical derangement.¹⁴¹ Even that most elaborate of cerebral processes, 'crystallisation', is, at source, a physiological imperative.¹⁴² It is clear that for Stendhal what is 'natural' in the affairs of the heart relates both to the laws of human physiology *and* to the broader context of Nature within which such laws operate. It is in the comparative anatomical study of man and animal — or, more precisely, of man *as* animal — that the most significant revelations about human nature should now, argues the author of *De l'Amour*, be sought.¹⁴³ Though there was nothing new in the suggestion that animals might have some light to shed on man, the point is worth stressing. For it demonstrates something of the distance which Stendhal's thinking had come since the days when he had suggested that, through the observation of *behaviour* alone, the philosopher might establish correlations between the animal and human realms.¹⁴⁴ Now, in 1822, the emphasis is quite different. 'Tous les amours, toutes les imaginations,' affirms Stendhal, 'prennent dans les individus la couleur des six tempéraments.' One must begin the study of the passions with physiology — and, in physiology, as Stendhal contends, 'l'homme ne sait presque rien sur lui-même que par l'anatomie comparée.'¹⁴⁵

By this logic, then, the study of that most delicate of human sentiments becomes an excursion, scalpel in hand, through the animal body. We are dealing here, clearly, not with Love as some airy manifestation of Mind or Heart, but with a love that may be laid bare upon a table and dissected. Love, like energy, is no abstraction: as Maurice Bardèche puts it, 'il dépend des muscles, du climat, de la couleur de la peau, de la densité de la bile, de la rapidité du pouls et aussi de la forme du gouvernement.'¹⁴⁶ The point is clearly made by Stendhal in the article, which he himself penned for *De l'Amour*:

On fait depuis deux mille ans des madrigaux sur l'amour, c'est pour la première fois qu'on s'est avisé de l'examiner et de le décrire, comme Cabanis eût décrit et examiné la fièvre ou toute autre maladie.¹⁴⁷

What is significant here is not the degree to which the extravagant comparison with Cabanis holds up: it is the fact that Stendhal should conceive of his subject so expressly in these terms — with some measure of irony, perhaps, but with a goodly measure of sincerity too, one suspects. He is at least, as Michael Wood puts it, 'half-serious' in

this journey, 'stethoscope and taxonomy in hand,' through the regions of the human heart.¹⁴⁸ *Physiologies* were, of course, to prove something of a fashion between the 1820s and 1840s;¹⁴⁹ but Stendhal insists, and that already in 1822, not on a metaphorical but on a quite literal interpretation of the term. To understand the passion known as 'love', he argues in his preface, 'il faut en parler comme d'une maladie.'¹⁵⁰ This analogy between love and illness, though it has about it a contrived rhetorical ring, is sustained both within and beyond *De l'Amour*. 'L'amour est comme la fièvre,' insists the author, 'il naît et s'éteint sans que la volonté y ait la moindre part.'¹⁵¹ The notion that passion can override any supposed faculty of 'will' has its roots, as we know, deep in Stendhal's thought. As early as June 1804, he had, we recall, defined passion as 'une maladie involontaire de l'âme, comme la fièvre est une maladie du corps.'¹⁵² The distinction between this assertion and the rationale underlying *De l'Amour*, though it may appear a fine one, is fundamental. For the clear division of man into 'âme' and 'corps' has, by 1822, been replaced by the view of man as an *integral whole* susceptible of investigation through the *single* method of the *médecins-idéologues*. Philosopher and doctor are no longer analogous; they have become one and the same for Stendhal in their recourse to what Henri Delacroix defines as the 'Ideological' method at work in *De l'Amour*: "'description exacte et scientifique", classification, groupement de symptômes, évolution psychologique, étude des phases successives, appel aux faits biologiques et sociaux, conséquences pratiques...'¹⁵³

While Stendhal never applies this method in any but the most superficial and erratic fashion, 'Ideology' being all too often ousted by intuition, he seems to keep faith, in principle at least, with the declared intentions of the work. Though most of the private writings which refer to *De l'Amour* date from the early 1820s and relate to the technicalities of composition and publication, two letters in particular shed light upon Stendhal's perception of the finished product. On 24 December 1824, he returns with comments to his friend, the natural scientist, Victor Jacquemont, a short essay by the latter on love. The note which accompanies this is revealing. 'Si j'avais cinquante chapitres comme celui-ci,' declares Stendhal, 'le mérite de l'*Amour* serait *réel*. Ce serait une vraie monographie.'¹⁵⁴ Though elsewhere he refers to his work dismissively as 'un bavardage', ironically as 'ma docte dissertation',¹⁵⁵ he betrays the suggestion here that he might not have been averse to seeing his 'monograph' valued as a serious — 'scientific' — dissertation. This appears to be confirmed by a letter to Sutton Sharpe dated 22 October 1833, in which Stendhal expresses his wish to have *De l'Amour* reviewed by the *Edinburgh Review* or the *Quarterly*. 'Le difficile,' he declares, 'est de trouver un *reviewer* qui *compre*ne le livre.' To this he adds the brief but indicative assertion: 'Ce livre est une monographie de la maladie nommée *Amour*. C'est un traité de *médecine morale*.'¹⁵⁶

Whatever the objective merits or demerits of *De l'Amour*, such remarks must be borne in mind when judging the significance of the work for Stendhal himself. No more, it is clear, did he believe that passion might be understood by being consigned to some special realm of human experience. Instead, he now held, the passions could be appreciated only as part of a complex interplay between the forces of nature and the structures of society. As early as December 1805, Stendhal had had recourse to the conception of love that is to be found in Cabanis.¹⁵⁷ Now, almost two decades on, the lessons of the physiologist on this question are more clearly articulated than ever:

Par exemple, on pourrait dire:

J'ai trouvé à Dresde, chez le comte Wolfstein, l'amour de vanité, le tempérament mélancolique, les habitudes monarchiques, l'âge de trente ans, et... les particularités individuelles.¹⁵⁸

Such is the complex mosaic — the 'modèle de grille déterministe'¹⁵⁹ — that it is the philosopher-scientist's to piece together. Temperament, geographical location, national character, age, political régime, and personal circumstances (such as sex, state of health, occupation, daily routine, diet...): all essential elements in the web of determinist influences at work upon man. And yet, having established as a generally applicable principle this elaborate set of variables, Stendhal makes a passing remark whose full import it is easy to overlook. 'L'homme passionné,' he asserts, 'est comme lui et non comme un autre, source de tous les ridicules en France; et de plus il offense les autres, ce qui donne des ailes au ridicule.'¹⁶⁰ Was it not the logical implication of this statement that the attempt to frame *general* principles was condemned from the outset to fall short of apprehending the nature and range of any given *individual's* experience? Was the only general principle not, in the final analysis, that there *was* no general principle? Stendhal does seem at least to be posing the question when, in the very first chapter of his work, he ventures the suggestion that there might be 'autant de façons de sentir parmi les hommes que de façons de voir.'¹⁶¹ With this brief remark, Stendhal raises a question to which he fails to provide any clear answer, but to which he will return, significantly, in the final paragraphs of his concluding chapter, when he considers the contrasting extremes of Werther and Don Juan:

Il y a tel caractère fait pour ne trouver le plaisir que dans la variété. Mais un homme qui porte aux nues le vin de Champagne aux dépens du Bordeaux, ne fait que dire avec plus ou moins d'éloquence: J'aime mieux le Champagne.

He then goes on to make a much more telling point:

Chacun de ces vins a ses partisans et tous ont raison, s'ils se connaissent bien eux-mêmes, et s'ils courent après le genre de bonheur qui est le mieux adapté à leurs organes et à leurs habitudes. [...] Mais enfin chaque homme, s'il veut se donner la peine de s'étudier soi-même, a son *beau idéal*, et il me semble qu'il y a toujours un peu de ridicule à vouloir

convertir son voisin.¹⁶²

Such is the note on which Book II of *De l'Amour* ends. As the conclusion to an analysis of love that ranges over a variety of nations and epochs, these remarks are cast in some relief. Stendhal's studied refusal to pass any definitive judgment, his recourse to physiology as a means of accounting for the different perceptions of happiness that exist from one individual to another, appear to sanction an out-and-out relativism that requires to be reconciled with a number of the more generalising observations contained within the work. Yet the thought with which he concludes his treatise merely gives renewed and more pointed expression to a question which, as we saw in a previous chapter, had troubled Stendhal as early as 1805 and which had emerged again more insistently in 1810: the difficulty, the impossibility, of bringing any common standard to bear upon 'human nature' as it is manifest from one individual to the next.¹⁶³

It is this question, implicit in much of what has been discussed in the foregoing pages, which we propose to examine in the final chapters of this study. For it constitutes the basis of what we consider to be an evolving pessimism in Stendhal's conception of man, a pessimism which Cabanis does much to foster and which contrasts markedly with the more sanguine philosophy of Stendhal's earlier years. Helvétius and Cabanis are, arguably, the two greatest philosophical influences which Stendhal underwent. Both expounded philosophies which, though profoundly dispiriting in a number of their essential tenets, were to have provided the point of departure for a positive regeneration of mankind. Hence the irrepressible optimism which informs their writings. To recognise that men were invariably motivated to seek their own good, even at the expense of others, was to move a stage closer, Helvétius held, to forging the conditions within which the same men could be brought to pursue a common good which they would identify as their own.¹⁶⁴ To conclude that human beings were determined not only by environment but by their very organs was, Cabanis in turn argued, to awaken the philosopher to the varied exigencies of human nature, and to prepare the conditions for a new ethic that would take account not only of man's conscious desires, but of his innate, instinctive, unconscious impulses too.¹⁶⁵ For both Helvétius (who stressed the uniformity of human nature) and Cabanis (who stressed, perforce, its diversity), knowledge of man, the facing up to unpalatable truths, was a pre-requisite for the social and moral betterment of mankind. Knowledge of how man *is* must precede any programme for how he *ought* to be.

To this extent, Francine Marill Albérès is quite justified in arguing that Stendhal could look to such thinkers for 'une vision optimiste de l'homme, [...] un idéal humain qui soit applicable dans la société et dans la vie.'¹⁶⁶ What the critic does not recognise,

however, is the severely limited and ephemeral nature of the 'idéal humain' for which Stendhal draws upon these thinkers. Where the theories of both Helvétius and Cabanis came together was in viewing man as the determined product of the forces at work upon him, 'le produit d'un schéma naturel et d'un travail social.'¹⁶⁷ Though Cabanis stressed the former and Helvétius the latter, these were the two essential domains, the natural and the social, within which the far-reaching reforms envisaged by the *philosophes* and *Idéologues* alike were to have been brought to bear¹⁶⁸ — domains which Stendhal, as we have seen, integrates into his own reasoning in the simplified formulæ of *ressort* and *sens*. Though the philosophy is double-edged, as open to an optimistic as to a pessimistic interpretation, Helvétius and Cabanis alike were convinced that ways could be found of so directing human nature that it might become the *means*, not the *obstacle*, to the happiness of humankind. 'Bien qu'isolé dans son égoïsme irréductible,' writes Michel Crouzet,

l'homme d'Helvétius est sourdement finalisé: il n'existe que comme fonction sociale. [...] La loi sociale fonde seule "la morale"; l'homme est qualifiable, il échappe à l'arbitraire anarchique de ses désirs pour entrer dans la vision du philosophe par son rapport à autrui, par le rapport entre son intérêt et celui d'autrui.¹⁶⁹

This notion of an inseverable link between the one and the many forms the very core of Helvétius's social philosophy. Man's hopes for future progress must begin, he urged, with the recognition that 'l'intérêt de chaque citoyen est toujours, par quelque lien, attaché à l'intérêt public.'¹⁷⁰ Nor, as Crouzet rightly points out, is the philosophy of Cabanis any less edifying in its broadest perspective. Men may be powerless to overcome their natural instincts and impulses; but this need not be construed as a licence to undermine the common weal by making unfettered individualism the rule of law. On the contrary, it must be argued that

de la physiologie aux données légales telles que l'égalité et la liberté, il y a un *enchaînement* si rigoureux qu'à la limite la morale n'est plus "que l'art de la santé", que les dérèglements moraux et sociaux, crime et folie, sont de l'ordre de la maladie.¹⁷¹

No more from Cabanis than from Helvétius, however, do the above ideas pass intact to Stendhal. For what he proceeds to do, in the case of each of these philosophers in turn, is to truncate the arguments in question, to cut the bleak initial premises (what E.C. Ladd calls the "is") off from their more heartening conclusions (in Ladd's terms, the "ought"),¹⁷² and to conflate these premises — each individual is slave to his own self-interest, and each must seek his pleasure in accordance with the dictates of his particular organism — within a view of man which leaves considerably less room for optimism than either Helvétius or Cabanis, with their utilitarian ethic and their faith in the possibility of effective social reform, would have sanctioned.

J'ai enfin lu un ouvrage qui me semble bien singulier, sublime en quelques parties, méprisable en d'autres, et bien décourageant en toutes: *l'Esprit* d'Helvétius. Ce livre m'avait tellement entraîné dans ses premières parties, qu'il m'a fait douter quelques jours de l'amitié et de l'amour.¹⁷³

Thus Stendhal to Edouard Mounier on 15 December 1803. The impression was a powerful one. It was also to be lasting. The refinements and correctives which Stendhal's interpretation of Helvétius was to undergo over the years would never diminish the store which he set by the view of man inherited from this philosopher of egoism, a view of man in which the 'méprisable' would all too readily eclipse the 'sublime'. For Helvétius is at once, as Michel Crouzet recognises,

le philosophe qui a tout éclairci, et rendu aisé le progrès de l'humanité vers le bonheur sous un bon gouvernement, et le philosophe qui en a trop montré, qui a transgressé les limites permises du savoir, et dont la terrible révélation engendre un pessimisme mortel.¹⁷⁴

Such is the problem inherent in Helvétius's vision, the 'double' nature of the philosophy to which he invites. 'Helvétius's notorious faith in the omnipotence of education,' writes Peter Gay, 'is a reflection not of optimism about human nature, but of stark pessimism about his starting point.'¹⁷⁵ The remark is astute and sums up well the attitude of a Stendhal whose faith in Helvétius's utopian society proved less durable than his belief in the latter's depiction of men as so many self-seeking individuals. Nor would the physiology of Cabanis rescue Stendhal from the path down which he had embarked with the psychology of Helvétius. To the insidious pessimism that was to be a legacy of the latter, Cabanis would bring a philosophy — a 'triste raison'¹⁷⁶ — which would swing the balance still further away from the optimistic confidence in man which Stendhal had exhibited in his youth. The process was to prove as disheartening as it was irreversible, consigning Stendhal to a moral outlook sharply at variance with his earliest philosophical predispositions and principles.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.
2. 'Stendhal et l'énergie: du Moi à la Poétique', pp. 61, 65.
3. 'Blood Run Cold: Some Transformations of Energy in Stendhal', 28th Annual Conference of the Society for French Studies, University of Sheffield, 27-29 March 1987. I am grateful to Professor Thompson for making the text of his paper available to me.
4. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 56-58; 'Aux sources de l'énergie stendhalienne', p. 100; *Italie*, 1556 n.; Alciato, 'Le Catéchisme d'un roué par Stendhal et l'influence d'Helvétius sur ce fragment', *Symposium*, vol. II (1948), p. 211; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 78-84.
5. *Op. cit.*, p. 74.
6. See Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 150; Fineshriber, p. 11; Chantreau, 'La découverte de l'énergie, la création du mythe du rouge', *Stendhal Club*, 28^e année, no. 110 (1986), pp. 103-112.
7. See *JL*, I, 40, 284, 315, 405, 474; II, 6, 21-22, 130; III, 74, 119; *Corr*, I, 33, 150, 222; *OI*, I, 59, 81, 167.
8. *JL*, I, 388. See also *Corr*, I, 146.
9. *JL*, I, 195.
10. *Ibid.*, I, 236.
11. *Ibid.*, I, 204.
12. *OI*, I, 178. See also *ibid.*, I, 68: 'Mante me trouve bien meilleur, cette année, que l'année dernière; il me dit qu'alors j'avais une énergie diabolique.'
13. See respectively *Italie*, 192; *De l'Amour*, I, 109; *Italie*, 1229, 231; 1444 n.; 491; 225, 555; 570, 1079; 216, 380, 586, 1042, 1055, 1091. The emphases are Stendhal's own. The list is by no means exhaustive. See in the same vein 'l'énergie des passions' (*Italie*, 483), '[l]énergie de passion' (*Ibid.*, 500), 'la faculté de vouloir' (*M de T*, I, 77; *Corr*, III, 194), 'la fermeté d'âme' (*Romans*, II, 919), 'la fermeté de caractère' (*Ibid.*, II, 946), 'le feu' (*Italie*, 449, 645; *JL*, III, 130; *Romans*, II, 51), 'le feu sacré' (*Corr*, II, 260; *Romans*, I, 286; *HB*, I, 101), 'le courage' (*Italie*, 867), 'le ressort' (*Ibid.*, 387; *H de P*, II, 35, 123 n. 1; *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224).
14. *Italie*, 338.
15. "'J'aime la force" est un de ses mots favoris,' charges E. Faguet (p. 15). 'Mais il faut bien s'entendre sur ce que Stendhal appelle l'énergie. C'est le contraire de l'énergie. C'est la violence; c'est la détente brusque, l'explosion soudaine, aveugle, sans dessein et sans suite, d'une passion qui ne sait ni se réprimer, ni se diriger. C'est un moment de folie tragique. Les anciens appelaient cela *impotentia sui*, et croyaient que c'était faiblesse. C'est le genre d'énergie qu'adore Stendhal.' A. Chuquet, too, holds that Stendhal 'confond l'énergie avec la violence' (p. 218). See also Doumic, pp. 127-128; Sabatier, pp. 57-63 *et passim*; A. Le Breton, '*Le Rouge et le Noir*' de Stendhal. *Etude et analyse* (Paris: Mellottée, 1934), p. 22.

16. *Italie*, 231, 1229.
17. *Ibid.*, 192.
18. 'Energétique et féminité (1720-1820)', *Romantisme*, 14^e année, no. 46 (1984), p. 20.
19. *Op. cit.*, pp. 441, 443.
20. The protean value of the term is discussed by J. Fabre, *Lumières et romantisme. Energie et nostalgie de Rousseau à Mickiewicz* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1963), pp. viii-ix.
21. *Op. cit.*, pp. 19-20. See also on this question Charlton, 'The French Romantic Movement', pp. 23-26.
22. See, for example, *JL*, I, 195, 236, 388; *OI*, I, 178.
23. Stendhal's recourse to the term 'energy' to denote a certain attribute of human nature is explicable within the context of contemporary usage, since borrowings between the language of the sciences and that of philosophy were commonplace and inevitable. For some discussion of the terms 'energy' and 'force' as they were common to the philosopher, the anthropologist and the physical scientist in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see S.W. Jackson, 'Subjective Experiences and the Concept of Energy', *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, vol X, no. 4 (1967), pp. 602-626.
24. See *H de P*, II, 35, 123 n. 1; *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224. In the two numbers of *Stendhal Club* (110 and 111) and the complementary issue of *Romantisme* (46) in which are published the proceedings of the *Colloque de la Société des Etudes Romantiques* of June 1983, 'Stendhal et l'énergie romantique', it is significant that not a single paper addresses this essential aspect of energy in Stendhal.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 101.
26. See *OI*, I, 59, 68, 81, 167; *JL*, I, 284, 286, 315, 388, 405, 474; II, 6, 21-22, 130; *Corr*, I, 146, 150.
27. *Op. cit.*, p. 101.
28. *H de P*, I, 51 n. 1; II, 255 n. 2, 301 n. 1, 323, 325. See also 'les traits énergiques' (II, 54-55 n. 1); 'l'énergie de pensée' (II, 79), 'l'énergie religieuse' (II, 79 n. 1); 'Energique dans les grandes [choses]' (II, 311); 'les vestiges gigantesques d'actions énergiques' (II, 327).
29. *Ibid.*, II, 44.
30. *Ibid.*, II, 50.
31. *Ibid.*, II, 60.
32. *Ibid.*, II, 69.
33. See, for example, Arbelet, Preface, *H de P*, I, xxxix; II, 441-457 nn.
34. *L'Histoire de la peinture en Italie et les plagiats de Stendhal*, pp. 264-265.
35. See *M de T*, I, 123: 'Or, pour faire un homme supérieur, ce n'est pas assez d'une tête logique, il faut un certain tempérament fougueux.'

36. Stendhal's commentators have failed almost without exception to take account of this aspect of energy. See, for example, C. Liprandi, who, in seeking to determine 'l'exacte valeur de l'énergie stendhalienne' (p. 183), defines the concept exclusively as 'une force morale' (p. 178). See likewise the 'conception toute sentimentale de l'énergie' that is evoked by L. Blum (pp. 146-148). M. Crouzet alone has fully recognised the importance of the *physiological* dimension in Stendhal's notion of energy and of the contribution made by Cabanis in this respect. 'Cabanis donne au Beyliste une sorte de sentiment de plein interne, d'opacité organique, et d'autonomie énergétique, c'est-à-dire, un approfondissement de son état vital et de sa subjectivité à la fois' (*Raison*, p. 615). Energy is, as Crouzet puts it, 'une sorte de "grâce biologique"', a "'laïcisation" de l'âme' (*Ibid.*, p. 627) which, defined first and foremost in *organic* terms, cuts across the spurious divide between the physical and the moral.
37. *H de P*, II, 43. Although, as P. Arbelet points out (*La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 307-311), this idea should not have been new to one who had read Du Bos, it is brought home with singular force to Stendhal after his reading of Cabanis in 1811. See above, Chapters V and VI.
38. *H de P*, II, 47.
39. *Ibid.*, II, 79.
40. See *ibid.*, II, 46, 326-328.
41. *Ibid.*, II, 79-80 n. 3.
42. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 287-291.
43. *Corr*, I, 272. See above, Chapter V. These remarks reappear almost verbatim in a diary entry dated 26 February 1806 (*OI*, I, 425).
44. *OI*, I, 378.
45. See *H de P*, II, 76-80.
46. See Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal*, pp. 408, 494-495.
47. See respectively *Italie*, 449, 645; *H de P*, II, 37; *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224; *H de P*, II, 37 n. 1; *Italie*, 388; *H de P*, II, 37 n. 1; *Italie*, 741, 945; *OI*, I, 738-739, 889; *Corr*, I, 847; *H de P*, I, 174-175 n. 3; II, 25; *De l'Amour*, I, 109; *Italie*, 449 n., 554.
48. 'Stendhal et l'énergie: du Moi à la Poétique', p. 62.
49. *Italie*, 387-388.
50. See again *ibid.*, 198: 'La politique est une science qui exige des expériences comme la chimie...'; *CA*, II, 172: 'Aujourd'hui, il faudrait écrire l'histoire avec la même sérénité philosophique qu'un traité de chimie.'
51. *Italie*, 741.
52. *JL*, III, 119.
53. *S d'E*, 40.
54. See the chapter 'Héroïnes rebelles de Stendhal' in R. Bolster, *Stendhal, Balzac et le féminisme romantique* (Paris: Minard/Lettres Modernes, 1970), pp.

55. *Romans*, I, 680. Cf. the same Julien's reflection on Mme de Rênal and Mme Derville: 'Absorbé par ces idées sévères, le peu qu'il daignait comprendre des mots obligeants des deux amies lui déplaisait comme vide de sens, niais, faible, en un mot *féminin*' (*Ibid.*, I, 271).
56. See *Corr*, I, 95; *Romans*, I, 453.
57. *Rapports*, p. 229. See on this question Jaton, pp. 16-18.
58. *Rapports*, p. 237.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 235. From 'différence' to 'infériorité' was, as Jaton (p. 18) argues, but a step. Stendhal's militancy in the cause of women's education, though it is a far cry from the 'feminism' for which it has at times been taken, would nonetheless prove a radical departure from Cabanis's proposition that the province of women did not extend beyond 'les soins intérieurs de la famille, et ce doux empire domestique par lequel seul elle devient tout à la fois respectable et touchante' (*Rapports*, p. 237).
60. *Op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
61. *OI*, I, 422.
62. See *Italie*, 130; *JL*, III, 345. On 'virile reason', see Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 187. On such reason as a pre-requisite for reading Helvétius, see *ibid.*, pp. 138-139.
63. *De l'Amour*, I, 108.
64. *Raison*, p. 214.
65. See, for example, the repeated likening of Julien Sorel to 'une jeune fille' (*Romans*, I, 241, 242, 446). Julien, as Crouzet puts it, 'n'a pas l'air mâle selon les bons critères' (*Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 113).
66. *Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours*, p. 210.
67. *OI*, I, 889, 1546-1547 n. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 134. The idea does not seem to have been entirely new to Stendhal. As early as April 1805, after his first recorded reading of Cabanis, we find him expressing the notion that the human being has a limited volume of sensibility to dispense at any given time. 'Dugazon vient et me fait mourir de rire, jusqu'à fatigue,' he writes on 7 April 1805. 'Voilà toute mon âme qui a assez vécu. Je ne suis plus bon qu'à des fonctions animales' (*JL*, II, 205). Here once again, there is a suggestion that the reading of Cabanis which Stendhal documents in his diary of 24 January 1805 (*OI*, I, 195) may not have been his first contact with the physiologist. For, in a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 29 August 1804, he had written: 'Je te conseille de marcher beaucoup. Fatigue-toi ferme, tu dormiras, tu ne seras plus triste parce que le fluide nerveux ne se portant plus si fortement à la tête, tes idées moins exagérées seront plus près de la vérité' (*Corr*, I, 150). Cf. the diary entry of 5 September 1806: 'J'emploie toute ma force à agir, je n'en ai plus pour écrire' (*OI*, I, 462).
68. In September 1811, during his trip to Italy, Stendhal had already compared his sensibility to 'une liqueur qui suffit pour pénétrer jusque dans les plus petites veines d'un corps que l'on injecte. Elle suffit à tout, abonde partout' (*OI*, I, 738-739).
69. See *Corr*, I, 847; Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 104, 183.

70. *H de P*, I, 174-175 n. 3. Cf. *OI*, I, 945: 'La politique tue chez moi la volupté, apparemment en appelant au cerveau tout le fluide nerveux.' See also the description of Mme de Rênal in *Le Rouge et le Noir*: 'Son âme, épuisée par tout ce qu'elle venait d'éprouver, n'avait plus de sensibilité au service des passions' (*Romans*, I, 261).
71. *H de P*, II, 25. Some prefiguration of this remark can be found in a note which Stendhal enters in his diary of 27 July 1810, and in which he refers to the weeks that he has recently spent working on his project *Letellier*: 'Une seule chose manquait à mon bonheur, c'était lorsque je m'étais fatigué l'esprit tout le matin de ne pas avoir pour passer la soirée une maîtresse aimable. Mais probablement si j'en avais eu une, une grande partie de mon énergie pour le travail se serait perdue dans ses bras' (*OI*, I, 604). The opposition between *sensibility* and *utility* that is suggested in these lines was capable of a more extensive application. The echo of Cabanis that is to be found here is present once again as Stendhal views with misgiving the changes by which France is threatened at the dawn of a new industrial age. 'C'est là ce que nous perdrons,' he writes in the *London Magazine* of October 1825, 'si jamais la France devient une nation de vapeurs, de chemins de fer et de fleuves. En un mot, personne ne peut dépenser sa substance de deux façons contraires. Si jamais nous apprenons à écouter avec attention les sermons de quelque Irving, nous perdrons la finesse et la gaieté qui sont nécessaires pour rire aux délicieuses piécettes de M. Ymbert et de M. Scribe' (*CA*, V, 200-201).
72. *De l'Amour*, I, 109.
73. *H de P*, II, 123 n. 1.
74. *De l'Amour*, I, 237. See also *OI*, II, 35-36.
75. *Corr*, I, 622.
76. *Italie*, 446.
77. *Ibid.*, 449.
78. *Ibid.*, 270. In Stendhal's private writings of 1818, the Italy of the Middle Ages specifically comes to represent the model of energy. See *JL*, III, 59, 119-121, 129-130.
79. *Italie*, 867. Cf. the earlier comparison from *Rome, Naples et Florence*, in which the Italian had been deemed to possess 'infiniment plus de susceptibilité de sentir avec force et profondeur, autrement dit, infiniment plus d'énergie de passion' (*Ibid.*, 500).
80. *Stendhal et la sainte famille*, p. 220. Berthier recognises, albeit implicitly, the significance of Cabanis in this 'notion scientifique et tout à fait "idéologique"' (pp. 220-221).
81. *JL*, I, 435.
82. See, among many such examples, *H de P*, I, 174-175 n. 3; II, 25; *De l'Amour*, I, 109, 237; *OI*, I, 889; *Italie*, 867.
83. On the question of vital energy, Stendhal's thinking and language alike are heavily indebted to the physiology of his age. In addition to the references already cited in this context, see R.W. Home, 'Electricity and the Nervous Fluid', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. III, no. 2 (1970), pp. 235-251; S.W. Jackson, 'Force and Kindred Notions in Eighteenth-Century

Neurophysiology and Medical Psychology', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. XLIV (1970), pp. 397-410, 539-554.

84. *De l'Amour*, II, 4.
85. *Ibid.*, II, 4-5.
86. *Italie*, 867.
87. *Ibid.*, 756. Though the comparison here is between Roman and Englishman, a glance at what Stendhal has to say elsewhere about the American and the Frenchman is instructive: 'j'estime un sage républicain des Etats-Unis, mais [...] ce n'est pas un homme pour moi, c'est une chose' (*Ibid.*, 494); 'Elle [la civilisation moderne] produit le Diorama et des chemins de fer; on moule admirablement, d'après nature, des oiseaux et des plantes; en vingt et une heures un Parisien verra Marseille; mais quel homme sera ce Parisien?' (*M de T*, I, 132). Cf. *H de P*, II, 149: 'l'homme du Midi est supérieur à l'homme du Nord.'
88. *Italie*, 519.
89. *Ibid.*, 137. 'Une Française jeune porte dans ses volontés un feu et une pétulance qui étonnent et fatiguent l'âme plus prudente d'une Romaine. Mais ce feu de paille dure deux jours.' A Roman woman, by contrast, 'désire la même chose six mois de suite' (*Ibid.*, 645). On constancy as a necessary quality of energy, see Liprandi, pp. 187-188. Cf. *Italie*, 519, 711.
90. *Italie*, 519.
91. *Stendhal et l'italianité*, p. 30. See also on this question *ibid.*, pp. 14, 40, 43, 45, 46-47, 87-88. On the Italian as synthesis of heart and head, 'la raison rendue à la nature et à sa nature', 'l'indistinction première du "je pense-je suis", du "je pense-je sens"', see *Raison*, pp. 484-493, 504-511, 521-525.
92. *Italie*, 227.
93. *Ibid.*, 322, 576-577. See also on this point *ibid.*, 1218; *JL*, II, 318.
94. *Italie*, 586. The Italian is 'souverainement naturel' (*OI*, II, 388).
95. See on this point Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 24, 47, 74-81.
96. *Italie*, 426 n. This remark from Alfieri, which had appeared twice in the earlier edition (*Ibid.*, 77, 113), would be paraphrased in the *Promenades dans Rome*, where we read that 'la plante homme est plus robuste et plus grande à Rome que partout ailleurs' (*Ibid.*, 868).
97. *JL*, III, 20.
98. *H de P*, II, 145.
99. *Italie*, 9.
100. *Ibid.*, 1197. See also *ibid.*, 874: 'La civilisation étiole les âmes'; *ibid.*, 910: 'l'éducation française a étioilé les hautes classes.'
101. *Ibid.*, 140.
102. *Ibid.*, 645.

103. *Ibid.*, 168, 1427 n.
104. *Corr*, I, 907.
105. *Italie*, 861.
106. *Ibid.*, 387. Though Stendhal makes no clear moral judgment in any of these cases, his sympathies are manifest in the provocative turn of phrase by which he evokes the violent propensities of the Piacenzan peasant.
107. *Ibid.*, 388. The complicity between Nature and the Italian is everywhere stressed. See, for example, *ibid.*, 364, 1291.
108. *Ibid.*, 554. This remark is strongly suggestive of Cabanis's 'Sixième Mémoire' on the temperaments, where the physiologist asserts that 'les corps vivants ont la faculté de produire [des] condensations du fluide électrique, par lesquelles son existence se manifeste.' He goes on: 'Il paraît même que l'organe nerveux est une espèce de condensateur, ou plutôt un véritable réservoir d'électricité, comme de phosphore. Mais il diffère certainement des autres substances idio-électriques, en ce qu'il est en même temps un excellent conducteur de l'électricité extérieure; tandis que ces substances interceptent, à la vérité, le cours du fluide, le reçoivent et l'accumulent par frottement, mais ne le transmettent pas, quand il est accumulé sur d'autres corps qui leur sont contigus' (*Rapports*, pp. 268-269).
109. *Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 23, 37, 107 nn.
110. See *JL*, III, 20; *Italie*, 73 n.; 448, 1260, 1660-1661 n.; *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224; *Italie*, 449 n.; 554. Crouzet (*op. cit.*) makes surprisingly little reference — even in a chapter entitled 'L'Italien et son corps' — to the physiological dimension of the Italian and to the signal influence of Cabanis in this respect.
111. *Italie*, 442.
112. *Ibid.*, 49, 518.
113. *Nature et Société chez Stendhal*, p. 35.
114. 'Les Italiens sont le peuple moderne qui ressemble le plus aux anciens' (*Italie*, 562); 'Il faut chercher toute l'Italie actuelle dans le Moyen Age' (*Ibid.*, 1520 n.); '[...] cette belle continuation du moyen âge nommée l'Italie' (*Corr*, I, 1053).
115. *Stendhal et l'italianité*, p. 40. For Stendhal's constant recourse to a past age of Italian greatness, see, for example, *Italie*, 198, 213, 227, 269-270.
116. *Italie*, 68.
117. *Ibid.*, 58, 387.
118. *Ibid.*, 49.
119. *Ibid.*, 192.
120. *De l'Amour*, II, 208.
121. *OI*, I, 495.
122. *Romans*, II, 556.

123. *Italie*, 600.
124. *Op. cit.*, pp. 76, 77.
125. *Mélanges intimes et marginalia* (Paris: Le Divan, 1936), II, 27. The remark is consigned by Stendhal to a copy of *Rome, Naples et Florence*.
126. *Rapports*, p. 130.
127. *Italie*, 400.
128. *De l'Amour*, I, 3, 31.
129. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 127.
130. *De l'Amour*, I, 138; II, 103, 172, 190. My italics. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 117: 'Ne pas aimer quand on a reçu du ciel une âme faite pour l'amour, c'est se priver soi et autrui d'un grand bonheur. C'est comme un oranger qui ne fleurirait pas de peur de faire un péché.'
131. *Ibid.*, II, 44. Cf. *Italie*, 400.
132. *De l'Amour*, I, 162.
133. *Ibid.*, I, 121.
134. *Ibid.*, II, 41.
135. *Corr*, I, 83-84.
136. *JL*, III, 253.
137. See *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 196-200; Frankel, pp. 86-90.
138. *De l'Amour*, I, 240.
139. *Ibid.*, I, 220.
140. See *ibid.*, I, 94, 119 n. 1, 233; II, 107, 108.
141. *Ibid.*, I, 56 n. 1.
142. *Ibid.*, I, 21.
143. *Ibid.*, I, 111 n. 1. Stendhal here anticipates the success of a science that was to come into its own in the nineteenth century. See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, and Reason*, p. 80. On comparative anatomy as it had evolved by the time Stendhal came to acknowledge its merits, see Coleman, *Georges Cuvier, Zoologist*, pp. 44-73.
144. See *JL*, I, 227.
145. *De l'Amour*, I, 217-220. 'C'est à l'anatomie comparée que nous devons demander les plus importantes révélations sur nous-mêmes' (*Ibid.*, I, 111 n. 1).
146. *Op. cit.*, p. 100.
147. *De l'Amour*, II, 394. Love, Stendhal here suggests, is as much the domain of the physician as of the poet. See his reference in this context (*Ibid.*, I, 56 n. 1)

to the doctor and ethnologist, William Frédéric Edwards. For further references to Edwards, see *Italie*, 663 n., 1159; *M de T*, I, 179 n. 1. See also on this point Théodoridès, *Stendhal du côté de la science*, pp. 188-190.

148. *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
149. Witness Balzac's *Physiologie du mariage*, Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du goût*, Sophie Gay's *Physiologie du ridicule*. See on this point Boas, pp. 68-69; Liprandi, pp. 227-228. Stendhal, argues Liprandi (p. 228), may be considered 'le véritable inventeur des fameuses physiologies.'
150. *De l'Amour*, I, 8-9.
151. *Ibid.*, I, 31.
152. *JL*, I, 398.
153. *Op. cit.*, p. 118.
154. See *Corr*, II, 78, 959 n.
155. *Ibid.*, I, 1015, 1017.
156. *Ibid.*, II, 560.
157. See *OI*, I, 363. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, pp. 256-258.
158. *De l'Amour*, I, 219.
159. *Raison*, p. 348. Crouzet rightly identifies Cabanis as a powerful influence in this context. Stendhal, he argues, 'use des "tempéraments" comme d'une grille de déchiffrement du phénomène humain' (*Ibid.*, p. 655).
160. *De l'Amour*, I, 231.
161. *Ibid.*, I, 16. Cf. Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 79: 'Certainement les hommes ne se ressemblent point par la manière de sentir...'
162. *De l'Amour*, II, 136-137.
163. See *JL*, II, 184; *OI*, I, 399-400, 622-623.
164. See Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 115-125; Cumming, pp. 200-217.
165. 'The challenge to the moral and political sciences,' as M. Staum points out, 'came from diversity rather than from a fixed archetypical "human nature"' ('Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', p. 20). The crux of the problem as it presented itself to Cabanis as social reformer rather than as physician was, therefore, 'how to improve mankind while recognizing the diversity of temperaments' (*Ibid.*, p. 15). Within this perspective, the 'touchstone of indefinite human perfectibility' lay for Cabanis in the judicious exercise of reason linked indissociably with 'the preventive and therapeutic use of physical habits' (*Ibid.*, p. 22). See the same author's 'Cabanis and the Revolution: The Therapy of Society', *The Analytic Spirit. Essays in the History of Science in Honor of Henry Guerlac*, ed. H. Woolf (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1981), pp. 146-174.
166. *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, pp. 74-75.

167. Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 50. For Helvétius, as Crouzet notes, man's 'nature' was reducible to self-interest alone. 'Tout s'apprend, tout s'acquiert, (au demeurant le *don*, l'inné chez Helvétius est bien ce minimum vital de l'amour de soi), l'homme est le produit d'un constructivisme tout puissant et externe...' (D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'*utile*', p. 473). For Cabanis, by contrast, social reform must be wrought *within* and *upon* a whole network of naturally determining influences. 'Localisé étroitement dans la zone végétale, animale, climatique, qui le fait vivre, [l'homme] est aussi dans la zone humaine dont il dépend, c'est-à-dire surtout la zone politique...' (Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 335). Such remarks bring us back squarely to Stendhal's 'human equation': 'Un être humain ne me paraît jamais que le résultat de ce que les lois ont mis dans sa tête, et le climat dans son cœur' (*Italie*, 238).
168. On 'la toute puissance de l'éducation' according to Helvétius, and the 'espoirs démesurés' which faith social progress through the sciences inspired in Cabanis, see Crouzet, *Raison*, pp. 922, 923 nn. On some of the broader aspects of these questions, see *ibid.*, pp. 49-56, 63, 72-73, 78-79, 98, 130-140.
169. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
170. *De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. II, ch. 8, p. 125.
171. *Raison*, p. 63. See more widely on these questions Crocker, *Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment*, pp. 461-464 *et passim*; Cassirer, pp. 25-27; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 13-15, 67, 77, 113, 115-125, 200-201; Staum, 'Cabanis and the Revolution: The Therapy of Society.'
172. Of Helvétius and d'Holbach, Ladd (pp. 224-225) writes: 'Here, then, is the "is" for our philosophes: Man, his consciousness determined by his physical environment, compelled by his very nature to seek his own happiness constantly. The "ought" was defined in terms of the utility principle — that actions should be considered good or bad depending on their effect on happiness. [...] To get from the "is" (Man, the pleasure-seeking receptacle and organizer of environmental stimuli) to the "ought" (Man, achieving his happiness through actions which maximize the happiness of the whole society), Helvétius and d'Holbach relied upon a program of education and legislation.'
173. *Corr*, I, 84.
174. *Raison*, p. 136.
175. *Op. cit.*, p. 170.
176. *Italie*, 826.

CHAPTER IX

FROM THE ONE TO THE MANY: THE DISAGGREGATION OF HUMANITY

Collective Ideals: *Humanitas* and *Virtus*

L'égoïste ignore à jamais le vrai bonheur de la vie sociale: celui d'aimer les hommes et de les servir.
Homo sum, nil humani a me alienum puto.

Thus Stendhal in a letter of 9 March 1806 to his sister Pauline.¹ Though the quotation from Terence is approximate, there is no mistaking the sentiment to which it gives expression.² The remark denotes one of the most important informing principles in Stendhal's early conception of man and society. His notebooks, diaries and letters from this period are replete with evocations of a common humanity to which the destiny of the individual is inseparably bound. Fulfilment as a human being presupposed involvement in a society where unbridled egoism had no place. Each individual, Stendhal urges his sister, is equipped with a fund of 'sensibilité' which should be turned outwards, not inwards: 'La société tend à concentrer cette sensibilité en nous-mêmes, à nous rendre *égoïste*. Quand cette passion ne serait pas contre la vertu, elle est contraire au bonheur.'³

As a philosophical ideal, the notion of Humanity had nothing about it that was new. The eighteenth century had all but deified Man as a collective entity.⁴ Much of the philosophy to which Stendhal was exposed in his early years of study in Paris (and in the Ecole Centrale of Grenoble before that) served to reaffirm the notion that man's well-being could be secured only through his relations with the wider community of men.⁵ The ideas of Happiness, Virtue and Philosophy alike, as Paul Vernière ably demonstrates, drew their meaning from the same source. By the later eighteenth century, writes Vernière, 'l'humanité est une "idée-force" qui n'est plus contestée.'⁶

Of the success with which this 'idée-force' consolidated its hold on the French philosophical conscience in the years immediately following the Revolution, Stendhal's early writings provide eloquent testimony.⁷ Much has been written about Stendhal's concept of individualism; much less about the civic ideals which early provided the driving force behind his moral and political convictions, and which would continue throughout his life to exercise his mind and pen. 'On nomme *vertu* l'habitude des actions utiles à tous les hommes,' he asserts in a letter of 1803; '*Vice*, l'habitude des actions nuisibles à tous les hommes.'⁸ The remark, though crude in its formulation,

provides the succinct statement of a utilitarian philosophy which held virtue and vice to be indissociable from *positive* action (self-mortification nowhere entered into the balance) and to take as their overriding criterion the service rendered to mankind. Thus, in a subsequent letter of May 1804, we find Stendhal enjoining his sister: 'ne prononce jamais le mot de *vertu* sans te dire *tout ce qui est utile au plus grand nombre*.'⁹ Such counsel was but a distilled version of ideas that are developed in Stendhal's notebooks and in the draft projects through which were kept alive his early theatrical ambitions. 'La vertu est ce qui est utile au public,' he writes in July 1804. 'Plus une chose lui est utile, plus elle est vertueuse.'¹⁰ What was to be understood by the 'utility' in question? Stendhal provides an unequivocal answer: '*il giovare ai più*, produire la plus grande masse de bonheur possible.'¹¹ To this end, the whole collective enterprise of man in society must tend. 'Le but de la législation est de produire la plus grande masse de bonheur possible,' declares Stendhal in a notebook entry of September 1803.¹² The idea is reaffirmed among some early notes for the theatre, in which we find 'le but de la société' defined quite simply as 'le plus grand bonheur possible actuel.'¹³

These clear, sweeping appeals to the notion of a 'common good' provided a touchstone for the aspirations of the *poète-philosophe*. Montesquieu, we recall, should have deployed his talents to describe not the deficiencies of specific régimes, but, more usefully, the laws whereby such deficiencies might have been *corrected*.¹⁴ In keeping with this stricture, Stendhal's was from the first to have been a morally (and politically) edifying literary enterprise. 'Dans cette carrière,' he reflects in August 1803, 'les sujets à traiter sont tous des vérités morales à développer, vérités dont la connaissance est utile à tous.'¹⁵ The stage was a didactic instrument through which virtue might be fostered, vice extirpated, *mores* corrected. 'Toute comédie est un plaidoyer du poète contre quelque chose qui choque l'intérêt de tous,' writes Stendhal amid his notes of 26 August 1804, invoking a conception of the playwright which is reaffirmed on a number of occasions.¹⁶ 'Je rends service à la philosophie (recherche de la vérité et pratique de la vertu),' he declares,¹⁷ relishing prematurely the fruits of an undertaking that is conceived with little short of messianic zeal. 'Le comique doit se regarder comme l'Hercule destiné à nettoyer les étables d'Augias,' we read in a notebook entry of 20 August 1804. 'Voir les vices qui nuisent le plus à la société, qui s'éloignent le plus du modèle idéal qu'on s'est fait, et les combattre.'¹⁸

Examples such as the foregoing in Stendhal's early writings are many. Many, too, are the occasions on which we are reminded that there is at work here no spirit of altruism, but rather a principle of enlightened egoism — of 'self-interest beguiled'¹⁹ — according to which the happiness of the individual and the interests of the community may be held to issue from the same source and to tend towards the same end. In her study of the background to Stendhal's novels, Margaret Tillet writes of the 'passage

from the altruistic "vertu" of the anecdotes in the earlier works to the instinctive egoism of the main characters in the novels.²⁰ Though correct in acknowledging the distance which separates Stendhal's earlier and later conception of moral character, the remark is misleading. For all the semantic difficulties into which Stendhal's reasoning on this question takes him, for all his residual attachment to a virtue innocent of crude self-interest, he never wavered in his contention that Altruism was, at bottom, an unmitigated fallacy. 'Tu dois t'appliquer à chercher quelles sont les choses qui peuvent faire ton bonheur,' he writes to his sister Pauline as early as January 1803; 'tu verras enfin que c'est la vertu et l'instruction.'²¹ Virtue thus conceived might be defined as 'le désir de rendre les hommes aussi heureux qu'il vous est possible',²² but it implied no abnegation of the self. Quite the contrary. The virtuous man, Stendhal is at pains to stress, 'agit toujours comme le reste des hommes pour son plus grand bonheur, mais son plus grand bonheur est à procurer le plus grand possible aux autres.'²³

This conception of 'virtue', which is prevalent throughout Stendhal's early notes and letters, is part of a wider perception of society as a *contract* between self-interested individuals. 'L'usage, ou les mœurs, est un contrat social (c'est-à-dire fait avec ceux avec qui on entre en société) par lequel on est convenu de se sacrifier à tel degré au bonheur des autres.'²⁴ Nothing, it seemed to Stendhal, was more rationally defensible than this notion of a morality predicated upon the collective self-interest of human communities. '*Morale*,' he writes, fresh from his reading of Helvétius in 1803, 'est la science des moyens inventés par les hommes pour vivre entre eux de la manière la plus heureuse possible.'²⁵ The problem occurred not in defining the principle, but rather in securing the means whereby theory might be translated into practice. For all of the foregoing statements, in tune as they are with the eminently political nature of Stendhal's early philosophical allegiance,²⁶ depended for their validity upon a particular conception of man as a malleable being. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, John Locke had written of the child's mind as 'white Paper, or Wax, to be moulded and fashioned as one pleases.'²⁷ Dispensing with Locke's own tentative reservations, the eighteenth-century tradition of Condillac and Helvétius had made great play of this notion,²⁸ which is passed to Stendhal via the author of *De l'Esprit* most notably. The assumption was that human nature derived essentially from the world without, not from the man within. In order to acquire a great mind, wrote Stendhal to Pauline in January 1803, she had only to observe and to compare in detail 'l'impression différente que font sur toi des objets quelconques.'²⁹ As with the head, so with the heart. 'Les passions sont l'effet des objets extérieurs sur nous,' writes Stendhal in one of his earliest extant notes.³⁰ The idea is amplified in a diary entry of 18 August 1804:

Chose à bien remarquer, l'âme n'a que des *états* et jamais des *qualités* en magasin. Où est la joie d'un homme qui pleure? Nulle part. Ce fut un état.³¹

What it is important to stress here is the essential *vacancy* of human nature thus conceived. Character comes from without; man becomes wax in the hands of the educator-legislator. 'L'égoïsme vient du gouvernement monarchique,' Stendhal confidently asserts in a letter of 20 June 1804.³² 'La monarchie,' he notes likewise in his journal of August 1804, '[...] fait des égoïstes....'³³ So anxious is Stendhal in these instances to identify an *external* culprit for what he deems a less than gratifying aspect of man that he goes far beyond what could be ratified by his philosophical mentors. While these remarks may appear on the surface to be in tune with Helvétius, Stendhal's language leads him once more here into a flagrant breach of the philosopher's egoistic principle. For 'egoism' in its most basic sense (the pursuit of one's own pleasure and avoidance of one's own pain) is the one — the only — factor in human nature that does *not* come from without; it may be *directed* from without, but *comes*, in every case, from the deepest recesses of the individual. The ego, as Michel Crouzet puts it, is the 'minimum vital' which Helvétius allows as the innate endowment of man.³⁴

What is important here, however, is not the literal betrayal of Helvétius, but rather the will with which Stendhal looks *beyond* men in seeking the factors that account for their behaviour. The idea which is crudely expressed in both of the instances cited above is developed in more reflective terms in a commentary on Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des lois*. The latter, as Stendhal argues, should not have declared virtue, honour and fear to be the directing principles of the republican, monarchical and despotic forms of government respectively:

Il devait dire: amour de soi; principe général, bien dirigé dans les républiques où il se confond avec l'amour de la chose publique, mal dans les monarchies où la passion régnante est la crainte.³⁵

Stendhal is much closer here to the letter of Helvétius. Writing to Pauline on 20 June 1804, he pursues this idea: 'Sous la monarchie, les hommes ne s'intéressent plus les uns aux autres comme dans les républiques; ils n'ont plus d'intérêts communs et en ont de contraires.'³⁶ Here lay the challenge to the legislator, whose task it was to ensure the *coincidence of interests* between the individual and society. Stendhal dilates upon this idea in a note of 9 July 1804, where he considers the 'philanthropie éclairée' by which men may be brought to recognise their personal interest in the furtherance of the common good. 'Le grand art,' he concludes, 'est donc de faire que les hommes se forment de belles idées qui les portent à sacrifier tout au bonheur du genre humain.'³⁷

Education — the term has a near-totemic value for the young Stendhal — provided the key.³⁸ We recall how he early fashioned his notion of heart and head as the

governing agencies in man, and how he adopted the view that the mind must act as a guide to the passions:

D'après cela, on voit que le meilleur *cœur*, quand il n'est pas joint à une bonne *tête* (pleine de beaucoup de vérités complètes sur les objets les plus importants à l'humanité [...]) ne peut faire que peu de bien.³⁹

Truth, held the young Stendhal, in keeping with the Enlightenment spirit, was the route to happiness and virtue alike.⁴⁰ 'Je crois, et je te le démontrerai par la suite,' he writes to Pauline in May 1804, 'que tout malheur ne vient que d'erreur, et que tout bonheur nous est procuré par la vérité: faisons donc tous nos efforts pour connaître cette vérité.'⁴¹ Nor was unhappiness all that was to be traced back to falsehood: evil itself sprang, Stendhal argued, from the same root. 'Tous les hommes agissent suivant ce qui leur paraît être et non suivant ce qui est,' he declares in a letter of 12 July 1804. 'Cette vérité est consolante; elle nous montre que souvent ils veulent faire le bien, quoique, en effet, ils ne produisent que du mal.'⁴² His early dramatic endeavours were to have furnished ample demonstration of this principle. Thus, of his projected play *Les Deux Hommes*, we read:

Je montre que l'éducation philosophique a produit un homme vraiment honnête, tandis qu'au contraire l'éducation dévote a produit un homme faible inclinant à la scélératesse.⁴³

Through the starkness of the deterministic language employed here, attention is drawn once more to the plasticity of the human nature in question. Men have the capacity to be heroes or villains, geniuses or dullards, depending solely upon the instruction which they receive. In upholding this principle, Stendhal keeps faith with the rationale of Locke, Condillac and Helvétius, a rationale which J.A. Passmore expresses thus: 'If men have a fixed, determinate nature, education is so far limited; if they have *no* nature, then its possibilities are boundless.'⁴⁴ Stendhal's faith in the educability and perfectibility of humanity everywhere informs his early thoughts on the subject. The question was one which, for the purposes of the stage, he reduced to a simple conflict between two systems of education, two types of political régime. 'Dans les *2 men*, je fais lutter le caractère républicain avec le caractère monarchique,' he writes in August 1804. His play will portray, as he puts it: 'Le caractère de tous les républicains qui ont existé, opposé à celui de tous les monarchistes.'⁴⁵ *Education* and *virtue* go hand in hand with *utility* and *happiness*.⁴⁶ Of the hero and villain respectively in *Les Deux Hommes*, Stendhal writes:

Il faut que Charles [...] montre le caractère le plus propre possible à faire le bonheur des autres.
Et que Ch[amouc]y [...] montre le caractère le plus propre à faire le malheur des autres. [...]

Il faut qu'ils montrent leur caractère comme une suite de leur éducation.⁴⁷

Nothing could be simpler than the conception of man upon which such characterisation was based. What is noteworthy is not only the malleability of the human nature that is evoked here, but the *generic* designations to which this gives rise. *The republican character, the monarchist, the virtuous man*: such are the terms in which Stendhal conceives of a Humanity that is considered *en bloc*. For it is clear that he subscribes at this stage to the Humean view that, everywhere and at all times, 'human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations' — or, as L.G. Crocker puts it, that 'men, having an identical organism and, particularly, an identical reason, generate a common store of ideas and judgments through an essentially common experience.'⁴⁸ Proper instruction will lead men *in general* to virtue and to happiness; a corrupt education will be no less far-reaching in its effects. In arguing thus, Stendhal holds closely to the rationale of Condillac and Helvétius, whose contention it was that sense-impressions, if properly interpreted, provided the first 'valid ingredients of knowledge, available to any man at any time.'⁴⁹ Stendhal's early writings abound with reminders that his point of reference is an all-embracing one: 'tous les hommes'... 'l'humanité'... 'l'intérêt de tous'... 'ce qui est utile au public'... '*tout ce qui est utile au plus grand nombre*'... 'la plus grande masse de bonheur possible'... 'l'amour de la chose publique'... 'la plus grande quantité d'utilité'... '[le] bonheur du genre humain'... 'le perfectionnement de l'espèce humaine...'⁵⁰

Here was the language of a post-Enlightenment, post-Revolutionary humanitarianism which perceived man, the measure of all, as a generic entity susceptible of universal and indefinite improvement. The extravagance of Stendhal's vision should be set in its context. For the discourse of the Revolution, as Pierre Trahard reminds us, drew heavily upon the same generic notion of Man:

partout les mots d'humanité, de justice, de fraternité retentissent; on parle d'"embrasser tout le genre humain dans ses affections", d'être "un Alexandre en philanthropie", d'affranchir à la fois "tous les peuples et toutes les castes". Le programme est immense et vague, souvent plus près de la chimère que de la réalité.⁵¹

As the expression of a philosophical ethic predicated on utility, such sentiments mobilised in their service the same remote classical models which had been embodied in the civic ideal of the *philosophes* and which found renewed expression now in the discourse and art of the Revolution.⁵² For Stendhal in turn, the heroes and institutions of republican Antiquity, the Rome of Plutarch, Livy and Sallust, provided a store-house of moral lessons.⁵³ 'Sous la monarchie donc, les hommes ne s'intéressent plus les uns aux autres,' he declares in a letter of 20 June 1804, concluding: 'A Rome, on était considérable par ses vertus et par ses talents; ici, on l'est par la manière dont on

est dans le monde.⁵⁴

Time and again Stendhal returns to this source as a means of sustaining his early conception of man and society. Curtius, Scaevola, L. Junius Brutus, Regulus, Gracchus, Horatius Cocles: all feature in his notes and letters as paragons of civic virtue who attained the highest honour and the highest gratification through merging their self-interest with the greater interests of the community.⁵⁵ Nor is the ethic which they embody — and this is the important point — seen by Stendhal to be beyond attainment. His recourse to the heroes of Antiquity is as much, at this stage, an aspiration as an exercise in nostalgia. A plan to write an '*Histoire Romaine en quatre vol[umes]*' is conceived, in 1804, with a clear objective: 'le but de ce travail est de faire chérir le plus possible la vertu à ceux qui le liront. De les rendre le plus heureux qu'il dépendra de moi.'⁵⁶ Emulation, even betterment, was the order of the day. 'Regulus, avec le caractère d'Henri IV, serait la perfection jusqu'ici connue de l'homme, l'hom[me] donnant le plus de plaisir à ses concitoyens.'⁵⁷ In a letter to Pauline Beyle dated 1 January 1805, Stendhal writes of Hannibal and Caesar as 'des hommes supérieurs' who deployed a rigorous logic in their respective enterprises. With the principles of 'Ideology', he goes on, 'nous pouvons raisonner aussi juste que ces grands hommes et il ne nous manque plus que leur expérience et leurs passions pour les égaler.'⁵⁸

A tall order, certainly; but one which demonstrates well Stendhal's faith in a human potential that he believed to have remained undiminished over time. This common fund of potentiality required only to be tapped by means of judicious legislation and instruction. Universality was everywhere the prevalent notion. In August 1804, Stendhal transcribes into his notebook a remark from the *Mélanges extraits des manuscrits de Mme Necker*: 'Les hommes n'auront jamais une conduite parfaitement bonne ou parfaitement mauvaise que quand ils seront dirigés par un seul principe.'⁵⁹ The statement captures something of the *état d'esprit* in which Stendhal committed to paper his earliest reflections on man.⁶⁰ With an optimism which was not to endure, he ruminated long on the principles that would bring to fruition the possibilities latent in human nature. Among his plans for an epic based on the battle of Pharsalus, we find a projected chapter entitled: 'Considérations sur l'état moral futur du genre humain.'⁶¹ Later, having transferred his ambitions to the *Filosofia Nova*, Stendhal will be no less preoccupied by this question: 'Je pense beaucoup de bien de notre siècle par suite du système de perfectibilité.'⁶²

The apparent contradiction between a cult of Antiquity on the one hand, and a doctrine of human perfectibility on the other, was not, of course, peculiar to Stendhal. The same conflicting tendencies had, as R.A. Leigh observes, marked the thought of an

eighteenth-century humanism which contrived to discover common principles between the classical world of Greece and Rome and the civic ideals of Revolutionary France.⁶³ The eighteenth century was nothing if not selective in the models of civic morality for which it was beholden to the Ancients. We come back always within this context, however, to the same crucial idea of a communion between the one and the many, to that 'identity of interests between governors and governed on which the stability of the state depends.'⁶⁴ It was an idea to which, as we have seen, the young Stendhal proved responsive. Thus, of his friend Joseph Rey, he writes in his diary of 15 April 1804:

Rey, philosophe, se propose de publier un système où il prouvera que le bonheur particulier est toujours lié au bonheur général. C'est ce que je lui souhaite.⁶⁵

Stendhal was not, however, to be privy to any such easy verification of the principle underlying the utilitarianism of Helvétius, Tracy and Cabanis in turn. Instead, this principle was to pose much more of a problem for him than our discussion thus far has indicated. For, running parallel to his faith in the possibility of a communion of interests between men, was a deep scepticism about the extent to which human nature itself would admit of such. The dilemma was not new. The eighteenth century had, as Paul Vernière argues, deployed ample casuistry in making of humanity the highest virtue:

Une telle vertu, fondée à la fois sur la nature de l'homme, l'instinct de sympathie, l'utilité sociale, réconciliait avec plus d'adresse que de vraisemblance l'amour de soi et l'amour d'autrui.⁶⁶

For Stendhal in turn the difficulty was inescapable. If the axiom *Salus populi suprema lex esto* was a designation how men *ought* to be, Virgil's *Trahit sua quemque voluptas* provided a statement of how they *were*.⁶⁷ One could not conceive for long of 'Humanity' without reducing this to the terms of *individual men*. Thus, in a notebook entry of July 1804, we find Stendhal clearly asserting that 'chaque homme est le seul juge compétent de son bonheur.'⁶⁸ We have observed already how, in his reading of Hobbes, he draws the moral implications — 'il y a autant de *bontés* ou de *mauvaisetés* qu'il y a d'hommes' — from such a relativistic view of man.⁶⁹ Once more in his writings of July 1804, we find him giving expression to this idea in its ethical extension. 'Tout hom[me] a une idée de la vertu ou du vice. Ces idées sont souvent différentes.'⁷⁰

The counter-argument to this was, in principle, a simple one: provide men with a common goal to which they may relate their self-interest, a common perception of right and wrong on which they may model their behaviour, and all will be for the best in the best of possible worlds. The gulf between theory and observed reality, however, remained enormous. 'Exactement parlant,' writes Stendhal in a letter of August 1804,

'chaque ville a ses mœurs; dans chaque ville, chaque société a les siennes, et enfin chaque hom[me] a les siennes.'⁷¹ How does one legislate for a 'common man' under such conditions? The problem is one which clearly troubles Stendhal. Having held that the *results* of one's actions alone should be deemed virtuous or vicious, he revises this judgment to take account of the *sacrifices* made by any individual in the pursuit of what he deems virtuous. 'Il faut connaître la quantité de bonheur ou de malheur qu'un homme attend de chaque chose pour connaître la grandeur de son sacrifice au désir d'être utile, et par conséquent le degré de sa vertu.'⁷² But how does one *measure* this? How does one establish a system of praise and blame equally valid for all, if one departs from the notion of a virtue gauged purely by its consequences? Stendhal is unsure:

Par exemple, Paul fait une action qui a six degrés d'utilité pour le public. Elle ne lui coûte que deux degrés d'effort sur lui-même. (Voici où est la difficulté qui m'arrête. C'est trouver la commune mesure de ces efforts des hommes. Est-ce en fonction de leur vie?)

Jean en fait une qui n'a que cinq degrés d'utilité, mais qui lui coûte quatre degrés d'effort.

Il est moins utile au public que Paul, mais bien plus aimable à ses yeux.⁷³

This characteristic expression of a moral problem in mathematical terms demonstrates clearly the difficulty which Stendhal encounters in embracing the strict act utilitarianism of an Helvétius or a Bentham. To seek to differentiate between the effort expended and the end result achieved in any enterprise was to dilute the pragmatic eudæmonism of the utilitarians — whatever conduces to happiness is good, and the more it conduces to happiness, the better it is to be deemed — with something akin to the conventional notion of moral conscience. Some weeks after penning the above passage, Stendhal returns to the same problem and concludes: 'N'estimer donc plus les gens sur leurs actions, mais sur les motifs qui les auront déterminés.'⁷⁴

Caught thus between an objective, *consequentialist* definition of virtue, and another, much more subjective notion which takes account of *intentionality*, Stendhal shows himself alive, as he would again in *D'un nouveau complot contre les industriels*, to what Bernard Williams sees as a fundamental flaw in the utilitarian doctrine. For if the ethical status of any action arises from its consequences alone, then morality relinquishes its claim to take account of 'the relations between a man's projects and his actions.'⁷⁵ Among the weaknesses of the consequentialist position, argues Williams, is the fact that it 'makes integrity as a value more or less unintelligible.'⁷⁶ The problem, as Stendhal came to perceive it, was none other than this. For he could not accept as complete a system of morality which took account only of what men did, not of what they thought or felt while doing it. A man is more than the sum of his actions; he has purposes, hopes, fears, which inform his behaviour and colour his perception of it.

Egoism itself, like passion and virtue, is no absolute value transferable from one individual to the next, Stendhal would reason, but a variable factor within human nature. 'On peut donc dire que plus un hom[me] est passionné,' he writes in July 1804, 'plus il est profondément égoïste.'⁷⁷

Here was something akin to the objection levelled by Diderot against the narrow, standardised conception of self-interest — '*permanent et inaltérable*' — that was to be found in Helvétius.⁷⁸ To argue as much, however, was to threaten the utilitarian ethic at its very base. For it was to deny the existence of a stable common denominator upon which an equation between happiness and virtue could be founded for all men alike. Similar objections to the utilitarian rationale can be found at work elsewhere in Stendhal's early writings. Recognising some diminution of his republican zeal in June 1804, he notes: 'Cette année (XII) je suis beaucoup plus heureux et beaucoup moins vertueux que l'année dernière.'⁷⁹ Contained in this brief remark is the very negation of the idea that the private and the public good were one. Nor was Stendhal always disposed even to regard himself as part of a wider community of fellow human beings. 'Nous naissons tous originaux,' he declares in a letter to Pauline Beyle in 1804.⁸⁰ What, then, keeps men from indulging their individual pichants with a complete disregard for their fellows? Stendhal provides a cynical answer in his letter to Pauline of 6 February 1806:

tout hom[me], sans la potence, le qu'en-dira-t-on ou l'enfer, suivrait ses passions sans égard à la justice. (Nous, nous avons de plus la noble pitié et l'amour de la gloire, mais nous sommes un sur dix mille.)⁸¹

This impression of his own distinctiveness, together with the misanthropic tone that rings out periodically from his letters in particular,⁸² militated against the embracive humanitarianism to which the young Stendhal sought to give expression. The unintelligibility of some human beings for others seemed, despite all his faith in education, to open unbridgeable gaps within humanity. 'Les gens du peuple parlent-ils souvent du *bonheur* comme nous l'entendons?' we read in a note dated 13 April 1803.⁸³ The idea is taken up again in more affirmative tones in a subsequent notebook entry:

C'est que les hommes ne se comprennent qu'à mesure qu'ils sont animés des mêmes passions. Je dis une chose très claire pour moi, mon interlocuteur la comprend suivant ses passions et souvent d'une manière entièrement opposée à ce que j'ai voulu lui dire.⁸⁴

If one extends this logic to the individual of extraordinary qualities, then all hope of communion is lost. 'L'amour des grandes âmes armées de bonne tête est inintelligible aux hom[m]es ordinaires,' writes Stendhal in a note dated 23 July 1804.⁸⁵ In a letter

penned some time later to his sister Pauline, we find the same idea given a much more personal application: 'Les jouissances des âmes comme les nôtres ou ne sont pas comprises, ou sont détestées par les âmes basses qui peuplent la société; souviens-toi de ce principe.'⁸⁶

This lack of comprehension between 'souls' is a common enough theme in the correspondence with which Stendhal regales his younger sister.⁸⁷ At no point in his early writings, however, does he contend that the gulf between individuals is due to *differences residing in the human organism itself*. Nor would it have occurred to him so to do. Helvétius had early provided an emphatic objection to any such notion:

Il est donc certain que l'inégalité d'esprit, apperçue dans les hommes que j'appelle communément bien organisés ne dépend nullement de l'excellence plus ou moins grande de leur organisation; mais de l'éducation différente qu'ils reçoivent, des circonstances diverses dans lesquelles ils se trouvent...⁸⁸

To this reasoning, Stendhal's early writings remain uniformly true. Reflecting upon the meaning of the term 'organique' in June 1804, he suggests tentatively that the human anatomy might vary subject to regional factors.⁸⁹ The thought is not pursued, however, and is indeed countered almost at once by the suggestion that sense-impressions are invariable not only from one individual to the next, but from one nation to another.⁹⁰ It was to be through an increased appreciation of Cabanis and the role of physiology that Stendhal would come, finally, to recognise the inadequacy of this rationale. Only then would he discover a compelling new means of accounting for the differences that separated men and of rationalising his intuition on this crucial question.

Cabanis and the Legitimation of the Individual

In this respect, the concluding lines of *De l'Amour* sum up an important current of Stendhal's thought as it was to develop under the influence of Cabanis. For, in seeking constant and universal principles to account for human character and conduct, Stendhal would be led to conclusions that were far removed indeed from the vision of humanity which he had sought to articulate as a young man of republican sympathies in post-Revolutionary Paris. In the medically-enshrined philosophy of Cabanis, he was to discover a legitimation of individualism, an objection to what Van Duzer calls the 'universalistic uniformitarianism' of the Enlightenment tradition,⁹¹ such as he had nowhere encountered it in Destutt de Tracy or, indeed, in Helvétius, for all the latter's unrelenting insistence on self-interest as the motive force in human nature. There are, in

Cabanis's thought, two tendencies which are not always easily reconciled. On the one hand, this respected physician and philanthropist shared with his fellow *Idéologues* an overriding concern for the perfectibility of humanity and the desire to evolve a science of man and society which would conduce to greater social happiness. On the other hand, his researches brought him face to face with the diversity and uniqueness of men *qua* organisms of flesh and blood, and with the difficulty of establishing any easy common denominator by which they might be measured. The uniformity and the diversity of humanity sit in uneasy relation to one another throughout the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, the science of man for which Cabanis endeavoured to lay the foundation remaining, as M.S. Staum puts it, 'poised on a delicate balance between the One and the Many,' between the philosopher-scientist's 'quest for uniformity, theory, and method' and the doctor's 'concern for individuality, eccentricity, and exceptional case history.'⁹²

While embracing the humanitarian aspirations of his reformist compeers, therefore, Cabanis was careful to couch any egalitarian sentiment in measured terms. The introduction and conclusion of his 'Sixième Mémoire' on the temperaments are unequivocal in the store which they set by the natural differences between men:

Quand on compare l'homme avec l'homme, on voit que la nature a mis entre les individus des différences analogues et correspondantes, en quelque sorte, à celles qui se remarquent entre les espèces. Les individus n'ont pas tous la même taille, les mêmes formes extérieures; les fonctions de la vie ne s'exécutent pas chez tous avec le même degré de force ou de promptitude; leurs penchants n'ont pas la même intensité, ne prennent pas toujours la même direction.⁹³

Even, argues Cabanis, if one were to succeed in realising the desired regeneration of society, there would exist

encore des différences notables, soit par rapport au caractère et à la direction des forces physiques vivantes, soit par rapport aux facultés et aux habitudes de l'entendement et de la volonté. L'égalité ne serait réelle qu'en général: elle serait uniquement approximative dans les cas particuliers.⁹⁴

Such a statement strikes at the very heart of the contention that men partake of a common fund of attributes and potential, and that differences between them are due to instruction and circumstance alone. This, as we saw above, had been the conviction of Helvétius; and Cabanis's criticism of the latter reveals much about the limits beyond which the physiologist believed no reformist strategy could prevail:

Enfin notre admiration pour l'esprit sage, étendu, profond d'Helvétius, pour la raison lumineuse et la méthode parfaite de Condillac, ne nous empêchera pas de reconnaître qu'ils ont manqué l'un et l'autre de connaissances physiologiques, dont leurs ouvrages auraient pu profiter utilement. S'ils eussent mieux connu l'économie animale, le premier aurait-il pu soutenir le système de l'égalité des

It comes as no surprise, in the light of such remarks, to note the qualification to which Cabanis has recourse when it falls to him to define the limits (or, as Helvétius would have it, the limitlessness) of man's educability. Indefinitely perfectible men might be; but Cabanis goes no further than to assert that the individual may become, through education physical and moral, 'en quelque sorte capable de tout.'⁹⁶ The very unscientific 'en quelque sorte' betrays a reservation — and one which Stendhal would come to share⁹⁷ — before the much more sweeping assertions of Helvétius.⁹⁸

The centre-piece of Cabanis's philosophy was the theory of the temperaments. Here was a whole new emphasis for Stendhal on the differences which *separated* men rather than the factors that bound them in their common humanity. From the earliest, Stendhal had, of course, been no stranger to a relativistic conception of man. In Du Bos, Buffon, Montesquieu and Helvétius, he had found ample insistence on the significance of variables such as climate, political régime and education in determining human character. As early as February 1803, indeed, he had gone beyond Helvétius's unwavering faith in the omnipotence of education, with all its '*collaborateurs occultes*' (in the sense not only of pedagogical instruction but of government, legislation and the whole range of institutional and cultural influences that bear upon men),⁹⁹ to introduce another factor into the equation: 'Mœurs = lois + climat.'¹⁰⁰ Some months later, Stendhal commits to paper his reason for recognising thus the importance of a factor whose influence Helvétius denied outright:

Je crois que le climat a beaucoup d'influence sur la nature des plantes, et par conséquent sur celle des animaux dont l'homme se nourrit; il en a donc sur le corps de l'homme. Or, il est évident que tous nos plaisirs passant par notre corps, le climat doit avoir une certaine influence sur nos désirs et par conséquent sur nos actions.

Lois + x climat = mœurs.

Buffon, IV, 238.¹⁰¹

The clear reference to Buffon here appears to account for Stendhal's insistence on the role of climate at this early stage.¹⁰² The latter identifies in fact three causes — climate, diet, and custom — 'qui toutes trois concourent à produire les variétés que nous remarquons dans les différents peuples de la terre.'¹⁰³ It was with just this rationale, or with the first two factors at least to which it related, that Helvétius had taken issue. This he makes clear when, in *De l'Homme*, he expressly disengages human character and conduct from physical constitution:

Je citerai les peuples du Nord en preuve de cette vérité. Leur tempérament pituiteux & phlegmatique est, dit-on, l'effet particulier de la nature de leur climat & de leur nourriture; cependant ils sont aussi susceptibles d'orgueil, d'envie, d'ambition, d'avarice, de superstition, que les peuples sanguins & bilieux du Midi. Ouvrez-t-on

l'histoire, on voit les Peuples tout-à-coup changer de caractère, sans qu'il soit arrivé de changement dans la nature de leurs climats ou de leur nourriture.¹⁰⁴

Adopting a position quite opposed to that of Helvétius, therefore, Buffon, with all his distrust of fixed genera, had prepared the ground for Stendhal towards a recognition of *some* natural variation within the human species. In the wake of his reading of Cabanis, Stendhal would return time and again to this notion, seizing now upon temperament as an inescapable first principle in the definition of character. From the moment of asserting that human nature was, in part at least, the domain of the physician, he was extending considerably the scope of his philosophy. For he had previously held, it should be stressed, to the belief that a universal humanity could be envisaged behind the warping layers of environmental relativism, that the differences between men were to be explained by reference to factors that lay *outside* of man himself. This is evident from his early conception of history (in which he includes, significantly, memoirs and biographies) as a fund of moral lessons applicable to all men at all times, 'cette base de toute connaissance de l'homme', as he put it.¹⁰⁵ In this, Stendhal echoed closely the celebrated contention of David Hume that the value of history lay in the discovery of 'the constant and universal principles of human nature' and 'the regular springs of human action and behaviour.' The same motives, Hume argued, always gave rise to the same actions; the same events followed always from the same causes.¹⁰⁶ Stendhal argues no differently when, in a letter of November 1801, he urges his sister to study 'cette histoire philosophique qui montre dans tous les événements la suite des passions des hommes', or when, in a notebook entry of January 1803, he declares quite simply: 'Les êtres changent, les choses morales ne changent jamais.'¹⁰⁷

This supposed constancy of human nature went hand in hand, the young Stendhal believed, with its universality. It is instructive to note that even a notion as fundamental, and as obvious to us today, as *race* could find no place within Stendhal's early view of man. 'Sont-ce leurs mœurs qui ont rendu les nègres noirs?' he asks in a notebook entry of January 1803.¹⁰⁸ Later, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Stendhal would suggest confidently that 'le Nègre si noir et le Danois si blond sont les descendants du même homme,' ascribing their respective evolution to wholly natural factors such as air, soil, climate and diet.¹⁰⁹ In the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, more notably, he will reflect at length upon the differences which define the various 'races' indigenous to France alone.¹¹⁰ In 1803, however, Stendhal was not yet equipped to advance any such line of thought. While he might speak in terms of *peuples* or *nations*, the latter were considered to be the result of historico-environmental processes only; the concept of race as a hereditary and ineradicable differential factor nowhere enters into Stendhal's initial considerations on man. In this, of course, he was far from

exceptional. The sciences of anthropology and ethnology, still in their infancy, had not yet arrived to undermine the optimistic humanitarianism of the French Enlightenment, with its associated notions of human equality and perfectibility. G.W. Stocking identifies in the work of Degérando, with whom the young Stendhal has earlier been compared in this context, an exemplar of that Enlightened anthropology which lacked 'any concept of "race", any notion of permanent hereditary differences between the groups of the human family':

Human nature was fundamentally the same in all times and places, and its development was governed by natural laws: man developed from his earliest state in a slow, unilinear evolutionary progress whose highest present manifestation was Western European society.¹¹¹

If the nature and conformation of the human organism itself, however, varies in ways that can be held to affect the moral characteristics of the individual, then this introduces a whole new range of considerations, fundamentally altering the determinism to which man is seen to be subject. What had been thought to be the essential identity of the genus *homo* must now give way to a pluralistic and diversitarian vision of humanity.¹¹² As G. W. Stocking argues, the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed a significant shift in focus and assumption, as advances in the science of physiology — and here the contribution of Cabanis in particular is cited — tended to replace the notion of a generic humanity with a new insistence on the natural differences which distinguished men both as peoples and as individuals.¹¹³

For a mind so preoccupied as Stendhal's with the notion of happiness, this effective disaggregation of the human community on physiological grounds led to an inescapable conclusion: the physical constitution of each individual must be held to bear, in one degree or another, upon 'ce premier penchant de l'homme: chercher le bonheur.'¹¹⁴ For one could not talk of the relation between the physical and the moral without taking account of what Stendhal perceived to be the very essence of 'moral' man: 'notre *moi moral* (notre désir du bonheur).'¹¹⁵ In *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, he would write tersely that 'le caractère d'un homme, c'est sa manière habituelle de chercher le bonheur.'¹¹⁶ We have discussed already, in Chapter V, the restrictions incumbent upon happiness when it is removed from a notionally 'moral' realm and implanted firmly in the world of physiological reality.¹¹⁷ Whatever problems this of itself might entail are infinitely compounded if happiness, like temperament, or character, or passion, can be defined in terms of no standard constitution, but is reducible in each and every case to the physical disposition of the individual. Happiness, Stendhal could read in Cabanis, was but 'le bien-être physique [...] considéré sous un autre point de vue et dans d'autres rapports.'¹¹⁸

Here once more the inadequacy of Helvétius was to be exposed. For it had been the latter's purpose to formulate, as Charles Frankel puts it, 'a calculus of morals based on the assumption that all pleasures are reducible to qualitatively identical units.'¹¹⁹ If this assumption was false, and the reader of Cabanis could not but conclude that it was, then the question posed for individual and society alike was enormous. How could one legislate for men's happiness when, as a result of their different constitutions, they find their happiness in different ways? Nor was it a question merely of identifying, through the temperaments, six definitive 'types' of man. There were, argued Cabanis, an infinite number of possible mixes and permutations among the temperaments themselves — even before the latter were complicated by any cultural or socio-political factors:

Ces six tempéraments se mélangent et se compliquent les uns avec les autres. Les proportions de ces mélanges sont aussi diverses que les combinaisons et les complications elles-mêmes: et celles-ci peuvent être aussi multipliées que les divers degrés d'intensité et les nuances dont chaque tempérament est susceptible, ou, pour ainsi dire, à l'infini.¹²⁰

The point is not lost on Stendhal, who, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, prefaces his discussion of this question with the clear statement: 'Les combinaisons de tempéraments sont infinies.'¹²¹ Was not one obliged to conclude, in the final analysis, therefore, that there were potentially as many types of happiness as there were men? Stendhal sets off down the road towards such a conclusion when he writes: 'On voit combien il est ridicule de parler de la gaieté française sous les brouillards de Picardie, ou au milieu des tristes craies de la Champagne.'¹²² The larger the community considered, the more approximate, shifting and ultimately unreliable are the labels by which it may be defined in its *chasse au bonheur*.¹²³ Stendhal's suggestion in *De l'Amour* that there might be 'autant de façons de sentir parmi les hommes que de façons de voir'¹²⁴ is but one glimpse of a question which, from 1811 notably, was to have an increasing bearing on his philosophy of man and on the moral and social implications thereof.

***Nosce te ipsum*: Self-Knowledge and Resignation to the Self**

Stendhal's private writings once more here provide an instructive insight into his thought. We have already noted how, citing Cabanis as his inspiration, he concludes in 1811 that different temperaments 'prennent le même plaisir et la même peine d'une manière différente.'¹²⁵ On the strength of such reasoning, Stendhal comes to conceive of the passions as quasi-organic phenomena taking root in a particular anatomical 'soil':

'Il paraît que certaines passions ne peuvent pas prendre et pousser dans certains tempéraments; on se figurerait difficilement l'avarice passion dominante d'un sanguin.'¹²⁶ In a note penned in April 1811, Stendhal develops this point by means of an imaginary incident which he relates as follows:

Supposons que dans une rue déserte et la nuit, un homme vous donne une calotte. Vous le reconnaissez. C'est un caractère féroce qui tire fort bien le pistolet et manie fort bien l'épée; il ne tient qu'à vous de ne pas parler de votre cas, il ne sera jamais connu, car le bretteur était ivre et ignore son action. Mais si vous êtes bilieux, l'idée de cet outrage empoisonnera tout le bonheur que vous pourriez avoir.¹²⁷

Some twenty years later, in penning the portrait of the *abbé* Pirard in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Stendhal is clearly mindful of this aspect of the bilious character. 'Mais le ciel, dans sa colère,' we read of the *abbé*, 'lui avait donné ce tempérament bilieux, fait pour sentir profondément les injures et la haine.'¹²⁸ If Pirard is defined by bilious qualities which he is powerless to suppress, Mme de Fervaques will, on the contrary, be defined by the absence of just such qualities: hers is 'la façon d'être flegmatique et tranquille des Hollondais,' not 'la constitution bilieuse qui porte à la vengeance.'¹²⁹ Such explicit references to what he had culled from Cabanis, though rare in Stendhal's novels, are nonetheless instructive. For they present temperament as a *given*, a pre-ordained definition of a whole character, attitude and mode of behaviour. Stendhal's reference to the bilious temperament is, of course, never gratuitous. As his diaries and letters reveal, he attributes a bilious quality to himself, laying claim to the essential elements of what he extracts from Cabanis as the 'caractère moral' of this temperament:

Tout cela donne à l'individu un sentiment presque habituel d'inquiétude, le bien-être facile du sanguin lui est entièrement inconnu. Il n'a de repos que dans l'excessive activité.¹³⁰

We have discussed how, on his trip to Italy in 1811, Stendhal applies just such qualities both to himself and to the Italian with whom he begins to proclaim his affinity.¹³¹ Reflecting, during the same trip, upon his lack of natural social grace, he observes: 'Je suis trop bilieux pour avoir jamais cette grâce-là. J'ai un but où je marche ferme.'¹³² What such a remark illustrates is that Stendhal was by now clearly mapping out his character, marking it off from other character 'types' and determining those areas of human experience to which it was more or less suited. Though such a tendency is in evidence from his earliest reading of Cabanis, it receives renewed impetus in 1811.¹³³ Through his identification with the bilious Italian, Stendhal was encouraged to believe that his character, if it excluded him from facile pleasures and an easy sociability, made him singularly apt for arduous undertakings. In this sense, the Russian campaign would give him an opportunity to place more than his fellow soldiers under the glare of his philosophical scrutiny. 'Tout ce qui en vaut la peine, dans ce monde, *est soi*,' he would write to Adolphe de Marestre in 1818. 'Le bon côté de ce

caractère est de prendre une retraite de Russie comme un verre de limonade.¹³⁴

We could not be further here from the '*Homo sum...*' of Stendhal's letter to Pauline Beyle some dozen years before. Though Cabanis is not overtly implicated in the remark to Mareste, it is important to recognise that the physiologist had long since provided Stendhal with the grounds for such an assertion. In the theory of the temperaments notably, Stendhal had discovered at last what he considered to be a bearing on that shifting goal of his philosophical peregrinations: knowledge of man. Though, as Georges Blin has demonstrated,¹³⁵ both the future novelist and his fictional protagonists will be ever haunted — or, in Victor Brombert's term, 'anguished'¹³⁶ — by their failure to penetrate the depths of their being and bring back a sure measure of their character, Stendhal had little doubt, by 1811, that he had happened upon a means of responding to the Delphic injunction which had rung out from Hobbes, Tracy and Cabanis in turn: *Gnôthi seauton, Nosce te ipsum, Connais-toi toi-même*.¹³⁷ We may cite briefly here the feverish diary entries of early 1806, in which the objective at least is clear, if the means are still to be defined:

[...] je me cherche. Ne pas m'arrêter à ce que je crois être.

Je crois que je ne me suis pas encore trouvé, je ne sais pas encore quel sera mon caractère.

Me chercher moi-même...

Je ne sais pas ce que je serai définitivement.¹³⁸

We recall, too, Stendhal's letter to his sister from the same period, in which he exhorts her to 'commencer la véritable étude,' that of her own character:

Lorsque tu connaîtras ton instrument, tu pourras dire: Tel archet, jouant dessus, produit malheur, tel autre, bonheur...¹³⁹

The final remark cited here goes to the heart of Stendhal's early conviction that character could be defined as the response of the individual to *external* stimuli; that the individual had control not over the vagaries of human experience, but over his own *reaction* to these, 'que le bonheur est dans notre rapport avec les choses extérieures, et que, pouvant modifier notre individu, nous sommes maîtres d'un des termes du rapport, et par conséquent du rapport...'¹⁴⁰ Mastery over one of the factors in the equation was mastery over the equation itself. 'N'importe la gravité réelle des événements,' writes Stendhal to Pauline in February 1806; 'ce que l'hom[me], sur lequel ils agissent, en croit décide de leur influence sur lui.'¹⁴¹ In this context, it is useful to signal the young Stendhal's recommendation to his sister, in a letter of 1 October 1805, that she espouse what he terms 'l'excellente philosophie de Scapin.'¹⁴²

If one looks on the black side, if one always expects the worst, he reasons, one is better placed to appreciate what joys life has to offer when they do present themselves. Thus he urges Pauline once more in a letter of 24 March 1807: 'souviens-toi de la morale de Scapin: il faut s'attendre à moins que rien pour goûter le peu qu'on trouve.'¹⁴³

All of this is essential to the appreciation of a note which Stendhal pens in November 1813, when, on re-reading *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, he comes across the line: 'Et ce qui a manqué à m'arriver, j'en ai rendu grâces à mon bon destin.' The response which these words elicit *now* from Stendhal is highly revealing:

Cette note est pour moi. Vers 1803, je pris réellement un peu l'habitude de cette philosophie de Scapin, et cela d'après ce passage-ci, mais elle ne donnait que du malheur, cette philosophie. Pour moi, la partie des maux de bien loin la plus cruelle, c'est de prévoir. Les souffrir n'est presque rien. Mon esprit n'est pas occupé à les sentir, mais à en sortir. Pour un autre tempérament, la surprise, la chute imprévue des maux, serait peut-être ce qu'ils auraient de plus rigoureux. Pour ces caractères la philosophie de Scapin est bonne.¹⁴⁴

What is remarkable about this note lies not in Stendhal's revision of his earlier contention, nor in the fragment of self-analysis which it provides; it lies rather in the *grounds* upon which Stendhal rationalises and justifies his change of mind. For he clearly believes now that temperament plays a predominant role in dictating the personal philosophy to which an individual should hold. For another temperament, Scapin's philosophy may be fine; with his own, Stendhal now concludes, it is incompatible.

The above remarks can be viewed in the same light as another instructive example. In March 1811, Stendhal makes a brief introspective entry in his diary: 'Mes deux défauts provenant de *misanthropie* font qu'il est avantageux pour moi d'être forcé impérieusement à voir et à pratiquer les hommes.'¹⁴⁵ Some four years later, he returns to the same diary entry and appends a new and revealing comment: 'Cela m'est impossible, cela est trop contre mon caractère, cela me donne trop de malheur par ennui, et en me privant de tout bonheur par les arts. 1815.'¹⁴⁶

What both of these examples clearly show is a capitulation by Stendhal to the exigencies, the essential *singularity*, of character. On both occasions, he gives evidence of a resignation that is strikingly at odds with the countless passages in which he had formerly expressed his belief that one could amend or redefine one's character to new specifications.¹⁴⁷ We are far here from the glibness of Stendhal's remark to François Périer-Lagrange in a letter from Brunswick in September 1807: 'Lorsque les passions qu'on a ne peuvent être satisfaites, il faut s'en faire de nouvelles.'¹⁴⁸ Such, he was to find, was easier said than done. The character which Stendhal had set out to 'cure' and

'perfect' in 1805 was, he came to realise, not to be so readily righted.¹⁴⁹ The imperative to 'know oneself' was no less urgent; but the knowledge should be used, he would conclude, not in a futile bid to correct the incorrigible, but rather as a means of better *accepting* one's character as it was. As though to confirm the thought, Stendhal commits to his diary in July 1814 the brief but telling reflection:

On se connaît et on ne se change pas, mais il faut se connaître.¹⁵⁰

Of this remark, Jean Starobinski writes: 'C'est l'aveu d'une défaite, de la part d'un homme dont toute l'entreprise de connaissance avait pour mobile initial la transformation de soi.'¹⁵¹ Whether in 1814 Stendhal was quite ready to admit defeat in the matter of self-knowledge and self-determination is debatable. What is clear, however, is that the confidence with which he had broached this question in his earlier writings was by now very seriously eroded. Georges Blin offers some of the most perceptive remarks advanced by any critic on the shift from 'avancement' to 'accommodation' in Stendhal's search for self-knowledge. As Blin puts it:

[...] consentant à ne devoir que s'accepter, mais idéologue encore dans le fatalisme, il se fait de l'*être soi* non seulement une injonction, mais post-réflexive, doute que l'on sache "se prendre comme on est" si l'on ne sait comment on est.¹⁵²

In a curious text dated 28 July 1822, Stendhal develops an elaborate analogy between human character and granite. Under the arresting title 'ESSAIS DE GEOLOGIE MORALE', character is described, with the aid of a sketch, as 'des rochers de granit' along whose contours the 'débris de la végétation' have settled, filling in the gaps and fissures. 'Il faut savoir faire la différence,' writes Stendhal, 'du granit au remplissage.' He explains:

Le granit, c'est le caractère naturel d'un homme, sa manière habituelle de chercher le bonheur. Le caractère est comme les traits: on commence à le voir à deux ou trois ans; il est bien reconnaissable à seize ou dix-sept, on l'aperçoit dans toute sa force à vingt-six ou trente.

Le remplissage [...], c'est ce que la politesse, l'usage du monde, la prudence, fait sur un caractère.

Having thus defined the terms of his analogy, Stendhal goes on to make a more substantive point. The inexperienced eye, he claims, mistakes the smooth contours formed by the build-up of debris for the character itself:

Il ne voit pas que dès que l'homme devra faire quelque chose d'important à ses propres yeux, il suivra le contour du *granit* de son caractère.¹⁵³

There is no need to insist upon the extent to which such a view of character is at variance with the philosophy of Helvétius, who would have admitted of no such distinction between the rock and its surface deposits. For it was the latter's contention

that character was in its very essence acquired, that it was synonymous with what is here considered as no more than an extraneous accretion. It followed, for Helvétius, that the tendencies of character were cultivable and infinitely modifiable.¹⁵⁴ The implications of Stendhal's argument above, by contrast, are clear. Character is never, at bottom, altered; it is merely overlain with the influences to which one is exposed from day to day, influences which, in testing moments, are dispelled to reveal the true 'granite' underneath. Any attempt to modify character, which is defined from the earliest age and which becomes clearly recognisable in adolescence, amounts, it is implied, to so much self-delusion.¹⁵⁵

Increasingly, Stendhal's private diaries and letters echo this note of resignation, of accommodation to one's character with all its strengths and all its shortcomings. The boundary between control and capitulation, between assuming one's character and being condemned to it, is a fine — and a shifting — one.¹⁵⁶ As much is acknowledged by Stendhal in a letter to Clémentine Curial in 1824:

Je me compare à un conscrit qui arrive dans un régiment de dragons; on lui donne un cheval. S'il a un peu de bon sens, il connaît bien vite les qualités de ce cheval. Le cheval, c'est le caractère; mais connaître que le cheval qu'on monte est ombrageux n'ôte pas du tout à ce cheval la qualité d'être ombrageux. Il en est ainsi de mon caractère; depuis deux ans surtout, je commence à le bien connaître.¹⁵⁷

It should not be assumed from this, of course, that character is always for Stendhal a burden to be borne. On a great many occasions, he retreats into his character as into a stronghold. The letters to Pauline in which he rehearses the view that they are of a privileged human stock cannot be dismissed out of hand as just so much posturing in the guise of a 'superior soul' — though they are certainly that too. The point to be made here is that whether Stendhal is exalting his character or cursing it — and he does both with equal vehemence — he is defining its *difference*.¹⁵⁸

Of all the notions in Stendhal's real and fictional worlds, none would prove more imposing than this. As a quinquagenarian reflecting upon his childhood, he will articulate, or, more precisely perhaps, *create*,¹⁵⁹ a personal mythology which is informed throughout by the consciousness of his difference from others. In the letters and journal entries which we have cited, one apprehends something of the tension in Stendhal between an appreciation of what marks him apart and a desire to take his character in hand and mould it to his own specifications. It is in his fictional world, however, that Stendhal will bring the sharpest focus to bear upon this notion of 'difference' — between the hero and the world, between the hero as he *is* and the hero as he *would* be — and that he will dramatise most effectively the tensions between the intellect and the 'fatal flaws' of character.¹⁶⁰ Octave de Malivert, for all the exceptional nature of his case, speaks not for himself alone when he acknowledges: 'J'ai par

malheur un caractère singulier, je ne me suis pas créé ainsi; tout ce que j'ai pu faire, c'est de me connaître.¹⁶¹

In considering the range of Stendhal's writings across which this question casts its shadow, there is a case for setting the *Vie de Henry Brulard*, and, to a lesser degree, the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, somewhat apart. For there is present in both a calmness, an 'apaisement intime',¹⁶² which is often lacking in the diaries and letters with which these introspective works may be compared. Jean Starobinski, in his searching analysis, puts it thus:

En vieillissant, Stendhal commencera à aimer la connaissance pour elle-même, sans espoir d'en faire un instrument utile à quelque autre but. Cette tardive quête de soi n'est plus destinée à lui préparer son avenir (comme faisaient les *Journaux intimes* de 1806 à 1818) mais à lui restituer son passé.¹⁶³

To describe this state of mind as a 'philosophical' acceptance of character would be no misnomer. For Stendhal discovers in the philosophy of Cabanis specifically a means of understanding and — much more importantly — of justifying, of *making peace with*, himself. Kurt Ringger's description of the *Vie de Henry Brulard* as a 'mémoire justificatif' is, in this sense, thoroughly apt.¹⁶⁴ Stendhal's objective in these pages is, as he describes it, to understand his 'machine'.¹⁶⁵ But there is more to the *Vie de Henry Brulard* than this: there is something, too, of that same 'nécessité intérieure de se disculper et de faire son apologie' which Gita May recognises as a motivating factor in Rousseau's introspection.¹⁶⁶ In Stendhal's case, the manner whereby this need is assuaged is particularly noteworthy. For it is to no romanticised notion of his own essential goodness or innocence that he has recourse, but rather to the hard edge of medical science as he perceives it. Thus his personal attributes and failings — his 'symptômes du tempérament mélancolique', his 'tempérament de feu', his 'timidité', his 'folie', his 'pudeur' and 'habitude d'une discrétion parfaite'¹⁶⁷ — all pass, by turns, under the lens of Cabanis's theories and find a psycho-physiological ratification against which it would be vain to remonstrate. Here, as Francine Marill Albérès perceptively notes, lies the ultimate value of Cabanis for Stendhal:

La théorie de Cabanis calme les angoisses de Stendhal dans la mesure même où ses angoisses rentrent dans un système, sont classées et homologuées, ressortissent à des problèmes scientifiques, et non plus d'un conflit avec la société, qui serait impossible à résoudre.¹⁶⁸

What character traits he discerns in himself are clearly seen by Stendhal to be the function of his particular constitution, and, to that extent, to lie beyond the bounds of remedy or censure. Thus, in acknowledging what he deems at times to be a lack of hard-headed judgment and sense of proportion, he concludes: 'J'excuse ce défaut de mon esprit en l'appelant: *effet nécessaire et sine qua non* d'une sensibilité extrême.'¹⁶⁹

In such remarks, we discern something of that 'unashamed cultivation of the human organism on its own terms' which, as W.D. Williams notes, Nietzsche was to find so laudable in Stendhal.¹⁷⁰ Even the latter's early revulsion at the grubby specimens of republicanism whom he had witnessed during an illicit sortie to the Société des Jacobins as a child is now rationalised and given a retrospective justification by recourse to Cabanis. 'En un mot,' concedes the autobiographer, 'je fus alors comme aujourd'hui: j'aime le peuple, je déteste ses oppresseurs; mais ce serait pour moi un supplice de tous les instants que de vivre avec le peuple.'¹⁷¹ He goes on:

J'emprunterai pour un instant la langue de Cabanis. J'ai la peau beaucoup trop fine, une peau de femme (plus tard j'avais toujours des ampoules après avoir tenu mon sabre pendant une heure); je m'écorche les doigts, que j'ai fort bien, pour un rien; en un mot, la superficie de mon corps est de femme. De là peut-être une horreur insurmontable pour ce qui a l'air *sale*, ou *humide*, ou *noirâtre*. Beaucoup de ces choses se trouvaient aux Jacobins de S[ain]t-André.¹⁷²

The logic of Stendhal's thinking here could not be more transparent. His insistence on the delicacy of his skin, as Robert Alter observes, 'has the effect, by invoking Cabanis's notion of physiological determinants for moral qualities, of excusing the would-be republican's recoil from the common people, for it reduces his social fastidiousness to a reflex of his physical makeup.'¹⁷³ What is particularly significant about the passage in question is that its application goes far beyond the single childhood incident recalled by Stendhal. The suggestion that he has not changed one whit since — 'je fus alors comme aujourd'hui' — lends an enduring quality to the physical and moral characteristics described. By affirming thus the immutability of character in its essential traits, Stendhal strikes a firm note of determinism in which the legacy of Cabanis is again unmistakable. For the physiologist, as he is filtered through Stendhal's perception, comes to sanction a deterministic view of human nature which is but a short step away from fatalism. Never is this more starkly in evidence than in the uncompromising passage which we find in Stendhal's journal of 28 July 1822:

Notre caractère, bon ou mauvais, c'est comme le *corps* que nous reconnaissons à seize ans, quand nous commençons à réfléchir. *Beau, laid* ou *médiocre*; il faut le prendre tel qu'il est; seulement l'homme sage en tire parti.

Une fois que nous savons quel est notre caractère, nous pouvons nous attendre *au bien et au mal*, qui en sont prédits dans les livres qui donnent la description du dit caractère. Par exemple:

caractère violent,

phlegmatique,

tendre et mélancolique, comme J.-J. Rousseau.¹⁷⁴

The emphasis on the term *corps* and the close association between character and temperament implicate Cabanis directly in this most pessimistic of statements. Such supine resignation to the inevitable, however, nowhere forms part of Cabanis's

philosophy in its broadest reading. The whole thrust of the latter's work, as we have argued, is towards a moral and social regeneration of mankind that could only be achieved through the understanding and judicious harnessing of the physiological factors which predispose the individual to particular modes of thought or action.¹⁷⁵ Temperament is but one element in the composition of character — and even then Cabanis leaves open the possibility of acquired temperament.¹⁷⁶ What Stendhal does, therefore, is to push one aspect only of Cabanis's thought through to its conclusion. The importance of the passage in question is that it establishes very clearly one of the poles around which Stendhal's view of moral man had for some time gravitated — and would continue thereafter to gravitate. For he never satisfactorily reconciles determinism and moral responsibility within any coherent synthesis. His view of man as an object of inscrutable forces that lie beyond his bidding alternates with a belief in the power of the individual, through the exercise of reason, to exert some measure of control over the course of his life. Stendhal would hold to the principle that political régime, education and cultural environment had a role to play in defining human character; but, in the absence of any fundamental and long-term revision of society, we find him inclining increasingly to the view that there was little the individual could do to redress the excesses and shortcomings of a character that was, in the final analysis, not of his choosing.

Italian *mores* and the Fragmentation of Man

Such, in a sense, had been the problem — posed in the abstract terms of 'heart' and 'head' — with which the young Stendhal had wrestled in the *Filosofia Nova*. His early writings, however, buoyed as they are by a confidence in man's power to mould his character and behaviour to desired ends, betray nothing of the fatalism that is exhaled by the passage cited above. With the reading of Cabanis and the annexation of a scientifically-orientated theory of human nature, the problem is given a new and keener edge. Where does the boundary lie between physiological determinism and rational control? The question is one which haunts Stendhal; and the answers which are to be found in his writing tend ever more in a direction that is at variance with his erstwhile faith in man's capacity to shape his own destiny.

Qu'est-ce que le *moi*? Je n'en sais rien. Je me suis un jour réveillé sur cette terre; je me trouve lié à un corps, à un caractère, à une fortune. Irai-je m'amuser vainement à vouloir les changer, et cependant oublier de vivre? Duperie: je me soumetts à leurs défauts. Je me soumetts à mon penchant aristocratique, après avoir déclamé dix ans, et de bonne foi, contre toute aristocratie. J'adore les nez romains, et pourtant, si je suis français, je me soumetts à n'avoir reçu du ciel qu'un nez champenois:

qu'y faire?¹⁷⁷

In this passage from *Rome, Naples et Florence*, we find a clear acknowledgment by Stendhal of that dichotomy 'between democratic principle and aristocratic propensity' which he would seek to rationalise by recourse to Cabanis in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*.¹⁷⁸ Here, as there, moral characteristics are set on a par with physical attributes. One is stuck with one's character as one is stuck with one's skin-type — or one's nose. The repetition (three times in succession) of the formula 'je me soumets' gives a strong deterministic ring to Stendhal's reasoning here, underlining the futility of striving — 'vainement' — to change one's lot. The passage has about it something of the self-conscious philosophising which characterises Stendhal's earlier letters to his sister Pauline. The fundamental difference, however, lies in a note of resignation, of submissiveness, that is seldom to be found in the earlier writings.

These few lines, with their alternately interrogative and assertive tone, go to the heart of what Georges Blin calls 'le problème du moi'¹⁷⁹ for Stendhal, posing not only the riddle of personality, but the whole question of the relationship between man and his destiny in its broadest sense. It is appropriate that the above passage should appear in *Rome, Naples et Florence*; for nowhere does Stendhal strike a more resolutely deterministic note than in his considerations of Italy and the Italian character. The capitulation to Nature's design which is evident in the Neapolitan *lazzarone* or the Roman peasant is unconscious and unconditional. As such, it is described by Stendhal in dispassionate tones, free of moral censure.¹⁸⁰ The Italians, when compared to their French or English counterparts, are 'dominés par les différences de climat et d'organisation';¹⁸¹ yet it is this very despotism of Nature, allied to their social and political institutions, which 'liberates' them in a sense, allowing each to 'chercher le bonheur comme il l'entend'.¹⁸² A foreigner in Rome, we read in *De l'Amour*, may be surprised by the antics of some love-crossed individuals — but 'personne ne les blâme, car ils font ce qui leur fait plaisir'.¹⁸³

The presence of a foreign eye looking in on the Italian — and failing to comprehend what it sees — is a common device which Stendhal employs to highlight the unbridgeable gulf between the character of the Italians and that of their European neighbours. The Italians, we read in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, 'ont d'autres poumons que nous'.¹⁸⁴ For all its brevity, this remark sums up the world of difference which separates the foreigner from the Italian — for a glance at Cabanis (and at *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*) confirms the significance accorded by the physiologist to the lung as an index of physical and moral disposition.¹⁸⁵ In Stendhal's considerations of Italy, the notion of a *common humanity* is conspicuous by its absence. Humanity is rent not only between North and South, France and Italy, but

between regions, towns, villages — even streets. In Rome, 'la largeur d'une place change les mœurs.'¹⁸⁶ Is it not clear, asks the author of *La Duchesse de Palliano*, 'que les passions varient toutes les fois qu'on s'avance de cent lieues vers le Nord?'¹⁸⁷ Set *La Chartreuse de Parme* a few degrees further north, and 'il y a lieu à un nouveau paysage comme à un nouveau roman.'¹⁸⁸

Nothing conveys more succinctly the relativity of human nature as Stendhal came to perceive it than these simple geographical references in which his writings abound. 'Pour comprendre que dix degrés de froid font à Stockholm un temps très doux, il faudrait commencer par sentir la dureté habituelle du climat,' we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*.¹⁸⁹ Compare two sixty-year old men, writes Stendhal with economy in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'dont l'un a vécu à Paris et l'autre à Dijon ou Grenoble.'¹⁹⁰ If humanity differs thus within the same geo-national space, little wonder that such irreparable rifts occur from one country to the next. 'Ce qui est aimable à Paris est indécent à Genève,' we are told in *Rome, Naples et Florence*.¹⁹¹ 'Ce qui est divin en France,' declares the piqued correspondent for the *New Monthly Magazine*, 'n'est que flippant en Angleterre.'¹⁹²

One of the clearest indications of Stendhal's shift away from the notion of a homogeneous humanity is the store which he would come to set by the concept of race. We have touched already upon the question of race as it is presented in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, where Stendhal, on the authority of W.-F. Edwards, divides the French 'en Gaëls, en Kymris, en Ibères et en Métais.'¹⁹³ Edwards's letter to Stendhal in October 1837 reflects clearly the latter's concern with the evolving science of ethnology.¹⁹⁴ Concern with this question is evident, too, in the *Promenades dans Rome*. 'Grâce au climat et à la race des hommes (ce sont des Grecs),' predicts Stendhal, 'l'éducation fera en dix ans à Naples ce qu'elle ne peut opérer qu'après un demi-siècle en Bohême.'¹⁹⁵ Elsewhere we find him comparing the relative merits of the Frenchman, the Englishman and the Roman, and affirming unequivocally 'la supériorité de la race romaine.'¹⁹⁶

Stendhal's precise choice in these instances of the Roman and Neapolitan, rather than the 'Italian', is not without significance. For 'race' — as a sort of 'milieu naturel interne'¹⁹⁷ — comes to signify a means of differentiating not between peoples and nations alone, but between communities and localities within the same country.

On a plus de gaieté à Siëne, qui n'est qu'à six lieues de Florence: on trouve de la passion à Arezzo. Tout change en Italie toutes les dix lieues. D'abord, les races d'hommes sont différentes.¹⁹⁸

Thus the superiority of the Roman is not reserved for comparisons with *other* nations

alone. 'Le Romain,' declares Stendhal, 'me semble supérieur, sous tous les rapports, aux autres peuples de l'Italie.'¹⁹⁹

In no work does Stendhal take greater pains — or greater pleasure, it seems — in underlining the differences that separate men than in *Rome, Naples et Florence* and the *Promenades dans Rome*. 'On peut être bon et honnête à Cosenza ou à Pizzo,' we are told, 'tout en faisant assassiner son ennemi.'²⁰⁰ The reader familiar only with the moral code of his own country 'entend par les mots *décence, vertu, duplicité*, des choses matériellement différentes de celles que vous avez voulu désigner.'²⁰¹ Even a Church that pretends to catholicity is fragmented by the humanity which it serves:

Les sots qui ne savent que ce qui est imprimé dans les livres vulgaires, croient que c'est le même christianisme qui règne en France et en Italie.
En Europe, autant de religions que d'Etats. [...]. Gens impartiaux! jugez du génie du christianisme par Rome et Naples.²⁰²

No vestige here of that 'single principle' which Stendhal had envisaged in 1804 as a means of bringing all men to view the world within the same moral perspective.²⁰³ The hopeless lack of comprehension between human beings in even the simplest matters is a theme to which we find him returning time and again in his considerations of Italy. It is a central notion in a letter of 30 June 1819 to Matilde Dembowski, which, for all the intimacy of its message and the vested interest which it serves, presents a view of human nature quite consistent with the broader logic that informs *Rome, Naples et Florence* and the *Promenades dans Rome*:

Il est évident que, comme *étrangers*, [...], comme *étrangers*, nous ne nous comprenons pas; nos démarches parlent une langue différente.
[...] Nous ne nous comprenons absolument pas.
[...] Combien de mes actions les plus simples de Milan ont dû vous déplaire! Dieu sait ce qu'elles signifient en italien.²⁰⁴

As with morals and *mores*, so too with the arts. 'Quelle idée se formerait de nos arts un habitant d'Otaïti, pour qui tout ce qui tient chez nous à la galanterie serait invisible?'²⁰⁵ Not that one need go so far afield to uncover the discrepancies in human sensibility. Between the author of the *Promenades dans Rome* and his travelling companions the gulf in the matter of aesthetic appreciation seems no less wide: 'Telle est l'origine de tous nos différends: beaucoup de choses insignifiantes à mes yeux leur semblent jolies, et ce qui est la beauté sublime pour moi leur fait peur.'²⁰⁶ What Stendhal is above all anxious to do, here just as much as in *Racine et Shakespeare* or *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, is to defy canons of judgment which assume some universally applicable law of taste or 'rightness'. 'Me croyez-vous assez fou pour blâmer un être de ce qu'il *sent ainsi*?' he asks, with mock outrage, in *Rome, Naples et Florence*. 'Je me borne à noter des faits.'²⁰⁷ Such is the relativistic reasoning which the question of artistic sensibility will everywhere come to elicit from Stendhal:

Le voyageur doit se rappeler que, dans ce qui plaît, nous ne pouvons aimer que ce qui nous plaît. La nature humaine est faite ainsi, le même homme ne peut pas adorer Raphaël et Rubens.²⁰⁸

The Problem for Morality

In all of the foregoing, we are confronted squarely with the same 'disaggregation' of humanity, the same division of the human species into 'types', and of types into individuals, which had been evident in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and *De l'Amour*. The notion of *difference*, while it may be expressed in moral and aesthetic terms, takes root for Stendhal in a deeper imperative against which it is futile to protest. 'La manière de *sentir* de l'Italie est absurde pour les habitants du Nord,' he declares in *Rome, Naples et Florence*:

Je ne conçois même pas, après y avoir rêvé un quart d'heure, par quels caractères, par quels mots on pourrait la leur faire entendre. — L'effort du bon sens des gens les plus distingués est de comprendre qu'ils ne peuvent pas comprendre. Cela se réduit à l'absurdité du tigre qui voudrait faire sentir au cerf les délices qu'il trouve à boire du sang.²⁰⁹

The image is arresting. It is not, however, unique. It echoes, in fact, a number of similar occasions when Stendhal has recourse to the animal realm in order to point up the differences that exist — naturally, *necessarily* — from one people to another, one individual to the next. 'Qui osera dire au tigre rapide: "Echange ton bonheur pour celui de la tendre colombe"?'²¹⁰ Such is the question which rings out defiantly from the introduction of *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, and which is later pursued in an evocative analogy:

Quoi de plus différent qu'une chèvre et un loup? Cependant ces animaux sont à peu près du même poids. Quoi de plus différent que l'anthropophage du Potose et le Hollondais tranquille, fumant sa pipe devant son canal d'eau dormante, et écoutant attentivement le bruit des grenouilles qui s'y jettent?²¹¹

The contrast between the Bolivian cannibal and the phlegmatic Dutchman, underlain as it is with the comparison of wolf to goat, is stark. What is more, it is devoid of all explicit moral comment — or, to be more precise, the 'moral' comment must be seen to reside in the simple, repeated question 'Quoi de plus différent?' For there is no attempt to judge both by a common standard: instead, the Dutchman and the Bolivian remain defined, irreducibly, by their difference one from the other.

Recourse to 'beast-fables' as a means of illustrating the disparities and the limits of comprehension between human beings was, as Michael Wood observes, to become a standard feature of Stendhal's discourse.²¹² Mérimée's testimony is once more instructive in this particular: "'Vous êtes un chat, je suis un rat", disait-il souvent pour terminer les discussions...'²¹³ Stendhal was far, of course, from being the patentee of this rationale; the beast analogy had a long established pedigree in French literature. 'J'aurai beau dire aux moutons de faire les loups, ils seront toujours moutons, et aux loups d'être doux comme des agneaux, ils resteront toujours loups.' Such had been Mme de Puisieux's preamble to the biting injunction: 'Quiconque est loup, agisse en loup.'²¹⁴ The remark might have come from Sade, *La Mettrie*, or a host of other eighteenth-century writers who had deployed their philosophy in the defence of 'the natural' as an overriding arbiter of human character and conduct, 'une finalité transcendant la conscience.'²¹⁵ In his refutation of *De l'Homme*, Diderot had given pointed expression to this reasoning, in response to Helvétius's conception of a standard, indefinitely modifiable human nature: 'On ne donne pas du nez à un lévrier, on ne donne pas la vitesse du lévrier à un chien-couchant; vous aurez beau faire, celui-ci gardera son nez, et celui-là gardera ses jambes.'²¹⁶ While it would be otiose to seek in Stendhal the influence of any single author in this respect, it is clear, as Michel Crouzet points out, that he was to subscribe with vigour to the rationale in question:

Ne résume-t-il pas en effet et fort bien le 18ème siècle en lui empruntant toutes les allégories qui prouvent qu'il n'y a que des visions du monde relatives à des êtres différemment organisés et dont les valeurs ou points de vue ne sont jamais échangeables? Etre soi, c'est être différent...²¹⁷

Nowhere here is there any suggestion of the malleability and open possibility which are so much a feature of Stendhal's earliest reflections on the human condition. The problem confronting Stendhal — as it confronted so many of the thinkers upon whom he drew for the raw materials of his philosophy — was that of reconciling two quite distinct, indeed opposing, conceptions of human nature. The eighteenth century, as Diderot's refutation of Helvétius well attests, had set out clearly the terms in which the issue was to be debated; but it had failed to resolve these into a coherent philosophy of man. Though it is difficult to state with precision when Stendhal recanted his early faith in man's capacity to attain to some ideal standard, it is clear that this was decidedly a thing of the past once he had redefined the principles of his philosophy in 1811. The examples cited above may be read in conjunction with a letter written by Stendhal to his sister Pauline in May of that year. The letter, it is important to note, belongs to a period in which Stendhal was reflecting upon his recent reading of Cabanis and endeavouring to apply the physiologist's principles to what he could observe in himself and in those around him.²¹⁸ 'Si nous avons la simplicité,' he declares, 'de courir après le bonheur des petites âmes, nous sommes tout étonnés, arrivés à la jouissance, de les voir

heureux et nous ennuyés.' He continues:

C'est tout simple: il faut des poules à un renard et des pommes de terre à un porc. Nous ne sommes pas de la même espèce que ces animaux-là. La même nourriture ne nous convient pas.²¹⁹

The crudity of Stendhal's language here, his peremptory recognition of the differences that separate individuals in their impulsions and needs, together with the implication that there exists a higher order of humanity to whom the laws for the common mass do not apply, place this passage among those in his writings that are most redolent of his later admirer, Friedrich Nietzsche. The extract cited belongs clearly, as the rest of the letter in question attests, to one of Stendhal's more misanthropic moments.²²⁰ The lack of any measure in the language with which he vents his spleen — 'tous les hommes sont froids, médiocres et aiment à faire du mal aux gens qu'ils croient heureux'²²¹ — is a warning against setting too much store by his remarks here as the expression of any definitive moral or philosophical stance. What is important once again, however, is the evocation, through recourse to animal imagery, of natural and ineradicable distinctions between human beings which, Stendhal suggests, precede any law, morality or aesthetic canon.²²²

Here was an idea whose power and durability may be gauged by the place which it would come to occupy across the range of Stendhal's writings. A letter addressed to Adolphe de Mareste on 3 March 1820, echoing both the sentiment and the imagery of the lines penned for Pauline Beyle almost a decade earlier, frames one of the most resounding statements of relativism to be found anywhere in Stendhal's hand. 'Je puis avoir tort,' he declares, 'mais ma sensation, *pour moi*, est vraie.'²²³ The paradoxical terms in which the remark is couched — sharpened by Stendhal's emphasis on the words '*pour moi*' — suggests that there is a personal truth, ratified by the senses, that overrides all other standards of 'rightness'. Having made this essential point, Stendhal goes on, in the same vein, to explain to Mareste why he chooses to reside in Italy rather than in France:

J'aime mieux passer ma vie avec Monti et Rossini. Je ne me sens pas d'humeur de vous décrire *Alexandre aux Indes*. Cela est horriblement ardu, et, après s'être tué de peine, cela se réduit au discours du lion, qui veut faire goûter au cerf le plaisir de boire du sang. Vous êtes l'homme de Paris, moi l'homme de Milan. Le foin intellectuel qui nourrit nos esprits depuis six ans est différent. Une bouteille ne peut pas contenir à la fois du champagne et du bordeaux.²²⁴

Images which are used elsewhere by Stendhal to evoke the diversity of human sensibility and the determinism by which it is governed are heaped here one on top of the other.²²⁵ Such, of course, is the reasoning underlying the theory for which Stendhal would coin his term 'romanticisme'; but the amplification which he gives the

notion here appears to take it beyond the boundaries of aesthetic sensibility alone. For the 'manière de sentir de l'Italie,' which he had declared in *Rome, Naples et Florence* to be beyond the comprehension of the outsider,²²⁶ is once more described here as the slaking of thirst with blood. The imagery is too contrived to be gratuitous. If Stendhal's 'romanticisme' appeared to offer some solution to the problem of human diversity from a purely *aesthetic* point of view,²²⁷ was the implication not that there remained a problem for *morality* which might be much less easily resolved?²²⁸

Here we return to the difficulty which is latent in Cabanis and which is passed on unresolved to Stendhal. For while both express the hope, as we have seen, that some method may be found to administer 'l'espèce humaine comme un individu,'²²⁹ both acknowledge, in their respective ways, that physiology itself constitutes a threshold beyond which any harmonisation of humanity must be deemed impracticable. With this notion, we come to the very heart of the moral dilemma upon which we touched in Chapter VII, the antinomy in Stendhal's thought between concern for a uniformly well regulated social order and admiration for the individual of extraordinary energy who threatens to disrupt it. As Margaret Tillett observes, Stendhal's interest is engaged by 'the study of the pressures which turn *l'homme* into *le citoyen*, and those which from time to time compel him to assert that he is unique.'²³⁰ Once more, in this context, Cabanis's 'Sixième Mémoire' on the temperaments is inescapable:

Il est possible que les circonstances particulières qui président à la formation de chaque individu de la même espèce, déterminent irrévocablement le degré d'énergie et le caractère de sa sensibilité. Par exemple, il est possible qu'il y ait d'homme à homme des différences primordiales dans ce qu'on peut appeler le principe sensitif lui-même: il est du moins très-sûr que ces différences ont lieu d'espèce à espèce.²³¹

This notion of 'energy' as a quantifiable, a means of differentiating between not only peoples but individuals within the same community, is central to the lessons which Stendhal draws from Cabanis.²³² If the 'sensitive principle', the 'degree of energy', may differ so radically from one man to the next, then the rule of human nature becomes nothing more than the sum of so many exceptions. While humanity is divisible into races and nations, the latter themselves are but aggregates of smaller communities which are reducible in turn to the individuals who people them.

With this in mind, we are better able to approach the character of the Italian as Stendhal presents it. For we encounter here, more than anywhere else, a legitimisation of the *individual*, who, far from being part of that happy humanity of which Stendhal had dreamed in 1804, inhabits a world that begins and ends with the Self. 'Chacun s'occupe de soi, et si l'on songe au voisin, c'est pour s'en méfier et le regarder presque comme un ennemi.'²³³ Stendhal's Italy represents in this sense the very antithesis of

the society that is evoked in his early notes and letters. Music and love, he writes in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, may be indulged to satiety; but 'on y meurt empoisonné de mélancolie, si l'on est citoyen'²³⁴ In a world of human islands, insists Stendhal, 'Tout ce qu'on peut espérer de mieux *c'est que les intérêts s'accordent*.'²³⁵ And where they do not, the same *ultima ratio* — that 'fatalité de la nature humaine' which Stendhal will lament in a letter to Byron — may be invoked.²³⁶

It is through the workings of an all-pervading determinism that we are invited to perceive the Italian character, forged by temperament and by a legislation which, Stendhal asserts, 'fortifie la mauvaise tendance du climat.'²³⁷ The ferocity which is endemic among the Italians, the penchant which they display for the sanguinary in their actions, is presented by Stendhal as a function of their energy and — the notion should not be understressed — as an index of their *potential*.²³⁸ 'Les vrais méchants-bilieux de l'Italie sont les Piémontais,' we are told in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*; yet in these same Piedmontese, one is more likely than elsewhere to find the stuff of which great men are made.²³⁹ This yoking of physiological and moral qualities diminishes substantially the *choice* which the Italian is seen to exercise in the question of his character and conduct. It resonates, moreover, with Cabanis's definition of the *bilieux-mélancolique* temperament as

le plus malheureux et le plus funeste de tous. C'est celui qui paraît propre aux nations fanatiques, vindicatives et sanguinaires. C'est lui qui détermine les sombres emportements des Tibère et des Sylla...²⁴⁰

'Est-ce leur faute s'ils sont féroces?' asks Stendhal in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*.²⁴¹ In each of the works dedicated to Italy, Stendhal insists upon the irrelevance of such concepts as 'fault' and 'blame' as they might be applied to the individual Italian's thoughts or actions:

Les idées d'*ordre* et de *justice* qui, depuis le morcellement des biens nationaux, sont au fond du cœur du paysan champenois ou bourguignon, sembleraient le comble de l'absurdité au paysan de la Sabine. Voulez-vous ici être opprimé par tout le monde et détruit? *soyez juste et humain*.²⁴²

No question, then, of human solidarity here. Yet so much of the 'moral' dimension which appears to be sacrificed outright in Stendhal's Italy is rescued through the all-important notion of potential. For in this land, where a harsh law of nature holds sway, where 'une chaleur brûlante exalte la bile,' the *ressort* is present in abundance: 'ce n'est que la *direction* du ressort qui manque.'²⁴³ Stendhal is clear in signalling the rich potential which he recognises in those Italian brigands who, 'bien dirigés, auraient été capables de grandes choses.'²⁴⁴ In Italy, we are told, 'se trouve le ressort qui fait les grands hommes: mais il est dirigé à contre-sens...'²⁴⁵ The Italian 'est musicien par

instinct, poète par nature, victime et esclave par la seule faute de ceux qui le gouvernent.²⁴⁶ Under the continued weight of a corruptive regime, 'il deviendra un voleur ou un paresseux, un mendiant ou un joueur d'orgue.'²⁴⁷ Such is the lottery through which the Italian may seek the means of giving expression to his nature. 'La force,' as Michel Crouzet puts it, 'barrée ici, se montre là, autre, masquée, transférée.'²⁴⁸

Contained within the foregoing paragraph, it may be argued, is Stendhal's most representative judgment of the Italian character. The apology of Italian energy which runs through his writings is as much an expression of what *could be* as a celebration of what *is*. Nowhere does Stendhal better display what Eugene Goodheart describes as that 'extraordinary sensitivity to the uniqueness, the volatility, the instability of the energy that composes the self.'²⁴⁹ The Italian is a being, according to Stendhal's logic, 'forcé aux grandes choses par son organisation physique' — and a people, in the borrowed terms of Alfieri, 'à qui rien ne manque, pour s'immortaliser, qu'un champ de bataille et le moyen d'agir.'²⁵⁰ The frustrated greatness of the Latin becomes a leitmotiv. Italy is, we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'la terre où les grands hommes sont encore le moins impossibles.'²⁵¹ The wording is as meaningful as it is contrived. 'Ce peuple,' we are likewise told in the *Promenades dans Rome*, 'est moins éloigné que nous des grandes actions.'²⁵² Whoever does not understand this, declares Stendhal, will never understand Italy.²⁵³ 'Donnez pendant vingt ans un Napoléon aux Romains,' he writes laconically in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'et vous verrez.'²⁵⁴

The Problem for Society

The destinies to which men and nations are suited, and the degree to which circumstances permit them to realise their potential, are two sides of a question which preoccupies Stendhal profoundly. The problem for any society, as he saw it, lay in fitting its most able members to the most demanding roles. In this respect, his thought comes to mark a departure from the philosophical spirit of the Enlightenment and Revolution. 'The very atmosphere of the Revolution,' as M.S. Staum argues, 'directed public attention away from organic differences which might suggest the "humiliating inequality of minds".' Instead, concern was focused, in keeping with the ideal of a universal man, upon 'those differences which governments could directly alter — political institutions and educational opportunity.'²⁵⁵ The egalitarian humanitarianism of the Enlightenment — as articulated by Helvétius among others — soon gave way in

Stendhal's mind, however, to the conviction that all individuals were not equal in potential, therefore could not be equal in achievement. The uniformitarian ideals of the Revolution are thus turned back upon themselves by a Stendhal who, in the *Promenades dans Rome*, will lament the 'effet de l'idée nivelante du XIX^e siècle' which, he contends, 'défend d'oser et de travailler à ce petit nombre d'hommes extraordinaires qu'elle ne peut empêcher de naître.'²⁵⁶

The source of Stendhal's thinking on the crucial question of matching men to social roles shifted definitively in this sense to Cabanis, who stood apart from the more utopian visionaries and held that it would be achievement enough if all men could be made fit to live as citizens, without entertaining the vain hope of making all equally fit to hold the same posts. If horses bred in the same stable continued to give evidence of different qualities and characteristics, then surely citizens of the same nation would continue to evince differences in vital energy, physical strength, intellectual ability:

L'homme, par l'étendue et la délicatesse singulière de sa sensibilité, est soumis à l'action d'un nombre infini de causes: par conséquent rien ne serait plus chimérique que de vouloir ramener tous les individus de son espèce à un type exactement uniforme et commun. Les hommes, tels que nous les supposons ici, seraient donc également propres à la vie sociale; ils ne le seraient pas également à tous les emplois de la société: leur plan de vie ne devrait pas être absolument le même; et le tempérament, comme la disposition personnelle des esprits et des penchants, offrirait encore beaucoup de différences aux observateurs.²⁵⁷

Such is the conclusion of the Memoir on the temperaments by which Stendhal was to set such store. 'Nous savons tous,' he will argue in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'qu'un espion espagnol traverse fort bien, en une nuit, vingt lieues de montagnes escarpées. Un Allemand meurt de fatigue à moitié chemin.'²⁵⁸ This simple comparison underlines the diversity of human capacity in its most basic, most crudely physiological terms. The only explanation offered in this instance by Stendhal is that 'une bile extrêmement âcre donne plus de force aux grands muscles de la jambe.'²⁵⁹ Such a notion, however, is susceptible of much wider application, opening the way to a far-reaching relativism in the moral and social spheres. Thus we find Stendhal, who had once held the passions to be everywhere and at all times the same, correcting this very view when it is uttered by a fellow-traveller in the *Promenades dans Rome*:

"Le cœur humain est le même partout", me disait-il. Rien de plus faux pour l'amour; à la bonne heure s'il s'agit d'ambition, de haine, d'hypocrisie, etc.²⁶⁰

The human leg is not always and everywhere the same; nor is the human heart. To argue as much was to endorse in its fullest implications the objection which Diderot had levelled against Helvétius in his refutation of *De l'Homme*.²⁶¹ For it was but a short step from acknowledging the diversity of human nature to concluding that the same

men could not aspire to the same achievement in every undertaking. There were, argued Diderot in advance of Cabanis, certain 'expressions de caractère, antérieures à toute éducation,' which predisposed the individual towards a given mode of being. 'L'art de convertir le plomb en or,' he writes scathingly of Helvétius's faith in the universality of human potential, 'est une alchimie moins ridicule que celle de faire un Régulus du premier venu.'²⁶²

By bringing his thinking into line with that of Diderot and Cabanis on this fundamental point, Stendhal resolves one question only to be confronted by another much more intractable. For the recognition of natural and unalterable disparities in the talents and potential of human beings poses an enormous problem when it comes to the attribution of posts within a given society.²⁶³ Where Regulus *does* exist, must he not be assured the means to deploy his talents and virtues? If all men are not fit to exercise all functions, those who *are* must either be allowed to accede to the roles for which they are apt, or find some alternative means of dispensing their energies. We have seen already in *De l'Amour* that Eponine cannot be consigned to a life of tranquil domesticity.²⁶⁴ Had the circumstances not been present which allowed her to channel her energies into heroism, she would have channelled them — with no less resolve and no less aptitude — into vice. Those endowed with special energies or talents cannot but seek means to realise them. This logic brings resounding meaning to an enigmatic remark which Stendhal makes in his discussion of the temperaments in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*. The Ancient Greek hero, Philopœmen, we are quite simply told, 'ne peut pas être condamné à scier du bois.'²⁶⁵

Force of character will out. There are those, such logic has it, who *need* to actualise their energies in a particular way. 'Vouloir, c'est avoir le courage de s'exposer à un inconvénient; s'exposer ainsi, c'est tenter le hasard, c'est jouer,' writes Stendhal in *De l'Amour*. 'Il y a des militaires qui ne peuvent vivre sans ce jeu; c'est ce qui les rend insupportables dans la vie de famille.'²⁶⁶ Some years earlier, in the planned revision of *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, we find him giving more precise application to this notion:

Pour les soldats romains la guerre était un état de repos. Se trouver au milieu des périls, des conspirations, des vengeances et des grandes actions est le seul état de repos que puissent jamais goûter quelques jeunes Corses et Piémontais de ma connaissance.²⁶⁷

If we place these remarks alongside the definition of the bilious temperament as it appears in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, we see once more the close relationship between the physiology of Cabanis and the portrait of the Italian as they are filtered respectively through Stendhal's conscience:

Le bien-être facile du sanguin lui est à jamais inconnu; il ne peut goûter de repos que dans l'excessive activité. Ce n'est que dans les grands mouvements, lorsque le danger ou la difficulté réclament toutes ses forces, lorsqu'à chaque instant il en a la conscience pleine et entière, que cet homme jouit de l'existence.²⁶⁸

The release of raw energy is, of course, a subject which Stendhal never tires of turning over in his mind and viewing from its many possible perspectives. In a letter written from Trieste to Adolphe de Mareste early in 1831, he provides in this sense a revealing gloss on Julien Sorel's character and fate. 'La guerre,' he declares, 'appellera les plus dignes au timon et donnera des sous-lieutenances à une quantité de Juliens. Elle est, comme le mercure, la ressource assurée des sangs empestés.'²⁶⁹ In a further letter, penned later in the same year, we find Stendhal referring once more to war as a therapeutic 'catharsis' for certain individuals, an 'émétique salulaire', as he puts it.²⁷⁰ These remarks are to be weighed. For implicit within them is a very considerable philosophical problem, with implications for morality, politics, and the whole notion of man within society. For how does one make a pillar of the establishment from such raw material? How turn this bellicose energy into virtue? Both of which beg a more fundamental question still: how can society legislate for the *disparities* within humankind, respecting the diversity of the Many whilst ensuring the sovereign well-being of the One?

Though Stendhal provides no satisfactory answer to these questions, they lie at the heart of his philosophical and literary preoccupations, from *Les Deux Hommes* through to *Lamiel*. It is in his reflections on Italy once more, however, that such questions come most insistently to the fore. The analogy between the Roman soldier and the Piedmontese conspirator is but one example of an inverse equation which Stendhal establishes between 'virtue' and 'vice' in ancient and in modern Italy. 'Du temps des Romains,' we read of a ruthless bandit in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'ce brigand eût été Marcellus.'²⁷¹ Of the 'foule de génies bruts' who populate Italy, Stendhal likewise declares: 'Ils ne jouissent de leur énergie que dans la force de volonté et au besoin beaucoup de ces Alfieri seraient des Brutus.'²⁷² If such are the 'Romans' of today, the crucial difference is that the civic *virtus* of Brutus and Marcellus has been transformed by the socio-historical context — '*Temporum culpa, non hominum*'²⁷³ — into a resolutely individualistic *virtù*. The *ressort* has lost its *sens*. Italy now is a country in which 'les Camilles', where they do not take to crime, 'deviennent des saints Dominiques.'²⁷⁴

Simplistic such reasoning may be. But it furnishes an important organising principle around which Stendhal structures his view of Italy. As he writes in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'la condition première de toutes les vertus est la force.'²⁷⁵ This notion, which carries through Stendhal's writings on Italy,²⁷⁶ provides a key to a

moral world in which the 'voleur héroïque' disputes the honours with the 'brigand honnête homme.'²⁷⁷ For both in turn display those '*vices indices de vertus*' which Stendhal hails as the mark of a people whose crimes stand as testament to their potential virtues.²⁷⁸ *La force* is the raw material of virtue and vice alike, preceding both and lying, therefore, in its most elemental form, beyond the range of moral approbation or censure. In this sense, it resembles closely the passions as they are discussed in Chapter III: it is what *la force* becomes when translated into action that defines its moral character.

L'abominable despotisme qui pèse sur [le Romain] depuis le XV^e siècle (voyez les *Mémoires* de Benvenuto Cellini), ne lui a laissé qu'une vertu: la force. Cette vertu prend souvent la physionomie du crime...²⁷⁹

If there is romanticism in this, it is a romanticism which finds its endorsement in philosophy. For Stendhal's vision here, as so often elsewhere, is but an application to the Italian of the qualities which Cabanis, scalpel in hand, divines in the bilious character. 'Des talents rares, de grands travaux, de grandes erreurs, de grandes fautes, quelquefois de grands crimes: tel est l'apanage de ces êtres ou sublimes ou dangereux.'²⁸⁰ Such is the definition that is to be found in the 'Premier Mémoire' of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, a definition which, echoing almost to the letter those '*enormi e sublimi delitti*' celebrated by Alfieri, provides a perfect summation of Stendhal's Italian.²⁸¹

Reserving a place in his portrait of the bilious Italian for each of the characteristics suggested by Cabanis, Stendhal makes of these, however, a statement that goes far beyond the intentions of the physiologist. His travels through Italy are not only a celebration; they are also an exercise in pessimism. For the conditional tense in which the virtues of the Italian are so tirelessly expressed has no prospect of becoming indicative. Nor indeed — and here lies the paradox of Stendhal's Italy — would Stendhal wish them to. The very *condition* of Stendhal's admiration for Italy's virtues is, we are led to conclude, that they remain potential. 'Le monde est dans une révolution,' we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*. 'Il ne reviendra jamais ni à la république antique, ni à la monarchie de Louis XIV. On verra naître un beau *constitutionnel*.'²⁸² The republic to which Italy might pretend is not the Republic of the Ancients, which, as Stendhal insists, 'ne peut pas être, et ne sera jamais un gouvernement moderne';²⁸³ it is rather 'quelque chose dans le genre de New York,' where 'la plante homme [...] ferait de plus grandes choses, mais aurait besoin, pour vivre, de moins d'énergie, et par conséquent serait moins belle.'²⁸⁴

The shadow of the French Revolution and the spectre of American democracy hang alike over Stendhal's considerations of Italy. For such appear to be the two routes

that lie open to a reformed Italian polity. In the former case, a republicanism which disintegrates into reaction and restoration; in the latter, a republic that succeeds to the point where the individual is sacrificed to the community, and culture to base utility. 'It is surely no accident that among the political movements of his day,' observes Irving Howe, Stendhal 'feels closest to the Carbonari who, because they are still fighting to unify their nation,' have not confronted the disintegration and distortions to which, it is so frequently suggested by Stendhal, liberal ideals are condemned when put into practice.²⁸⁵ To trade despotism for the modern republic as Stendhal portrays it is to exchange one tyranny for another. 'Les grands génies en Amérique tournent directement à l'*utile*,' he writes in 1819. 'Voilà le caractère de la nation. Ils se font Washington ou Franklin et non pas Alfieri ou Canova.'²⁸⁶

Such is the *impasse* into which we are led via Stendhal's Italy. Any reform of society and reaffirmation of collective values, where it succeeds, must be on a model for which Stendhal's aversion is amply documented. As he puts it in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 'j'estime un sage républicain des Etats-Unis, mais je l'oublie à tout jamais en quelques jours: ce n'est pas un homme pour moi, c'est une chose.'²⁸⁷ Any salvation of the *human* element, any retention of the *vir in virtute*, of that 'minimum humain' which, as Michel Crouzet argues, is the appurtenance of *ante-social* man for Stendhal,²⁸⁸ must reside in an ideal of individualism indifferent — where it is not recalcitrant — to the social order. 'C'est d'une huître malade que l'on tire la *perle*,' insists the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, convinced that, where Italy at least is concerned, the worth of society and that of the individual are inversely proportional.²⁸⁹ Crouzet puts the problem succinctly in his study of Stendhal's Italy: 'Là où la société ne vaut rien, l'individu est excellent.'²⁹⁰

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

1. *Corr*, I, 305. The quotation is an approximate rendering of Terence's '*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto*' ('I am a man: I count nothing human indifferent to me'). Cf. the letter of 22 March 1806 to the same Pauline: 'Songe au vif bonheur qu'on éprouve à voir un heureux, et un heureux que l'on a fait. C'est le secret du bonheur. Les plaisirs égoïstes ne sont jamais enivrants, ce qui l'est, c'est de voir un être qu'on aime aussi heureux qu'on peut le rendre. C'est ce qui a fait inventer la vertu' (*Ibid.*, I, 314-315).
2. It was a sentiment much appealed to in the humanitarian philosophy of the period. See, for example, Cabanis's extolment of 'cette vive faculté de sympathie, en vertu de laquelle rien d'humain ne nous demeure étranger' (*Rapports*, p. 299). Cf. Diderot: 'Je suis homme et je n'ai d'autres droits naturels véritablement inaliénables que ceux de l'humanité' (cited by Vernière, p. 177).
3. *Corr*, I, 304-305. Despite the semantic problem of defining 'egoism' as a 'passion', Stendhal articulates here an idea which finds many echoes in his early writings. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 27-28: '[...] pour être heureux, il faut avoir l'intention du bien et le faire'; *ibid.*, I, 139: 'Nous aurons donc le plaisir si doux d'être vertueux...'; *ibid.*, I, 209: 'Rendons nos amis heureux, en leur montrant la vraie vertu'; *JL*, II, 191: 'Donc quand nous jugeons une action parfaitement vertueuse, il faut la faire à l'instant.'
4. 'La société civile est pour ainsi dire la seule divinité,' wrote Dumarsais (cited by Vernière, p. 175). On 'l'idéal collectiviste de la Révolution', see Trahard, p. 100: 'L'individu n'est rien en effet par lui-même, et il n'a droit au bonheur que s'il s'incorpore à la collectivité, qui le protège.' See also on this important point Hazard, *La Pensée européenne au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, vol. I, pp. 224-233; Frankel, pp. 8-9.
5. Though Stendhal derived much on this question from thinkers such as Vauvenargues and Helvétius, he encountered everywhere variations on the same theme of Humanity. See, for example, the extract from Lavater, in which man is perceived as an integral part of a human network (*JL*, I, 292), or the remarks inspired by Brissot de Warville in July 1804: 'L'état de bonhomie est le suprême bonheur pour moi. [...] les grandes méditations philosophiques me mettent dans cet état délicieux' (*Ibid.*, I, 475). On the Ecoles Centrales as schools of civic virtue, see Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, pp. 237-252.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 177.
7. On the general aspects of this question, see Trahard, pp. 63-73 *et passim*.
8. *Corr*, I, 66. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 282: 'D'abord ce qui est utile ou la vertu. Ce qui nuit ou le vice'; *ibid.*, I, 292: 'la vertu (la plus grande quantité d'utilité).'
9. *Ibid.*, I, 93. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 16-17: 'sois bonne et aimante et surtout jamais fausse, car c'est un crime que de feindre la vertu.'
10. *JL*, II, 17. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 101, 244, 473-474; II, 35-36, 44.
11. *Ibid.*, II, 18.
12. *Ibid.*, I, 247.

13. *Ibid.*, II, 137.
14. *Corr*, I, 83-84. We find the point spelt out with more emphasis still some years later in a marginal note on Constant's *Principes de politique*: 'L'on perd toujours le temps pour discuter des *anciennes* erreurs. Il faut se tenir sur la nouvelle route. Le principe d[irecteu]r de l'institution sociale est le bonheur des *associés*. Voilà la pierre de touche avec laquelle l'on peut, l'on doit juger des opérations et des lois politiques' (*Ibid.*, III, 361). See also *JL*, III, 253.
15. *JL*, I, 216.
16. *Ibid.*, II, 136. See also *ibid.*, II, 52, 110, 133, 137-138.
17. *Ibid.*, I, 468. We touch once more here upon the important practical and *ethical* dimension in Stendhal's conception of the philosopher and of the truth which it is his perceived mission to lay bare. See above, Chapters II and III. See also on this point J.-C. Alciatore, 'Stendhal et Brissot de Warville', pp. 126-128.
18. *JL*, II, 123. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 42: 'chercher dans la société [...] les erreurs qui restent encore à combattre. Les ordonner suivant le plus ou moins grand mal qu'elles peuvent produire'; *ibid.*, II, 112: 'Voilà le sens dans lequel moi, poète comique, je dois travailler pour être utile à la nation, en détruisant la prise des tyrans sur elle, et la rapprochant par-delà de la *divina libertà*.'
19. J.L. Walker, *The Philosophy of Egoism* (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, 1972), p. 55.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 17.
21. *Corr*, I, 48.
22. *Ibid.*, I, 126. Cf. Stendhal's letter to Edouard Mounier in February 1804: 'j'estime peu les hommes parce que j'en ai vu très peu d'estimables; j'estime encore moins les femmes parce que je les ai vues presque toutes se mal conduire; mais je crois encore à la vertu chez les uns et chez les autres. Cette croyance fait mon plus doux bonheur...' (*Ibid.*, I, 87).
23. *JL*, II, 93. 'Brutus même en immolant ses fils agissait pour son plus grand plaisir' (*Ibid.*, II, 11). Cf. *ibid.*, I, 327: '[...] il n'y a que les sots qui croient que je puisse aller contre mes intérêts.' For the difficulty which Stendhal encounters in adhering to this principle, see the discussion of Helvétius in Chapter III.
24. *JL*, II, 49. See the judgment on human sociability which Stendhal paraphrases from Hobbes in June 1804 (*Ibid.*, I, 391): 'Les hommes sont *sociables* à cause d'une jouissance qu'ils éprouvent à être dans la compagnie de leurs *semblables*.' Cf. Hobbes, *De la Nature humaine*, pp. 100-101, § 16.
25. *Ibid.*, I, 206. See Stendhal's exhortations to his sister that she sow in society what she wishes to reap: *Corr*, I, 103, 120, 122, 194, 283, 295-296. See also in this context *ibid.*, I, 107-108, 128. For a general discussion of the 'intelligent Egoism' which Stendhal invokes, see Walker, *The Philosophy of Egoism* (esp. pp. 17, 22-23, 53-55).
26. See on this point Van Duzer, pp. 72-83; Desné, pp. 252-254. Cf. Robespierre's summation of the Revolutionary ethic: 'la vertu est l'essence de la République' (cited by Trahard, p. 66).
27. *Ed. cit.*, p. 261, § 202.

28. While urging the immeasurable importance of education, Locke recognised 'a thousand other things' besides — 'the various Tempers, different Inclinations, and particular Defaults' — which could contribute to character. It would, he conceded, 'require a Volume' to list such factors. See *op. cit.*, pp. 260-261, § 202. On the eighteenth century's interpretation of Locke, see Passmore's excellent essay, 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought.'
29. *Corr*, I, 52-53. Cf. Helvétius, *De l'Homme*, vol. I, sec. II, ch. 4, pp. 179-181.
30. *JL*, I, 29.
31. *OI*, I, 114.
32. *Corr*, I, 109. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 78: 'Il est d'ailleurs évident que le Français actuel, n'ayant pas d'occupation au *forum* est forcé à l'adultère par la nature même de son gouvern[emen]t.'
33. *JL*, II, 116.
34. 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'*utile*', p. 473.
35. *JL*, I, 478. For what Stendhal is here reacting to in Montesquieu, see *De l'Esprit des Loix* (Geneva: Barrillot & Fils, 1749), pp. 16-23.
36. *Corr*, I, 109. Cf. Stendhal's notebook entry of 10 May 1803: 'Aujourd'hui, je suis beaucoup plus citoyen que sujet, et je dois tendre à devenir sans cesse meilleur citoyen' (*JL*, I, 170).
37. *JL*, II, 11-12. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 188: 'Un orateur doit [...] parler de *vertus*, *justice* etc., comme s'il y croyait et, à l'abri de ces mots imposants, montrer aux gens que leur intérêt est de faire ce qu'il leur conseille.'
38. On no question does the young Stendhal represent more clearly the spirit of the Enlightenment and Revolution. For the central place of education in the philosophical ethos of the period, see Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity*.
39. *JL*, II, 21. See *Corr*, I, 154: '[...] souvent on a le bon *cœur* de vouloir le bonheur des autres sans avoir la bonne *tête* nécessaire pour en assurer les moyens.' The net conclusion to such reasoning is found in a notebook entry of August 1804: 'Il ne faut donc qu'avoir une bonne tête (ou bien raisonner) pour être vertueux parmi nous' (*JL*, II, 92). Cf. Robespierre's definition of republican virtue as 'une âme élevée et un caractère ferme dirigé par des lumières suffisantes' (cited by Trahard, p. 66).
40. This idea was not, however, as we saw in Chapter II, without its ambiguities. The deficit side of 'truth' would present itself ever more insistently to Stendhal's mind as his early optimism evaporated and he grew increasingly pessimistic in his outlook. See below.
41. *Corr*, I, 93. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 107-108: 'En général, tout mal vient d'ignorer la vérité...' Stendhal keeps faith here with the spirit of the Ecoles Centrales. See Pearce Williams, p. 314.
42. *Corr*, I, 126.
43. *Théâtre*, I, 243. Again the eminently political nature of Stendhal's early philosophy is in evidence. See *JL*, I, 480: 'Il faut saper les tyrans par l'éducation, c'est là le moyen le plus sûr.'

44. 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought', p. 25.
45. *JL*, II, 89-90. The opposition of a philosophical republican and a corrupt monarchist was scarcely 'la plus grande idée qui ait jamais fondé une comédie' (*Ibid.*, II, 89). The philosopher had a well established place on the French stage by the time Stendhal came to conceive of his earliest plots. See I.O. Wade, *The "Philosophe" in the French Drama of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton UP; Paris: PUF, 1926).
46. See Picavet in relation to Condorcet ('la nature lie la vérité, le bonheur et la vertu' [p. 114]), Cabanis ('la raison n'est que la nature elle-même, la vertu, que la raison mise en pratique, et l'art du bonheur, que celui de la vertu' [p. 191]), and Tracy ("Le produit de la faculté de penser ou percevoir = connaissance = vérité [...] = vertu = bonheur = sentiment d'aimer [...] = liberté = égalité = philanthropie" [p. 303]). See also Lichtheim, pp. 167-168.
47. *JL*, II, 126-127.
48. *An Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding, and an Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 83, § 65; Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, p. 184. Crocker's remark is made in relation to Voltaire; but it sums up well the view of human nature which Stendhal inherits from Helvétius most notably. On the 'essential identity of all men' as the latter conceived it, see *ibid.*, p. 189.
49. Frankel, p. 47. See also p. 16.
50. See respectively *JL*, II, 21, 114; *Corr*, I, 66; *JL*, II, 136, 17; *Corr*, I, 93; *JL*, I, 247; II, 18; *Corr*, I, 83-84; *JL*, I, 478; *Corr*, I, 292; *JL*, II, 12, 157-158.
51. *Op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.
52. See Parker, pp. 33-36, 62-63, 122-126; E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 220-300; D. Leduc-Fayette, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et le mythe de l'antiquité* (Paris: Vrin, 1974); R.A. Leigh, 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Myth of Antiquity in the Eighteenth Century', *Classical Influences on Western Thought, A.D. 1650-1870*, ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), pp. 155-168; J. Starobinski, *1789. Les emblèmes de la raison* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), pp. 65-81. For an excellent study of the Latin moral tradition upon which the *philosophes* and Revolutionaries drew, see D. Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967).
53. See Stendhal's repeated injunctions to Pauline that she read these authors: *Corr*, I, 2, 3, 44, 52, 54, 62, 74, 102, 131, 132, 135, 226, 272, 282, 292. On Stendhal's perceptions of Ancient Rome, see J.G. Shields, 'Enricus Beyle, Romanus: le classicisme d'un romantique', *Stendhal, Roma, L'Italia*, ed. M. Colesanti *et al* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1985), pp. 63-82.
54. *Corr*, I, 110. See also *JL*, I, 359. On this question in general, see Parker, pp. 23-24.
55. See *Corr*, I, 47, 102, 109; *JL*, II, 11-12, 39, 101; *OI*, I, 148.
56. *JL*, II, 26. See also *ibid.*, I, 237-238: 'Il nous manque une histoire de la r[épublique] romaine écrite avec l'enthousiasme de la liberté, enthousiasme modéré de manière à faire le plus grand effet et à réveiller les peuples dormant sous les chaînes de la tyrannie.' Something of the sense of concepts such as

virtue and *liberty* as they feature in the rhetoric of the period, and as they are used in turn by Stendhal, may be gleaned from J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le Vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963). This study provides a useful accompaniment to Parker's *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries*. See also on this question J.G. Shields, 'Stendhal et les métamorphoses de la République', *Stendhal Club*, 27^e année, no. 107 (1985), pp. 214-226.

57. *OI*, I, 148.
58. *Corr*, I, 171-172.
59. *JL*, II, 87.
60. This raises an important question. For the view is expressed by many of Stendhal's commentators that he was from the earliest, in L. Blum's terms (p. 216), 'imperméable, réfractaire à toute influence, à toute persuasion.' The established image is one of an 'eternal dissenter' (Josephson, p. x) whose overriding ambition was, as P. Jourda argues, to 's'affranchir de toute influence scolaire' (*Etat présent des études stendhaliennes*, p. 19). This is a view with which any who read Stendhal's early notes and letters in the light of his instruction in the Ecole Centrale cannot but take issue. For his writings, years after his formal education had ended, far from bearing out the suggestion that Stendhal 'résistait à tout ce qu'on lui avançait' (Blin, *Personnalité*, p. 418), are infused still with the values which had defined the Ecoles Centrales. See on this question in general Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity*, pp. 221-278; Vial, pp. 71-125; Van Duzer, pp. 111-114, 128-142; Kitchin, pp. 179-192. On Stendhal's alleged resistance to 'toute forme de contrainte et de dogme, comme parti pris négatif à l'égard de la société et de la loi', see Crouzet, 'Littérature et politique chez Stendhal', p. 102; Mérimée, 'Notes et souvenirs', in Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 206; Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, vol. I, p. 252; Josephson, p. 25.
61. *JL*, I, 61. Though Stendhal's language here is suggestive of Condorcet, he makes surprisingly little mention of the latter in his writings — particularly if store is to be set by his claim that he read 'avec enthousiasme deux ou trois fois' (*HB*, II, 276) the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*. On Condorcet's theory of human perfectibility as Stendhal would have known it, see Picavet, pp. 101-116; Rude, pp. 30-37; J.G. Frazer, *Condorcet on the Progress of the Human Mind* (The Zaharoff Lecture, 1933) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); F.E. Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1962), pp. 75-102; Cailliet, pp. 165-210 ('L'œuvre à laquelle aboutit toute la pensée du XVIII^e siècle, c'est l'*Esquisse* de Condorcet' [p. 166]). The concept of 'progress' as an outgrowth of Enlightenment thought is discussed by J.B. Bury in *The Idea of Progress* (New York: Dover, 1960). See in particular pp. 159-216, 260-323. See also on this question Frankel, *passim*.
62. *JL*, I, 321. Though references to the perfectibility of humanity in Stendhal's early writings are legion, he hesitates on this question. 'Qu'est-ce que la perfectibilité? Existe-elle?' (*Ibid.*, I, 327). Cf. the notebook entry of July 1804 in which he envisages 'la civilisation la plus parfaite possible où si la perfectibilité est vraie nous arriverons le dernier jour du monde' (*Ibid.*, II, 62).
63. See 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Myth of Antiquity in the Eighteenth Century.' The association between classical antiquity and the doctrine of secular humanism in question arose more, of course, from myth than from historical fact. See N. Loraux and P. Vidal-Naquet, 'La Formation de l'Athènes bourgeoise: essai d'historiographie 1750-1850', in Bolgar, *Classical Influences*

- on *Western Thought*, pp. 169-222. Stendhal, while celebrating in turn the virtues of the Ancients, is alive to the contradiction inherent in the Revolutionary cult of Antiquity. 'Les anciens ne connurent pas les *droits de l'homme*,' he writes in 1818. 'La liberté fut pour eux un héritage comme la fortune' (*Italie*, 199).
64. H.O. Pappé, 'The English Utilitarians and Athenian Democracy', in Bolgar, *Classical Influences on Western Thought*, p. 299.
 65. *OI*, I, 61.
 66. *Op. cit.*, p. 175.
 67. For Stendhal's frequent recourse to these dicta, see *JL*, I, 174; II, 343; III, 181, 184, 335; *Corr*, I, 915; *Vie de Nap*, 38; *De l'Amour*, II, 172 n. 1; *Italie*, 266; *H de P*, II, 8.
 68. *JL*, I, 417. Cf. *ibid.*, II, 18, 21: 'Tous les hommes agissent suivant ce qui leur paraît et non suivant ce qui est.'
 69. *Ibid.*, I, 370.
 70. *Ibid.*, I, 452.
 71. *Corr*, I, 140. As early as August 1803, we find Stendhal expressing doubt that the society to which he is witness could be galvanised by a common interest into common endeavour. '[...] actuellement que [les hommes] trouvent des sensations délicieuses sans sortir de leurs maisons, peuvent-ils être rappelés sur la place publique?' (*JL*, I, 227).
 72. *JL*, II, 15. Stendhal is clearly uneasy on this point, for he appears to contradict himself by reverting almost at once to the argument that actions are to be deemed good or bad by virtue of their *consequences* alone: 'Il ne faut donc pas estimer notre rôle dans la vie commune par le mérite qu'il nous semble avoir, mais par l'effet que nous lui voyons produire' (*ibid.*, II, 21). Cf. *ibid.*, II, 35-36: 'Il faut ordonner [...] les vertus et leurs contraires les vices, sur la quantité de bonheur et de malheur qu'ils peuvent produire probablement'; *ibid.*, II, 79: '[...] l'utilité [...] est toujours l'échelle du mérite.'
 73. *Ibid.*, II, 17. Contained here already, in 1804, are the seeds of the pamphlet which Stendhal would in time direct against the narrow pragmatism of the Saint-Simonians. See on this question Strickland, *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, pp. 48-51; 'Le bonheur du plus grand nombre', pp. 203-204.
 74. *JL*, II, 100. 'Ce sont les motifs qui portent à une action et non pas l'action toute nue qui nous peignent un homme comme aimable ou haïssable. Un père a fait périr son fils; exécration dans Philippe II, admirable dans J[unius] Brutus' (*Ibid.*, II, 101).
 75. 'A Critique of Utilitarianism', in J.J.C. Smart and B. Williams, *Utilitarianism For and Against* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973), p. 100.
 76. See *ibid.*, pp. 79, 82-83, 99.
 77. *JL*, II, 48. Cf. *Corr*, I, 109: 'l'extrême égoïste est celui qui verrait avec plaisir tuer un homme pour s'épargner la peine de se faire les ongles.'
 78. *Op. cit.*, p. 385. 'Le seul point sur lequel je ne contesterai pas, c'est que chacun s'aime autant qu'il est possible à chacun de s'aimer. Mais deux hommes, oui,

deux seuls hommes réduits par la nature, l'expérience ou l'institution à la même dose d'amour de soi, seraient le plus étonnant de tous les prodiges.'

79. *JL*, I, 472.
80. *Corr*, I, 159.
81. *Ibid.*, I, 280.
82. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 30, 36, 87, 150, 161-162, 218, 337, 338, 344-347, 353. See on this question Crouzet, 'Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain'; Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 391-392.
83. *JL*, I, 142-143. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 6.
84. *Ibid.*, I, 343. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 253: 'Le merveilleux, l'admirable, l'étonnant d'un homme ne sont point le merveilleux, l'admirable, l'étonnant d'un autre homme.'
85. *Ibid.*, II, 37.
86. *Corr*, I, 344.
87. See also, for example, *ibid.*, I, 335, 338.
88. *De l'Esprit*, vol. II, disc. III, ch. 26, pp. 157-158.
89. *JL*, I, 375-376.
90. *Ibid.*, I, 390.
91. *Op. cit.*, p. 78.
92. Such, according to Staum, are 'the evident polarities in Cabanis's viewpoint.' See 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 138; *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, p. 20.
93. *Rapports*, p. 262.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
97. See *Corr*, I, 920.
98. 'L'éducation peut tout' is the unqualified claim of Helvétius, whose contention it is that 'Tous les hommes communément bien organisés ont une égale aptitude à l'esprit.' See *De l'Homme*, vol. I, sec. II, ch. 1, p. 149; vol. II, sec. X, ch. 1, p. 611.
99. Education, for Helvétius, is 'tout ce qui sert à notre instruction' (*De l'Esprit*, vol. I, disc. III, ch. 1, pp. 343, 347). See on this point Cumming, p. 142; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 195-197; Halévy, vol. II, pp. 258-259.
100. *JL*, I, 126.

101. *Ibid.*, I, 157.
102. See Vigneron, 'Beylisme, romanticisme, réalisme', p. 98.
103. See *JL*, I, 522 n. While Buffon makes no reference in the passage cited to *legislation*, Helvétius, for his part, goes so far as to deny outright the influence of *climate*. What Stendhal does, in effect, is to conjoin the arguments of both in a grossly over-simplified formula.
104. *De l'Homme*, vol. II, sect. V, ch. 2, pp. 13-14. This is a point which, as H. Delacroix (p. 9 n. 2) notes, Helvétius is at pains to stress.
105. *Corr*, I, 312. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 27, 52; *JL*, I, 120, 135. It had, as L. Pearce Williams observes (pp. 317-318), been the objective of the Ecoles Centrales to present history as a means of charting the progress of the human mind and the 'constant relation' between man's reason and his well-being.
106. *An Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding*, p. 83, § 65. See on this point Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, pp. 186-187; Gay, pp. 168-169, 380-385; Staum, 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 136; Frankel, pp. 101-127 *passim*.
107. *Corr*, I, 27; *JL*, I, 113. Cf. *Corr*, I, 142: 'Les mœurs changent, mais non les passions; les moyens de passions changent avec les mœurs.'
108. *JL*, I, 122.
109. *H de P*, II, 34-35.
110. *M de T*, I, 177-183; II, 29-35. See on this question Régaldo, 'Un touriste "idéologue": Stendhal à Bordeaux', pp. 43-46.
111. *Op. cit.*, p. 140. To this notion of a 'generic human civilization' (*Ibid.*, p. 148), Cabanis was to be among the foremost in bringing a serious physiological corrective.
112. The process by which this development took place in the French post-Enlightenment conscience is charted by Stocking.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 148. See on this question in general Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 92-117.
114. *JL*, II, 403.
115. *Corr*, I, 311-312.
116. *H de P*, II, 84.
117. See the remarks relating to diet and health in Chapter V.
118. *Rapports*, p. 206.
119. *Op. cit.*, p. 60.
120. *Rapports*, p. 295. See also *ibid.*, p. 85: 'Dans la nature, les tempéraments se combinent et se mitigent de cent manières différentes. On n'en rencontre presque point qui soient exempts de mélange.'
121. *H de P*, II, 38.

122. *Ibid.*, II, 75.
123. See Bosselaers, *Stendhal, pèlerin du bonheur*, pp. 27-28.
124. *De l'Amour*, I, 16.
125. *JL*, II, 315.
126. *Ibid.*, II, 354. See also *ibid.*, II, 296-297; *OI*, I, 622-623.
127. *JL*, II, 334.
128. *Romans*, I, 406. See also *ibid.*, I, 463.
129. *Ibid.*, I, 596, 597.
130. *JL*, II, 327. To this Stendhal adds his ultimate appraisal of the bilious temperament: 'Le bilieux est donc forcé aux grandes choses (Ex.: Milan).' [For 'Milan', read Napoleon.] The passage cited may be read in conjunction with a remark which Stendhal makes to his sister Pauline in a letter from Vienna in September 1809: 'Le repos avec notre caractère est l'avant-garde de la mort' (*Corr*, I, 540).
131. See *OI*, I, 766.
132. *Ibid.*, I, 720. See the more extended reflection on this aspect of Stendhal's character in his diary of 15 May 1806 (*Ibid.*, I, 438).
133. See Chapters V and VII respectively; *Corr*, I, 261, 263, 272, 312, 616; *OI*, I, 720, 764, 766.
134. *Corr*, I, 893.
135. *Personnalité*, pp. 3-13. See also on this question Starobinski, 'Stendhal pseudonyme.'
136. Introduction, *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 5; *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 6. On the problem of self-knowledge in Stendhal and its relation to the creative enterprise of the novelist, see the same author's 'Stendhal: Creation and Self-Knowledge.'
137. See *JL*, I, 366; *OI*, I, 710; II, 231; Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 142. See also on this question Alciatore, 'Stendhal, Destutt de Tracy et le précepte *Nosce te ipsum*.'
138. *OI*, I, 394; 397; 398; 428. Stendhal's diary serves often as a record of self-discovery. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 668, 694, 697, 907.
139. *Corr*, I, 283. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 291: 'Songe à te connaître toi-même.'
140. *JL*, II, 113.
141. *Corr*, I, 281-282. Such stoical reasoning is much in evidence in Stendhal's early notes and letters. See, for instance, *JL*, I, 331; II, 8; *OI*, I, 378, 397; *Corr*, I, 106, 108, 119, 139, 163-165, 175, 193-194, 197, 198, 260-261, 271, 348.
142. *Corr*, I, 229.

143. *Ibid.*, I, 343.
144. *JL*, II, 420.
145. *OI*, I, 668.
146. *Loc. cit.*, n.
147. Among a plethora of examples, see *Corr*, I, 139, 163-165, 193-194, 214, 291-292, 300; *JL*, I, 475; II, 8, 15, 182; *OI*, I, 397.
148. *Corr*, I, 364.
149. See *OI*, I, 315.
150. *Ibid.*, I, 907. The problem of self-knowledge is from the earliest recognised by Stendhal. See, for example, *Corr*, I, 101: '[...] il est très difficile de se connaître soi-même'; *ibid.*, I, 282: 'Nous ne connaissons donc guère nos caractères...' Cf. his conclusion as expressed in *S d'E*, 93: 'On peut connaître tout, excepté soi-même.' The problem will be transmitted in turn to Stendhal's fictional characters. See, for example, Lucien Leuwen's exasperated reflexion: 'quelle opinion dois-je avoir de moi-même?' (*Romans*, I, 1276).
151. 'Stendhal pseudonyme', p. 219.
152. *Personnalité*, p. 11 n. 4.
153. *JL*, III, 161-162. Cf. the naturalistic image which is again used to represent character in a diary entry of September 1811 (*OI*, I, 791).
154. See Cumming, pp. 151, 200-217; Smith, *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, pp. 196-201.
155. See Leuwen *père's* pointed question to his son: 'Est-ce qu'on change de caractère?' (*Romans*, I, 1157).
156. See on this question Starobinski, 'Stendhal pseudonyme', pp. 203-204, 219-221, 242-244.
157. *Corr*, II, 33. This passage finds something of a pendant in the *Vie de Henry Brulard*. 'J'étais,' Stendhal recalls, 'comme un cheval ombrageux qui ne voit pas ce qui est mais des obstacles ou périls imaginaires; le bon, c'est que mon cœur se montait, et je marchais fièrement aux plus grands périls. Je suis encore ainsi aujourd'hui' (*HB*, II, 277).
158. See on this point Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 24.
159. See Brombert's definition of the *Vie de Henry Brulard* as 'an enterprise of the imagination as much as of memory, [...] a work of creative retrospection' (*Ibid.*, p. 25).
160. See Barrère, pp. 447-461.
161. *Romans*, I, 34. Cf. Julien Sorel: 'Grand Dieu! Pourquoi suis-je moi?' (*Ibid.*, I, 612), and Lucien Leuwen: 'Grand Dieu! Tous les hommes sont-ils ainsi? Ou suis-je plus fou qu'un autre? Qui me résoudra ce problème?' (*Ibid.*, I, 976). On the singularity of the Stendhalian hero, see Blin, *Personnalité*, pp. 395-406, 420-423; Barrère, pp. 457-459.

162. C.W. Thompson, *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, p. 225.
163. 'Stendhal pseudonyme', p. 219.
164. *L'Ame et la Page. Trois Essais sur Stendhal* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1982), p. 88.
165. *HB*, II, 279.
166. 'Préromantisme rousseauiste et égotisme stendhalien: convergence et divergences', p. 104.
167. See *HB*, I, 19; 33; 175.
168. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 112.
169. *HB*, II, 129.
170. *Op. cit.*, p. 178.
171. *HB*, I, 235.
172. *Ibid.*, I, 236.
173. *Op. cit.*, p. 22 n. 4.
174. *JL*, III, 162. Here the contrast with Helvétius is starker than ever.
175. 'Ideology,' as M.S. Staum notes, 'did not imply a relentless fatalism any more than it implied a rigid materialism' ('Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 140).
176. The twelfth and final memoir of Cabanis's work is devoted to the question of acquired temperament. This could be effected, it is argued, through the contraction of certain illnesses, or under the influence of a sustained change of climate or regimen. Stendhal, in turn, recognises the possibility of acquired temperament. See *H de P*, II, 75.
177. *Italie*, 508.
178. Alter, p. 21.
179. *Personnalité*, pp. 3 ff.
180. See, for example, *Italie*, 364-365.
181. *Ibid.*, 147.
182. *Ibid.*, 583.
183. *De l'Amour*, I, 241.
184. *Italie*, 73.
185. 'Le volume du poumon paraît aussi déterminer communément celui du cœur, ou du moins l'énergie des fibres de celui-ci se proportionne au volume de celui-là, et tous les deux déterminent de concert les dispositions générales du système sanguin. [...] Ainsi donc, un poumon plus volumineux produit, toutes choses

égales d'ailleurs, une sanguification plus active ou plus complète; il fournit une plus grande quantité de chaleur animale; il imprime un mouvement plus rapide au sang' (*Rapports*, pp. 277-278). Cf. *H de P*, II, 40, 44-45; *JL*, II, 324-331.

186. *Italie*, 755.
187. *Romans*, II, 711.
188. *Ibid.*, II, 24.
189. *H de P*, II, 108.
190. *Italie*, 945. Of Louis David, Stendhal elsewhere writes: 'Ses tableaux ne font pas plaisir à l'œil; ils seraient peut-être bons sous la latitude de Stockholm' (*Ibid.*, 333 n.).
191. *Ibid.*, 39, 521.
192. *CA*, III, 22. The remark is a clear reference to the criticisms levelled against *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817* by the *Edinburgh Review*. See *Italie*, 1440-1443.
193. See *M de T*, I, 177-182; II, 29-36.
194. *Corr*, III, 542-544. Stendhal projects what he has culled from Cabanis onto the new material provided by Edwards. 'Chose singulière! on ne rencontre guère d'homme de l'une ou de l'autre race au caractère physique pur ou à peu près, qui n'en ait aussi le caractère moral' (*M de T*, I, 180). On this question, as on the earlier question of temperament, M. Tillett (p. 119) is unjustifiably dismissive. Failing to recognise Stendhal's debt to Edwards, she sums up this part of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* as 'some pages of generalization on the "three races" of France — supplied by Crozet or borrowed from some even more pedestrian writer.'
195. *Italie*, 662-663. Stendhal adds the footnote: 'Voir la savante dissertation de M. le docteur Edwards sur les races d'hommes et les rapports de la physiologie et de l'histoire. Paris, 1829.'
196. *Ibid.*, 867.
197. Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 335.
198. *Italie*, 668. Extending the scope of the comparison, Stendhal goes on to evoke 'toute l'étendue de la différence que l'expérience établit entre le flegmatique Hollondais, le Bergamasque à demi fou tant ses passions sont vives, et le Napolitain à demi fou tant il suit avec impétuosité la *sensation du moment*.'
199. *Ibid.*, 586.
200. *Ibid.*, 662.
201. *Ibid.*, 37, 518.
202. *Ibid.*, 62.
203. See *JL*, II, 87.
204. *Corr*, I, 974-975.

205. *Italie*, 65.
206. *Ibid.*, 689.
207. *Ibid.*, 410.
208. *Ibid.*, 1182.
209. *Ibid.*, 38, 519.
210. *H de P*, I, 50.
211. *Ibid.*, II, 36.
212. *Op. cit.*, p. 39.
213. 'H.B.', in Jourda, *Stendhal raconté par ceux qui l'ont vu*, p. 191.
214. Cited by Mauzi, p. 147 n. 1. The *homo homini lupus* had a particular place, as B. Plongeron (p. 398) notes, in the post-Revolutionary philosophical conscience.
215. See Mauzi, pp. 145-147.
216. *Op. cit.*, p. 277. The remark, of course, had a significance that extended far beyond the canine realm. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 312: '[...] la race humaine rassemble les analogues de toutes les sortes d'animaux; et [...] il n'est non plus possible de tirer un homme de sa classe qu'un animal de la sienne, sans les dénaturer l'un et l'autre, et sans se fatiguer beaucoup pour n'en faire que deux sottes bêtes.'
217. *Raison*, p. 299.
218. See, for example, *OI*, I, 660, 666, 720, 766; *Corr*, I, 621-622; *JL*, II, 334.
219. *Corr*, I, 609-610.
220. Cf. his vituperative denunciations of 'la canaille humaine' in the letters which he despatches from Prussia in 1807 (*Ibid.*, I, 337, 338, 344, 346, 347, 348, 353, 367, 377).
221. *Ibid.*, I, 609
222. See on this point Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 35. 'Le vouloir prime le savoir,' as Crouzet elsewhere puts it, 'et le "caractère" la logique' (*Raison*, p. 153).
223. *Corr*, I, 1002-1003.
224. *Ibid.*, I, 1003.
225. See, for example, *Vie de Nap*, 354: 'Quand les hommes voudront-ils s'abaisser à comprendre qu'une bouteille ne peut pas être pleine en même temps de vin de Champagne et de Suresnes? Il faut choisir.' Cf. *Italie*, 38, 519; *De l'Amour*, II, 136-137; *JL*, III, 186: 'une jeune femme ne peut être blonde et brune.'
226. *Italie*, 38, 519.
227. *Le beau idéal* can be altered in time and space, multiplied or divided *ad infinitum* (*H de P*, II, 17-18). See on this question Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic*

- Esthetics*, pp. 55-60. 'From the classical science of mathematical certitude and uniformity,' writes E. Kennedy, '*idéologie*, with Stendhal, became a method for analyzing romantic idiosyncrasy' ('Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', p. 233).
228. It is, of course, a fine line (where the line exists at all) which separates the aesthetic from the moral in Stendhal's world-view. '[...] le sublime en bien est près du sublime en mal,' he writes as early as 1804 (*Corr*, I, 150).
229. See Cabanis, *Rapports*, p. 298; *H de P*, II, 79-80 n. 3.
230. *Op. cit.*, p. 79.
231. *Rapports*, p. 266.
232. Witness 'le fatal triangle qui s'étend entre Bordeaux, Bayonne et Valence' (*HB*, II, 25): 'Je pense qu'à cause du climat et de l'amour et de l'énergie qu'il donne à la machine, ce triangle devrait produire les premiers hommes de France. La Corse me conduit à cette idée.'
233. *Italie*, 445. Cf. Stendhal's letter to Clémentine Curial in 1824 (*Corr*, II, 33).
234. *Italie*, 292.
235. *Ibid.*, 143.
236. *Corr*, II, 17. See, among a number of examples, *Italie*, 867-868, 1214, 1237; *Rossini*, I, 251.
237. *Italie*, 1660 n. Cf. *H de P*, II, 145: 'Quand son tempérament profondément bilieux lui permettrait le bonheur facile du sanguin, ses gouvernements sont là pour le lui défendre.'
238. The association between *energy*, *ferocity* and *potentiality* is frequently in evidence. See, for example, *Italie*, 192-193, 334-335, 387-388. On the Italian as a quantum of potential, see Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité*, pp. 35-38, 226-229.
239. *Italie*, 58.
240. *Rapports*, pp. 608-609.
241. *Italie*, 99. Cf. *ibid.*, 165.
242. *Ibid.*, 1038. See also *ibid.*, 17, 239, 486, 867-868, 996-997.
243. *De l'Amour*, I, 223-224.
244. *Italie*, 1236.
245. *H de P*, II, 145.
246. *Italie*, 1291.
247. *Loc. cit.* Stendhal writes of Italy's outlaws: 'combien d'entre eux ne demandaient qu'un champ à cultiver pour ne pas se faire brigands!' (*Ibid.*, 1237).
248. 'Stendhal et l'énergie: du Moi à la Poétique', p. 68. Again R. Doumic (pp.

- 134-135) seizes something of Stendhal's concept of energy which was lost on contemporaries such as E. Faguet. Of Stendhal's Italy, Doumic writes: '[...] dans de tels milieux, l'individu est sans cesse en présence d'un obstacle; il a l'occasion et il est dans la nécessité de lutter; toutes ses facultés sont tendues, prêtes au bien comme au mal; toutes les forces du génie sont développées, prêtes à faire leur poussée en n'importe quel sens, à éclater dans la guerre ou dans les beaux-arts...'
249. *Op. cit.*, p. 59.
250. *H de P*, II, 46; *Italie*, 426.
251. *H de P*, II, 145.
252. *Italie*, 656.
253. See *ibid.*, 425-426, 219: '[...] tant le génie italien est fait pour les grandes choses...'
254. *Ibid.*, 426 n. Stendhal later reiterates this remark, applying it specifically to the Roman: 'Donnez-lui un Napoléon pendant vingt ans, et les Romains seront évidemment le premier peuple de l'Europe' (*Ibid.*, 586). Cf. the later reference to Naples (*Ibid.*, 663): 'Un Frédéric II, avec dix ans d'enseignement mutuel, placerait ce pays à la hauteur des Chambres.'
255. 'Cabanis and the Science of Man', p. 143.
256. *Italie*, 825.
257. *Rapports*, pp. 299-300.
258. *H de P*, II, 37.
259. *Loc. cit.*
260. *Italie*, 1069. Cf. *JL*, II, 184; *OI*, I, 399-400; *H de P*, I, 264; *Italie*, 1182.
261. See *op. cit.*, pp. 277, 312 *et passim*.
262. *Ibid.*, p. 280. Each man, as Diderot argues (p. 312), 'est entraîné par son organisation, son caractère, son tempérament, son aptitude naturelle à combiner de préférence telles et telles idées plutôt que telles ou telles autres.' See in the same vein pp. 339-347.
263. The problem had been recognised by Diderot, who identifies in the arbitrary interplay of natural aptitudes and fortune 'la raison pour laquelle les talents sont déplacés et les états de la société remplis d'hommes malheureux ou de sujets médiocres, et que celui qui aurait été un grand artiste, n'est qu'un pauvre sorbonniste ou un plat jurisconsulte' (p. 312). Such reasoning could have come straight from the pages of Stendhal.
264. *De l'Amour*, I, 109. See above, Chapter VIII. The case of Eponine finds some echo in Mme de Rênal, who, for all her adulterous deceptions, 'eût sacrifié sa vie sans hésiter pour sauver celle de son mari, si elle l'eût vu en péril' (*Romans*, I, 362).
265. *H de P*, II, 48. In a pointedly parodic way, Julien Sorel is offered a glimpse of just such a fate, the same 'moyen ignoble d'arriver à l'aisance', by Fouqué the timber-merchant — and that at a moment when, dining with his friend 'comme

des héros d'Homère', Julien 'ne voyait rien entre lui et les actions les plus héroïques, que le manque d'occasion.' See *Romans*, I, 285-290.

266. *De l'Amour*, II, 200. 'Le scélérat qui vous fait horreur comme assassin,' Stendhal writes in *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*, 'vous ferait pitié comme père de famille' (*Italie*, 115). Leonidas, the celebrated king of Sparta and hero of Thermopylae, we read in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (II, 138), 'pouvait être, et j'irai plus loin, était certainement un amant, un ami, un mari fort insipide.'
267. *Italie*, 192. 'A ces grands hommes inconnus qui ne peuvent se montrer par des actions,' adds Stendhal, 'il ne manque que l'idée d'écrire pour effacer les Alfieri et balancer les Machiavel' (*Ibid.*, 193).
268. *H de P*, II, 46. On 'cette inquiétude, mère des grandes choses, qui presse le bilieux', see also *ibid.*, II, 53.
269. *Corr*, II, 259.
270. *Ibid.*, II, 342.
271. *Italie*, 158, 559.
272. *Ibid.*, 225.
273. For this remark in a different but related context, see *H de P*, I, 13 n. 1.
274. *Ibid.*, II, 145.
275. *Ibid.*, II, 226.
276. See, for example, *Italie*, 192: 'la seule qualité essentielle au grand homme, c'est la force.' Cf. *ibid.*, 1214; *Rossini*, I, 251; *H de P*, I, 108-109 n. 2.
277. *Italie*, 778, 1245. M. Crouzet apprehends something of the moral paradox implicit in such designations when he stresses in Stendhal 'l'idée que le crime renvoie à la vertu, la vengeance à la reconnaissance, le brigand au grand citoyen; la construction sociale et légale est à ce point seconde, que son rôle est tout au plus d'infléchir la force, et de l'orienter, ou de la nommer par convention: mais sous le système nominal, persiste l'élan premier, et il importe de reconnaître que le mal est en réalité un bien, et inversement, car à l'origine, et avant l'intervention de la société, il n'y a que la force' (*Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 16).
278. *Italie*, 201.
279. *Ibid.*, 1214.
280. *Rapports*, p. 82.
281. *Italie*, 426.
282. *H de P*, II, 137.
283. *Ibid.*, II, 120.
284. See *Italie*, 627, 868. Cf. *ibid.*, 57: 'Si l'on recréait la Grèce, on n'obtiendrait que des New York et des Philadelphie, pays rebelles aux arts.'

285. *Op. cit.*, p. 80.
286. *JL*, III, 146.
287. *Italie*, 494. Among Stendhal's many grievances against a republic on the American model, see *M de T*, II, 380-381; *Romans*, I, 822-823, 1357-1358.
288. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 39. See also *ibid.*, pp. 23-24, 34-35.
289. *Italie*, 581. On 'l'irréductible contradiction du progrès de la société et du progrès de l'individu', see Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 56. Cf. Delacroix, p. 27: 'le progrès politique et le bonheur de l'humanité, effets et bien suprême de la société, sont en contradiction directe avec l'épanouissement et le bonheur de l'homme.'
290. *Stendhal et l'italianité*, p. 23. Cf. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 178: 'La contradiction de l'humain et du social fait que l'évolution bénéfique a aussi le caractère d'une dégénérescence.'

CHAPTER X

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS: APPLYING THE LESSONS OF DISILLUSIONMENT

Philosophical Optimism Recanted

The foregoing chapter presents two quite distinct visions of human nature. By renouncing his early faith in man's inherent sociability, Stendhal opened the way towards a rationale of the ego which we find developed across the range of his later writings. Italy — 'où tout le monde est original et ne fait que ce qui lui fait plaisir, sans *s'inquiéter du voisin*' — becomes the *locus in quo* of an individualism to which all roads, philosophical, aesthetic and political, lead.¹ For the political aspect of Stendhal's thought cannot be separated from the broader philosophical context within which it evolves. The monarchical régime — 'où le sort de chaque homme est individuel'² — is a far cry indeed from Stendhal's initial ideal; but, as the contributor to the *London Magazine* will declare baldly in 1825: 'Personne n'aime la République.'³ Whatever self-consciousness might be divined in such a remark, it sums up Stendhal's perception of a France where, as he will put it in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*,

il n'y a plus de société; chaque famille vit isolée dans sa maison, comme Robinson dans son île. Une ville est une collection de ménages anachorètes.⁴

Throughout Stendhal's writings, both private and published, one finds many such allusions to the disintegration of the republican ideal. Nor does Stendhal's experience as an active participant in the post-Revolutionary adventure appear to have bolstered his faltering faith in man. Quite the contrary, if store is to be set by the testimony of his diaries and letters. 'Les intérieurs d'âmes que j'ai vus dans la retraite de Moscou,' he would reflect in his diary of 19 April 1813, 'm'ont à jamais dégoûté des observations que je puis faire sur les êtres grossiers, sur ces manches à sabre qui composent une armée.'⁵ If Stendhal required proof that the *virtus* of old was no more, he seems to have found it in ample measure on the steppes of Russia. 'L'aspect sale sous lequel on découvre l'humanité dans les positions difficiles, en un mot ce que j'ai vu en Russie, me dégoûte des voyages un peu dangereux,' we read again in his diary of 25 July 1815.⁶

The terms in which Stendhal couches the recollections of his armed service, and of the Russian campaign most notably, are highly significant. For what he denounces most is the lack of any evident *humanitarian* sentiment. 'Le danger était trop grand dans la retraite de Russie pour avoir pitié de personne,' he would write in a footnote to

*l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie.*⁷ Much later, as consul in Civitavecchia, we find him reflecting still upon the base egoism and venality which had been laid bare during the retreat from Moscow. 'Je quittai Moscou le 16 octobre 1812,' he recalls in a note consigned to Saint-Simon's *Mémoires*:

Les généraux étaient des modèles d'égoïsme sordide, prêts à sacrifier leur vie pour de l'avancement, et bien autre chose que leur vie. Ces âmes sales et sordides donnaient seulement signe de vie quand le péril était extrême.⁸

It is not our purpose to argue the importance of this single episode as a turning-point in Stendhal's philosophical evolution. What we wish to highlight is quite simply the *perspective* within which he rationalised the experience in question, making it the focus for a sweeping — philosophical — disillusionment with mankind. 'This is the point,' writes Robert Alter, 'where Stendhal's doctrine of the Happy Few begins to take definitive shape, for after Russia he begins to fear that the mass of humanity is too horrendously unredeemable to work with or hope for.'⁹ Though Alter describes the Russian *débâcle* as more of a clear watershed in Stendhal's philosophical conscience than we should care to, he appears founded in his contention that it 'was, most fundamentally, a sense of man's nature that was destroyed for Beyle in the wreckage of Napoleon's Russian adventure.' For Stendhal had, as Alter observes, and as we have seen in an earlier chapter, sought to conduct 'a rational quasi-mathematical analysis of man as a bundle of impulsions toward pleasure and away from pain obeying uniform laws of motivation.'¹⁰ Though he had long forsaken the more abstract and uniformitarian aspects of such a notion, the neatly turned aphorisms of the *philosophes* through which it had first been conveyed to him could not but seem singularly at odds with the brutalised vision of man to which he had been privy. Stendhal's diary entry of 21 May 1813, written against the roar of the cannons at Bautzen, testifies to his impatience now with those observations on the 'human soul' by which he had once set such store, and which his Moscow experience — as he specifies — had cast in a new light:

Je ne bande plus pour ce genre d'observations. J'en suis soûl, qu'on me passe l'expression; c'est un homme qui a trop pris de punch et qui a été obligé de le rendre; il en est dégoûté pour la vie.¹¹

Such remarks, for all their value, must be treated with some caution. Stendhal's interest in the 'human heart', if it waned in the aftermath of his Russian ordeal, was by no means eclipsed in 1812. What one may conclude is that he would cling more firmly hereafter to the impression, in which the retreat across the wastes of Russia seems to have confirmed him, of a humanity hopelessly fragmented. The Moscow campaign may be seen, in this sense, less as a clear turning-point than as an important stage in an on-going process of disenchantment for Stendhal.¹² By the time he undertook to

articulate his philosophy in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and *De l'Amour*, he would have come to some sort of intellectual terms with a view of man that is the very negation of that 'revered but impossible ideal'¹³ upon which he had drawn in his earliest writings. By then, too, Stendhal would have found a new avenue into which to channel his radically revised conception of man. 'Les plaisirs de chaque individu sont différents, et souvent opposés,' we read in *De l'Amour*: 'cela explique fort bien comment ce qui est beauté pour un individu est laid pour un autre.'¹⁴

This, it became clear to Stendhal, was the inevitable conclusion not only of all aesthetic theorising, but of any attempt, moral and political alike, to legislate for a 'common' man. The rank individualism for which his writing stands at times as a defiant apology may be seen as a capitulation to what he suggests is the overwhelming evidence of man's unregenerate ego. Yet Stendhal's protestations against the inveterate selfishness of his fellows must be seen within a broader context than his own philosophical evolution. It is important to stress that the role of the *ego* is paramount for even the most optimistic of the thinkers who furnished Stendhal with his earliest view of Humanity. Where he breaks faith with these thinkers is not in seeing men as so many self-interested animals; as Michel Crouzet points out: 'Tous les maîtres de Stendhal l'ont dit, Helvétius, Cabanis, Volney, Tracy, la société n'est qu'une collection d'individus, c'est-à-dire de bonheurs individuels...'¹⁵ It is rather on the crucial question of man's *perfectibility* — the belief that if men could not be made altruistic, egoism at least could be enlightened — that Stendhal was to defect from the rationale of the philosophers to whom he had subscribed.¹⁶ 'Etudier bien cette idée de *perfectibilité*,' he had written in 1804, 'qui me mènera, si je la trouve fondée, à un état de l'âme bien doux, l'*optimisme*...'¹⁷ Stendhal was not, however, to embrace for long what had been a distinctive feature of eighteenth-century thought and had become in turn 'the guiding ideal of the Ideologic school'.¹⁸ The optimism which he makes contingent here upon faith in the betterment of mankind was not to come to fruition, but was to remain a feature of those earliest writings in which he extols the indefinite powers of education to transform the moral and social environment. Progress Stendhal would recognise aplenty in the scientific, technological and artistic advances of his age; but his faith in man's nature was not to keep abreast of his faith in man's intelligence. As early as 1804, we find the problem posed in terms which question the common notion (for the eighteenth-century optimists notably) of moral perfectibility through historical process:

Je pensais donc que depuis les anciens l'esprit humain s'était perfectionné, c'est-à-dire que nous savons beaucoup de vérités qu'ils ignoraient. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que le cœur humain se soit aussi perfectionné, c'est-à-dire que les passions de nos cœurs soient plus vertueuses que celles des leurs; au contraire, à la première vue, il semble qu'elles le soient beaucoup moins. La monarchie elle-même est une perfection de l'esprit humain, car quel art ne

faut-il pas à un homme pour faire que tant de gens obéissent à ses ordres contre leur intérêt évident!
Mais peut-être aussi avons-nous plus de plaisirs que les anciens républicains; sommes-nous plus heureux?¹⁹

The suggestion that men might be happier in the pursuit of their own gratifications than in the furtherance of the common weal had far-reaching implications. The tension between the determinism of the *philosophes* and their moral idealism was, as D.C. Potts argues, one of the most compelling features of Enlightenment thought.²⁰ As it passes to Stendhal, this tension is compounded by a loss of faith in man's civic propensities and in his capacity for moral self-regeneration. The increasing conviction that each individual was an end in himself could not be reconciled for long with the 'revolutionary universalism' of Stendhal's youth.²¹ The *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* are, in the definition of man expounded by the *philosophes*, entirely different; for Stendhal they remain, ultimately, one and the same. '*Intérêt, besoin, passion, utile,*' writes Michel Crouzet, 'ces mots du vocabulaire politique et psychologique indiquent un isolement premier de l'homme, une vocation égoïste, une nature d'abord vouée à soi, qui fait un problème de l'état et de la généralité sociale.'²² This 'nature d'abord vouée à soi' is but the starting-point for a reformist philosopher such as Helvétius; but it is to the starting-point itself that Stendhal will continually find himself returning. The idea — which comes into its own with the reading of Cabanis — that each human being possesses a unique 'nature' that no collective ethic could conjure away, while it found in Stendhal a responsive proponent, cut deep into his moral awareness. For it legitimised the transition from a science of Man to a science of the Individual that was at odds with the whole tradition from which he had derived his early philosophical and ethical inspiration. With its insistence on diversity and relativity in the spheres of human character and conduct, Stendhal's interpretation of Cabanis introduced a disunity and disorder where they had been felt to be most required. 'L'optimiste naïf,' to borrow the terms of Michel Crouzet, will emerge from his study of the 'human heart' 'un pessimiste cynique.'²³

It is here that Stendhal's severance from the whole Enlightenment tradition is most irreparable, here that his modernity — to use an ambivalent and easily abused term — can be said in large part to lie. In his stimulating discussion of eighteenth-century French materialism, E.A. Gellner stresses that pessimism about the human condition was an attitude quite foreign to the secular ideals of the Enlightenment:

This vision of man formulated metaphysically by Schopenhauer, aphoristically by Nietzsche, and clinically by Freud is something which is alien to Enlightened thought and which constitutes a grave problem for it. The Enlightenment was not necessarily given to attributing a fundamentally good moral substrate to man, as Rousseau did, but it saw man as at least morally neutral and capable of rational and indeed virtuous behavior, once it could be freed from superstition; and even if motivated by self-interest, enlightened self-interest would lead to a rational

harmony.²⁴

Such was the rationale which informed the whole social, ethical and political world-view that we associate with the eighteenth-century *philosophes* and their later counterparts, the Idéologues. Faith in the redemptive power of reason, a perception of man and society as malleable entities, the alignment of collective morality and felicity upon a human nature which could not but proceed from truth to virtue: if these factors resume the spirit of optimism that sustained the Enlightenment, they also sum up, by implication, the problems inherited by the Idéologues as legatees of that optimism. For the latter are separated from their forebears not only by a social and political revolution that had given little cause to be sanguin about man's capacities for enlightened virtue, but by another revolution — slow, painstaking, but no less real for that — in the definition of the very nature of man as an animal organism. The problem is brought sharply into relief by Cabanis. For how does one square belief in the boundless power of reason with the removal of even part of man's 'moral' self from his conscience to his abdomen? Did Cabanis not contend that 'l'organe cérébral, considéré comme celui de la pensée, [...], n'est pas lié par des rapports moins étroits d'influence réciproque avec le foie, la rate, l'estomac ou les parties de la génération'?²⁵ If such was the case, then each man potentially carried within himself the most powerful objection to the aspirations of Enlightened rationalism. Gellner puts the problem in general but elucidatory terms:

The idea that the enemy of rationality and happiness is *within* and deeply rooted, a kind of cosmic or biological or fundamental bloody-mindedness, is something which, if true, badly upsets the rationalistic and optimistic world-view of the Enlightenment. If true, it shows that enlightenment is not enough. The aims it offers humanity — rational, harmonized happiness — are in fact shown not to satisfy our real strivings; the means it offers — the removal of superstition and prejudice and tyranny — are shown to be inefficacious.²⁶

This passage captures something of the evolution in Stendhal's reasoning from *Les Deux Hommes* to *Lamiel*. For the 'human heart' — and this is the point that is lost if one dates his 'philosophy' from the age of eighteen or twenty — was far from being the same for Stendhal in 1840 as it had been in 1804. 'Between the ardent good-citizenship of Charles in "Les Deux Hommes" and the cynical egoism of Sansfin in *Lamiel*,' writes Margaret Tillett, 'there is a gulf of disillusion as much with self as with events.'²⁷ The 'gulf of disillusion', one might argue, lies, more deeply still, in Stendhal's perception of human nature itself. As he would declare in a letter to Adolphe de Maresté dated 21 December 1819, 'nous avons tous deux raison, car il n'y a pas de moral, et nos physiques sont différents.'²⁸ This preemptory recourse to the body as moral arbiter, with its outright denial of the faculties of 'head' and 'heart' as Stendhal had once conceived them, bears the unmistakable stamp of Cabanis. Yet it betrays the

whole spirit which informs the latter's philosophy. One need only glance at the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* to appreciate how crude and distortive is Stendhal's allusion here to its author. 'La nature produit l'homme avec des organes et des facultés déterminées,' Cabanis certainly claims; but he adds at once:

mais l'art peut accroître ces facultés, changer ou diriger leur emploi, créer en quelque sorte de nouveaux *organes*. C'est là l'ouvrage de l'éducation, qui n'est, à proprement parler, que l'art des impressions et des habitudes.²⁹

While Cabanis's language reveals once more here some uncertainty about the limits to which reform might be pushed, there is no doubting his belief in man's power to exert a salutary influence upon the raw material of human nature. Nothing of this, however, appears in Stendhal's remark to Mareste, or in the journal entry from the same period in which, alluding once more to Cabanis, he presents character as a *fait accompli* which the best efforts of the reformer are powerless to modify.³⁰ Such instances demonstrate well the selectivity and distortion which comes to characterise Stendhal's representation of the philosophers to whom he professes allegiance. Writing to his friend Mareste on 22 April 1818, Stendhal defines the term 'vertueux' as 'utile au bonheur du peuple, fidèle à la maxime: *Salus populi suprema lex est*.'³¹ The words could have been lifted as readily from Helvétius as from any of Stendhal's earliest notes or letters. If Stendhal's definition of virtue has not changed, however, since his initial reading of Helvétius, what *has* changed — and irrevocably — is his belief that such virtue could be implemented with any realistic prospect of success. 'Il faut être bien borné,' he concludes cynically, 'pour se figurer que l'intérêt du berger et celui des moutons soit le même (c'est-à-dire que le berger le croie).'³²

So much for the enlightened legislator. Stendhal puts his finger here on a central weakness in Helvétius's argument. For he clearly recognises the problem latent in the fact that the legislator-educator himself must issue from the same Humanity, and be subject to conditioning by the same environment, that it is his task to reform. As D.W. Smith puts it in his study of Helvétius, 'no legislator, on the author's own admission, could be sufficiently disinterested to create a legislative system suited to the needs of the public rather than of himself.'³³ Helvétius would have required therefore, as John Lough points out, some *deus ex machina* to set his system in motion, if not indeed to sustain it.³⁴ Was it not naïf in the extreme to hope that any monarch 'would suddenly through enlightenment become the instrument of the will of the people, the guarantor of its happiness'?³⁵ And what of the longer term? How does one prevent society, once reformed, from degenerating? How does one ensure, in Stendhal's terms, that the interests of shepherd and flock, once in harmony, remain in harmony? Having witnessed the political upheavals of Revolution, Empire and Restoration, Stendhal could, in 1818, ask the question with some point. But the answer is nowhere to be

found in Helvétius. An advocate of enlightened despotism, he held that political progress should take place from the top down, that it should be the achievement of an enlightened few from among the ruling élite.³⁶ To argue as much, however, was, as E.C. Ladd points out, to cherish little more than the pious hope that a head of state would take it upon himself to 'work for the greatest happiness of all members of society.'³⁷

While it raises a powerful objection against the whole foundation upon which the social reformism of Helvétius rested, Stendhal's scepticism to Mareste about the possibility of any real community of interests among men takes issue also with Cabanis. For the latter echoes Helvétius in contending that, 'Par une heureuse nécessité, l'intérêt de chaque individu ne saurait jamais être véritablement séparé de l'intérêt des autres hommes.'³⁸ Cabanis bases his rationale on a quasi-Christian notion of virtue — minus the spiritual dimension — whereby acts against the common interest 'retombent inévitablement, tôt ou tard, sur leur auteur.' He explains:

Sans doute, l'homme vertueux peut être malheureux: mais il serait alors bien plus malheureux encore sans le secours de la vertu; elle seule adoucit tous les maux, et fait goûter tous les biens de la destinée humaine.³⁹

The argument was a common one among the *philosophes* and *Idéologues*.⁴⁰ 'Le véritable bonheur,' Cabanis concludes, 'est nécessairement le partage exclusif de la véritable vertu.'⁴¹ What Stendhal was to call into question, however, was not just the practicability of virtue thus conceived, but its very *desirability*. For he had long ceased to subscribe to the simple equation between virtue and happiness which had found expression in some of his earliest letters to his sister Pauline.⁴² A diary entry of 20 February 1815 provides a most illuminating glimpse of Stendhal's revised stance on this question:

Je ne sais si l'habitude des vertus est aussi utile au bonheur que le prétend Cabanis. Ceci est peut-être une fraude pieuse [...]. Mais je crois que l'habitude de l'égoïsme à la du Deffand nuit au bonheur, en faisant qu'on ne prend plus intérêt à rien.⁴³

These juxtaposed references to Cabanis and Mme du Deffand evoke two antithetical worlds, one of expansive social virtue, the other of insular egoism, neither of which is recognised here by Stendhal as a route to personal happiness. The terms in which the reference to Cabanis is couched recall distinctly the 'Lettre sur la perfectibilité' which is ascribed to the latter and which had appeared in *La Décade* of 20 April 1799.⁴⁴ For there a time is envisaged when 'la vertu, dont les hommes irréfléchis se font une image sévère, sera prise enfin pour ce qu'elle est, pour le moyen d'être heureux.' To this is added the confident prediction that

un jour viendra où les avantages attachés pour l'homme aux habitudes de la vertu,

seront si bien démontrés, qu'on se moquera du méchant comme d'un sot, toutes les fois qu'on ne jugera pas nécessaire de l'enchaîner comme un furieux.⁴⁵

For all the esteem in which Stendhal had come to hold Cabanis by 1815, he clearly refuses to accompany the latter in these sanguin conclusions about man's moral potentiality. What gives more point to the confrontation which we find in Stendhal's diary between the would-be social reformer and the celebrated socialite is a remark which appears in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* and which, taken in conjunction with the diary entry in question, appears to bear out Stendhal's repudiation of the notion of human perfectibility as it is upheld by Cabanis:

Tant qu'on ne fera pas de tous les hommes des anges, ou des gens passionnés pour le même objet, [...], ce qu'ils auront de mieux à faire pour se plaire sera d'être Français comme on l'était dans le salon de madame du Deffand.⁴⁶

It is important to stress that the pessimistic resignation which is implicit in such a remark, while it issues a challenge to the social philosophy of Cabanis, is wholly — if paradoxically — consistent with the latter's contribution to Stendhal. For, taken in isolation from any programme of social regeneration, Cabanis's theories of physiological determinism appeared to lend themselves much more readily to an individualistic than to a socialistic philosophy of man. Such at least was the way in which Stendhal chose to interpret the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. 'L'idée dominante que je rapporte de Paris,' he would write to Mareste on 2 November 1819, 'c'est que chacun a raison dans son trou, et qu'il est absurde de vouloir être à la fois dans deux trous.'⁴⁷

Such is the rationale which Stendhal invokes in order to account for his decision to reside in Milan rather than in Paris. The difference that distinguishes him in this sense from his friend is a theme which runs through the letters to Mareste. Writing again on 7 May 1821, Stendhal makes what is by now a familiar commentary on their respective life-styles:

La chute *della Pietra di Paragone* vous démontre ce que j'avance depuis cinq ans: qu'un Parisien comme vous et un Italien tel que moi avons un *goût* différent. De plus, chacun a le bon goût, s'il parle sincèrement.⁴⁸

Contemporaneous with *De l'Amour*, these letters echo and elucidate the concluding remarks of that work. For it was Stendhal's contention there, as we recall, that 'tous ont raison, s'ils se connaissent bien eux-mêmes, et s'ils courent après le genre de bonheur qui est le mieux adapté à leurs organes et à leurs habitudes.'⁴⁹ Each must be the arbiter and censor of his own happiness, according to criteria which, Stendhal suggests, begin and end with an understanding of one's own nature. 'La *Morale* est comme la *Physique*; que de sottises ont dit les anciens!' he would scribble on a volume

of Montaigne's *Essais* in 1834.⁵⁰ An individual should never be ridiculed for his passion, he had reflected some two decades before, 'car c'est une manière de chercher le bonheur et je suis seul juge compétent de ce qui me rend heureux ou malheureux.'⁵¹ The remark is made, significantly, in a commentary on Molière's *Les Femmes savantes* — a play which, as we recall, Stendhal considers to be founded on the soundest physiological principles.⁵² Such a view of man, it is clear, could not be reconciled for long with any utopian ideal of common interest based on the greatest good of the greatest number. 'Un amoureux parle du bonheur à son père avare,' writes Stendhal amid some notes in which he attempts to codify his thoughts on the theatre:

Bonheur signifie pour le fils *possession de l'objet aimé*; pour le père *possession d'un million*. Ils parlent des moyens d'atteindre le bonheur. Peut-on s'étonner si leurs moyens diffèrent.⁵³

Penned in 1813, these remarks articulate a logic that can be found at work across the whole range of Stendhal's later writings. All is relative, he would insist, in human relations, art, politics, moral convention.⁵⁴ No standard of taste or behaviour is immutable; and none remains impervious to the changes wrought upon it from one community to the next, one individual to the next. 'Tout cela,' declares Stendhal in his letter to Mareste of 21 December 1819, 'se réduit à ce que le Corrège aurait fait ses madones noires s'il eût peint au Sénégal.'⁵⁵ Though such a remark has, on the surface, much in common with Ideology's denial of absolute standards in human affairs, the emphasis which Stendhal lends his reasoning on this whole question sets him quite apart from his declared mentors. While Destutt de Tracy, as Michel Crouzet notes, 'se fondait sur une "organisation" universelle des hommes', Stendhal, by contrast, 'tend invinciblement à majorer les éléments carrément subjectivistes de la doctrine, et à la lancer dans un relativisme complet.'⁵⁶ Tracy's philosophy, argues Emmet Kennedy, 'suffers from the fallacy of composition, that what is good for one is necessarily good for all.'⁵⁷ It was by confronting the bankruptcy of such a notion that Stendhal would move progressively further from the 'unitary tendencies' of the Enlightenment and Revolution.⁵⁸ Hence the frank and expeditious terms in which the author of *De l'Amour* will deem the American incapable of 'crystallisation', wedded as he is to the arid pursuit of reason. 'J'admire ce bonheur et ne l'envie pas; c'est comme le bonheur d'êtres d'une espèce différente et inférieure.'⁵⁹

Video meliora, proboque... : The Moral Plight of the Stendhalian Hero

Such is the problem which will receive its most vexing and at times most subtle examination in the novels. All of Stendhal's protagonists in turn will be forced to conduct their *chasse au bonheur* in a world where relativism goes hand in hand with individualism, and individualism with isolation. Octave, for all his attachment in principle to the utilitarian philosophy of Helvétius and Bentham, will confront nonetheless 'cette sensation: je suis ici dans un désert d'hommes.'⁶⁰ Julien, though visited — in his 'vertu romaine' — by illusions of utilitarian virtue, will capitulate to the imperative: 'chacun pour soi dans ce désert d'égoïsme qu'on appelle la vie.'⁶¹ Lucien, separated by a 'chasme' from his father and mentor, will strive in vain to reconcile 'ce sot amour du bien' with the less edifying aspects of his character and career.⁶²

All three will rationalise their relationship to the world in terms of their *singularity*, a singularity which is at once a refuge and a burden, and which is evoked at times in a deterministic language redolent of Cabanis. 'Un être tout-puissant et bon pourrait-il me punir d'ajouter foi au rapport des organes que lui-même il m'a donnés?' reasons Octave.⁶³ 'Puisque l'effet physique est si fort,' exclaims Lucien, 'je ne suis donc pas blâmable moralement!'⁶⁴ The same Lucien will seek to rationalise his aversion to the republican model of government by placing the claims of his organism above those of his reason. 'J'ai de l'estime pour leur opinion, leur ambition est honnête,' he writes of the republican cénacle in the Nancy garrison; but, he concludes, 'la démocratie est trop âpre pour ma façon de sentir.'⁶⁵ Julien Sorel likewise, we are told, has 'une organisation délicate'; his ambition, it is suggested, stems not from any 'decision' as such, but from the fact that 'la délicatesse de son cœur lui fait un besoin de quelques-unes des jouissances que donne l'argent.'⁶⁶ The gulf between the civic ideal which each in turn esteems and their own exiguous contribution to the common weal is cruelly accentuated by Stendhal. 'Mais comment sortir de la boue où je suis plongé au moral comme au physique?' exclaims the mud-bespattered Lucien on the road from Blois, adding feebly in his own defence: 'j'ai fait ce que j'ai pu pour être utile et estimable'⁶⁷ Like Julien, he is, Stendhal delights in reminding us, a 'jeune Romain' torn between principle and practice,⁶⁸ whilst it is Octave's lamely to reflect: 'Brutus sacrifia ses enfants, c'était la difficulté qui se présentait à lui, moi, je vivrai.'⁶⁹

Caught squarely between his perception of an ideal good and a countervailing reality — 'entre ce qu'il estime et ce qu'il prévoit de sa vie future'⁷⁰ — Stendhal's protagonist struggles to take what comfort may be had from a deterministic rationale, from the thought that things are as they *must* be. 'Est-ce la faute d'un homme s'il a les

cheveux noirs?' asks Octave.⁷¹ 'Il n'y a qu'un sot, se dit-il, qui soit en colère contre les autres,' we read of Julien: 'une pierre tombe parce qu'elle est pesante.'⁷² Such reasoning, however, is fitful and inadequate to afford any genuine comfort. It is clear from Stendhal's notes on *Armance* that he perceived the tensions between conscience and conduct as fundamental to dramatic characterisation in the novel:

Où est le jeune homme qui, sans devenir fou, pourra supporter la contradiction entre ce qu'il estime et ce qu'il prévoit de sa vie future? — [...] Le contraste entre les actions qu'il regarde comme estimables et les actions à travers lesquelles il prévoit que doit le conduire sa vie future.⁷³

'A quoi donc sommes-nous bons?' Such is the question, voiced by Lucien Leuwen, which sums up the anguish of a Stendhalian hero in whom the *ressort* can find no meaningful *sens*.⁷⁴ For it can be argued of Stendhal's novels that they dramatise in each case the conflict between the essential character of the individual and the channels through which this must seek expression. 'Du temps de l'Empereur,' we recall, 'Julien eût été un fort honnête homme.'⁷⁵ For Octave, Julien and Lucien alike, the attachment to utilitarianism in principle is matched by a painful awareness of their own *uselessness* in practical terms. The parody of ancient civic virtue which breaks through at times in the novels serves to heighten the gulf between lofty ideal and a paltry reality. If Julien draws inspiration from Caesar's troops at Pharsalus, it is to calm his anxieties before the nocturnal assault on Mathilde's balcony; if Lucien compares himself with the legendary Brutus, it is as the acolyte of a mundane and less than principled July Monarchy.⁷⁶ A quotation from Ovid, which Stendhal cites in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, expresses appositely the plight of these frustrated heroes as both they and the reader are invited to perceive it: '*Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor*' — 'I see the better course and approve of it; but I follow the worse.'⁷⁷

In *La Chartreuse de Parme* alone do we find that easy capitulation to Nature — and to *human* nature — which takes men and things as they are, and which is summed up in Gina's remark to Mosca: 'il n'est pas en votre pouvoir de changer votre nature.'⁷⁸ It is here too that the utilitarian ideal which exercises Octave, Julien and Lucien alike is broached in the most dismissive tones. For Fabrice, 'le culte du *bonheur du plus grand nombre*' is but 'une *hérésie* qui passera comme les autres, mais après avoir tué beaucoup d'âmes, comme la peste tandis qu'elle règne dans une contrée tue beaucoup de corps.'⁷⁹ More candid still in this respect is the character-portrait of Mosca:

Le comte n'avait pas de vertu; l'on peut même ajouter que ce que les libéraux entendent par *vertu* (chercher le bonheur du plus grand nombre) lui semblait une duperie; il se croyait obligé à chercher avant tout le bonheur du comte Mosca della Rovère...⁸⁰

For this reason, Mosca is most emphatically not, as Pierre Martino claims, 'le

produit parfait de la culture idéologique.⁸¹ He represents a conscious and sustained *deviation* from all that Ideology tends towards from the outset. Manuel Brussaly, in subscribing to Martino's analysis, upholds a contradiction in terms when he declares Mosca '*amoral*' in the ideological sense, a disciple of the doctrines of Tracy and of Helvétius.⁸² Ideology, as such interpretations fail to recognise, is shot through with moral purpose. It is no manual for individualistic self-mastery, as Martino suggests,⁸³ but an ambitiously comprehensive programme for the regeneration of *social* man. Mosca's 'redemption' lies not in being an *idéologue*, with all the ethical humanitarianism and expansive social conscience which this implies; it lies — in keeping with the much narrower and more aesthetic considerations which had informed *D'un nouveau complot contre les industriels* — in an inherent generosity of spirit, the possession of 'une de ces âmes rares qui se font un remords éternel d'une action généreuse qu'elles pouvaient faire et qu'elles n'ont pas faite.'⁸⁴ Skulduggery, turpitude and infamy are, as Howard Clewes observes, the tools of this so-called *idéologue's* trade; but he retains Stendhal's sympathy through his disabused awareness that the game is there to be played according to rules which have little in common with any morally fastidious definition of good and evil, right and wrong.⁸⁵ If we extend our considerations to *Lamiel*, the difficulty of attempting to impose a reading on Stendhal's novels which squares with his reputation as an exponent of Ideology is at its most acute. For in Sansfin we find an altogether more hard-edged and gratuitous cynicism than in either *Leuwen père* or *Mosca*, a cynicism which, as Stendhal's last word on the problem of man in society, presents as unedifying a portrait of human nature as is anywhere evident in his writings. The question with which Stendhal approaches the characterisation of Sansfin in his notes of 6 March 1841 gives evidence of a conscious effort to push his portrayal of the darker side of human nature into new and uncharted territory: 'Dominique aura-t-il assez d'esprit pour avilir comme il faut Sansfin?'⁸⁶

Egoism, Utilitarianism and the Bankruptcy of the Republic

It would be a distortion of the complexity of Stendhal's thought to suggest that he progressed in a linear fashion from the embrasive humanitarianism of his youth to the militant individualism which is at times so pointedly articulated in his works. There is present even in his earliest notes and letters a concern for the individual as a unique exponent of human nature, just as there persists in his later writings a deep respect for the civic ideals on which he modelled his conception of man at the outset.⁸⁷ The problem, as Gita May rightly recognises, was one of forging a difficult compromise between 'l'idéal égalitaire et collectiviste' to which Stendhal early subscribes, and 'la

conception romantique et individualiste de l'être d'exception dans un état de perpétuelle et intolérable aliénation vis-à-vis des autres.⁸⁸ Therein lies the essence of a philosophical conflict which was to find no easy resolution in Stendhal. For in his thought at its most mature, there remains a tension between the claims of the individual and the claims of the social group which, if it seems to resolve in favour of the former, issues in considerably less triumphalism than Stendhal's critics, and indeed his own pronouncements, might at times lead us to suspect. The destiny of the outsider — 'la malheureuse position de l'homme soi-disant supérieur, ou, pour mieux dire, *différent*' — is, as Stendhal suggests in a letter to Félix Faure in 1813, bought at a price to society and individual alike.⁸⁹

Many are the occasions when we encounter the same suggestion by Stendhal that the extraordinary individual is to be pitied as much as celebrated, that the most basic self-interest demands the identification of the 'self' with the social whole.⁹⁰ 'Il faut considérer que ce sont les hommes avec qui vous êtes destiné à vivre qui vous rendront heureux et malheureux,' Stendhal had written sententiously to his sister Pauline in April 1805.⁹¹ Reflecting on life in Italy in his diary of 8 September 1811, he writes: 'on a besoin d'heureux pour être heureux jusque dans les plus petites choses, mais je crois qu'on peut l'être dans ce pays.'⁹² Such remarks invite some re-evaluation of the doctrine of bullish individualism which has so often been taken to be the very essence of Stendhal's philosophy. 'Le bonheur est contagieux,' we read in a note dated Milan, 14 May 1818: 'Si vous voulez être heureux, vivez au milieu de gens heureux.'⁹³ The disparity between such words and the clarion call for defiant self-sufficiency which so often rings out from Stendhal's writings is clear. Harry Levin shows a rare appreciation of the complexity of this question when he writes:

Though later generations of supermen and nihilists and *déracinés* and *immoralistes* pay their respects to Julien, and claim Stendhal as the founder of their *culte du moi*, no writer has more cogently insisted that egoism is self-destructing, and that the few cannot be happy when the many are unhappy.⁹⁴

Implicit here is the problem up against which Stendhal's philanthropic and utilitarian sympathies were forever destined to run. In order to contribute to and share in the happiness of others, one must be *like* others. While Stendhal stops short of holding that the end indeed justifies the means, he is acutely conscious of the isolation to which the individual who cannot lose himself amid the run of humanity is condemned. 'Malheur à qui se distingue!' warns the author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*.⁹⁵ Much of the dramatic tension of Stendhal's novels resides, as we have noted, in the essential singularity of the hero, his failure to be at one with the world in which he lives. While there is evident in Stendhal's private writings the same 'singularité agressive et militante'⁹⁶ that is displayed at times by his protagonists, he remains alive

to the deficit side of such distinctiveness from the common herd. It is in no exultant tones certainly that, writing from Civitavecchia in October 1839, and having had ample occasion to revise the collectivist ideals of his youth, Stendhal would declare himself 'le seul animal de mon espèce.'⁹⁷

Such remarks require to be interpreted within the wider perspective of Stendhal's social thought. For the distinction has not been clearly enough made by critics between 'utilitarianism' as a social philosophy and 'utilitarianism' as a narrow personal code, or, put another way, between a *universalistic* and a purely *egoistic* interpretation of the utilitarian ethic.⁹⁸ Thus can W.H. Fineshriber insist upon the 'wholly utilitarian and egoistic morality' preached by Stendhal, whilst Geoffrey Strickland discerns in the same Stendhal 'a very conscious Utilitarianism', fashioned after the socialistic precepts of Jeremy Bentham.⁹⁹ Neither interpretation is necessarily to be faulted; nor, indeed, are they mutually exclusive: but there are important qualifications to be made in either case. For it is precisely Stendhal's failure to reconcile these postures, to resolve the tensions that they create in his view of man and society, which explains his evident discomfiture in relation to the Benthamite principle of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' Renée Winegarten oversimplifies the question when she asserts: 'Without difficulty, Beyle moved from the utilitarianism of Helvétius to the philosophical radicalism of Bentham.'¹⁰⁰ No writer, in truth, has met with *greater* difficulty in reconciling the demands of the one with the sovereign well-being of the many. As Pierre Martino recognises, Stendhal 'ne s'explique pas bien sur l'opposition possible de l'intérêt général et de l'intérêt individuel';¹⁰¹ but it was a question which never ceased to exercise his mind.¹⁰²

All of the foregoing must be borne in mind when considering Stendhal's place within the philosophical tradition to which his name has been annexed. If Helvétius and Cabanis, in their initial premises at least, provided what seemed a legitimation of individualism, they failed in turn for Stendhal to reconcile this with the wider humanitarian ethic that it was their concern to promulgate. They merely *posed the problem*, without offering any ultimately practicable solution. To this extent, both imparted to Stendhal the seeds of an irresolvable dilemma. Of those called upon to enact the Revolution, Tocqueville writes:

Ils ne doutaient pas de la perfectibilité, de la puissance de l'homme; [...], ils avaient foi dans sa vertu. [...]; ils ne doutaient point qu'ils ne fussent appelés à transformer la société et à régénérer notre espèce.¹⁰³

As it fell to the succeeding generation to draw up the balance-sheet of a century of philosophical radicalism culminating in the ravages of revolution and war, the fallacy in such millennial ambitions was brutally exposed. In Stendhal, and in *Le Rouge et le*

Noir notably, writes Paul Bourget, we discover 'l'aube tragique du pessimisme'.¹⁰⁴ It was in this 'dawn of pessimism' precisely that a later age was to discover Stendhal's 'modernity'. Writing for *La Revue Bleue* in 1884, Paul Deschanel deems Stendhal 'le lien entre la philosophie sensualiste du XVIII^e.siècle et la philosophie fataliste de nos jours'.¹⁰⁵ The idea is taken up and amplified by another of Stendhal's early commentators, Emile Faguet:

Stendhal, c'est le XVIII^e siècle, c'est Duclos, Helvétius, Destutt de Tracy et Cabanis [...]. Mais c'est le XVIII^e siècle, dirai-je perversi, je dirai plutôt un peu endurci et rendu plus brutal par la Révolution et l'Empire. [...] En un mot c'est un homme du XVIII^e siècle, moins l'optimisme. C'est le XVIII^e siècle qui a traversé une terrible époque de brutalité et de violence, qui en a été endurci et assombri, et qui a gardé toutes ses idées sans garder son rêve. De là ce qu'il y a de sec et de dur et de noir dans toute l'œuvre de ce d'Holbach retardataire.

Faguet goes on to conclude with point:

L'établissement du bonheur, voilà le rêve du XVIII^e siècle, *la chasse au bonheur*, qui devient vite *la lutte pour le bonheur*, voilà l'idée de Stendhal. La transformation de l'optimisme épicurien en épicurisme pessimiste, voilà ce que Stendhal, [...], fait toucher du doigt.¹⁰⁶

The happiness of the greatest number was a concept which disintegrated at the touch. Having sought in vain a common measure of egoism, of passion, of virtue, of all that might serve as a constant gauge to human nature and as the basis for a moral code by which to regulate men and their affairs, Stendhal would come to inveigh against any suggestion that such a measure might indeed exist. Etienne Delécluze records in his journal the portrait of a Stendhal intent on repudiating 'tout ce qui peut établir un consentement unanime,' unshakeable in his contention that 'les uns voient jaune, les autres bleu, les autres vert'.¹⁰⁷ Delécluze leaves a similar testimony in his *Souvenirs de soixante années* and his *Impressions romaines*, ascribing to Stendhal the most firmly rooted belief that men are condemned to perceive the world from standpoints so particular as to preclude any community of experience:

Nous ne pouvons pas nous ressembler; nous ne pouvons pas recevoir des impressions semblables des mêmes objets.¹⁰⁸

While it echoes Cabanis's thesis that 'les hommes ne se ressemblent point par la manière de sentir',¹⁰⁹ such reasoning would come to represent for Stendhal the most insurmountable obstacle to a utilitarian ethic. In its *ex post facto* interpretation of human affairs, utilitarianism, as Bernard Williams argues, makes 'only the most superficial sense of human desire and action at all; and hence only very poor sense of what was supposed to be its own speciality, happiness'.¹¹⁰ It is on this crucial point that Stendhal's faith in the utilitarian ideal would founder. For one could not *legislate* for personal happiness; one could not gainsay the multiplicity of ends in which men pursue

their *own* felicity. Once the definition of happiness is thus consigned to each individual, once it is tied to a particular neuro-biological organism and made subject to factors that are perceived to lie beyond man's immediate control, the way is open to a resolutely individualistic ethic.

Stendhal's ambivalence with regard to the utilitarian ideal would require a detailed study.¹¹¹ What is clear, however, is that the 'totalitarian democracy' which had fired his imagination as a young reader of Helvétius¹¹² could not be easily reconciled with the vision of man which emerged from Cabanis. Extraordinary individuals were not made: they were born. Any attempt to redefine man on a collective model, Stendhal would come to reason, could only be achieved through the subjugation of men *as* men. America, as the only viable republic, gives the lie to Stendhal's republicanism. For there men are *counted*, not *weighed*; there, as we read in *Lucien Leuwen*, 'la charrette gouvernementale est tombée dans l'ornière opposée à la nôtre. Le suffrage universel règne en tyran, et en tyran aux mains sales.'¹¹³ This remark carries a clear suggestion of the *juste-milieu* politics which are generally held to have been Stendhal's 'position', in so far as it can be defined as such, under the July Monarchy.¹¹⁴ What it demonstrates emphatically is Stendhal's refusal to endorse the translation of *res publica* into what it must inevitably become, *res populi*. 'En ce cas,' he would declare in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, 'je deviens bien vite aristocrate. Je ne veux faire la cour à personne, mais moins encore au peuple qu'au ministre.'¹¹⁵

In interpreting such remarks, critics have tended to concentrate upon Stendhal's personality, his difficulty in reconciling what Robert Alter describes as 'passionate republican principles and a thoroughly aristocratic sensibility.'¹¹⁶ This interpretation, in the light of the aesthetic considerations that bulk so large in Stendhal's political thinking,¹¹⁷ may have something to commend it. But there were *philosophical* reasons, too, which accounted for Stendhal's political predicament. After Cabanis, the most utopian system would have to recognise that, in terms of intelligence, talent, potential, and the whole range of character-traits and qualities to which each individual organism plays host, men could not be counted but *must* be weighed. To this extent, it can be argued, Cabanis's premises militate against his conclusions, his physiological determinism constituting an insuperable bar, for the reader who so chooses to interpret him, to his humanistic and socialistic aspirations.¹¹⁸ For it was the latter's objective, as it was the objective of the Idéologues in general, to 'lay bare the common ground of human needs and aspirations, thus providing the lawgiver with the means of furthering the common good.' Such, as George Lichtheim argues, was the guiding principle of Destutt de Tracy and his fellow Idéologues:

What is "natural" is also "social". Once human nature is properly understood, society will at last be able to arrange itself in a harmonious fashion. Reason is the

guarantor of order and liberty. As with Condorcet, Destutt's aim is pedagogical: it is to lay bare the guiding principles of republican citizenship.¹¹⁹

It was this very notion, however, this sanguine faith in the possibility of reforming man and society, which came to smack of the illusory for Stendhal. What he finds reprehensible in the republican posture is precisely the desire to *regenerate* humanity, to cast it in a mould which it simply will not fit.¹²⁰ The events of 1789-1815 and beyond bore witness enough to the fallacy in the pretensions of militant republicanism. As the author of the *Mémoires d'un touriste* will avow,

il me semble qu'en 1837 du moins, le gouvernement royal est préférable à la meilleure des républiques. Nous tomberions sous le plus mauvais des rois, sous un Ferdinand VII d'Espagne par exemple, que je l'aimerais mieux que les républicains au pouvoir. Ils y arriveraient, je le crois, avec des intentions raisonnables; mais bientôt ils se mettraient en colère, et voudraient *régénérer*.¹²¹

The biting emphasis on the final verb here conveys what had become the very gravamen of Stendhal's charge against the apologists of the Republic. Defining a democratic system which would accommodate the divergent exigencies of human nature, which would resolve (as Michel Crouzet so aptly puts it) 'l'objection qu'est *l'homme à tout système*',¹²² was, however, another matter; and Stendhal has none to offer. But his eroded republicanism and capitulation to the compromises of the July Monarchy are the measure of a philosophical conviction as much as they are the expression of any personal sensibility. For he could not sustain intellectually a republican sentiment that is nurtured under the Consulate, called into question under the Empire, and forced to come to terms with its own bankruptcy under the Restoration and July Monarchy. The stripling republican who had 'rinsed his mouth out' with Alfieri on the day of Napoleon's coronation is at some remove from the pragmatist who would conclude, as Manuel Brussaly puts it, that 'he preferred a king to a president.'¹²³ Insofar as it constitutes an early expression of opposition to the prevailing régime, Stendhal's political ideal remains consistent with itself and with the humanitarian philosophy of which it is, at the outset, a function. It is in this sense indeed that his 'republicanism' is always best defined, as a stance of *opposition*, affording a means, even in the 1820s, of assailing the régime and its philosophical base of support.¹²⁴ Confronted with the prospect of translating his republic into what *realpolitik* will bear, however, Stendhal demurs.

For the modern republic, with its enslavement to the utilitarian principle, becomes indissociable for Stendhal from a mediocrity and a philistinism that work to outlaw the individual. 'Ces théoriciens du moi inventent une société sans le moi,' writes Michel Crouzet, summing up well the depersonalised, abstracted, highly theoretical republic conceived by the *philosophes* and Idéologues.¹²⁵ The moment one makes utility the

rule of law, the moment one hands sovereignty to 'la majorité, laquelle est formée en grande partie par la canaille,'¹²⁶ one abolishes the conditions in which the arts and much of what is most to be valued in human endeavour may flourish.¹²⁷ In this sense, it can be argued, Cabanis, by aiding and abetting Stendhal in the revision of his earliest conception of humanity, provides a means of keeping faith, *philosophically*, with his evolving social and political conscience. It is not without significance, certainly, that the author of the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* is invoked or alluded to on so many occasions to justify the cult of self which Stendhal makes his own. No less than Lucien Leuwen will Stendhal come to associate democracy with the suppression of the richness and diversity that is human nature, with the idea that 'where every man is a voter, no man is free.'¹²⁸ No less than his vexed but resigned hero will Stendhal adjudge the republic to be *beyond* him, both physically and morally.¹²⁹ As Michel Crouzet acutely observes, 'l'image de la vie républicaine chez Stendhal demeure, malgré l'adhésion au principe de l'intérêt, inséparable du renoncement.'¹³⁰

Hedonism and Pessimism: 'Beylism' Reconsidered

It is within this context that Stendhal's so-called 'Beylism', though it is not primarily a *political* posture, attains its fullest significance. For that philosophy of 'desultory *egoism*'¹³¹ which he invokes in a number of letters between 1811 and 1813 constitutes, as Geoffrey Strickland observes, the formulation by Stendhal of 'un hédonisme à sa propre mesure.'¹³² Utilitarianism (as a social philosophy) and Beylism (as a personal code) depart from the same point; but they proceed in different, indeed opposing, directions. What is *utility*? Stendhal provides the answer in a marginal note dating from 1819: 'Grand principe de Helvétius très bien appliqué aux lois par J. Bentham.'¹³³ What is Beylism? It is the *same* Helvétian principle, the same fundamental concern to forge a practical means of attaining personal happiness, allied to the relativistic determinism of Cabanis and bereft of all collective overtones. Writing to Félix Faure from Moscow at the height of the Russian campaign on 2 October 1812, Stendhal enjoins his friend to cultivate what he terms '[les] principes du pur beylisme.' The letter defines with clarity the limits of what has become the most overworked — and, one may justifiably say, the most abused¹³⁴ — term in Stendhal scholarship:

Je lisais les *Confessions* de Rousseau il y a huit jours. C'est uniquement faute de deux ou trois principes de *beylisme* qu'il a eu tant de malheurs. Cette manie de voir des devoirs et des vertus partout a mis de la pédanterie dans son style et du malheur dans sa vie. Il se lie avec un homme pendant trois semaines: crac, les *devoirs* de l'amitié, etc. Cet homme ne songe plus à lui après deux ans; il cherche à cela une explication noire. Le *beylisme* lui eût dit: "Deux corps se rapprochent; il

naît de la chaleur et une fermentation, mais tout état de cette nature est passager. C'est une fleur dont il faut jouir avec volupté, etc." Saisis-tu mon idée?¹³⁵

The ring of Cabanis which this passage has about it is unmistakable. 'Depuis l'attraction matérielle jusqu'à la sympathie morale dans l'homme sociable,' writes J.E. Schlanger, 'Cabanis trace une genèse unitive de l'organisation.'¹³⁶ Thus, in the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, we find an insistence on the animal attraction and elective affinities that obtain between living beings as masses of organised matter, on the *physical* basis of 'la sympathie morale', the process whereby 'On voit les individus s'attirer, ou se repousser.'¹³⁷ Nothing in Nature is excluded by Cabanis from the 'analogie entre la sensibilité animale, l'instinct des plantes, les affinités électives et la simple attraction gravitante, qui s'exerce en tout temps entre toutes les parties de la matière.'¹³⁸

The extract from Stendhal's letter to Faure, however, is important for more than the imprint which it bears of such reasoning. The passage, which is central to an understanding of what Stendhal meant by *beylisme*, can be read in conjunction with an extract from another letter written earlier in the same year to his sister Pauline. In this, we find a clear adumbration of the cultured egoism which Stendhal would later contrast with the burdensome aspirations of the social reformers.¹³⁹ 'Mme du Deffand,' he writes, 'me fait sentir encore mieux tout le bon de mon système: de ne rendre son bonheur dépendant de personne...'¹⁴⁰ The wilfully solipsistic attitude that is suggested here as a means of ploughing one's own private furrow towards happiness finds an echo in other letters and diary entries of the period. As Stendhal writes in a letter to Félix Faure in November 1812, 'plus tu seras heureux, moins tu trouveras étrange mon système de bélyisme [*sic*], plus tu m'aimeras.'¹⁴¹ In like fashion, he had sought, as his diary of March 1811 informs us, to 'rendre un peu beyliste' his love-crossed friend, Louis Crozet.¹⁴² In each case, Stendhal is referring to a manner of viewing the world which makes personal — that is *individual* — happiness the supreme goal. Beylism is, as Michel Crouzet quaintly puts it, 'une "self-philosophie"'.¹⁴³ Tailor one's expectations to match reality and avail oneself of the routes to happiness that lie open without lamenting those that are barred: such is the essence of a doctrine which Stendhal alludes to as 'Epicurean'.¹⁴⁴ Alfieri, had he shown a little less bilious virtue and a little more *beylisme*, would have learnt to see life not as a relentless struggle against an established order which he could not hope to overturn, but rather as 'un bal masqué où le prince ne s'offense pas d'être croisé par le perruquier en domino.'¹⁴⁵

Exegetes have travelled far indeed from the strict sense of what is conveyed by such remarks. For there is in all of this more that is redolent of the classical sage than of the anarchic self-assertion, the manual for waging war on society, the 'philosophie de

la révolte', which successive generations of critics have come to associate with the term 'Beylism'.¹⁴⁶ What emerges from those several passages in which Stendhal sets forth his *beylisme* is a philosophy not of revolt, but rather of *accommodation* — to oneself, to one's circumstances, to the world in which one must live. The *beyliste*, in setting his sights on happiness, should eschew excess and temper extravagant desire; a contentment that can be attained — and *sustained* — is worth more than a state of sublime happiness which, Stendhal argues, must prove at best ephemeral, at worst chimerical.¹⁴⁷ Beylism is not only a quest for happiness: it is a recognition of the limits to happiness that are set by the human condition itself. It is best defined perhaps as an injunction to enjoy the pleasures of life as and when they present themselves, to cut with the grain, as it were, rather than striving against the natural course of things. F.W.J. Hemmings sums it up, with commendable sobriety, as 'a hedonistic doctrine of which the first rule is: Do not kick against the pricks.'¹⁴⁸

Whatever the appeal for Stendhal of the rationale on which it rests, this homespun hedonism could provide only a partial solution at best to the problem of man in society. The self remained for Stendhal too much a part of the social fabric for him to feel that he had found in his *beylisme* anything but an enforced and far from satisfactory compromise with happiness as it elsewhere conceived by him. For there clearly persists in Stendhal's mind the conviction that 'il y a une certaine chose nommée *vertu* dont il faut aussi se souvenir quelquefois quand on prétend être heureux.'¹⁴⁹ His writings to the end carry numerous evocations of 'virtue' such as it had been defined in his earliest notes and letters:

[...] vertueux dans le vrai sens du mot (c'est-à-dire *contribuant au bonheur du genre humain*)... [*Histoire de la peinture en Italie*]

[...] vertu (utilité du plus grand nombre). [*Rome, Naples et Florence*]

[...] cette morale simple qui n'appelle vertu que *ce qui est utile aux hommes*. [*Les Cenci*]

[...] la vertu la plus pure, *l'utilité de tous*... [*Mémoires d'un touriste*]¹⁵⁰

What is it to be virtuous? It is to set the well-being of the many above the well-being of the few and to act in consequence. In a letter of 26 March 1820 to Adolphe de Mareste, Stendhal draws upon this rationale, condemning outright the politics of 'the happy few': '[trouver] réellement du plaisir à faire le mal du plus grand nombre, pour le plaisir du petit, *id est ultra*'.¹⁵¹ In *De l'Amour*, a chapter is devoted to the question. 'Moi, j'honore du nom de vertu l'habitude de faire des actions pénibles et utiles aux autres.'¹⁵² Even as late as March 1841, in Stendhal's notes for *Lamiel*, we find reaffirmed this conception of 'la vertu (être utile à son propre péril)'.¹⁵³ Yet the attachment to such a notion, however durable, was accompanied in Stendhal by a sharp

awareness of its inherent idealism and ultimate impossibility. As early as 3 May 1804, Stendhal had confided in his diary that the time for such virtue was no more: 'Je sens que le temps est passé d'être républicain.'¹⁵⁴ To cling to an ideal while despairing of it would be the lot of a Stendhal who, in 1813, defines his 'Republic' still as 'le gouvernement qui existait à Rome durant les guerres puniques, où le premier intérêt de tout le monde est la chose publique.'¹⁵⁵ Here, in a remote, beleaguered, semi-legendary Rome, Stendhal identifies that 'single principle' — the *metus hostilis* — around which a genuinely communal interest could crystallise, 'cette cité des cœurs où le privé s'absorbe dans le public, et l'individu disparaît dans l'état...'¹⁵⁶

That Stendhal should choose Rome at the height of the Punic Wars as his model republic is significant. For the suggestion is frequently present in his writing that the apotheosis of the Republic is to be achieved only in a state of war. The beleaguered city state, under threat for its very existence, is the society which best gives expression to Stendhal's republican ideal. Here the man of extraordinary talent and energy could dispense these to the full in the service of a community whose *interests lay* in according the highest office to the most able. France, for a brief moment at least, had experienced something of the seige mentality to which Ancient Rome, in Stendhal's mythology, owed her virtues. 'Quand Bonaparte fit parler de lui,' reflects Julien Sorel, 'la France avait peur d'être envahie; le mérite militaire était nécessaire et à la mode'¹⁵⁷

The argument that republican virtues are best fostered in adversity was a common one among Latin moral historians, who looked back to the struggle against Carthage notably as the moral apex of Republican Rome. The notion made a strong impression on Stendhal.¹⁵⁸ For, as F.W.J. Hemmings recognises, there is a Cato, a 'stern republican Roman', who co-exists in Stendhal with the 'dilettante-dandy'.¹⁵⁹ Yet Stendhal's admiration for the Ancients, though genuine, lasting and highly idealised, is not uncritical. What the Republic of the Ancients — no less than that of the moderns — gains in *moral* terms, it loses in *aesthetic* appeal.¹⁶⁰ For nothing, by Stendhal's lights, was more inimical to artistic creation and the finer sensibilities than an excessive concern for the public good and the tyranny of the many over the few. On such grounds alone, Stendhal would have found objections aplenty to the best organised republic, even if — *especially* if — men were capable of observing its every stricture.¹⁶¹

While the Cato in Stendhal regretted Hannibal at the gates, the *beyliste* was prepared to take his pleasures where they were to be found, in the opera houses of Italy (where the *ego* reigns supreme and 'il n'y a point de société')¹⁶² and the salons à la du Deffand (where 'on ne prend plus intérêt à rien').¹⁶³ In this denial of the social dimension, concludes Michel Crouzet, 'il ne reste plus qu'une indifférence civique

souveraine, un égoïsme enfin vainqueur, comme si la politique et l'idéalisme humanitaire n'étaient qu'une agression contre le moi.¹⁶⁴ Where the demands of society and of the self cannot be balanced, they must be seen as mutually hostile.¹⁶⁵ The gulf between theory and reality is never more acutely felt by Stendhal than on this question. For, as Irving Howe argues so well, there coexist in Stendhal's political vision two quite distinct forms of liberalism, 'a *pure* liberalism, a liberalism not yet tarnished by history, a liberalism of concept to set off against the liberalism of practice, which he rightly finds both timid and absurd.'¹⁶⁶ In *La Chartreuse de Parme*, it falls to Ferrante Palla to articulate in an Italian context what had long been Stendhal's judgment of post-Revolutionary France:

Je me suis dit, elle n'aime pas la république, elle qui m'est supérieure par l'esprit autant que par les grâces et la beauté. D'ailleurs, comment faire une république sans républicains?¹⁶⁷

The answer is the more resounding for being left unvoiced.

Increasingly antipathetic to any form of philosophical or political radicalism which might seek to 'regenerate' man, Stendhal was to make of necessity a virtue in relinquishing the notion that 'The Republic' could provide a viable order for France.¹⁶⁸ Though Fernand Rude argues the case for Stendhal's sympathy with Fourierism in the *Mémoires d'un touriste*, such sympathy as can be divined does not go without a very substantial measure of cynicism. However well Fourier may have conceived of his *Associations*, he remains a 'rêveur sublime' who has not taken account of the first principles of human nature. His fault, Stendhal suggests, is the fault of all those pious reformers who, though they may be admirable in their sincerity, remain consigned to self-delusion and failure:

Fourier, vivant dans la solitude, ou, ce qui est la même chose, avec des disciples n'osant faire une objection (d'ailleurs il ne répondait jamais aux objections), n'a pas vu que dans chaque village un fripon actif et beau parleur (un Robert Macaire) se mettra à la tête de l'association, et pervertira toutes ses belles conséquences.¹⁶⁹

So much for Stendhal's faith in collective human enterprise by the late 1830s.¹⁷⁰ We come back always in this context to his rejection of the possibility that men could be invited, cajoled, or even compelled to sink their differences in some common pool of human experience. The eighteenth century to which Stendhal holds allegiance presents two images of man that are *prima facie* opposed. As I.F. Knight argues in her study of Condillac, the thinkers of the Enlightenment sought not to account for men, ideas, or institutions in terms of their uniqueness, but rather to 'find the common ground which constituted [their] universality.'¹⁷¹ A.O. Lovejoy stresses likewise that the Enlightenment was, in its dominant tendency, an age devoted to seeking 'a standard conceived as universal, uncomplicated, immutable, uniform for every rational

being.¹⁷² Yet underlying — and indeed *sustaining* — this search for common principles of thought and behaviour, was the recognition, brought home by Montesquieu, Buffon, Du Bos and others, of the actual and observable *'differentness'* of men and their opinions and valuations and institutions.¹⁷³ For the way had long been opened up towards the conclusion not that men were indissociable in nature, but that, as Francine Marill Albérès puts it, 'il n'y a que pluralité et multiplicité d'individus; la seule constante d'un monde changeant prend la forme protéenne de la diversité et de la variété.'¹⁷⁴

The challenge to the eighteenth century lay at the junction of these two views of man, at the point where the superficial diversity of men might be resolved within the wider conception of a human nature that was held to be 'fundamentally the same under all the accidental accretions of time and place.'¹⁷⁵ If there lay the challenge, there too, according to Stendhal's witness, lay the failure. By the time it reaches Cabanis, man's individualism is beyond redemption. With the sanction of physiology at his beck, the human being could more and more dig himself in behind the ramparts of his own singularity, behind what Lovejoy calls 'the sanctity of one's idiosyncrasy.'¹⁷⁶ Men might aspire to be equally happy, and it was Stendhal's sincere wish that they should: but they could never be happily equal.¹⁷⁷ Increasingly Stendhal would come to hold the view that the principal objection to 'the regenerative power of education as an instrument of social enlightenment and progress' (which, as Van Duzer observes, was fundamental to the *idéologue* ideal)¹⁷⁸ lay not in the régimes by which men were governed, but within man, *each man*, himself. Morality no less than Art becomes, in the words of C.W. Thompson, 'un dialogue fragile entre des subjectivités radicalement isolées.'¹⁷⁹ We are so many prisoners of our own sensations, of our own singular — *egoistic* — experience of the world. The sharp expression given to this rationale in the 1853 edition of the *Promenades dans Rome* urges the conclusion that, 'tant que nous sommes, êtres vulgaires ou grands hommes, nous sommes *emprisonnés dans nos propres sensations*, et encore plus emprisonnés dans les jugements que nous en tirons.'¹⁸⁰ Thus the individual may counter every moral and aesthetic precept with the objection that, whilst the latter must assume any situation to be the same for others as it is for him, 'the situation never *is* the same for others because he himself is a unique factor in any situation.'¹⁸¹ It requires no more than this simple reasoning to give every man the means of replacing what J.A. Brunton calls 'the "Valid for one, valid for all" principle' with the central — irredeemably individualistic — axiom of Egoism, the "I am I" principle.'¹⁸²

Nor would it require a radically different rationale to find in the history to which Stendhal's writings stand as testament little cause for celebrating the unity of mankind. Whatever the Revolutionaries' opposition to scholastic generalisation, theirs was no

less an ambition, as Henri Peyre reminds us, 'to proclaim universal truths and formulate principles for all men.'¹⁸³ If the vicissitudes of 1789 to 1815 bore out anything for Stendhal, however, it was that the uniformitarian vision of man was but an illusion — a 'pious fraud' — masking the reality of a Humanity rent by ineradicable divisions. The self, it was clear, could no more be defined in quite the same way as indissociable from the commonwealth of men. Of the French post-Revolutionary conscience, George H. Mead writes:

First of all, the discouraged self that had undertaken to rebuild the world on the basis of rights, the self that had followed out the gospel of Rousseau in attempting to reconstruct society on the basis of what was universal in the individual, on the basis not only of that which he found in himself but which he recognized in others, found that the undertaking had failed. It was not possible to build up a new community on the abstract rights of men.¹⁸⁴

The American Revolution might, as Mead recognises, argue against such a bleak conclusion; but for those emerging from the Revolutionary years in France, there was urgent need for some revision of principle. Such a revision, in Bernard Plongeron's judgment, was to spring from 'un pessimisme foncier à propos de la nature humaine "ondoyante et diverse", que partagent généralement les rescapés de l'aventure révolutionnaire.'¹⁸⁵ It is as tempting as it is perilous, through the lens of historical hindsight, to descry thus the mood of a whole people and period. In the pages of Stendhal, however, the attitude in question finds a resounding echo. Hence the sweepingly 'philosophical' allusion to himself, in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, as 'celui qui, ballotté par les révolutions, est devenu à ses dépens juste appréciateur du mérite de l'homme.'¹⁸⁶ Those austere republicans who people Stendhal's writings, and for whom he reserves admiration and derision in equal measure, merely persist, as René Girard puts it, in 'les illusions du XVIII^e siècle sur l'excellence de la nature humaine.' They fail, in the face of all evidence, to recognise that 'les plus beaux fruits de la réflexion idéologique seront toujours gâtés par le ver de l'irrationnel.'¹⁸⁷ Stendhal, for his part, makes what he deems the necessary *aggiornamento* in his thinking, as two notable passages penned in 1814 attest:

J'entends par mes *républicains* [...] les hommes dont le moral s'est formé sous l'influence de la Révolution et qui, sous l'empire des leçons terribles et diverses qu'elle a données au monde, sont devenus des *royalistes constitutionnels*.

L'expérience de la Révolution et le despotisme de Buonaparte avaient apaisé l'effervescence de leurs têtes; ce n'étaient plus ces hommes sans frein qui croyaient qu'un peuple était libre lorsqu'il avait le droit de se gouverner lui-même; nous n'avions plus de Brutus, et nous l'avons bien prouvé...¹⁸⁸

So much for the revival of Republican Rome. In an age when, as he would declare in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, 'la mode est pour les vertus négatives,'¹⁸⁹ the

high-minded ideals of Stendhal's youth could not but be radically undermined. In a note consigned circa 1818 to the margins of Mme de Staël's *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française*, we find an appreciably shrunken representation of the Virtue which the young Stendhal had so vigorously lauded as the height of civic *engagement*. 'Pompeuse bêtise,' he retorts to Mme de Staël's defence of a virtue divorced from self-interest: 'être vertueux c'est ne nuire aux intérêts de personne.'¹⁹⁰ The shift from an essentially *positive*, socially orientated ethic to mere *abstinence* from harm is telling.

Stendhal, as Irving Howe observes, 'is a writer of the moment when a great historical experience has reached its point of exhaustion':

Such a writer can no longer believe in the unity of society, neither the unity claimed by those in power, which is patently a fraud, nor the unity envisaged by those in opposition, which now seems distant and chimerical.¹⁹¹

Stendhal comes at the end not only of a great historical experience but of great philosophical enterprise too. The Enlightenment, with its ideals and aspirations for the betterment of mankind, is ever-present as the backcloth to his thought. Born early enough to partake of the optimism which had inspired a previous generation, he was to outgrow his faith in all that eighteenth-century philosophy had seemed to promise. Taken as a whole, Stendhal's writings provide a theatre in which the Age of Reason, with its abstract vision of man as a quantum of passionate impulse and rational intellect, seeks to come to terms with a new age of science and medicine in which it was becoming mandatory to treat human nature as a psycho-physiological and not a metaphysical object of inquiry.¹⁹² The change both in premise and conclusion to which this gave rise called into question much that had been postulated about man's nature and his capacity for the moral and social regeneration that was the ambition of the *philosophes* and *Idéologues* alike. From a concept of man based on supposed universals to a concept of the self as a unique 'pathological' case, the transition is starkly portrayed in Stendhal's literary output from 1800 to 1842.¹⁹³

At every stage in its development, Stendhal's thought can be defined either by its kinship with or its departure from the philosophy that is expressed in his early notebooks, diaries and letters. Irving Howe makes an important point — and one which has not always been recognised — when he argues that Stendhal's cult of energy 'follows logically from his gradual loss of belief in the unity of society or the redemptive power of the people.' It is amid the ruins of an intensely civic ideal that Stendhal constructs his defence of energetic individualism, with all its admiration for 'the exceptional man, the hero who surmounts history rather than the people who bear it.'¹⁹⁴ From *virtus* to *virtù*, from a collective ethic to one of resolute individualism,

from a belief in the indefinite perfectibility of man and society to a cynical and quasi-fatalistic view of the human condition, Stendhal's thought is an exercise in disenchantment.¹⁹⁵ Philosophy, which had begun by commending itself as a panacea for the ills of man and society, ends as a study in disillusion laying bare the severe limitations to the improvements that could be wrought upon mankind.¹⁹⁶ Between the "'ami des hommes", soucieux du "bonheur commun"' whom Fernand Rude discovers in the young Henri Beyle,¹⁹⁷ and the Stendhal who, as Georges Blin puts it, 'ne veut pas d'autre source de la valeur que le Moi, ni d'autre motif dans le Moi que le "plaisir",¹⁹⁸ there is much to sustain Emile Faguet's fine summation:

En un mot c'est un homme du XVIII^e siècle, moins l'optimisme.¹⁹⁹

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

1. See *Corr*, II, 33. As a letter of 20 January 1831 to Sophie Duvaucel suggests, politics no less than art had become for Stendhal a *thing of individuals*: 'Rien d'*individuel*, rien de fort par conséquent dans la conduite des hommes au pouvoir' (*Ibid.*, II, 221).
2. *JL*, III, 254.
3. *CA*, V, 15. The erosion of the republican ideal can be traced from an early stage through Stendhal's writings. See Crouzet, 'Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain'; Shields, 'Stendhal et les métamorphoses de la République.' Danton and Robespierre, Stendhal would reflect, disabused, in 1825, 'voulait faire de nous des citoyens de Sparte et de Rome' (*CA*, IV, 359). Cf. *Vie de Nap*, 62, where he derides 'l'extravagance de vouloir établir une république sur le modèle antique.'
4. *M de T*, I, 47. '[Le] cruel isolement au milieu d'un désert d'hommes' is a legacy of the modern monarchy, argues Stendhal in *l'Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (II, 114): 'Le Grec n'avait jamais ce sentiment d'isolement...' The Ancient Greek or Roman 'ne pouvait être heureux qu'au *Forum*, nous, nous voulons être heureux au fond de notre maison' (*Italie*, 198). Cf. *Mél. pol/hist.*, 145: 'Nos vertus ne sont plus des vertus publiques: notre bonheur se compose de plaisir que nous procurent l'industrie et l'intérieur de nos sociétés et de nos familles.' On 'la rare vertu du courage civique', see also *CA*, V, 347; IV, 310-311.
5. *OI*, I, 868.
6. *Ibid.*, I, 943. Cf. the letter written from Smolensk to Félix Faure on 24 August 1812 (*Corr*, I, 656-657): 'Dans cet océan de barbarie, pas un son qui réponde à mon âme! Tout est grossier, sale, puant au physique et au moral.' Stendhal's letters from Russia are a litany of complaints against his comrades-in-arms. See also *ibid.*, I, 664, 682.
7. *H de P*, II, 85 n. 1.
8. *JL*, III, 284.
9. *Op. cit.*, p. 119. See also on this question Tillett, pp. 25-26. If importance is to be set upon the few but revealing commentaries which Stendhal provides on the disaster of 1812, it is clear that he emerged from this episode with a more jaundiced view than ever of his fellow man.
10. *Op. cit.*, p. 118. Alone among Stendhal's protagonists, Fabrice will be disabused of his military illusions by the all-too-real experience of the battlefield. His vicissitudes at the hands of his comrades-in-arms (*Romans*, II, 56-92) may be read as an indictment by Stendhal of human nature *in extremis*.
11. *OI*, I, 868. See on this point Alter, pp. 117-118.
12. Cf. the terms in which Stendhal writes to his sister Pauline from his posting in Brunswick on 30 April 1807 (*Corr*, I, 345-349).
13. Tillett, p. 133. It is clear that Stendhal felt himself to have learnt a bitter lesson from his Russian experience. In his diary of 27 March 1811, he had written: 'They speak much of war with Russia. Il serait charmant, en revenant d'Italie, d'aller à une armée bien active.' Some two years later, he returns to append a new reflection to this same diary entry. 'Cela a eu lieu,' he notes laconically.

'Charmant n'est pas exactement le mot propre. 25 février 1813' (*OI*, I, 668).

14. *De l'Amour*, I, 53.
15. *Raison*, p. 31. See also *ibid.*, pp. 28-29, 49-55; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 164.
16. See on this question in general P. Vernière's 'L'idée d'humanité au XVIII^{ème} siècle.' See also Crouzet, *Raison*, p. 49: 'L'idéologie en enseignant à l'homme ce qu'il est, ce qu'il fait, en réalité le décompose pour le recomposer; sa portée révolutionnaire n'est pas dans son "matérialisme", mais dans son idéalisme...'
17. *JL*, I, 404.
18. See Van Duzer, pp. 96-100. E. Cailliet (p. 61) takes up the same point: '[...] les Encyclopédistes s'en tiennent à l'idée de l'unité de l'espèce humaine et à celle de la continuité du développement historique dont l'idée de Progrès, qu'exaltent les Idéologues, n'est que le corollaire.' On 'le culte du progrès' as 'la marque distinctive du dix-huitième siècle', see also King, pp. 46-49, 74-75, 86-87.
19. *JL*, I, 476. No such distinction was commonly made between intellectual and moral progress. Cf. the broad Enlightenment view, as expressed by Stocking (p. 140), that 'man developed from his earliest state in a slow, unilinear evolutionary progress whose highest present manifestation was Western European society.'
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 234.
21. See Kennedy, *A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 168.
22. *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 174.
23. *Raison*, p. 549.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 282.
25. *Rapports*, p. 581. See also *ibid.*, p. 115: 'Puisque l'état des viscères du bas-ventre peut intervertir entièrement l'ordre des sentiments et des idées, il peut donc occasionner la folie...'
26. *Op. cit.*, p. 282.
27. *Op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
28. *Corr*, I, 998.
29. *Rapports*, p. 99.
30. See *JL*, III, 162.
31. *Corr*, I, 915. Cf., for example, *De l'Homme*, vol. II, sec. V, ch. 3, pp. 18-19 n. (b); sec. X, ch. 7, pp. 653, 661; ch. 10, p. 683.
32. *Corr*, I, 915.
33. *Helvétius: A Study in Persecution*, p. 117. One could, of course, level just such an argument against the whole of Helvétius's thesis, on the grounds that *he himself* is susceptible to the dictates of human nature and the pressures of a particular environment, therefore unlikely to be prescribing anything remotely

objective for humanity at large. As Smith points out (*Ibid.*, p. 77), this is precisely what the Catholic apologist J.N. Hayer argued in his refutation of *De l'Esprit*. On this fundamental objection to environmentalist reformism — 'Who shall educate the educators?' — see Passmore, 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought', p. 46; Lichtheim, pp. 168-169 n. 18.

34. *Op. cit.*, p. 383. See also *ibid.*, p. 372.
35. Ladd, p. 238.
36. See Frankel, p. 61.
37. *Op. cit.*, p. 231.
38. *Rapports*, p. 51.
39. *Loc. cit.*, n. 1.
40. For the same rationale as expounded by d'Holbach, see Desné, pp. 211-215, 221-222, 225-227.
41. *Rapports*, p. 51.
42. See, for example, *Corr*, I, 27-28: '[...] pour être heureux, il faut avoir l'intention du bien et le faire'; *Ibid.*, I, 46: '[...] il n'y a qu'un chemin au bonheur sur la terre, c'est la vertu.' Cf. *ibid.*, I, 48, 87, 93, 139, 209, 304-305, 314-315.
43. *OI*, I, 929. See Stendhal's derisive reference to 'la manie philanthropique' in a letter of August 1810 (*Corr*, I, 586).
44. The letter is published as an appendix to Picavet, pp. 590-596. 'Non,' insists Cabanis, 'l'espoir de perfectionner l'homme, de le rendre plus sensé, meilleur, plus heureux, n'est point chimérique' (*Ibid.*, p. 591). On the inextinguishable optimism evinced by Cabanis with regard to man's perfectibility, see Bury, pp. 215-216; Staum, 'Medical Components in Cabanis's Science of Man', pp. 1-2, 19-20, 22-23. For the same faith in man's capacity for self-improvement as expressed by Helvétius, see Bury, pp. 165-167. The rationale in question was, of course, given its most systematic expression by Condorcet. See Frazer; Bury, pp. 202-215; Picavet, pp. 101-116; Cailliet, pp. 165-210.
45. Picavet, p. 590. Cf. Helvétius in *De l'Homme* (vol. I, sect. IV, ch. 14, p. 524): 'Dans une excellente Législation les seuls vicieux seroient les fous.'
46. *H de P*, II, 141.
47. *Corr*, I, 994.
48. *Ibid.*, I, 1062.
49. *De l'Amour*, II, 137.
50. *JL*, III, 252.
51. *Ibid.*, II, 390.
52. See *ibid.*, II, 399.
53. *Ibid.*, III, 6.

54. See the letter to Mareste of 1 April 1821: 'Vous sentez bien [...] que tout est relatif...' (*Corr*, I, 1059).
55. *Ibid.*, I, 998. Cf. *H de P*, II, 3-4; *Corr*, I, 1059-1060.
56. *Raison*, p. 299. This, we submit, is an accurate assessment; and it is by way of Cabanis that much of the divergence in question is effected. See above and in Chapter IX, where our discussion relates in particular to the letters from Stendhal to Adolphe de Mareste.
57. 'Destutt de Tracy and the Unity of the Sciences', p. 237.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 238. See more generally on this question Stocking, pp. 140-142.
59. *De l'Amour*, II, 39.
60. See *Romans*, I, 50, 60, 84. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 36: 'il vit comme un être à part, séparé des autres hommes.'
61. *Ibid.*, I, 524, 653. On the 'émotivité philanthropique' to which Julien remains prone, see Barrère, p. 444. See also Howe, p. 85.
62. See *Romans*, I, 1266, 1316.
63. *Ibid.*, I, 34. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 148: 'Ne pensez-vous pas, madame, que le caractère est un organe usé chez les hommes de notre siècle?'
64. *Ibid.*, I, 910.
65. *Ibid.*, I, 825.
66. See *ibid.*, I, 252, 403.
67. *Ibid.*, I, 1198.
68. *Ibid.*, I, 1008. This aspect of Lucien secures him a place in A.E. Carter's *The Idea of Decadence in French Literature, 1830-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 46.
69. *Romans*, I, 44.
70. *Ibid.*, I, 1426 n.
71. *Ibid.*, I, 99.
72. *Ibid.*, I, 282.
73. *Ibid.*, I, 1426-1427 n.
74. *Ibid.*, I, 814.
75. *Corr*, II, 256.
76. *Romans*, I, 535; 1298: 'Me voilà faisant pour le général Fari ce que Brutus n'aurait pas fait pour sa patrie!' (*Ibid.*, I, 1298). The same parody of ancient civic virtue can be found in Mosca's reflection on a corrupt judiciary: 'Ils arriveraient à ne pas condamner les coquins le plus évidemment coupables et se croiraient des Brutus' (*Ibid.*, II, 184). Cf. the quotation from Ennius, celebrating Q. Fabius Maximus's delaying tactics against Hannibal, with which Stendhal prefaces the haggling between Sorel père and M. de Rênal (*Ibid.*, I,

- 234).
77. *H de P*, II, 41 n. 1. See in this regard I. Howe's stimulating essay, 'Stendhal: The Politics of Survival.'
 78. *Romans*, II, 292.
 79. *Ibid.*, II, 148-149. Alone among Stendhal's heroes, Fabrice is free of the yoke of self-deprecation. He lacks, as C.W. Thompson observes, a faculty of self-criticism, never finding himself 'en guerre ouverte avec lui-même.' See *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, pp. 19, 173.
 80. *Romans*, II, 288.
 81. *Op. cit.*, p. 261.
 82. See *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.
 83. Mosca's claim to Ideology, argues Martino (p. 261), lies in being 'un esprit froid et calculateur [...], maître de son intelligence et des manifestations extérieures de ses sentiments [...], l'homme devenu tout-puissant sur soi et sur les autres...' Such an interpretation of the aims and values of Tracy's philosophy, however, is much too narrow to be tenable.
 84. *Romans*, II, 163.
 85. See *op. cit.*, p. 106.
 86. *Romans*, II, 1037.
 87. See, among the examples of the former, *Corr*, I, 140, 159, 240, 280, 335, 338, 344; *JL*, I, 133, 174, 253, 343, 370, 417, 452; II, 48-49; and, among the many instances of the latter, *JL*, II, 343; III, 252-253, 361; *Corr*, I, 915; II, 717; *H de P*, I, 114 n. 2, 116, 162-164 n. 1 (final par.); II, 8, 127; *De l'Amour*, I, 233-234 n. 2; II, 92, 99, 107-108, 191; *Italie*, 221, 266, 465, 562; *Vie de Nap*, 23, 38, 75-76; *M de T*, I, 224 n. 1; II, 70, 161, 501; *HB*, I, 281-282; *Romans*, II, 682.
 88. 'Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', p. 269.
 89. *Corr*, I, 701.
 90. See, for example, *ibid.*, I, 377: 'Quand on a le malheur de ne pas ressembler à la majorité des hommes, il faut les regarder comme des gens qu'on a mortellement offensés...'; *ibid.*, I, 656-657: 'Dans cet océan de barbarie, pas un son qui réponde à mon âme!'; *ibid.*, II, 762: '[...] un abîme nous sépare...'; *Romans*, I, 393: '[...] différence engendre haine.'
 91. *Corr*, I, 194.
 92. *OI*, I, 736-737. Cf. *De l'Amour*, II, 85: '[...] entre gens qui vivent ensemble, le bonheur est contagieux.'
 93. *OI*, II, 8.
 94. *Op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.
 95. *Romans*, I, 356.
 96. Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité*, p. 11.

97. *Corr*, III, 295.
98. See J.J.C. Smart, 'An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics', in Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism For and Against*, pp. 1-74; 'Utilitarianism', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. VIII, pp. 206-212. See also the very useful chapter, 'The Utilitarian Synthesis', in Crocker, *Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment*, pp. 219-325. The possibility of an egoistic or universalistic application of the 'principle of utility' is among the first of the questions broached by Bentham in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. cit., pp. 1-7.
99. See Fineshriber, p. 47; Strickland, *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, pp. 44, 270 n. 51.
100. 'Stendhal: The Enigmatic Liberal', *Encounter*, vol. LXV, no. 3 (1985), p. 28.
101. *Op. cit.*, p. 320. M. Josephson (p. 83) likewise recognises that Stendhal never 'fully rationalized the problems raised by the opposition between individual and collective (social) happiness.'
102. 'L'utile est la seule loi, et il est sans loi,' writes M. Crouzet (*Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 16). For further indications of the problems implicit in Stendhal's 'utilitarianism', see Green, p. 217; Brussaly, pp. 71-73; Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 47; Rude, pp. 53-56; Tillett, pp. 16-17, 95-96; Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, pp. 145-146, 207-211; Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 174; 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'utile.'
103. *L'Ancien régime et la Révolution*, ed. J.-P. Mayer (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 251. Not only were those who shared in such optimism convinced that a turning-point in human history had been reached; they were ill-disposed, it seemed, to wait unduly for their optimism to bear fruit. As O. Temkin puts it, 'the temper of the time made men expect perfection soon' ('The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology', p. 33).
104. *Op. cit.*, p. 329.
105. See Mélia, *Stendhal et ses commentateurs*, p. 356.
106. *Op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.
107. Cited by Blin, *Roman*, p. 125. For a full discussion of this question, see *ibid.*, pp. 123-135.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 125 n. 4. Blin cites another of Delécluze's reminiscences of Stendhal on the question of taste: '[...] chaque temps, chaque pays, chaque individu même a le sien. Vous avez sur le nez des verres blancs et grossissants; mes lunettes diminuent et rougissent les objets; comment diable voulez-vous que nous soyons d'accord sur ce que nous voyons?' (*Loc. cit.*)
109. *Rapports*, p. 79.
110. *Op. cit.*, p. 82.
111. Some useful thoughts on the question can be found in Strickland, 'Le bonheur du plus grand nombre'; *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist*, pp. 33-44, 263-266.
112. See Talmon, pp. 28-37.

113. *Romans*, I, 1358. 'Les hommes ne sont pas pesés, mais comptés, et le vote du plus grossier des artisans compte autant que celui de Jefferson, et souvent rencontre plus de sympathie' (*Loc. cit.*).
114. See Brussaly, pp. 124-155; Martino, p. 326; Thompson, *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, pp. 220-221, 224-225.
115. *M de T*, I, 20.
116. *Op. cit.*, p. 18. See also Brussaly (pp. 176-181), who recognises the same 'irreducible antinomy' in Stendhal's political thought.
117. See Howe, pp. 79, 81, 83; Brussaly, pp. 78, 119.
118. J.W. Stein (pp. 86-87) recognises something of the difficulty in Cabanis's thought, the implicit contradiction between 'the Enlightenment visions of great things for man, to which Cabanis subscribed', and his 'view of a predetermined inner self, subjectively different in each individual' and liable to militate against any 'commonality of applicable ideas.'
119. *Op. cit.*, p. 167.
120. Society, as M. Crouzet puts it, 'n'est pas une généralité, mais une multiplicité.' However democratic in its institutions, it remains 'un univers fait de singuliers' (*Raison*, pp. 91, 329).
121. *M de T*, I, 400-401. 'S'étant longuement penché sur le problème de l'homme naturel,' writes Gita May, 'Beyle en vient à la conclusion qu'une société aimablement corrompue et cynique, mais consciente de ses imperfections et par conséquent tolérante et habitable, est préférable à une république de citoyens vertueux et militants' ('Stendhal et les moralistes classiques', p. 269).
122. *Raison*, p. 137.
123. *Op. cit.*, p. 105. Cf. Stendhal's diary entry of 9 December 1804 (*OI*, I, 156).
124. As M. Crouzet puts it, echoing the earlier assessment of G. Blin, Stendhal remains throughout an 'opposant éternel, "récalcitrant à tout régime", "constant dans le refus", et se saisissant "par le repoussé"...' ('L'Apolitisme stendhalien', p. 220).
125. *Raison*, p. 75.
126. *Romans*, I, 1358.
127. 'Puritanism, utilitarianism, preoccupation with money matters, narrow pragmatism, lack of imagination, want of artistic sense, all these things are brought into relief in [Stendhal's] judgment of America...' (Brussaly, p. 183).
128. Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 145.
129. See *Romans*, I, 825; *HB*, I, 235-236.
130. 'Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain', p. 40.
131. See Hemmings, *Stendhal: A Study of his Novels*, p. 90.
132. 'Le bonheur du plus grand nombre', p. 202.

133. *JL*, III, 377. See, in relation to Bentham, P. McReynolds, 'The Motivational Psychology of Jeremy Bentham: I. Background and General Approach', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. IV, no. 3 (1968), pp. 241-244.
134. Some indication of the range of sense which the term *beylisme* has acquired may be had from the following: Blum, pp. 178-179; Martino, pp. 313-314; Jourda, *Etat présent des études stendhaliennes*, p. 94; Imbert, 'Etat présent des études stendhaliennes', pt. I, p. 172; Vigneron, 'Beylisme, romanticisme, réalisme', pp. 101, 104; Albérès, *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, p. 30; Fineshriber, pp. 39-40; Brussaly, pp. 18-19; Green, pp. 101-102; Clewes, pp. 26-27; May, *Stendhal and the Age of Napoleon*, pp. 5, 156-157; Adams, pp. 44, 184; Rey, Preface, *De l'Amour*, I, v; Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 11; Augendre, 'La "Filosofia nova" dans l'histoire du matérialisme', p. 255. The term has, in its much evolved sense, become enshrined in the *Larousse*, where it is defined thus: 'Attitude morale illustrée par les héros de Henri Beyle (Stendhal), et qui allie à un individualisme exclusif le goût de l'énergie dans l'action et dans la passion' (*Grand Larousse encyclopédique en dix volumes* [Paris: Larousse, 1960-64], vol. II, p. 112).
135. *Corr*, I, 659.
136. *Op. cit.*, p. 105.
137. See *Rapports*, pp. 46, 488-492, 535-552.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 491. Tracy, as E. Kennedy points out, subscribes to a similar view of man. 'Like La Mettrie, who saw a close causal connection between physiological and mental states, Tracy found the first involuntary, physiological movements of infants to be the "result of chemical attractions and combinations," attributable to a "vital force" which activates all matter' (*A 'Philosophe' in the Age of Revolution*, p. 114).
139. See above the references to Mme du Deffand and Cabanis. Stendhal, as we have seen, had early espoused the principle that happiness could be 'engineered' through social means. He was not to hold long, however, to his faith in this fundamental precept of the Enlightenment. Happiness, he came to conclude, could not be *made* according to a given recipe; fragile and transient, it had to be *pursued* with stealth by each individual in turn. It is significant, perhaps, that 'la manufacture du bonheur', of which Stendhal had written in a letter of April 1805 (*Corr*, I, 189), gives way to 'la poursuite de la félicité' (*OI*, I, 407) and, much more commonly, of course, 'la chasse au bonheur' (*Corr*, II, 111).
140. *Corr*, I, 626-627. The 'égoïsme voluptueux' of which Mme du Deffand furnished the model is thought by F. Vermale to have contributed substantially to Stendhal's personal philosophy. 'Mme du Deffand,' Vermale asserts, 'haussa dans l'esprit de M. de Beyle l'égoïsme jusqu'à sa forme supérieure qu'est l'égotisme' ('L'élaboration du beylisme', pp. 274-275). It is not without significance perhaps that, hard pressed by marauding cossacks on the retreat from Moscow, Stendhal should have had recourse, as he later recounts, to 'un volume de Mme du Deffand que je lus presque en entier' (*Corr*, I, 681).
141. *Corr*, I, 679.
142. *OI*, I, 662.
143. *Raison*, p. 8. Crouzet elsewhere defines *le beylisme* as '[une] philosophie faite par un homme et pour lui seul, comme le "pantagruélisme" ou le "shandisme"...' (*Littérature et politique chez Stendhal*, p. 102).

144. See *OI*, I, 717. Many prefigurations of this doctrine are to be found among Stendhal's early notes and letters. 'Tout le temps qu'on s'afflige, la porte est fermée aux plaisirs,' he had written in 1804. [...] Cherchons les plaisirs à ma portée' (*JL*, II, 8-9). The same sententious, hortatory note is struck time and again. See *ibid.*, I, 295; *Corr*, I, 100, 122, 175, 195, 197, 229, 241, 248, 260-261, 271, 273, 278, 283-284, 290, 292, 295-296, 301, 314, 316, 335, 343, 348, 519, 571; *OI*, I, 378, 397, 407, 609. Common to the notes and letters scribbled in a rented room in Paris in the early 1800s and the correspondence despatched from Russia a decade later is a preoccupation with the same enduring question: that of seeking a happiness consonant with one's circumstances.
145. *OI*, I, 663.
146. Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 11; Blum, p. 178. See, among many such assessments, Sabatier, pp. 94-95; Fineshriber, p. 44; Martino, p. 210; Albérès, *Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, p. 30. In a letter of 6 July 1804, Stendhal had put to his sister Pauline a simple choice: 'songe que, dans cette vie, il faut être Héraclite ou Démocrite; choisis' (*Corr*, I, 122). In a subsequent letter, he dilates upon this idea: 'Adieu; écris-moi souvent, et tâche de rire un peu; il n'y a que cela qui soulage; il faut prendre son parti, il faut être dans ce monde Héraclite ou Démocrite, et, franchement, Démocrite vaut mieux' (*Ibid.*, I, 153). In 1809, it is in this same choice still — between the so-called 'laughing philosopher', Democritus, and his grim counterpart, Heraclitus — that Stendhal will discern the highest degree of philosophical wisdom, 'la véritable philosophie (celle de tourner tout au gai)' (*Ibid.*, I, 519).
147. See *Corr*, I, 214, 241, 278, 292, 316, 649.
148. *Stendhal: A Study of his Novels*, p. 88. The coining of *le beylisme* can be seen in this sense as the culmination of the process of *dérusseauisation* upon which the young Stendhal had embarked in 1804 (*OI*, I, 152). His early writings are replete with condemnations of the 'sophismes misanthropes' (*JL*, I, 203), the 'colère' (*Corr*, I, 128), the 'mauvaise humeur' (*Ibid.*, I, 139-140) and the 'chagrin' (*Ibid.*, I, 219) of the author of *Les Confessions*. The spirit of the later *beylisme* is present in much of the advice imparted to Pauline Beyle during the years when Stendhal was endeavouring to shake off what he saw as the clinging legacy of Rousseau. See, for example, the lengthy letter of 29 October-16 November 1804 (*Ibid.*, I, 159-166).
149. *CA*, V, 219. It is patently not the case, as W.H. Fineshriber maintains (pp., 33-34), that 'social values and social service have no meaning for Beyle,' that 'there is no social morality.' The understanding of Stendhal's thought has long been bedevilled by simplistic judgments of this kind. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 44: 'Social values have no meaning for Stendhal. *Beylisme* prescribes a tacit declaration of war on the social group.' See likewise F.M. Albérès, who takes Stendhal's conception of *la vertu* to be 'la liberté de se mal tenir en société, d'enfreindre les convenances, de dire du mal des autres, de refuser les sentiments factices' (*Stendhal et le sentiment religieux*, p. 25). See also in this vein A. Girard (p. 290), who claims of Stendhal: 'La place de l'homme dans le monde, la condition humaine n'ont jamais retenu son attention.' It would, of course, be no less erroneous to suggest, with A. Thibaudet (*Stendhal* [Paris: Hachette, 1931], p. 30), that Stendhal could be read as 'le plus pur des auteurs républicains', or to discern in him, as F. Rude (*passim*) does, a proto-Socialist. R. Johannet writes of Stendhal at once as a 'contempteur de la noblesse' and a 'républicain que le peuple écœure' ('Explication du beylisme naissant', *Ecrits de Paris*, January 1966, p. 98). For an attempt to bridge the two positions, see Martino, pp. 325-328; Brussaly, pp. 193-206 *et passim*. More commendable on this question are the perceptive essays of I. Howe ('Stendhal: The Politics of

- Survival') and M. Crouzet ('Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain'; 'L'Apolitisme stendhalien'). Howe's claim that Stendhal articulates 'an opposition to aristocracy *and* democracy, privilege *and* equality' (p. 79) is well made and conveys clearly the *impasse* into which Stendhal's political thought, in any strictly conventional terms, leads. Crouzet, too, discerns in Stendhal a political posture which, in all its complexities, may be deemed 'équivoque jusqu'à l'incohérence' ('L'Apolitisme stendhalien', p. 220).
150. See *H de P*, I, 114 n. 2; *Italie*, 562; *Romans*, II, 682; *M de T*, II, 501. See also *Italie*, 266: '[...] la première maxime de l'art de régner, *salus populi suprema lex esto*'; *H de P*, II, 8: 'La justice, à l'égard d'un peuple, c'est l'accomplissement de la fameuse maxime: "Que le salut de tous soit la suprême loi".' Cf. Stendhal's letter of 1 November 1834 to Domenico Fiore: 'La vertu, c'est augmenter le bonheur; le vice augmente le malheur. Tout le reste n'est qu'hypocrisie ou ânerie bourgeoise' (*Corr*, II, 717). See also the marginal note which he consigns, in 1834, to a copy of Montaigne's *Essais*: 'Augmenter la masse du bonheur qui existe ici-bas, ne jamais faire de mal inutile; de la sottise des carêmes, des sacrifices, etc.' (*JL*, III, 252-253).
 151. *Corr*, I, 1016.
 152. See *De l'Amour*, II, 107-109.
 153. *Romans*, II, 1037.
 154. *OI*, I, 72.
 155. *JL*, III, 26 n. 2.
 156. Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, pp. 17-18.
 157. *Romans*, I, 239. Among a host of references which support the various aspects of our argument here, see *JL*, I, 56, 231-232; *Corr*, II, 259, 342; *Italie*, 659-660, 736-738; *H de P*, II, 133-135; *De l'Amour*, I, 224-225; II, 108; *Rossini*, I, 269.
 158. See Shields, 'Enricus Beyle, Romanus: le classicisme d'un romantique.' In addition to the many allusions to Regulus as the exemplar of republican virtue, see *JL*, I, 231-232; *Italie*, 659-660, 736-738, 762; *H de P*, II, 133-134. The anachronistic nature of such an ideal, even before the turn of the century, is signalled by Parker, pp. 178-179. See also on this point M. Lyons, *France under the Directory* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), pp. 128-129.
 159. *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 97. See on this question M. Crouzet, 'D'Helvétius à Stendhal: les métamorphoses de l'*utile*.'
 160. See, for example, *Italie*, 503, 508, 614-615, 744, 762, 914; *M de T*, II, 274; *De l'Amour*, I, 35; *H de P*, II, 134-135, 138. It is a peculiar Cato who can claim: '[...] j'aime mieux souffrir une injustice que de bâiller six mois' (*R et S*, 239), or who declares that society, bereft of its 'grands seigneurs', 'semble presque l'année dépouillée de son printemps' (*Mél. Pol/Hist.*, 250-251). Such remarks, like the tortured reflections of Lucien Leuwen, sum up a problem that lies at the core of the republican question for Stendhal.
 161. On the 'variations infinies de Stendhal autour du problème républicain', see Crouzet, 'Misanthropie et vertu: Stendhal et le problème républicain' (p. 51). See also on this question Howe; Brussaly, pp. 174-206; Giraud, pp. 53-59.
 162. See M. Crouzet, 'L'Apolitisme stendhalien', p. 226. Stendhal's Italy, Crouzet goes on, 'demeure le pays a-social, le pays des a-sociaux qui ignorent tout

- simplement le problème de l'existence sociale et réfléchie' (*Ibid.*, p. 227). Cf. *Italie*, 292: 'on y meurt empoisonné de mélancolie, si l'on est citoyen.'
163. *OI*, I, 929.
 164. 'L'Apolitisme stendhalien', p. 224.
 165. '[...] en faisant le bien général,' writes Stendhal in 1814, 'conservons un peu de plaisir' (*Mél. journ.*, 12).
 166. *Op. cit.*, p. 80. There is a bitter irony in many of Stendhal's later references to the ideals of the Revolution. By *liberté*, he insists, one should no longer understand 'cette liberté chimérique qui n'est faite que pour des anges, que quelques âmes passionnées rêvèrent en 1789, et qui a été noyée dans des flots du sang le plus pur. Ma liberté à moi est inséparable d'une noblesse et d'un roi' (*Mél. Poll/Hist.*, 149).
 167. *Romans*, II, 419.
 168. See Brussaly, pp. 151-155, 198-199; Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, pp. 156-157.
 169. *M de T*, II, 482. On Stendhal's attitude to Fourier, see the over-stretched argument of Rude, pp. 238-242.
 170. G. Lukács (p. 83), while defining Stendhal's attitude as 'democratic-revolutionary', argues that he remained nonetheless quite blind to 'the perspectives opened up by socialism and by a new type of democracy.'
 171. *The Geometric Spirit*, p. 28.
 172. *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 292.
 173. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
 174. *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, p. 132.
 175. Knight, *The Geometric Spirit*, p. 6.
 176. *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 313.
 177. It is this consideration above all which makes F. Rude's reading of Stendhal subject to caution. See, for example, pp. 25-27, 32, 44-45, 53-56.
 178. *Op. cit.*, p. 97.
 179. *Le Jeu de l'ordre et de la liberté dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme'*, pp. 52-53.
 180. *Italie*, 1722 n.
 181. J.A. Brunton, 'Egoism and Morality', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. VI, no. 25 (1956), p. 292.
 182. *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 295, 300.
 183. 'The Influence of Eighteenth Century Ideas on the French Revolution', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. X, no. 1 (1949), p. 67.
 184. *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. M.H. Moore (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 60.

185. *Op. cit.*, 398.
186. *H de P*, II, 146.
187. *Op. cit.*, p. 157.
188. *Mél. Pol/Hist.*, 142; *Mél. Journ.*, 7-8.
189. *H de P*, I, 52.
190. See Félix-Faure, p. 108.
191. *Op. cit.*, p. 78. 'Nor can Stendhal place much hope in the unity of the people, certainly nothing like the hope felt during the revolution, for he sees the people — or as we would now say, the masses — in their phase of lassitude and despair. [...] Stendhal feels that the hope placed in the people has proved to be unwarranted' (*Ibid.*, pp. 78-79). Howe's interpretation is quite at odds with that of Martino (p. 328), who argues — in the face of Stendhal's own testimony — for 'la constance de sa foi envers les grands principes qui avaient enthousiasmé sa jeunesse.' Nostalgia perhaps; but not, it must be concluded, *faith*. What has been argued in the foregoing pages, we submit, calls seriously into question the same critic's assertion (p. 326) that 'Stendhal fut révolutionnaire à vingt ans, et passablement conservateur à cinquante, sans d'ailleurs que ses idées eussent beaucoup changé.'
192. See Brazier, 'Rise of Neurophysiology in the 19th Century'; Temkin, 'The Philosophical Background of Magendie's Physiology.'
193. This heightened awareness of the individual self found artistic and literary expression in the progression from Neoclassicism to Romanticism. See the chapter 'Literature and the Self' in Talbot, *Stendhal and Romantic Esthetics*, pp. 15-45. See also Charlton, 'Prose Fiction', in *The French Romantics*, vol. I, pp. 167-180. The question is discussed in a historico-philosophical perspective by Mead, pp. 58-65. On the problem of reconciling the increasingly evident diversity of human beings with the notion of Humanity as a collective entity, see also Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 93-96.
194. *Op. cit.*, p. 79. See also on this point Albérès, *Le Naturel chez Stendhal*, pp. 276-278.
195. See the draft of Stendhal's letter to Balzac of October 1840: 'Je n'ai nullement regret à tout ce qui ne doit pas arriver. Je suis fataliste et je m'en cache' (*Corr*, III, 403). The remark articulates a philosophic resignation to life's vicissitudes which was not always expressed by Stendhal in quite such urbane terms. Cf. *Romans*, I, 1406, 1578 n.; *JL*, III, 271.
196. See Stendhal's letter to Albert Stapfer of 27 September 1835: 'Tâchez de ne pas prendre la vie raisonnablement, la vie est une chose triste, si l'on tire des conséquences justes des choses on la rend bien plus désagréable que si l'on secoue un peu les oreilles...' (*Corr*, III, 129).
197. *Op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.
198. 'Stendhal et l'idée de "Morale"', *Stendhal Club*, 9^e année, no. 34 (1967), p. 155.
199. *Op. cit.*, p. 62. See above, p. 483.

CONCLUSION

We began this study by acknowledging the many-sided and complex nature of Stendhal's thought. So, too, must we end it. It has become something of a fashion among Stendhal scholars at once to lament and to extol a mercurial quality which militates against the unequivocal Conclusion.¹ 'No one who ventures to speak or write about Stendhal,' avers F.W.J. Hemmings, 'can fail to be painfully aware at almost every turn of how much he is forced to disregard, of the many reservations and attenuations that have to be suppressed.'² The remark articulates admirably our sentiment on concluding this study. For we are conscious, despite all that has been said, of all that remains to be said; conscious of the fact that we have presented here but one reader's interpretation of a mind that has been defined with justice as 'mobile, versatile, contradictoire'.³

What we have sought above all to demonstrate in the foregoing pages is that, whatever definitions one assigns to Stendhal's thought, whatever philosophical categories one endeavours to make him fit, whatever debts one traces to specific thinkers or movements, his philosophy remains a highly personal one, both more and less than the sum of its parts. It is a philosophy in the popular sense of a set of reflections and opinions, expressed through philosophical concepts but addressed from the perspective of complex commitments; not philosophy properly speaking, namely engagement in detached, sustained argument. In Stendhal's 'philosophy', the most incompatible elements coexist. Stendhal is a determinist who sets a premium on the will, a materialist who is not above invoking the 'soul', a utilitarian who scorns base utility, a philosophical egoist who clings to an ideal of disinterested virtue, an idolater of demonstrable fact who yet avows a cult of the ineffable. Terms such as 'materialism', 'sensationalism' or 'naturalism' are no more susceptible of easy classification in Stendhal's case than is his shifting utilitarian ethic or his ambivalent pronouncements on man's capacity for self-determination. Stendhal keeps faith with no single philosopher or philosophical school, but develops his own very particular view of the world and of man's place within it. If by the term 'disciple' we understand the faithful exponent of a detailed body of philosophical precepts, then Stendhal is no disciple. He remains as resolute in resisting the 'ism' as his commentators have been in thrusting it upon him. His thought, often more orthodox in its tenets than he suspects, presents an uneasy synthesis of two widely divergent traditions, the radical philosophy of the eighteenth-century materialists and what might be termed conventional ethical psychology. The predispositions and assumptions which Stendhal carries with him into his reading of philosophy, if they undergo a marked evolution, prove nonetheless an enduring obstacle to his assimilation into the school of thought for which his name has become a byword. The construction which he places upon such age-old concepts as

'reason' and 'will', 'self-interest' and 'virtue', sets him at some considerable remove from the mechanistic materialism of Hobbes, the environmental determinism of Helvétius, or the sensationalist ethic of the Idéologues. Arthur Chuquet, in considering the aptitude of the term 'Romantic' to define Stendhal's art, concludes by throwing away the mould and declaring Stendhal 'un indépendant, un irrégulier qui n'appartient à aucune école, à aucun cénacle, et ne suit la bannière de personne.'⁴ There is a truth in such a remark which is as readily applicable to Stendhal the 'thinker' as it is to Stendhal the literary artist.

Acutely — rather, perhaps, than deeply — concerned by the philosophical questions of his day, Stendhal never made it his pretension to forge a systematic world-view. His was an ostentatious effort, on the contrary, to eschew all suggestion of the *esprit de système*. If he is to be defined as a 'philosopher', it is as a philosopher *sui generis* — and one who, from beginning to end, remains curiously at odds with his medium. While there is evidence aplenty in Stendhal's writings of a strong and abiding reverence for philosophy and science, there is also a keen awareness of the atrophying effects of seeking only the 'knowable'. The practitioners of philosophy whom he exalts as masters of their science in turn feel the biting edge of his criticism, the contention that they are cold, unfeeling technicians dedicated to the reification of life in its every particular, the unmasking of all illusion. The dehumanising reductionism upon which their philosophy trades constitutes the gravamen of charges levelled against Condillac, Helvétius and the whole sensationalist tradition to which Stendhal is commonly held to have been an unquestioning adherent.

Such reservations notwithstanding, it is clear that the philosophy by which Stendhal was influenced occupies an indispensable place in his writings. We have endeavoured to take account of what we consider foremost among the ideas which inform his writings, and to reflect the partisan element in Stendhal's philosophical proclivities. We have become accustomed in our age to regarding philosophy as a remote, esoteric discipline. In Stendhal's day, there was no domain of human interest which could not be brought within the purview of the philosopher. The mind-body problem, God and the soul, the place of Man in Nature, the uniformity and diversity of species, the influence of the physical and cultural environments, free will and determinism, self-interest and the utilitarian ethic: all were issues which, against the backdrop of a rapidly developing world of the sciences, presented themselves to Stendhal not as arcane points of academic dispute but as real and immediate concerns.

Stendhal's enduring preoccupation with such issues, his later claim that he had brought his intellect to bear upon the same essential corpus of ideas throughout, should not mislead us into concluding that his thought failed to develop, or that he did not

question, revise, renounce on occasion his convictions. Beneath the apparent constancy of Stendhal's philosophical disposition can be discerned tensions, contradictions, and a very considerable evolution. One best appreciates the later Stendhal, it is often argued, through knowledge of the earlier. Such appreciation, we contend, is to be sought as much in the *distance* which separates the two as in the ideas which unite them. Stendhal himself, it must be recognised, lays claim to none of those labels which, beloved of scholars, would freeze his thought in a particular frame. It is a curious irony that the one unequivocal definition which, in 1829, Stendhal *did* elect to apply to himself — 'je suis un philosophe de l'école de Cabanis'⁵ — should have received such short shrift at the hands of his critics. We have attempted to draw out the implications of this remark, and to accord Cabanis something of the place which we find him so frequently denied by Stendhal scholars.

To this end, we have sought to trace Stendhal's progression from a highly abstractive, somewhat mechanistic notion of Man to a much more naturalistic conception of the living individual. From the narrow constraints and ultimate sterility of his earlier reasoning, Stendhal advanced, under the ægis of Cabanis, to much richer philosophical pasture. Here metaphysical man was to be forsworn in favour of natural man. By embracing the integrity and specificity of the living organism, Stendhal defies the notion that the human being is no more than an ingenious machine awaiting stimulation from the external world. The corrective which Cabanis brings to Stendhal's other *maîtres à penser* on this question is crucial. It is to the physician Cabanis, certainly, and not to the metaphysician Hobbes, that we should look when seeking to define the nature of Stendhal's much evoked materialism. Though Stendhal early recognises the proximity between the human and animal realms, Cabanis opens up a whole new perspective on man as a higher form of animal. Stendhal's theory of energy and perceptions of Italy, we have argued, owe much to the evolution of his thought in this respect.

All of this amounts, we hope, to a study which sheds light upon some areas of Stendhal's thought that have become obscured by a tendency to accept on trust his adherence to a particular set of philosophical values. To define Stendhal as a thinker in the sensationalist-materialist tradition of Hobbes, Helvétius or d'Holbach is to re-cast him in a mould which he simply refuses to fit. To make of him an *idéologue* after the fashion of Tracy is to overlook a number of fundamental aspects of his thought which confound any such designation. We have sought throughout to contain Stendhal within no single definition, but to confront with equal scruple what we perceive to be the consistencies and contradictions alike in his thought. We leave it to others to contend the place which Stendhal should occupy in any history of ideas. What is certain, however, is that his writings provide a rich vein of commentary upon the philosophical

questions confronting his age. From his earliest journals and letters through to the latest of his published works, Stendhal's writings commend themselves to the student of the history of ideas, not for the manner in which he resolves the problems addressed therein, but for the very difficulties which he encounters in seeking to resolve these. The complexity of Stendhal's response to the range of philosophical issues with which we have dealt in the foregoing pages has long discouraged the present author from aspiring to draw this study to any neat and all-embracing conclusion. If the net result of our endeavour is merely to suggest how much may yet be done to amplify and elucidate our understanding of Stendhal's thought in all its many ramifications, then we should consider it conclusion enough.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. See in this vein Clewes, p. 42; Adams, p. xviii; Wood, p. 166; Félix-Faure, p. 13; Richard, p. 116; Crouzet, 'L'Apolitisme stendhalien, pp. 221, 222.
2. *Stendhal: A Study of His Novels*, p. 95.
3. Blum, p. 10.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 286. M. Crouzet, in discussing Stendhal's politics, signals 'ce désir de n'adhérer à une doctrine qu'à la condition de pouvoir en sortir, et d'en faire un repoussoir, et non une partialité' ('L'Apolitisme stendhalien, p. 221).
5. *JL*, III, 181.

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