L'HISTOIRE DE MADAME DE LUZ: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL AND OF ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH NOVEL

by

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To Sylviane, my wife,
whose unfailing patience
and help have been essential
to my academic achievements.

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INTRODUCTION

The best literary critics of the contemporary period, contrary to those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tend to judge works of fiction impartially, according to the literary merits of the text and to the importance of the work in the development of its respective genre. This critical approach is particularly clear in the case of literary criticism treating the writers of licentious tales and novels of the eighteenth-century like Laclos and Sade. Whereas past critics often condemned these writers on moral grounds without giving due process to the texts,[1] recent commentators have studied such authors with an impersonal attitude, so as to evaluate novelists principally on the basis of the texts' literary qualities.

The modern objective approach to criticism has resulted in renewed interest in Laclos and Sade and an accompanying resurgence of interest in their immediate predecessors like Duclos. A brief survey of critical assessment of Duclos' writings, in particular, his novels, will reveal a recent renewal of interest in them and a reappraisal of their lit-

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[1] André Le Breton's treatment of Laclos is representative of this type of criticism: "Point de lecture plus pénible que celle des Liaisons dangereuses. Et puis il est regrettable pour l'impassible Laclos qu'il ne soit tout à fait supérieur que dans la peinture du mal." Le Roman au dix-huitième siècle (Paris, 1898), p. 336.

erary merit and importance.

Until recent years critics failed to evaluate Duclos' works by textual analysis. No critic systematically studied his novels. No one wrote a thorough analysis of Duclos' ethical or historical writings, although literary historians rank him among the best moralists and historians of the eighteenth-century.[2] Even full-length works treating Duclos, in particular those of Le Bourgo,[3] Heilmann,[4] and Freud,[5] stress biographical material and fail to analyse the texts. Or like Karl Toth[6] they consider Duclos an acute observer of society and use his writings to study the period rather than his art. Even Paul Meister's very accurate and inclusive work[7] is basically a biography which fails to do justice to Duclos' literary works, and in particular, to his novels.

Although the contemporary eighteenth-century public

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[2]Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du Lundi (Paris, 1869.), IX, pp. 264-261. Jules Barni, Les Moralistes français au XVIII^e siècle (Paris, 1873), pp. 71-115.

[3]Leo Le Bourgo, Un homme de lettres au XVIII^e siècle, Duclos, sa vie et ses ouvrages (Bordeaux, 1902).

[4]Eleonore Heilmann, Charles Pinot Duclos (Berlin, Humbolt-Universitat, 1939).

[5]Hilde Freud, Duclos and his Literary Relationships (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1951).

[6]Karl Toth, Woman and Rococo in France seen through the Life and Works of a Contemporary, Charles Pinot Duclos (London, 1931).

[7]Paul Meister, Charles Duclos (Genève, 1956).

received Duclos' writings with enthusiasm,[8] critical praise was not unanimous.[9] This division among the critics carried into the nineteenth-century. Villenave and Stendhal are favorable to Duclos. In his "Notice", Villenave presents a biography of Duclos with a few brief remarks about Duclos' literary production. He does, however, approve of Duclos' novels, in particular, l'Histoire de Madame de Luz: "Des situations extraordinaires, un intérêt soutenu, des réflexions ingénieuses, un style vif et facile, ont fait le succès de ce roman."[10] Stendhal finds in Duclos a kindred spirit and exhorts his readers to discover Duclos.[11]

Villenave and Stendhal are exceptions, however, to the main current of critical appraisal of Duclos inaugurated by

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[8]The popularity of Mme de Luz is confirmed by Daniel Mornet's study of books in private French libraries. See: "Les Enseignements des bibliothèques privées (1750-1780)," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XVII (1910), p. 473.

[9]Critics favorable to Duclos:
Voisenon, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1781), IV, p. 155.
Clément, Les cinq années littéraires (Berlin, 1755), II, pp. 48 and 81.
Critics unfavorable to Duclos:
Charles Collé, Journal et mémoires (Paris, 1868), II, p. 76.
Fréron, Année littéraire. 1772, VIII, p. 315-334; 1773, I, p. 339-356.
Grimm, Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique (Paris, 1877-82), VI, p. 327.

[10]Charles Pinot Duclos, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1821), Vol. I, p. vi.

[11]"Ici, j'ai recours ce matin à Duclos, Mémoires sur les Moeurs. Je ne trouve point d'esprit plus analogue au mien." Oeuvres intimes (Paris, 1955), p. 1247.

"Lis souvent Duclos,"; "On tire le jus de la connaissance de l'homme." Correspondance (Paris, 1908), II, p. 179.

Sainte-Beuve in his Causeries du Lundi. Sainte-Beuve devotes brief discussion to Duclos' novels, preferring to treat him primarily as an historian and moralist. He is particularly severe in his evaluation of Duclos' fiction. He qualifies Duclos, the novelist, as barren, without imagination concluding: "Ces ouvrages ont perdu tout agrément aujourd'hui."[12] Moreover, he singles out l'Histoire de Madame de Luz for criticism because of the licentious nature of the situations and themes. Sainte-Beuve criticizes, then, both Duclos' manner of writing as well as his licentious themes. His criticism set a precedent and was repeated by later critics.

Ferdinand Brunetière, for example, emphasizes the inferior quality of the literary productions around 1750. He singles out Duclos' Confession du comte * * *, calling it a poor substitute for the novels of Lesage and Marivaux.[13] Lanson calls Duclos' novels boring both in style and content.[14] Faguet is typical of the literary manual writers. He discusses the major writers--Bayle, Fontenelle, Lesage, Marivaux, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, etc.--but fails to mention a single important secondary writer such as Duclos, Restif or Crebillon fils.[15] Neglect of secondary writers

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[12] op.cit., p. 215.

[13] Ferdinand Brunetière, Histoire de la littérature française classique (Paris, 1912), III, p. 324.

[14] Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française (Paris, 1960), p. 678.

[15] Emile Faguet, Dix-huitième siècle--études littéraires (Paris, 1898).

tends to distort literary history. Even Le Bourgo, in his long study reflects Sainte-Beuve's criticism of Duclos' novels: "Duclos ne se recommende, dans ses romans, par aucune qualité de conception et d'exécution à l'attention de la postérité.[16]

Critical studies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then, consider Duclos important only in so far as his works reflect the period: he is accepted with reserve as an historian and moralist, but denounced as an artist and novelist. Moreover, none of the critical works analyse the texts, yet his novels are condemned because they offend moral taste, are written without imagination, are stylistically poor and are boring.

In 1925, Emile Henriot countered the traditional evaluation of Duclos' novels. In a short article he rehabilitates Duclos' literary image and defends his novels. Henriot states with regard to Les Confessions du comte * * *, Les Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des moeurs, and, by extension, to l'Histoire de Madame de Luz: "Là du moins, Duclos est conteur, et dans la meilleure tradition du roman dit psychologique, inaugurée par Madame de la Fayette, continuée après lui par Laclos, Constant et Stendhal."[17]

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[16] op. cit., p. 155.

[17] Emile Henriot, "Duclos," La Revue de Paris (mars-avril, 1925), II, p. 606.
This article forms a chapter in Henriot's book Les Livres du second rayon (Paris, 1925).

Emile Trahard is equally favorable to Duclos and includes brief textual analyses of Duclos' three novels. This brief study situates Duclos' novels within the general context of the eighteenth-century French novel. Trahard defends Duclos while underlining what he considers Duclos' principal weakness as a novelist:

> Son oeuvre n'a pas de résonance ni de prolongement, parce qu'elle ne jaillit point du coeur. Mais elle a du naturel et de la vérité, parce qu'elle est le fruit d'une longue observation et d'une attentive expérience.[18]

More recently Dorothy McGhee has written a brief, but favorable chapter on Duclos. She defends him against the word "compiler", a term with which earlier critics had pejoratively labeled Duclos. Indeed, she justifies his manner of writing: "His reporter's sense of drama appears as multicolored and faceted as that of a Diderot or a Voltaire; like them too, he is persistent, slyly referative, impertinent, nervous."[19]

Lester Crocker has seen fit to include Duclos in his study of ethical thought in the eighteenth century.[20] He makes frequent reference to Duclos and is one of the first to

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[18]Emile Trahard, Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française (Paris, 1933), II, p. 290.

[19]Dorothy McGhee, "The Case against Duclos," in Fortunes of a Tale (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1954), p. 28.

[20]Lester Crocker, An Age of Crisis (Baltimore, 1959).

take Duclos' moral ideas seriously. He devotes a section of his work to a discussion of l'Histoire de Madame de Luz which he considers, contrary to general opinion, Duclos' best novel. Crocker situates this novel squarely within the nihilistic, materialistic current of French thought which culminates in the works of Laclos and Sade. Donald Newcomb also includes an analysis of l'Histoire de Madame de Luz and of Duclos' ethical thought in his work.[21] He, like Crocker, regards Duclos' moral ideas, seen through his fictional works, as worthy of serious consideration.

Sarah Penick's study is the first book-length analysis of Duclos devoted solely to his novels. Her discussion attempts to situate Duclos' novels in the context of contemporary eighteenth-century novelistic preoccupations. Although her appraisal is relatively short and fails to develop many possible areas of study, it does serve to indicate the place of Duclos' fictional work in the development of the French novel. She concludes that Duclos' novels are important because:

> They contribute to the general study of society in the eighteenth-century France, since his [Duclos'] interests in social love and virtue and his preoccupation with reality place him in the central line of the eighteenth-century novelistic thought.[22]

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[21]Donald Newcomb, The Evolution of Ethical Thought in the eighteenth-Century French Novel (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Missouri, 1967).

[22]Sarah Penick, A Study of the Novels of Charles Duclos (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Missouri, 1967), p. 124.

Viktoria Skrupskelis is the first critic to make a comprehensive textual analysis of all of Duclos' works in order to examine his ethical thought. This impressive, well written, and impartial book includes many new approaches to Duclos' writings and serves to discredit those critics who label Duclos a mediocre thinker and writer, unworthy of critical attention. Her position is typical of more recent literary criticism concerning Duclos when she states:

> He is not one of the major artists who dominate their environment and who succeed, because of force, the uniqueness, and the perfection of their writings, to impose upon literature a decisive direction. But he is excellent among the secondary figures, as a sensitive reporter on the manners of a transitional age, as a gifted analyst of men in society, and, finally, as a writer who responded to the most significant intellectual and aesthetic trends of the eighteenth century.[23]

The relatively large number of current critical essays and books studying Duclos indicate a very definite renaissance of interest in his writings. The accompanying reassessment of his literary merit warrants a more detailed study of his novels. It is to this end and in the spirit of recent critics favorable to Duclos that the present work is undertaken. Duclos' Madame de Luz will be judged in its own right, without recourse to preconceived or ill-conceived bio-

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[23]Viktoria Skrupskelis, Duclos as a Moralist (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1966), pp. 220-221.

graphical, historical or literary prejudices.[24]

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[24]Frederick Wright Vogler in his study, Vital D'Audiguier and the Seventeenth-Century French Novel, justifies the present critical approach to French literature when he states:

> These two works [Gustave Reynier's Le Roman Sentimental en France avant l'Astrée and Maurice Magendie's Le Roman Français au XVII[e] siècle, de l'Astrée au Grand Cyrus] alone are enough to discredit the traditional restriction of critical attention to those isolated phenomena which have become the fictional landmarks of the period. Scholarship of this sort is typical of the new approach to the analysis of French literature through study in depth - the establishment of literary context - rather than the former tendency to literary hero-worship. The modern disinterring of long-neglected secondary authors and their works provides a much more accurate idea of the changes in a literate or semi-literate public's tastes and requirements over a continuous period than was possible through the nearly exclusive study of literary monuments. Traditional categories are discovered to be arbitrary and untenable in the face of substantial contradictory evidence, which can no longer be dismissed as the work of misfits - Lanson's "attardés et égarés." (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, no. 48, 1964), p. 15.

CHAPTER I

Duclos' Character and Life

Before discussing Duclos' life, his social and literary success, a brief character portrait seems indispensable the better to understand Duclos' life and works.[1]

Duclos had, throughout his life, the vigorous health of an athlete, a fact which may partially account for his sanguine temperament and his natural tendency toward Epicureanism. As a child he was gay, bold, full of life, and precocious. Later, he was a socially respected libertine who in no way tried to camouflage his vices. He says he had an "ardeur immodérée pour les femmes . . . . Je les aimois toutes et je n'en méprisois aucune."[2] Although it

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[1]Documentation for the character and life of Duclos was taken from the following sources:
Louis Simon Auger, "Notice sur Duclos," Oeuvres complètes de Duclos, Paris, 1806.
Duclos, Mémoires and Voyage en Italie, in Oeuvres complètes. ed. Villenave, (Paris, 1821), vol. 1 and 3.
Emile Henriot, "Un honnête homme au XVIII^{e} siècle--Duclos," La Nouvelle Revue (oct-nov. 1910), XVII, pp. 553-64; (nov.-dec. 1910) XVIII, pp. 124-33.
Leo Le Bourgo, Un homme de lettres au XVIII^{e} siècle, Duclos, sa vie et ses ouvrages (Bordeaux, 1902).
Paul Meister, Charles Duclos (Genève, 1956).
Jean-Marie Peigne, Charles Duclos (Paris, 1867).
J. J. Rousseau, Correspondances générale (Paris, 1929) and Confessions in Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1959-64).
Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du lundi (Paris, 1869).
Mathieu Villenave, "Notice", Oeuvres complètes de Duclos (Paris, 1821), I, pp. i-xlviii.
Voltaire, Correspondance (Genève, since 1953).

[2]Oeuvres complètes, ed. Auger, p. Lxxxviii.

was well known that he had amorous affairs, he was discreet, and his contemporaries do not speak explicitly of any particular liaison. He was also fond of good food and especially of fine wines. He was a full-blooded man whose anger was readily aroused. Even as a child, however, he was not given to ill-will and was ready to forgive once his anger had subsided. Moreover he was not naturally jealous or envious.

Duclos had an extremely keen and original mind, complemented by an effervescent imagination. M. Abeille remarked: "Les idées se présentoient à lui avec tant d'abondance que s'il n'eut pas eu la phrase serrée, il eut été bègue."[3] His memory was likewise very acute. Duclos seems to have impressed his contemporaries the most by three salient character traits: his wit, his frankness and his independence.

Duclos was very successful as an homme de salon because of his wit. He says in his Mémoires: "Je me crois de l'esprit, et j'ai la réputation d'en avoir."[4] He excelled in the art of conversation and made his first mark in the aristocratic circles of Paris by his wit. The Contesse de Rochefort reflects the general opinion of the Parisian aristocracy when she says:

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[3]Auger, I, p. xxxiii.

[4]Villenave, I, p. xliv.

> Duclos est un homme impayable. On dit qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le ciel. Duclos fait bien mentir le proverbe; car il est bien sûr qu'il n'a eu, ni qu'il n'aura jamais son Pareil.[5]

Many of Duclos' witty, incisive remarks are preserved in the letters and memoirs of his contemporaries. In fact, many of his contemporaries judged Duclos, the man, to be more interesting than Duclos, the writer.

Duclos' critics often invoked his extreme candor and brusque, incisive manner against him. In fact, he had a singular manner of delivery, speaking in a loud voice accompanied by slicing gestures. Duclos admits that he was often more candid than courtly and euphemistic when he says: "Je ne suis pas grossier mais trop peu poli pour le monde que je vois."[6] Louis XV is reputed to have remarked: "Oh! pour Duclos, il a son franc parler."[7] Duclos' habit of speaking bluntly, even cruelly, was especially evident when he was seeking truth. Beauzee, in his acceptance speech to the Académie Française, recalls Duclos' franc parler:

> On a reproché à Duclos de la vivacité dans le ton, peut-être quelque chose de plus dans la dispute. Si l'on cherchait à obscurcir la vérité, il ne tirait pas le voile, il le déchirait. S'il rencontrait des obstacles au bien, il ne les détournait, il les renversait.[8]

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[5]Ibid, I, p. xiii.

[6]Villenave, vol. I, p. xliv.

[7]Ibid, vol. I, p. xxiv.

[8]Ibid, vol. I, p. xliii.

While some thought of Duclos as the "bavard impérieux" and censured him for it, it was in part Duclos' frankness which caused Rousseau to call him "un homme vrai"[10] and earned him the respect of his confrères.

Many of Duclos' contemporaries indicate that he was especially jealous of his independence. While still a young man in Paris he refused a pension from a wealthy patron which would have assured him an easy life, but at the expense of his personal freedom. His independent manner toward the nobility led one courtier to call him the "plébéien révolté."[11] Duclos' common sense and social instinct, however, never allowed him completely to alienate the aristocracy. One critic remarks that Duclos must be studied as an independent figure.[12] He was neither a pure philosophe, nor pure homme de salon, nor pure homme de lettres. While he was an accepted and even sought-after member of the salon society, he was also a moralist who criticized this society in his writings. Although he is often grouped with the philosophes, many of his ideas differ from theirs. Duclos preferred this own individual way, independent of others. Moreover, Duclos' independence and moderation permitted him to maintain the objective distance necessary to observe and judge society. His view of man and life is often ironic.

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[10] J. J. Rousseau, Confessions (Paris, 1914) III, p. 48.

[11] Villenave, vol. I, p. xxviii.

[12] Skrupskelis, p. 18.

While possessing the pre-requisites for success in the hypercivilized aristocratic society, Duclos likewise had the qualities of a man of action. He had the requisites of a good administrator: common sense, good judgment and moderation. He was an effective mayor of Dinan and an able perpetual secretary of the Académie Française. Moreover, he was prudent, capable of extreme tact and diplomacy, as well as firmness, even obstinacy, when he judged his position the stronger. In short, he had the basic qualities of a diplomat. One critic remarks that Duclos' diplomatic qualities were some of the best assets the philosophes had during the difficult years from 1758 until Duclos' death in 1772.[13] Duclos differed, however, from the philosophes in that his public political and religious positions were generally conservative.

Amour-propre or self-esteem was an important element in his character. Forcalquier-Brancas tells us that Duclos "n'a que de l'amour-propre et point d'orgueil."[14] That is to say he had a high opinion of himself because of his accomplishments but that he was not immodest or overbearing.

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[13]"Duclos avait tout ce qui fait les chefs en politique: tour à tour souple et ferme suivant les circonstances, il avait le sentiment des concessions nécessaires, enfin le dédain des témérités inutiles soit dans les represailles, soit dans l'attaque. Aussi les philosophes trouvèrent-ils en lui non pas le sage ennemi dont parle le poète, mais un guide impartial, raisonable, fort utile pour les sauver d'amis maladroits, c'est-à-dire d'eux-mêmes. Ils ont fait bien des fautes; s'ils n'en ont pas commis davantage, c'est à Duclos surtout qu'ils le doivent." L. Brunel, Les Philosophes et l'Académie française au XVIII^{e} siècle (Paris, 1884), p. 267.

[14]Villenave, vol. I, p. xliii.

Qualities of unquestionable honesty, unselfishness and generosity were also outstanding in his character. Duclos' integrity was unquestionable. One finds few witnesses among his contemporaries who attest to any dishonesty on Duclos' part (Grimm and Mme d'Epinay's accounts must be considered exaggerated character portraits by people who harboured ill will against Duclos). As Emile Henriot justly states: "Ses confrères tenaient en grand honneur le caractère de Duclos, en qui l'on ne vit jamais rien paraître qui fût bas."[15] Many of the anecdotes about Duclos demonstrate his integrity. His lack of selfish interest was manifested in the fact that he preferred to belong to the two Academies for honor rather than profit, electing to serve without pension. Furthermore, he sent annual donations to the poor in Dinan. While he served as perpetual secretary to the Académie Française, he continually assisted members and nonmembers without thought of recompense.

Duclos was a loyal friend. Rousseau called Duclos "un homme sûr" and Duclos' relations with Rousseau bear out this evaluation. Even more striking was Duclos' comportment toward his friend, La Chalotais, who was persecuted by the crown. Meister suggests that Duclos embraced a kind of "culte d'amitié" that he expressed through "la bienfaisance."[16] Duclos' loyalty suggests that his out-spoken, brusque, and even cruel manner may have camouflaged a sentimental vein.

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[15]Henriot, p. 603.

[16]Meister, p. 29.

His generosity to the poor of Dinan and the sentimental scenes in l'Histoire de Madame de Luz support this supposition.

Whatever sentimental tendencies Duclos may have had, they in no way affected his attitude toward religion. While he was of sheer necessity prudent and conservative in not openly attacking the established religion, his personal life suggests that he was at least a free-thinker if not a skeptic.[17]

Duclos' character did not apparently undergo any radical changes during his lifetime. Meister characterizes it as almost perfectly constant:

> On ne peut constater chez Duclos aucune progression, il offre l'aspect d'un homme d'une extraordinaire consistence. Du début à la fin de sa vie, il fut parfaitement lui-même et il fit montre d'une unité de caractère qui ne trouve pour égale dans la littérature française, que celle de Stendhal.[18]

Duclos' qualities were such that he successfully engaged in many types of endeavor: homme de salon, politician, novelist, moralist, historian, erudite, administrator, economist--in short, he was un honnête homme in the fullest sense of the word. Duclos' reputation was founded on these

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[17]"Comme Montesquieu et Buffon, Duclos . . . fut un libertin dans sa jeunesse, mais à la différence de ces deux grands hommes, l'âge ne le corrigea pas." Le Bourgo, p. 101-02

"Indéniablement, Duclos est de la lignée qui de Montaigne mène aux libertins du XVII^{e} siècle, aux rationalistes de l'ère encyclopédique, à Stendhal et à Gide . . ." Meister, p. 173.

[18]Meister, p. 33.

qualities and at his death even an enemy like Fréron admitted that he merited his reputation and his fortune.[19]

Duclos was one of the important mid-century social and literary figures: received in all the famous literary circles, he was a member of two academies, perpetual secretary of the Académie Française, and royal historiographer. He was known to the prominent writers and was personally acquainted with the giants of the period: Montesquieu, Marivaux, Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau. Furthermore, his literary works were among the most popular of the time. Literary historians and academic critics have, however, neglected Duclos so drastically that the student of French literature may not even know that a Duclos existed. This attitude of neglect, spawned by nineteenth and early twentieth-century critics, is entirely misleading. Apart from disregarding Duclos' qualities as a writer, he was, from an historical point of view, a very influential person in the literary and social milieux of the mid-eighteenth century. A brief biography, emphasizing Duclos' literary relations, will show in the necessary perspective his true importance during this period.

Born into a middle-class family in the village of Dinan, Brittany, Duclos, as a youth, had the distinction of being the first dinanais to study in Paris--a fact of primary importance in his later literary career. Chance and Duclos' precociousness brought this about. Duclos' father, a hat merchant with

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[19] Année littéraire, (1772) VIII, p. 322.

iron investments, died two years after Charles' birth. Madame Duclos, out of devotion to her children, did not remarry. She had a keen business sense and invested in the marine outfitting industry which was prospering in Saint-Malo during the War of the Spanish Succession (1708-1712). She was obliged to spend much of her time there, and likeable young Charles remained in Dinan without proper supervision. He began to frequent a group of captured English officers, one of whom particularly liked the boy. One day the two of them imbibed a quantity of punch (Duclos was only six). Madame Duclos was understandably scandalized and sent the boy to Rennes to live under the supervision of her daughter who had recently married. In Rennes, Duclos began his studies in preparation for a business career. However, by 1712, commerce had fallen off and Madame Duclos decided to send Charles to Paris to study liberal arts at the Academy of the Marquis de Dangeau. This was an event of capital import in the life of Duclos: here he was on familier terms for the first time with the Parisian aristocracy. Duclos' precocious and independent nature rapidly earned him the respect of his aristocratic companions. Moreover, he competed with them and did brilliantly, carrying off the academic honors at the end of six years. The social contacts made at the academy were later to gain him access to the elite aristocratic families and their literary and social functions.

In 1718, Duclos graduated from the Academy and entered the Collège d'Harcourt ostensibly to study law. However, his

youthful preoccupations and inclinations prevented him from seriously devoting himself to his law books. Rather he turned to the Epicurean pleasures available in Paris and so began a kind of vie bohémienne. His companions were often shady sorts like the charlatan Saint-Maurice, who beguiled the gullible rich by counterfeit seances at which he conjured up the spirit, Alael. This dissolute comportment did not, however, debauch Duclos' character. As one critic observes:

> La vigueur de son caractère et son bon sens lui permirent de traverser sans trop de dangers quelques années de dissipation et de ne pas subir l'influence de la mauvaise compagnie où il égara parfois sa jeunesse.[20]

It was through the libertine Saint-Maurice that Duclos made his first literary contacts, Piron and Crébillon père. His association with men of letters increased in 1726, when he began to haunt the famous literary cafes, the Gradot, the Procope and the Régence. Duclos was soon acquainted with the clientele of these celebrated establishments: Boindin, the born contradictor; Fréret, the historian; Piron, the poet; Abbé Terrasson, the humanist; the Marquis de Lafaye, likeable and courtly man of the world; Baron, the famous actor; Melon, the economist; Desfontaines, Maupertius, Saurin, La Motte, as well as many lesser-known figures. Duclos shortly established himself as a sparkling conversationalist who embodied "la con-

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[20]Roger Picard, Les Salons littéraires et la société française (New York, 1943), p. 190.

tradiction . . . gaie."[21]

The late seventeen-twenties were also marked by Duclos' entrance into the aristocratic coteries of Paris. One cannot underestimate the significance of this key success in Duclos' rise to social and literary prominence. In these patrician circles Duclos met the important forces in the literary world, and, in particular, the women:

> L'Influence des femmes dans la vie littéraire et dans les salons ne saurait être exagérée. Ce sont elles qui lancent les oeuvres et les écrivains, à défaut de la presse qui existe à peine. On mesure leur prédominance en cette matière au rôle que leurs salons jouent dans les élections à l'Académie, qui elle aussi est une sorte de salon.[22]

Le Chevalier d'Aydie, one of Duclos' friends from the Academy of the Marquis de Dangeau, first introduced Duclos to the Brancas family. Duclos soon became the persona grata of the Brancas' salon, considered a rendez-vous for literary and fashionable society and noted for its brilliant receptions. His reputation as a pungent conversationalist spread and the leading salons opened their doors to him. Madame Delauney de Staal and Madame du Deffand welcomed him. At Madame de Tencin's salon he became acquainted with Hénault, Cardinal Bernis, Fontenelle, Montesquieu and Marivaux; Marivaux later worked for Duclos' admission to the Académie Française. On Tuesday,

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[21]Duclos, Mémoires, I, p. 24.

[22]Picard, p. 155.

Duclos frequented Helvetius; on Thursday and Sunday, he was often a guest at Baron d'Holbach's Au Grand-Val along with Raynall, Marmontel, Diderot, Grimm, and Saint-Laurent. Buffon invited him often to the Jardin du Roi.

While mainly protected by the Brancas family, by 1745 Duclos had secured the patronage of many influential literary and political figures, including the then all-powerful Madame de Pompadour. Her redoubtable prestige was instrumental in Duclos' appointment as mayor of Dinan and as deputy to the tiers Etats of Brittany; in his successful candidacy for a seat in the Academie Francaise; and in his assignation to the position of royal historiographer. As a guest of Madame de Pompadour's at Versailles, Duclos frequently found himself in the company of Diderot, D'Alembert, Helvetius and Marmontel. Duclos was, in fact, on relatively familiar terms with Madame de Pompadour: every Sunday, he, Marmontel and Cardinal Bernis would visit informally with her until Cardinal Bernis' disgrace.

Duclos also consorted with Mademoiselle Quinault. He was one of those invited to her literary soirees called "le dîner du Bout du Banc." Voltaire, Collé, the Comte de Caylus, Moncrif and D'Alembert participated likewise. The guests were to inscribe impromptu verse, epigrams, etc., on a small writing desk placed in the middle of the table. These gatherings produced two works--Les Etrennes de la Saint-Jean and Le Recueil de ces messieurs.

In 1747, Duclos met the paradoxical, witty, brilliant and passionate Madame d'Epinay through Mademoiselle Quinault. Madame d'Epinay invited Duclos to both her Paris salon and to La Chevrette where, in 1756, the guests included Grimm, Rousseau, Holbach, Saint-Lambert and Francueil. Madame d'Epinay took Duclos into her confidence and he quickly became one of her preferred guests. The subsequent and unfortunate rift between them is now well known, albeit as romanticized history, through Madame d'Epinay's account in her Histoire de Mademoiselle de Montbrillant.[23]

Although Duclos possessed a natural inclination for literature ("J'avais un assez bon fonds de littérature que j'entreprenais par goût"),[24] his literary career began rather late in his life at the age of thirty-five. He candidly describes his conversion to letters, admitting:

> J'ai été très libertin par force de tempérament, et je n'ai commencé à m'occuper formellement des lettres que rassasié de libertinage, à peu près comme ces femmes qui donnent à Dieu ce que le diable ne veut plus.[25]

With the exception of a mock-tragedy, La Mort de Mardi-Gras, which he wrote in 1737 and subsequently burned, he did not begin to write seriously until after his election to the

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[23]George Roth, in his edition of l'Histoire de Madame de Montbrillant (Paris, 1951), believes that Madame d'Epinay left, not memoirs, but a roman à clef which includes an exaggerated negative portrait of Duclos.

[24]Villenave, Vol.I, p. xliv.

[25]Ibid., p. xliv.

Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He was selected in 1739, without having written a single literary work of merit, through the political influence of the Brancas family (an event which underscores the importance of the salons in the literary history of the period). In November 1739, Duclos began his literary career by reading to the Academy the first in a series of six scholarly reports. A second report was read in 1740, and in 1741 Duclos finished his first novel, L'Histoire de Madame de Luz. At the end of this same year he completed a second novel, Les Confessions du Comte * * *. Both novels were succès de scandale. The Confessions, reprinted eight times in 1742, became the sixth most read piece of fiction during the years from 1740 to 1760.[26] In 1744 Duclos published the short story, Acajou et Zirphilie, which went through five editions in one year and became the tenth most read fictional work of the period. In 1745 his Histoire de Louis XI was published and the public bought two thousand copies of it in less than four weeks.

Duclos' literary success made him a natural candidate for the Académie Française. Through the patronage of the Brancas family and with the support of Marivaux, he was a candidate in 1745, but Duclos withdrew his candidacy when he learned that Voltaire was the other nominee. Duclos' candidacy was proposed a second time in 1746, but he lost the elec-

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[26]See Daniel Mornet, "Les Enseignements des bibliothèques privées (1750-1780), Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XVII (1910), p. 473.

tion to the Abbé de Lille in spite of patronage from the Brancas family and Madame de Pompadour and support within the Academie from Marivaux and the Duc de Villars. Finally, that same year, protected by the Brancas family, Madame de Pompadour and Madame de Geoffrin, he was selected to fill the seat of Abbé de Montgault. By 1751 Duclos' reputation had so waxed that Raynall could call him "l'homme de lettres de France le plus à la mode"[27] ; and in 1754 "homme qui tient aujourd'hui une place considérable dans la littérature."[28]

In 1755 Mirabaud, at the age of eighty-five, resigned as perpetual secretary of the Académie Française and Duclos was chosen to replace him--a position he filled for seventeen years. His election to this post was generally well received, as evidenced in Buffon's statement that "personne ne convenait mieux que lui à cette place importante pour le bien de l'Académie."[29] At this point in Duclos' career, he became a veritable literary power: "Une fois que Duclos fut élu secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie, il devint pratiquement le chef de la faction des gens de lettres."[30] He worked to establish the notions of equality among members of the Académie and the independence of writers. He similarly labored for the cause

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[27]Raynall, "Nouvelles littéraires," (March 8) 1751 in Grimm, Correspondance litteraire, (Paris, 1877), II, p. 37.

[28]Ibid, (March 1) 1754, II, p. 325.

[29]Buffon, Correspondance inédite (Paris, 1860), I, p. 53.

[30]Meister, p. 53.

of literature in general and for the good of the Académie as a whole. He was a forceful and effective leader:

> Il succédait à des secrétaires perpétuels insignifiants; lui, au contraire, il était actif, très répandu dans le monde; il mit son activité et ses relations au service de la Compagnie, qui en tira honneur et profit. Il n'usa pas seulement de son influence en matière d'élections; il sut faire respecter le Réglement.[31]

Duclos' loyalty to the Académie did not, however, prevent him from working for the benefit of the philosophes. He openly supported Diderot's unsuccessful candidacy to the Compagnie; he was largely responsible for the election of both D'Alembert and Marmontel. He was, in fact, so linked with the philosophic party that when King Christian VII, king of Denmark, gave a princely reception in 1768 for the leading philosophes Duclos was included among the eighteen guests; among the rest were Diderot, d'Alembert, Holbach, Condillac, Helvétius and Grimm.

Duclos' prominent role in the literary empyrean brought him naturally into personal contact with the principal literary figures. A brief survey of his relationships with the most important writers of the day will complete our assessment of his substantial role during this period of intellectual quickening.

Duclos' relations with Buffon, Marivaux and Montesquieu have already been noted. Each of them respected Duclos.

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[31]Le Bourgo, p. 60.

Montesquieu was particularly favorable to Duclos' non-fiction, praising his Considérations sur les Moeurs warmly:

> Vous avez bien de l'esprit, mon cher Duclos, et dites de bien belles choses. On dira que La Bruyère et vous, connaissez bien votre siècle, que vous êtes plus philosophe que lui, et que votre siècle est plus philosophe que le sien. Quoi qu'il en soit, vous êtes agréable à lire et faites penser.[32]

Although pertinent biographical documents are rare, it seems probable that Marivaux and Duclos were friends. Marivaux was one of the principal supporters of Duclos' candidacy for the Académie Française. In 1747, when Marivaux was ill, the Académie included Duclos in the delegation which visited the sick man. (Customarily, only friends were included in these parties.)

Duclos' relations with Diderot are also difficult to determine with any certainty. It is, however, obvious that the men each frequented several of the same literary circles: Baron Holbach's, Madame de Pompadour's and Madame d'Epinay's. Furthermore, Duclos worked for Diderot's election to the Académie Française and made known publicly his regret that Diderot was not elected. In addition, Paul Meister points out the filiation between Diderot's Bijoux Indiscrets and Duclos' Confessions du comte * * *.[33] Moreover, the Encyclopédie,

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[32]Montesquieu to Duclos, Bordeaux, August 15, 1748. Quoted in Le Bourgo, p. 58.

[33]Meister, pp. 61-62.

of which Diderot was the director, solicited articles from Duclos--a request prompted primarily for advertising purposes, for Duclos' conservatism was often at odds with the radical positions taken by its editors. Duclos' prominence, like that of Voltaire's, was exploited by the editors the better to publicize their endeavor. Duclos' scholarly report, "Déclamation des Anciens," appeared in its entirety in 1754 (IV) and he probably wrote the articles "Etiquette" (IV, 1756) and "Honoraire" (VIII, N.E., 1765). One cannot be sure of his other contributions to the Encyclopédie although it is certain that he was not one of the principal contributors to this historic enterprise.

Although Diderot's articles "Historiographe," "Egyptiens" and "Encyclopédie" demonstrate esteem for Duclos as a person and for his notions on orthography, Diderot was in part responsible for the break between Duclos and Madame d'Epinay and the subsequent malicious portrait of Duclos in Madame d'Epinay's Mémoires. Meister sums up the Diderot-Duclos ties:

> . . . Si Diderot a montré de l'estime pour quelques ouvrages de Duclos . . . il n'en a pas moins fait preuve d'une malveillance constante . . . . Duclos, de son côté, semble avoir plutôt témoigné de l'indifférence à l'égard de Diderot . . . . Tout porte à croire qu'après avoir été liés non par l'amitié, mais pour les besoins de la cause commune, ces deux hommes en arrivèrent à la rupture . . . .[34]

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[34] Ibid., p. 65.

Duclos' prestige and importance in the literary milieu made it necessary for most writers of renown, regardless of their personal dispositions, to deal with him. This fact, evident in Diderot's relations with him, is equally true of Voltaire's. Le Bourgo clarifies their essential similarities and dissimilarities:

> . . . Il n'y eut jamais d'intimité entre les deux écrivains. Ils furent amis plutôt par l'intérêt que par sympathie; ils eurent à combattre les mêmes ennemis, mais leurs goûts étaient différents; leurs esprits n'étaient pas de la même famille, il n'y eut jamais d'affinité entre leurs caractères.[35]

The principal difference between the two men, discounting literary genius, was that Voltaire fought passionately for what he believed, matching intolerance with intolerance; while Duclos followed the code of the honnête homme--maintaining equal distance from extremes.

Voltaire's fluctuating attitude toward Duclos hinged on Duclos' rising literary fortunes, and serves today as a gauge for determining his ascent to prominence. Voltaire rarely corresponded with Duclos before 1760, but Voltaire's correspondance contains many references to Duclos. There exists a letter to Duclos written in 1745 in which Voltaire lauds L'Histoire de Louis XI. Five years later Voltaire's jealousy was piqued by the fact that Duclos had replaced him as royal historiographer, and he began to censor Duclos as an historian. Voltaire remained antagonistic until Duclos

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[35]Le Bourgo, p. 83

became perpetual secretary and it became politically expedient to renew ties with him. Voltaire did so in 1760 by joining Duclos and the philosophic party in denouncing Palissot's play Les Philosophes. Voltaire's letters to the perpetual secretary (about thirty-five in number) generally solicit Duclos' help: he asks him to work for the election of Diderot; condemns Palissot's play; exhorts Duclos to reconcile himself with d'Alembert the better to repulse the enemies of the philosophes; discusses and asks for criticism of his Commentaires sur Corneille (twenty-five letters); requests Duclos' support of certain candidates to the Académie Française. The letters are rarely of a personal nature, although their tone grows warmer toward the end of the decade. In short, political necessities obliged Voltaire to reaffirm amicable relations with Duclos. This fact attests to Duclos' stature from 1755 to 1772.

The Rousseau-Duclos ties present a more personal vein. Documentation on their relations is relatively copious when compared with that treating Duclos and the previously cited writers: nine letters from Rousseau; twenty from Duclos; references to one another in letters to third parties; Rousseau's published writings, in particular, the Confessions, La Nouvelle Héloïse and Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques.

Rousseau's first contact with Duclos was by way of an edition of the Confessions du comte * * * given him by Madame de Broglie in 1742. Rousseau and Duclos did not meet until

1747 through Madame d'Epinay.[36] Five years later Duclos' protection made possible the presentation of Le Devin du village, a fact Rousseau made known in his dedication of the play: "Souffrez, monsieur [Duclos], que votre nom soit à la tête de cet ouvrage qui sans vous n'aurait jamais paru."[37]

Rousseau was particularly impressed by Duclos' integrity, which he clearly recognized. This is obvious in a passage from the Confessions: "à qui [Duclos] je dois de savoir que la droiture et la probité peuvent s'allier quelquefois avec la culture des lettres."[38] In addition, Daniel Mornet argues that Duclos served as a model for Milord Edouard in La Nouvelle Héloise, a fictional representation of the honnête homme par excellence.[39]

When Rousseau left Paris and broke with the philosophes in 1755, Duclos alone remained loyal to him. Their correspondence does not quicken, however, until 1760, when Rousseau sent newly printed sections of La Nouvelle Héloïse to Duclos for commentary. Duclos' response to the novel was positive, even enthusiastic. He predicted "le plus grand succès" for the work. Paul Dimoff summarizes Duclos' critical evaluation of

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[36]George Roth believes they first met in 1745.

[37]Rousseau, Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1959), II, p. 1095.

[38]Ibid., I, p. 371.

[39]Nouvelle Héloïse, ed. Daniel Mornet (Paris, 1925), I, p. 125.

the novel as "un modèle de critique franche, honnête et clairvoyante."[40] No doubt Duclos' sympathetic reaction to the novel in the ten letters pertaining to it united the two writers definitively. Rousseau's response was fervid: ". . . je m'aperçois que nous avons plus de goûts que je n'avois cru, et que nous aurions du nous aimer tout autrement que nous n'avons fait."[41]

Of greater consequence to literary history is the fact that Duclos directly inspired Rousseau to write the celebrated Confessions. In some of Duclos letters which have been preserved, he proposed that Rousseau write an autobiography: "Je vous exhorte plus que jamais à écrire les mémoires dont je vous ai parlé, dussent-ils avoir un jour un codicille."[42] After hesitating for two or three years, Rousseau finally accepted the proposal and announced his intentions to Duclos:

> . . . j'ai beaucoup à dire, et je dirai tout; je n'omettrai pas une de mes fautes, pas même une de mes mauvaises pensées. Je me peindrai tel que je suis: le mal offusquera presque toujours le bien; et malgre cela, j'ai peine à croire qu'aucun de mes lecteurs ose se dire, je suis meilleur que ne fut cet homme-là.[43]

Without any doubt this passage announces the tone of the

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[40]Paul Dimoff, "Les Relations de J.J. Rousseau avec Duclos," Mercure de France, No. 640 (15 fev., 1925), p. 13.

[41]Correspondance générale, V, p. 262.

[42]Ibid., XII, p. 141.

[43]Ibid., XII, p. 222.

Confessions, and in particular, the opening passage.

The two writers' correspondence to one another fell off during the second half of the seventeen-sixties, a period during which Rousseau's paranoia worsened and his misanthropy surged. He still, however, thought rather enough of Duclos as late as 1769, when he wrote to Thérèse Levasseur the following description of Duclos:

> Ce n'est pas un ami chaud, mais un homme droit qui n'insultera pas ma mémoire, parce qu'il m'a bien connu et qu'il est juste; mais il ne se compromettra pas, et je ne désire pas qu'il se compromette.[44]

Duclos was, without a doubt, closely involved in Rousseau's finest literary productions. His influence was personal rather than literary. Moreover, he was one of the few Parisians who had the courage and loyalty to maintain friendly ties with Jean-Jacques after his rupture with Parisian literary circles. Their relations mirror, in part, Rousseau's traumatic spiritual struggle.

This brief biographical survey, in which I have not attempted to be comprehensive, points up two important conclusions: Duclos' commerce with the literary world was extensive, perhaps greater than that of any of his contemporaries with the exception of Voltaire. Secondly, his far ranging influence was personal rather than bookish.

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[44]Ibid., XIX, p. 141.

CHAPTER II

An Analysis of L'Histoire de Madame de Luz

Bearing in mind the popular success of Duclos' first two novels, we shall now analyze Madame de Luz the better to understand the text and to establish its place and importance in the evolution of the French novel. It is my contention that Madame de Luz is representative of eighteenth-century novelistic preoccupations and is also a pivotal novel, incorporating qualities of the seventeenth-century novel of analysis in its form and characterization, but announcing the novel of the late eighteenth-century by its themes and ethos. If this claim is borne out by the subsequent discussion, then Madame de Luz constitutes an important link in the continuity of the novel of analysis from Madame de Lafayette and the seventeenth-century moralists to Laclos and Sade.

The structure of Madame de Luz can be analyzed much like that of a French classical tragedy. It can be divided into three parts: exposition, noeud, and dénouement.

The first three paragraphs of the novel constitute the exposition. The major themes are presented abstractly. First, the theme of evil is stated. The virtue of a woman, and by implication virtue in general, is unnatural because "dans ce

monde [c'est] un être étranger."[1] Because it is unnatural, men, circumstances and nature collude to corrupt it. Circumstances undermine the will to virtue from the exterior. Nature works from within through the heart and through the senses to pervert man's aspiration to virtue. Men, naturally hypocritical, disguise licentious intentions under a mask of good will, and thereby gain the confidence of the woman, the first step toward her undoing. Hence, since the human condition and man's moral weakness contravene virtue, one should be indulgent in judging moral weakness. In fact, an act should be judged according to the intention of the agent. One should distinguish between a crime (a consciously willed act) and a misfortune (a forced act of evil in which the will is powerless to resist against interior force, passion, or exterior force, circumstances). Moreover, since there is nothing to be gained from virtue, neither material reward nor emotional happiness, a woman who seeks to be virtuous will receive no reward. Virtue will go necessarily unrewarded because it is anti-nature.

Basic factual information is also presented in the exposition. Madame de Luz represents not only one of the most striking examples of virtue unrewarded, but one whose quest for virtue invites misfortune. The elements of the basic moral conflict are also exposed: duty to a marriage of convenience versus natural inclination. While still too young

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[1]Duclos, Oeuvres ed. Villenave (Paris, 1821), Vol.I, p. 147. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

to know the ways of her own heart, Madame de Luz was married to a much older man, honest but of mediocre qualities, a person with whom she has nothing in common. She soon discovers that she is in love with her cousin, a seemingly ideal potential marriage partner by reason of similar age, communion of temperament, common interests and long acquaintance. The principal elements are thus created for Madame de Luz's interior struggle between her aspiration to marital fidelity and her natural inclination for Saint-Géran. The opposition of a social convention involving the ideal of fidelity to its tenets and the dictates of nature and heart is firmly established before the action of the novel begins.

The noeud is composed of one principal action, the relationship between Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran (to be described as episode A in my discussion); three secondary intrigues--the Thurin, Maran/Marsillac and Hardouin adventures (to be called episodes B, C, and D in this analysis); two historical digressions which are organic in the progress of the dramatic action.

Duclos does not adhere to the classical esthetic principle which requires one chief, well developed action to which the other actions are subordinate and dependant. Duclos prefers an esthetic of quantity: while episode A is the principal intrigue which unifies the novel (it begins and ends with A) the other episodes are autonomous and take up one half of the action of the novel. For thematic purposes Duclos seeks a cumulative effect, based on numerous and repetitive adventures

which demonstrate two themes: nature tends toward evil and virtue is circumstantial. He intends that these themes be universally applicable, as suggested by his choice of characters. These figures represent the three important social classes: a commoner, the bourgeois judge; two noblemen; a member of the clergy. Duclos' deliberate cross section is meant to validate the thesis that human nature is fundamentally corrupt.

It should also be noted that A serves as a foil which contrasts the superiority of love based on amitié over unrefined sensual desire. This contrast is particularly evident with regard to A and B which intermesh. The relation of one is interrupted and the other taken up in the same manner and for the same purpose as in Chrétien de Troyes' works. Saint-Géran's motives and disinterested conduct after the Baron de Luz's imprisonment are the antithesis of Thurin's use of events to achieve sexual satisfaction. Whereas Saint-Géran has derived moral elevation from his love for Madame de Luz and love has therefore become a positive force, Thurin is morally degraded through an intrinsically physical love.

Each adventure exposes ethical problems and negative resolutions. In short, Duclos approaches moral questions through negative examples. His own point of view is not explicitly stated, but implied. The reader must participate by interpreting events and dialogue to determine Duclos' ethical values.

Episode A begins with a Marivaux-like section in which the awakening of love is exploited. Love declares itself unexpectedly. It is not, however, love at first sight or a coup de foudre. It has long been in incubation, since childhood in fact, and is based on inclination, esteem and sexual passion. Where Marivaux is content to explore the myriad psychological twists and turns of timid souls before they acknowledge love, Duclos presses on rapidly to the declaration of love. His principal interest lies in the moral dilemma that potentially adulterous love poses. The declaration is the critical step forward in the progress of love: like Phèdre's declaration of love in act II, scene 5, it is intended to arouse a reciprocal response. The end result of the open declaration of love is sexual gratification. Saint Géran is the first to assert his love. He has nothing to lose and everything to gain by his declaration. Madame de Luz, on the other hand, has every reason not to declare her love if she sincerely intends to remain constant to her concept of virtue. She equates happiness with repos derived from strict adherence to her marriage vows. Unfortunately, the social convention (marriage of convenience) conflicts with her natural preference of a marriage partner. Madame de Luz's reasoned adherence to marital duty is at odds with her heart and her senses. She may be the master of her actions through will power, but she is not the master of her heart: " . . . si ce n'est pas un crime de ne pouvoir

régler les mouvements de son coeur, c'est du moins un très grand malheur" (I, 158).

Saint-Géran readily declares his feelings to Madame de Luz, expecting a reciprocal declaration:

> Quelle que soit l'idée qu'on a de la vertu d'une femme, ce n'est certainement que l'espoir qui fait qu'on lui déclare l'amour qu'on ressent pour elle; et l'on n'est jamais malheureux quand on espère (I, 152)

Like the other masculine characters, Saint-Géran sets out to seduce Madame de Luz and to satisfy his natural physical desires. Madame de Luz resists his advances through force of reason and will and even attempts to send away this threat to her tranquility. But in spite of her resistance she cannot help deriving pleasure from Saint-Géran's declaration. In spite of her natural aspiration to virtue and her best intentions she experiences the natural feminine reaction to the attention of a lover: "Elle ressent involontairement un plaisir secret. La nature est avant tous les devoirs qui ne consistent souvent qu'à la combattre" (I, 152). Moreover, her vanity is touched. She finally admits to herself that she loves Saint-Géran and that unrequited love would be a total humiliation. In contrast, requited love is an ego-expander and is very pleasurable.

Ironically, Baron de Luz intervenes and prevents Madame de Luz from sending Saint-Géran away. He invites Saint-Géran to Burgundy. Life in Burgundy favors the development of Madame de Luz's love for Saint-Géran and her eventual declaration.

Affairs of state monopolize the Baron's time, leaving Saint-Géran free to cultivate Madame de Luz's passion. He employs tenderness to gain her confidence and to calm her scruples. He then argues for indulgence: he claims that natural inclination based on mutual esteem has superior rights to those of a marriage of convenience. Society condones such relationships. In fact, such a union is more "virtuous":

> De tels amans sont plus estimables que des époux que les lois forcent de vivre ensemble; car il faut qu'une passion toujours heureuse et toujours constante soit fondée sur des qualités supérieures, sur une estime réciproque (I, 158).

Saint-Géran's concerted efforts succeed in nullifying temporarily Madame de Luz's scruples and she at last openly declares her love. She rationalizes this declaration by claiming that she has confidence that Saint-Géran's friendship will guide his actions and that he will respect her virtue. This is no doubt wishful thinking motivated more by subconscious desire than by common sense:

> Madame de Luz elle-même, plus occupée du discours qu'attentive à l'action de M. de Saint-Géran, en recevant ces protestations, ne pouvait se défendre d'un plaisir secret qu'elle ne démêlait qu'imparfaitement, et qui fait le charme de l'âme sans alarmer l'innocence (I, 157).

Her declaration is the turning point in their relationship. From that moment on, love becomes the principal preoccupation of the couple. Their relationship is always physically innocent, but Madame de Luz is no doubt emotionally unfaithful to her husband. She does entertain misgivings about her

conduct: "Cette indulgence de ma part ne sera-t-elle criminelle?" (I, 156). But nature and pleasure stifle her scruples.

Meanwhile, Saint-Géran, like any normal man, works actively to seduce Madame de Luz since "il y a un terme pour lequel l'amant soupire, vers lequel il se porte, même en protestant, même en croyant le contraire" (I, 157). Consciously or subconsciously Saint-Géran is at the mercy of his passion.

Madame de Luz resists sensual passion and justifies her conduct with Saint-Géran by making a distinction between the rights of the husband and the rights of the lover. She owes physical fidelity to the former and emotional fidelity to the latter. Through inflexible fidelity to this ethical distinction she converts Saint-Géran's love from physical desire to a platonic state in which the physical desire is transfigured and the lover derives constant spiritual pleasure from contemplation (but not possession) of the object of love. No doubt physical desire is subconsciously everpresent and ready to reassert itself in an unguarded moment. Nevertheless a certain kind of stability and happiness are achieved: "Quoiqu'il [Saint-Géran] désirât encore, il n'en était pas moins heureux" (I, 159). This idyllic period is interrupted by the events related to the Biron conspiracy, whose consequences irrevocably shatter the emotional stability of Madame de Luz and make it impossible for her relationship with Saint-Géran to continue on the same terms.

In episode B Madame de Luz is a victim of opportunism and circumstances. The rights of husband (sexual fidelity) and of lover (one must merit his esteem) conflict with Madame de Luz's sense of humanity and her feeling that marital duty renders her responsible for her husband's life.

Thurin is motivated by vanity and sensual desire. At first, like the libertine, he is motivated by vanity, the desire to establish a reputation. But he quickly falls in love with Madame de Luz. In the beginning, Madame de Luz is indulgent toward him. Unfortunately, her natural gentleness and moderation only encourage him. When he finally makes open advances she flatly rejects his advances, her dignity outraged. Later, the Biron conspiracy offers Thurin an opportunity both to avenge his wounded vanity and to accomplish his physical desires.

Madame de Luz's idealistic notions of the way of the world conflict with reality as Thurin describes it (and no doubt as Duclos conceives it): virtue is not a principal motivating factor among human beings, but rather pleasure is at the heart of men's actions. Madame de Luz's virtue will not win amnesty for the Baron. The only solution is to match corruption with corruption, to placate the judge by satisfying the man. Thurin is no doubt a corrupt realist who will have great success in his world precisely because he is corrupt.

Madame de Luz, near despair, cannot determine where her loyalties lie: are her virtue and duty to her lover of greater

consequence than her sense of humanity, the obligation to save a life whenever possible? In her state of anguish, her reawakened scruples question her motives. She endures feelings of guilt because of her love for Saint-Géran. She wonders if her desire to remain virtuous masks a secret motive: the hidden wish that her husband, the obstacle to her legitimate union with Saint-Géran, should die. Furthermore, if she saves her husband's life, she sacrifices her lover to her husband: according to her Cornelian notion of love, after the sacrifice of her virtue, she will no longer be worthy of her lover. Her scruples and indecision torture her. Madame de Luz's dilemma pits her deep concern for virtue against the practical human consideration of saving a life.

Saint-Géran, contrary to Thurin, works nobly and unselfishly to save the life of his rival, the Baron. His nobility of character, derived in part from transfigured physical love, is expressed in terms similar to those made memorable by Corneille:

> Je serais trop heureux qu'il [the Baron] pût devoir son salut à mes soins. Je ne formerai point de souhaits indignes de vous [Madame de Luz] et de moi. Je ne serais pas digne de vous aimer, si ma vertu ne m'était plus chère que vous-même (I, 175).

Ironically, it is this trusted friend and lover who brings to Madame de Luz the news, deliberately propagated at court by Thurin, that the Baron is guilty. Because of this new turn of events, Madame de Luz despairs and submits to Thurin's

desires. In so doing she sacrifices her notion of marital duty and virtue, betrays her love for Saint-Géran, and deals an irrevocable blow to her self-esteem. Mauzi characterizes Madame de Luz's state accurately:

> Madame de Luz se sent alors coupable à double titre: elle avait manqué à la fois à la vertu et à l'amour. Quand on a eu assez d'héroïsme pour résister à une passion glorieusement transmuée en pur amour, il est sans doute accablant de voir mourir sa vertu sans aucune compensation de bonheur.[2]

In desperation, because of circumstances for which she is not responsible, she has chosen to give to one she despises what she has refused to the one she loves. She feels guilty, but Duclos makes it very clear that she is innocent of crime by virtue of mitigating circumstances: "Vaincue par le malheur, [elle] fut forcée d'immoler au salut de son mari, la vertu, le devoir et l'amour" (I, 178).

The presences of both the Baron and Saint-Géran are now unbearable to her, since each reminds her of violated rights. Those of her lover are the most difficult to endure. Madame de Luz seeks repos through a reasoned effort to do her duty to her husband. If reason and heart, duty and inclination are irreconcilable, at least she can seek repos from the perpetual conflict of reason and heart by sending away the object of her love: "Cette séparation . . . je [Madame de Luz] la

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[2]Robert Mauzi, l'Idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée française au XVIII[e] siècle (Paris, 1965), pp. 31-32.

crois nécessaire; peut-être lui devrons-nous un jour notre tranquillité" (I, 187). Ironically, this moment of separation is the time when her passion reaches its apex: "Jamais leur amour n'avait été plus vif . . . Elle n'avait exigé cette séparation que pour cesser de l'aimer; et, n'écoutant alors que son coeur, elle lui jura cent fois l'amour le plus tendre . . . . " (I, 187). This passage underlines the profound division between Madame de Luz's marital duty and her inclination. Love has made irrevocable progress and has magnified inhumanly the cleavage between virtue and nature. In the end, she rejects tangible happiness with Saint-Géran for the implausible possibility of finding happiness through adherence to marital duty.

Episode C is a further indication that virtue is circumstantial, and that human nature is fundamentally given to vice. It also shows that rejection of happiness for virtue invites misfortune. Madame de Luz seeks the solace of solitude in the country. But if Saint-Géran had been with her, it is probable that Maran and Marsillac would have left her alone. Without her husband, alone, seeking seclusion, she is easy prey to the sensual desires of the men of the province.

Duclos takes pains to contrast the characters of Maran and Marsillac. The former is basically an evil man. The latter tends to be virtuous. Maran consciously wills evil; he intends to seduce Madame de Luz by force if necessary. Marsillac intends to do Madame de Luz a favor, but because of circumstances and his own moral weakness, he is blinded by passion and rapes her. He is an example of misfortune--a man

who is not basically evil, but who succumbs to overpowering forces in human nature. He consequently merits our indulgence.

Madame de Luz has experienced no moral conflict during the rape because she is unconscious. When she regains consciousness she poses for the first time the problem of evil: how could Providence allow such evil to befall a person who is sincerely virtuous? She prefers, however, to assume the burden of the guilt, rather than conclude that Providence plots against virtue:

> Comment avec tant de vertu dans le coeur, pouvait-elle être devenue si criminelle? Mais comment, avec tant de malheurs, pouvait elle être encore innocente? C'eût été accuser le ciel d'injustice. Elle aimait mieux se condamner elle-même (I, 194).

Madame de Luz returns to Paris and Episode D begins. She seeks the intercession of a director of conscience, père Hardouin, the better to resolve her moral scruples. Once again, her virtue is the source of her undoing. It is precisely her unadulterated innocence and sincere remorse which inflame Hardouin's lust: "L'innocence est le premier charme de la beauté, et rien ne retrace l'innocence comme les remords" (I, 199). Madame de Luz's character contrasts strikingly with the former coquettes and moral hypocrites with whom Hardouin normally deals. He is touched by Madame de Luz's sincerity and falls in love with her. He quickly gains her confidence and calms her moral scruples. She attains a state of emotional tranquility. He deliberately calculates

the best means of seducing her. But circumstances and his pressing lust compel him to use an outside force, opium, to achieve his end.

Once again, Madame de Luz endures no moral conflict: she is unconscious and quite clearly innocent of any crime. But when she awakens and discovers what has transpired, she is filled with disgust, self-recrimination and despair. Defiled by a servant of God, she openly accuses Providence of plotting against virtue: "A quel comble d'horreur étais-je donc destinée! ciel cruel! Par où puis-je avoir mérité ta haine? est-ce la vertu qui t'est odieuse?" (I, 205).

The denouement is simple and rapid. It is the logical consequence of Madame de Luz's quest for absolute virtue. Her efforts to be virtuous have been totally frustrated. Her self-esteem has been debased, she feels only disgust for herself and now thinks she is unworthy of Saint-Géran. Objectively we see her as innocent of crime, having intended no evil; but subjectively, she considers herself criminal and degraded. No doubt her death results from a deformed view of the limits of human nature and the role circumstances play in limiting or impeding virtue. Moreover, her traditional concept of love, based on esteem, does not conform to her situation: Saint-Géran loves her person, not her stubborn clinging to marital duty. She rejects a bona fide chance for happiness for motives which seem unreasonable. Her motivation is purely subjective, dependant on feelings which have no foundation in fact. She willed no evil; therefore, she is

not guilty. She merits our indulgence, but most of all her own. She denies herself a common measure of compromise, necessary for survival, and dies because of it.

The two historical digressions place the action in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries. A close textual comparison of Duclos' account of the Biron conspiracy and Father Gabriel Daniel's version show that Duclos followed the Daniel description closely.[3] Duclos may also have drawn on the accounts of the memorialist historians of the period such as Mezeray, Sully and L'Estoile. This cannot, however, be corroborated. The historical events coincide with the reign of Henry IV. The Biron conspiracy was a well-known historical fact, and all the more odious because of Henry IV's conspicuous friendship for Marshal Biron. Duclos was probably attracted to this conspiracy precisely because it was notorious, would serve as a vehicle for the dramatic action of the novel, and demonstrated "l'énergie d'un grand coupable et surtout de beaux exemples de subtiles et tortueuses machinations."[4]

Nevertheless, the ethos of the society and the social types portrayed by Duclos are not representative of the sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries. They are, in fact, anachronistic. Like Madame de Lafayette, Duclos depicts his own society in an earlier historical setting. Duclos is not preoccupied with recreating the ethos of 1600. Rather, the

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[3]For a detailed comparison of the two texts see Paul Meister, Charles Duclos (Geneva, 1956), pp. 167-71.

[4]Ibid., pp. 202-03.

historical framework serves certain novelistic designs.

Duclos uses the historical digressions for three principal purposes. Like other eighteenth-century novelists, he is acutely concerned with verisimilitude. He considers the novel a form of romanticized history. By its very nature, the novelistic creation must surpass the events of reality in projecting the semblance of truth: "Le roman en [de vraisemblance] exige plus que l'histoire, à qui l'autorité de la vérité suffit" (I, 216). The first historical digression, the Biron conspiracy, adds a dimension of authenticity to the erotic episodes. It reinforces their credibility. Not only does the conspiracy give Thurin a means of seducing Madame de Luz, but that seduction commingles with history (Did the historical Turin seduce, in fact, a Baroness?).

Moreover, the political intrigue and the leaders of the conspiracy are interesting in themselves. They add an element of adventure and act as dramatic relief from the fundamentally erotic episodes, which risk becoming insipid.

Crocker also believes that Duclos, in imitation of Madame de Lafayette, goes back to the time of Henry IV, but does not recapture the realistic immediacy of the period. Nevertheless, the temporal distance does help to create a classical effect of universality and timelessness. The moral characteristics of the human beings Duclos portrays are universally applicable and are therefore not particular to the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries.

The second digression is noteworthy for its portrait of

Henry IV. He seems to represent Duclos' particular eighteenth-century ideal of the philosopher King. Duclos insists on the fact that Henry renounced his own inclination for war, choosing peace for the sake of the nation. This second digression also offers the historical background--peace in France and foreign wars--which makes Saint-Géran's departure from France plausible.

Examination of the novel's structure and action leads to a central conclusion: Duclos likes the extraordinary. Madame de Luz, for example, is an extraordinary example of persecuted virtue trapped in uncommon circumstances. This special dilemma has caused a few critics to attack the plot of the novel. Penick states that it is implausible that all these events could happen to one woman. It is a novelistic flaw because of the unlikelihood of the situation as a whole.[5] Skrupskelis declares: "The plot strikes us as artificial and unconvincing."[6]

These critics base their adverse judgements, in part, on the supposition that normally few virtuous women are raped three times. Hence, the plot seems artificial. Such a charge is easy to discredit. To answer it one must go to the very core of the problem of fiction. What is the relation of life-like plausibility to artistic possibility? Where do we draw

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[5]Sarah M. Penick, A Study of the Novels of Charles Duclos (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, the University of Missouri, Columbia, 1967), p. 104.

[6]Viktoria Skrupskelis, Duclos as a Moralist (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, the University of Illinois, Urbana, 1966), p. 151

the line? What constitutes the criteria for distinguishing between the plausible and the possible? What distinguishes fiction from fact?

Certainly the events related in the novel are within the realm of possibility. There are undoubtedly historical examples of virtue enduring an even worse fate. One therefore cannot reject the plot on the ground that it is incredible or impossible. Now Duclos, himself, realized that the story of Madame de Luz is uncommon: "La baronne de Luz est un des plus singuliers exemples du malheur qui suit la vertu" (I, 147) Are we then to reject the plot as implausible simply because it is out of the ordinary? The real question is whether Duclos' novelistic technique carries the reader's interest and whether he does in fact create an imaginary but coherent world. As the reader follows the plot, is he so caught up in the illusion of reality that he accepts, without protest, the validity of the events recounted?

In the case of Madame de Luz, it seems to me that Duclos has achieved the illusion of reality. All the events are accounted for, either by historical fact or by the desires and weaknesses of the characters. Certain historical events, as I have shown, validate important elements in the plot. An analysis of the characters will further substantiate my contention that they are convincing in their novelistic framework and that their motivations give impetus and form to the plot.

One critic concludes, after a brief discussion of Madame

de Luz, that Duclos' characters have exaggerated traits and that his "presentation of society is a caricature . . ."[7] This assessment may apply in some degree to secondary characters like Maran, Marsillac and the Baron de Luz. It is not true, however, of the four major figures, Thurin, Hardouin, Saint-Géran and Madame de Luz, whose motives and personalities are explored in greater depth. Thurin and Hardouin obviously represent prototypical emotions and are driven to commit evil by excessive passion. Nevertheless, their characters are so developed as to be clearly individualized and their personalities too complex to be written off as caricatures. No doubt Duclos accentuates their sinister character traits, but it is equally true that he depicts the manners of a corrupt society. Indeed, the complexities of Saint-Géran and Madame de Luz are revealed in detail. They are intricate, three-dimensional personalities. Duclos' characters are not perhaps as finely drawn and memorable as Laclos' or Rousseau's, but to write them off as two-dimensional or as mere caricatures constitutes a shallow reading of the text.

The characters, as Crocker notes, fall into three distinct categories.[8] There are men whose natures tend naturally to do evil, and good men and women who can be separated into two subgroups: some in whom reason and will to virtue are

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[7]Penick, p. 106.

[8]Crocker, p. 429.

easily overwhelmed by the passions and animal drives; others who persist in virtue only to find themselves in a position of weakness, exploited by the evil around them.

All the characters in the novel, except Madame de Luz, manifest moral weakness and represent the first two categories of human beings. Madame de Luz, on the contrary, incarnates the will to virtue and delineates the third group. Moreover, her moral character is patently superior to those of the men. This fact, as George May explains, situates the novel in the mainstream of seventeenth and eighteenth-century feminist literature.[9]

Thurin, Biron, La Fin, Maran, and Hardouin illustrate the first category of persons: those who consciously will evil.

Father Gabriel Daniel, Duclos' historical source, names a Turin and Fleury as the avocats généraux appointed by Henry IV to investigate the Biron conspiracy. Duclos mentions a Fleury and adds an h to the name of the historical figure Turin. He goes even further, creating a personality and an erotic episode which have, as far as can be determined, no historical foundation: the character and the actions of the fictional Thurin have only the most tenuous link with the historical Turin.

The incompetent or corrupt administrator of justice has a protracted history in French literature, dating from medieval

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[9]George May, Le Dilemme du roman au XVIII[e] siècle (Paris, New Haven, 1963), pp. 239-41.

popular literature and later found in such celebrated works as Rabelais' five books, Gil Blas, Voltaire's contes, and the Mariage de Figaro. Thurin incarnates this literary type. Like Rabelais' Grippe-Minou, he is prompt to prostitute justice for personal gain. However, Thurin differentiates himself from the literary stereotype on two counts: his motivation is sexual, rather than monetary, and he is in a position to exploit the nobility, rather than a fellow bourgeois. Duclos' social realism, in the character of Thurin, illustrates eighteenth-century social phenomena: the rise of the bourgeois to positions of power and influence in the French court and the filtering down of aristocratic immorality into lower echelons of society. Thurin takes his place next to Turcaret and other fictional bourgeois opportunists who achieve financial or political influence and who begin to rival an anemic nobility for power. Furthermore, like Laclos' characters, Thurin has no sense of virtue--he scorns it. He is a spokesman for a society that denies the meaningfulness of the moral ideal.

Thurin stands for the rising star of the bourgeois class and represents the new breed of magistrates, ready to prostitute their duties for recognition at court. Vanity is Thurin's ruling passion. His ambition is to have a reputation at court: "Il avait la ridicule ambition d'être à la cour" (I, 153). Vanity motivates his first amorous advances: a liaison with Madame de Luz would establish his reputation at court. In addition, his excessive vanity combined with sensual desire inflates his sense of importance: "[il] ne pouvait pas

s'imaginer qu'une femme pût refuser son hommage" (I, 154). His egoism makes him overly confident, blinds him to his true social status, renders him absolutely presumptuous and thereby ridiculous when Madame de Luz rejects him. It is precisely Thurin's transgression of social bounds which angers Madame de Luz. Not only does she feel no inclination for him, but he is a commoner and she is a woman of noble birth. His presumption is a slight to her self-esteem. Madame de Luz makes the source of her anger clear when she declares: "Je vous [Thurin] prie, lui dit-elle, de ne paraître jamais devant moi et de songer qu'une femme de mon rang peut être déshonorée et par l'amour et par l'amant" (I, 155). And later Duclos notes that in her rejection of him "Thurin crut remarquer dans les paroles de madame de Luz, plus de mépris pour lui que de vertu" (I, 170). In Madame de Luz's judgement, Thurin is not, at first, a real threat to her virtue. She is exasperated, however, by the fact that he has not respected her superior standing in the social hierarchy. Thurin's vanity is such that he has considered himself her equal and, thereby, meriting an erotic response.

There is no doubt that Thurin is a vain and odious person, but he is by no means simply a fop, a stilted caricature of the vain bourgeois with social pretensions or a ridiculous courtier. In the first place, his passion for Madame de Luz is very real. Like the characters of French classical drama, his speech manifests reason dominated by passion: "le désordre de ses discours fit aisément connaître à madame de Luz qu'il

était véritablement amoureux" (I, 154). His unrequited passion and his vanity account for his cruel conduct toward the heroine.

Furthermore, Duclos is careful to add a dimension to Thurin's character which develops it. If vanity in matters of the heart causes him to act in a degrading and ridiculous way, in matters of state he is extremely lucid and merits consideration: "M. de Thurin avait réellement de l'esprit, et fut dans la suite employé dans les grandes affaires" (I, 153). His observations on society and the human condition are perspicacious, providing a realistic assessment of eighteenth-century, rather than seventeenth-century ethos. His remarks are anachronistic because,although the fictitious world of the novel is dated 1600, Thurin is really a spokesman for the morality of 1700--a morality which is worldly and which rejects the meaningfulness of virtue. In this society, corrupt judges, as Thurin argues, are useful. Ironically, Thurin, "conscience souple" who prostitutes his duty, is useful to Madame de Luz in freeing her husband, a deed which bears out Thurin's contention that evil is useful to society. Moreover, Thurin's political notions are those of a man who realistically and accurately defines the principles and needs of the government of Henry IV. The contemporary political situation is such that the king has no choice but to execute the principals in the conspiracy. Likewise, Thurin's sharp observation discovers the real nature of Madame de Luz's relationship with Saint-Géran. He accurately analyzes, too,

the reasons for the baron's not confiding in his wife: "C'est votre vertu qui l'a effrayé, et qui l'a empêché de vous faire part de son dessein . . . Son respect pour votre vertu a été la cause de son silence" (I, 167).

Duclos once again underlines the sinister side of Thurin's character. Thurin exploits his perspicacity to advance his lecherous enterprise. His wit can be ironic and cruel, as when he pretends to have learned virtue from Madame de Luz at the expense of the baron's life: "Vos scrupules sur votre devoir m'ont éclairé sur le mien et votre vertu a été pour moi une leçon d'intégrité" (I, 177). And his anger and desire for vengeance know no bounds. Yet, in contrast with repeated revelations of Thurin's inhumanity, Duclos does suggest that Thurin has a latent vein of humanity:

> Madame de Luz était dans cet état lorsque Thurin, ne pouvant s'empêcher de rougir de voir une femme de cette naissance dans un abaissement si peu digne d'elle et de lui, la releva, et, la faisant asseoir, il se jeta lui-même à ses pieds (I, 178).

And a second time: "Thurin ému de son [Madame de Luz's] état . . . Se jeta aux genoux de Madame de Luz, et voulut la consoler" (I, 173). In both cases, Thurin's pity and passion become mixed: his consoling kiss is also charged with sexual desire. He is at once the protective, comforting male and the aggressive, inflamed fornicator. Thurin is, thus, not simply a villain in a kind of melodrama. Although Duclos emphasizes the odious nature of Thurin's conduct toward Madame de Luz, he is careful to give Thurin's motivation the complexity shown by a three-dimensional character.

The contrary is true of Maran. He is two-dimensional and only a minor character. Like Thurin, he is vain, but there is little basis for his vanity. His title to nobility is probably spurious and he is ignorant, without culture and dishonest: in short, the provincial boor personified. His vanity is rivaled only by his lust: he will go to any end to satisfy his animal drives. Maran's function in the novel is primarily thematic; he demonstrates that evil is universal in the provinces as well as at court. He also serves as a foil to Marsillac, highlighting the latter's upright and perceptive nature. It is also Maran's attempted rape which sets up the chain of circumstances that bring about Marsillac's fall from the ways of virtue.

Charles de Gontaut, Baron, then Duke de Biron and Jacques de La Fin figure in the historical digression. They were the principal authors of the famous historical conspiracy, but are secondary characters in the novel.[10]

Charles de Gontaut, Duke and Marshal of France, was historically a celebrated general during the civil wars and one of the first important Catholics to rally behind Henry of Navarre. His father, Armand de Gontaut baron de Biron, was one of the most illustrious of the Valois generals. In 1570, at the request of Charles IX, he negotiated the Peace of Saint-Germain with the Protestants. Charles de Gontaut's lineage, his own daring exploits during the civil war and his close friendship with Henry IV made him famous in his day and

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[10]Consult the appendix for expanded biographical information.

his conspiracy against the crown all the more odious.

Jacques de La Fin belonged to a Protestant family of Burgundy. His reputation as a miscreant is well established by his contemporaries. His principal claim to fame was the treacherous role he played in Biron's downfall.

In developing Biron's character Duclos follows historical sources closely, but he leaves out the petty, demeaning elements (Biron's belief in astrology, for example) which would complicate the clean lines of the portrait drawn after classical models. Duclos portrays a man of many noble and outstanding qualities whose "valeur lui était naturelle" (I, 161), but who possesses one tragic flaw--excessive ambition. Biron is obsessed by ambition to the exclusion of all other passions. This brings about his disgrace. Duclos seems particularly drawn to Biron because of the excessive nature of both his invincible courage and his far-ranging designs. Biron is Cornelian in his actions, either magnificent courage or terrible disloyalty. There is nothing mean about his personality.

La Fin is an interesting secondary character because Duclos assigns him an eighteenth-century frame of mind. He possesses natural talents: "C'était un homme adroit, d'un esprit vif et entreprenant, et très propre à manier une affaire . . . La Fin était né pour être grand seigneur" (I, 162-63). Naturally gifted like Figaro later in the century, he chooses to manipulate the nobles by superior force of wit to achieve personal ambitions. Moreover, his attitude toward those born

into greatness by social rank, but not by soul, is similar to Figaro's:

> Les grands n'étaient à ses yeux que des hommes rampans dans le besoin, faux dans leurs caresses, ingrats après le succès, perfides à tous engagemens. Il n'avait point pour eux cet attachement désintéressé, dont la plupart sont si peu dignes (I, 163)

These notions hardly reflect the sentiments of the usual sixteenth or early seventeenth-century gentilhomme. Rather, they reflect the alienation and dissatisfaction of the eighteenth-century bourgeois with his aristocratic leaders. La Fin's attitude like that of Figaro's reflects those of their bourgeois creators, Duclos and Beaumarchais. No doubt neither author desired revolution, but they do have their characters represent the prevalent disaffection with aristocratic comportment, a principal factor in the French Revolution.

Hardouin illustrates a contemporary social type: the director of conscience. Duclos' general description of the director of conscience applies in detail to his creation, Hardouin. However, Hardouin distinguishes himself from the standardized type by the superior manner in which he applies the arts of priestcraft to achieve personal ends. He does not serve God, he serves himself. Hardouin is the priest of Evil, an ignominious Tartuffe. To the exterior world he incarnates the impeccable priest:

> Parmi des directeurs illustres il y en avait un fort renommé pour sa piété et pour ses lumières. Flambeau de la vérité, ennemi du crime, il préservait l'esprit de l'erreur, et fortifiait le coeur contre les passions (I, 195).

Hidden beneath this facade is the potential for consummate crime. Ironically, it is Madame de Luz's virtue, her innocence, which sets her apart from the women of Hardouin's habitual commerce and which touches his heart. At first, he is not so perverse as not to recognize goodness and admire it: "Loué soit à jamais le ciel! . . . Je vois que l'innocence a plus de scrupules, que le crime n'a de remords . . . . M. Hardouin en fut ému, il en fut même étonné" (I, 198). Ironically, it is Madame de Luz's innocence coupled with her youth and beauty which inflame Hardouin's desires. Hardouin is apparently a neophyte lover. He rationalizes his feelings for Madame de Luz by ironically attributing them to divine grace. Using the psychological craft which the priesthood has taught him, he quickly dominates Madame de Luz's guilt-ridden mind. Patiently he wins her confidence and calms her remorse, using everything in his religious arsenal: "Il résolut . . . de s'appliquer uniquement à séduire l'esprit de sa pénitente . . . . La principale étude était de séduire entièrement les remords dont elle était agitée" (I, 200-01). He coolly calculates his words and actions and loses all sense of honor and moral responsibility. Under the mask of religious instruction, he contrives to erode or confuse Madame de Luz's conception of duty and virtue. However, circumstances and his burning impatience force him to more dastardly designs. His choice of opium is in character: Hardouin believes its soporific effect will allow him to satisfy his passion without exposing him to punishment. His subsequent changing of

religions in Holland emphasizes his lack of moral and religious qualms. Religion for him is a means to earthly gain and has no metaphysical foundation. Hardouin's unadulterated hypocrisy and his egregious machinations make him a clear precursor to the moral nihilists created by Laclos and Sade.

Baron de Luz, Marsillac and Saint-Géran belong to the second category of human beings: those who are not basically corrupt, but who are vulnerable to corrupting influences or to the drives of nature.

Duclos' source for the Baron de Luz is an historical figure, the Baron de Lux, a Burgundian who was lieutenant general of Burgundy at the time of the Biron Conspiracy.[11] The connection of the Baron de Luz with the Baron de Lux is further corroborated by the fact that after the Baron's death his post in Burgundy went to the Count of Biron, a relative: this is exactly what happened after the Baron de Lux's death.

Historical sources suggest that the Baron de Lux was a scoundrel. Duclos' fictional character, on the contrary, is a relatively good man, an "honnête homme" as Duclos labels him. Duclos, in fact, takes great liberties with the historical figure: his creation is identical with the historical original only in name and in a few historical details.

In the novel the Baron plays a secondary role and Duclos does not attempt to develop the Baron's character. The reason is obvious. The reader is not to share feelings with the

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[11]Consult the appendix for expanded biographical information.

Baron; his undivided sympathies are to be fixed on the plight of Saint-Géran and Madame de Luz. The Baron is more a presence than a character.

Duclos presents the reader with a brief character sketch of the Baron: he is middle-aged, if not older, and honest but of mediocre character. He represents the average nobleman. He accepts the usual code of ethics for his milieu in which feminine virtue is not highly regarded. This is evident in his manner of treating the possibility that Saint-Géran has a mistress:

> Si quelque autre chose pouvait le retenir à Paris, ce serait sans doute une maîtresse; il est jeune et aimable, il en trouvera partout; et je suis sûr, si vous le priez bien de faire ce voyage avec nous, il ne vous refusera pas, et qu'il sacrifiera ses maîtresses à ses amis (I, 151).

His nonchalant endorsement of fornication by young gentlemen reflects the general attitude of the aristocracy. He may have passed his own youth in like manner. One wonders if he would have sincerely objected to Madame de Luz's liaison with Saint-Géran. Could he have appreciated Madame de Luz's valiant struggle to remain virtuous? Moreover, the Baron is neither a passionate man nor is he perspicacious. He is not in the least aware of the mutual passion of Saint-Geran and Madame de Luz: "Les personnes qui ont passé l'âge des passions, ou qui n'en ont jamais connu les égaremens, ne sont pas ordinairement les plus clairvoyans" (I, 150).

The Baron's mediocrity, want of perspicacity and weakness of will are the root causes of his political difficulties. He does not by nature will the prostitution of his duty: "Le Baron de Luz y eut d'abord beaucoup de repugnance" (I, 163). Although he is an honnête homme, he is short-sighted and weak willed. The headstrong Biron simply overpowers the Baron's natural inclination to do his duty: ". . . enfin, gagné par les sollicitations et les promesses du Maréchal, il devint son complice" (I, 163). The reasons for his complicity in the conspiracy confirm our estimate of the mediocrity of his character.

The fictional Baron de Luz is less a character than a tool. He represents the average nobleman with an average code of ethics who conducts himself in a mediocre way: there is nothing admirable or despicable about him. He is mediocrity incarnate. His presence symbolizes the emotional vacuum created by marriages of convenience and shows why they were at the root of so many moral dilemmas in the eighteenth-century. What is more, the Baron's mediocrity serves to advance the dramatic action of the novel. It makes possible the Saint-Géran and Madame de Luz relationship. The unseeing Baron even works against Madame de Luz's virtue by insisting that Saint-Geran accompany them to Burgundy. His treason abets the Thurin episode. Lastly, the Baron's character serves Duclos' intention. By its very mediocrity, it underscores the ironic truth that Madame de Luz has no valid reason to be faithful; her treatment of Saint-Géran results from her sense of marital

duty and is doubly ironic in view of her subsequent disgrace, caused in large measure by the Baron's treason.

Marsillac is also a secondary character. His personality is not well developed. He represents the nobleman who tends to be virtuous, but who succumbs to passion. Duclos insists on Marsillac's basic goodness by contrasting it with Maran's maleficent nature. He is clairvoyant in discerning Madame de Luz's desires and consciously intends her no wrong. He even stops visiting her because he realizes she prefers solitude. His fall from virtue to crime is unwitting: it is the result of circumstances and blind passion. Marsillac (if we believe Mauzi's assessment of the eighteenth-century) represents the average eighteenth-century man:

> Ce qui peint le mieux le XVIII^{e} siècle, ce n'est pas les parfaites constructions des Liaisons dangereuses, mais les hésitations, les conflits, les compromis et les sophismes, toutes les fois que la faiblesse devant le plaisir dénoue ou emporte les scrupules d'une conscience, sans la priver d'une vocation morale qui survit aux accidents.[12]

Marsillac is basically a moral man. The rape in no way changes his basic character. After his crime, when he is conscious of what he has done, he endures sincere remorse and shame. Inherent in his act is the lesson that though virtue may normally assert itself, nature is ever ready to reassert its superior rights.

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[12]Mauzi, p. 30.

Saint-Géran belongs to the long tradition of quasi-courtly lovers that stretches in French fiction from Lancelot to the seventeenth-century galant: he is completely subject to his lady's desires. Whatever Madame de Luz wishes him to do, he does. Yet in spite of his quasi-chivalrous worship of Madame de Luz, and in spite of his verbal commitments to the contrary, Saint-Géran, like the other male characters, makes every effort to seduce her. Certainly he is at heart a good man, capable of disinterested and generous acts. His conduct during the Baron's imprisonment makes this clear. Moreover, he merits Madame de Luz's love. Unlike the other masculine characters, he is ennobled by love. He does not revert to force in his efforts to seduce. Admittedly, he argues in favor of adultery, using arguments of social acceptance to prove that a liaison with Madame de Luz would not be criminal. His arguments and his efforts to seduce Madame de Luz are justified, however, by the natural inclination which the two principal characters feel for each other. One critic argues that, although Saint-Géran is not the protagonist in the novel, he may well represent Duclos' point of view, the reasoned compromise between duty and nature:

> In moments of conflict between love and duty he is capable of choosing the latter because he is not 'un amant vulgaire avec une probité commune' . . . . But he does not overestimate his potentiality for good; seeking to reconcile nature and duty, he first consults circumstances and his own temperament.[13]

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[13]Skrupskelis, p. 159.

If this is in fact the case, then Saint-Géran's defense of adultery also reflects Duclos' pragmatic morality. Given the context of eighteenth-century manners and social conventions, Saint-Géran's dialectics for the superior rights of a union based on inclination to a union contracted without free consent take on a certain validity.

Saint-Géran, like the other male characters, is subject to nature. However, he is morally superior to them because he chooses moderation as a means of reconciling duty and nature, moral aspirations and circumstances. Moreover, his inclination for Madame de Luz is not simply physical desire, but is rooted in sincere affection for Madame de Luz. He sets her desires ahead of his own. The moderation he exhibits contrasts with the extremes of the other characters.

Madame de Luz is the protagonist in the novel. She is morally superior to all the other characters. She represents the last group of people: those who adhere to virtue and who are victimized because of it. Madame de Luz's personality is well developed both through self-analyzing monologues and through her response to circumstances. Basically she adheres to seventeenth-century ideals: love based on mutual esteem which is derived from doing one's duty; a sense of virtue opposed to the eighteenth-century ethos which pervades the novel; the belief that human conduct should be regulated by reason and will. She expresses these notions by a vocabulary which contrasts with that of the other characters and which is that of the classical heroine: terms like gloire,

repos, honneur, estime, cruel sacrifice and crime. She is clearly a distant descendant of Madame de Clèves. However, Duclos' treatment of Madame de Luz is very different from the way in which Madame de Lafayette handles her heroine: it is ironic. Madame de Luz possesses the basic qualities and ideals which gave her seventeenth-century ancestor her nobleness and greatness. But these very qualities and ideals render her ridiculous and unhappy in the final analysis; her ideals are nullified by events and she is obliged to give to those she does not love what she denied to the one she does love. She is a kind of anti-heroine who illustrates Pascal's celebrated maxime: "L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête, et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête" (Brunschvicq, 358).

Madame de Luz's salient trait is her pride in virtue. Unlike Madame de Lafayette who assigns Madame de Clève's sense of virtue to her education (Madame de Chartres has so instilled the notions of honor, self-respect and discipline in her daughter that virtue has become instinctive) Duclos does not give any cause for Madame de Luz's mania for virtue. He posits its existence, but does not expand on its source. In fact, the reader knows very little about Madame de Luz's childhood and education. One knows only that she equates virtue with physical fidelity to her husband. Her unreasoning aspiration to perfect fidelity makes it impossible for her to view the human condition objectively. Her quest for perfection soon degenerates into scrupulous and agonizing self-analysis, "le malheur des âmes délicates" (I, 176). Confronted

with social conventions, circumstances beyond her control and natural impulses, she cannot clearly discern what is really virtuous. Moreover, she cannot distinguish between crime and misfortune. She is tortured by self-doubt, lack of confidence and guilt. Yet her sense of guilt is purely subjective, having no foundation in fact: circumstances have forced her to be an unwilling party to crimes and nature has made her love a man contrary to marital duty. Her guilt is purely interior. It is based on feeling, not on a rational analysis of circumstances and intention. In interior monologues she scrupulously examines her motives for acting, but she cannot resolve her feelings of guilt by accepting the circumstantial nature of virtue. No longer emotionally capable of coping with her situation, she despairs. Like the tragic heroine, she feels dégoût de soi and desires peace of mind through death. Only her sense of self-esteem, another seventeenth-century characteristic, prevents her from taking her own life.

While Madame de Luz's motivation and ideals are those of the classical heroine, she is, in certain ways, very much a representative eighteenth-century heroine. Her declaration of love and her gullible belief that Saint-Géran will respect her virtue set her apart from a Madame de Clèves. Her declaration of love is, in fact, the victory of subconscious desire over reason and common sense. She even derives secret pleasure from her relationship with Saint-Géran. Her declared belief in his honorable intentions is short-sighted, a rationaliza-

tion which defies reality and which masks nature's triumph over reason. Secondly, her definition of virtue and her conduct toward Saint-Géran are very much in the current of eighteenth-century fiction. Mauzi notes:

> De nombreux romans reprennent le thème de la Princesse de Clèves: la passion d'une femme mariée qui veut rester fidèle à son devoir. Mais les héroïnes du XVIII siècle ont une étrange façon d'entendre leur devoir. Tout en s'efforçant de rester vertueuses, elles sont en révolte contre la loi conjugale . . . . Madame de Luz distingue deux ordres de devoirs, qui ne se rencontrent pas: son corps est à son mari, son coeur à son amant. La vertu consiste à respecter strictement cette répartition. Partagées en apparence entre leur conscience et leur amour, ces étranges épouses sont en réalité tout entières du côté de l'amour.[14]

Madame de Luz further differentiates herself from the seventeenth century tragic heroine in two important ways. In the first place, she is very much a victim of outside forces. Her equation of physical virtue with marital fidelity, and virtue with the honor necessary to be worthy of Saint-Géran help destroy her, but they in no way make her commit a destructive crime as does, for example, Phèdre's incestuous desire. Madame de Luz's scruples, though they torment her, do not cause her to do evil, but rather circumstances, fate if you like, force her to be an unwilling partner in evil. She is like the sentimental or romantic heroine who seems to be punished unremittingly by fate.

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[14]Mauzi, p. 31.

Secondly, Madame de Luz's explosive emotional outbursts differentiate her from a classical heroine like Madame de Clèves, whose force of will keeps her inner drama well concealed from the observer. Madame de Luz, on the contrary, weeps, cries aloud, faints--in short, openly displays her emotional trauma. In the rape scenes and at her final meeting with Saint-Géran, Madame de Luz is pathetic. These episodes illustrate some of the notions Diderot will later codify in his esthetic writings: tableaux pathétiques, emotions translated into action by pantomime. In these last two respects, Madame de Luz is clearly a pre-Romantic heroine. The character of Madame de Luz is thus a composite of seventeenth-century qualities and of those which will become the dominant characteristics of the stereotyped Romantic heroine.

A study of the themes of Madame de Luz leads one into the thick of critical controversy. Contemporary critics are very much divided on what constitutes the principal theme of the novel. Albert-Marie Schmidt[15] and Lester Crocker believe the theme of universal evil is the chief subject. In their opinion Duclos is a precursor to Sade by the theme of universal evil exploited in Justine. Crocker sums up his position when he says:

> Duclos' view of life is ironical. In fact, the story of Madame de Luz becomes a reversal, almost a parody, of that of Madame de Clèves. While Madame de Luz succeeds in

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[15] Albert-Marie Schmidt, "Duclos, Sade et la littérature féroce," Revue des sciences humaines, avril-sept. 1951, pp. 146-155.

> guiding her actions by will and moral reason, she discovers that this is contrary to human nature and to the conditions of life. In most other people, and especially the powerful, reason is dominated by passion, when it is not actually prostituted to it.[16]

Paul Meister[17] and Viktoria Skrupskelis are very much opposed to this judgement. They take at face value Duclos' statement that his principal theme is that a virtuous woman can be forced to commit a crime, can be thereby dishonored, but still remain innocent. In short, the crime versus misfortune motif is the principal topic. Skrupskelis further limits the subject to that of man's ability to govern himself by moral reason: should he aspire to absolute perfection or should he be content with more modest goals; should he judge himself on the basis of intention or should he value only his good acts?[18]

Meister and Skrupskelis prefer to exclude the theme of universal evil on the basis that it is not repeated in Duclos' other works and conflicts with his basic optimism. Hence, Duclos could not have intended that universal evil be the principal topic of the novel. Skrupskelis goes so far as to call into question Duclos' novelistic technique:as a neophyte novelist, he unintentionally emphasized the theme of evil. In her judgement, Duclos is a deficient novelist. Her rationale,

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[16]Crocker, p. 427.

[17]pp. 136-140.

[18]p. 146 ff.

however, goes contrary to the opinion of many respected critics who agree that Madame de Luz is perhaps Duclos' best novel when judged by its novelistic techniques: it is tightly structured, and each part tends to illustrate a theme. This compact structure indicates that Duclos was very aware of his thematic aims. Moreover, the quasi-Jansenist theme of evil is verbalized throughout the text. Thurin says for example:

> Cette vertu, si précieuse à vos yeux, n'est qu'un préjugé chimérique, que les hommes, par un autre préjugé, exigent dans leurs femmes ou dans leurs maîtresses, et dont ils font peu de cas dans les autres. Elle peut quelquefois faire naître une estime stérile; mais comme le plus cher, ils ne croient pas lui devoir beaucoup de reconnaissance (I, 171).

Men, by nature, tend to do evil, either because of weakness or because of a will to do evil. The plot of the novel corroborates Thurin's position. All of the characters (with the exception of Madame de Luz) demonstrate moral weakness and the carefully structured plot ironically assigns the most important slot, the last episode, to an agent of God, Hardouin. He commits the most heinous of crimes; he is the essence of a moral nihilist. Little wonder Madame de Luz concludes that Providence plots against virtue: "A quel comble d'horreur étais-je donc destinée! Ciel cruel! par où puis-je avoir mérité ta haine? est-ce la vertu qui t'est odieuse?" (I, 205).

Skrupskelis and Meister make much of Duclos' "lettre à l'auteur de Madame de Luz" in which he states that the crime/

malheur motif is the principal concern of the novel. Duclos' public statement can be explained, however, by the "dilemma" which George May has so cogently discussed: the conflict between morality (painting men as they ought to be) and reality (painting men as they are).[19] Duclos was acutely aware that the censors, influenced by the Church, favored the description of men as they ought to be. Moreover, the Church was militantly opposed to the Jansenist doctrine of universal corruption. In our character study of Duclos we have shown him to be an extremely prudent individual. One would hardly expect him to underline publicly a theme which was considered morally dangerous and heretical. Like many other writers of the period, he probably chose to point out publicly an inoffensive element while prudently passing over one charged with controversy.

It seems to me that both groups of critics are in some measure correct in their discussion of the themes. Both themes are important to the novel. The critics have fallen into error however, by labelling one of the motifs the principal subject of the book. They have failed to see that both themes are aspects of a more general, overriding subject--le bonheur. Duclos' novel is about happiness. Through negative examples, Duclos shows how not to go about achieving happiness: his characters choose the wrong means. But as in satire, this novel contains an implied ideal. A discussion of the theme of happiness will clarify not only the

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[19] op. cit.

meaning of the novel, but Duclos' conception of happiness.

Madame de Luz equates bonheur with repos. She is convinced that a married woman accedes to happiness through virtue, flawless fulfillment of her marriage duty: "Le bonheur de la vie d'une femme dépend d'être attachée à ses devoirs. Il n'y a de véritable tranquillité pour elle que dans la vertu . . ." (I, 156). Virtue is tantamount to physical fidelity. Madame de Luz entertains the stoic mania for virtue, virtue for its own sake, because she sincerely believes it is the only avenue to happiness for an honorable wife. Ironically, as the novel unfolds, marital fidelity is proven not to be synonymous with happiness and the rewards of virtue prove to be negative. Society has forced a marriage of convenience on Madame de Luz. She marries an older man with whom she has nothing in common. She falls in love with a childhood friend who seems to represent a perfect marriage partner. Her loyalties are thus divided: reason demands fidelity to marriage duty for the sake of la gloire; the heart presses for submission to the loved one. She is divided between allegiance to an artifical social convention and her natural inclinations.

The masculine characters also desire happiness, but choose a different means of attaining it: gratification of sexual passions. They illustrate the proposition that "l'homme est si faible" (I, 199) in the face of nature. Virtue and vice are therefore contrasted as opposing expedients by which the characters bid for earthly happiness.

The theme of evil is not the principal topic of the novel, but rather one facet of the question of man's happiness. It is a proposition, a condition, that must be considered and reckoned with in man's quest for happiness. The existence of evil, circumstantial and metaphysical, is a determining factor, a limiting factor, in man's ethical conduct. If nature is basically evil, one mode of conduct is to embrace nature and aspire to vice. Thurin and Hardouin manifest this extreme reaction to the problem of evil. They equate vice with bonheur; vice becomes their "virtue." The other extreme response to evil is illustrated by Madame de Luz: the rejection of nature and the suppression of passion through inflexible will. She assumes that absolute virtue which excludes nature, will by its very nature culminate in happiness. The novel demonstrates this notion to be fallacious. Bonheur and virtue do not necessarily coincide.

The theme of universal evil constitutes the metaphysical background against which Duclos seeks a practical mode of action culminating in happiness. In this universe, where evil seems to dominate, absolute virtue per se is almost impossible and goes necessarily unrewarded. Does Duclos then advocate vice as a means to happiness like Thurin and Hardouin? No, he rejects this extreme too. He preaches moderation in an effort to conciliate nature (heart and body) with virtue (reason). He rejects vice as an effective method for arriving at happiness when he condemns libertines in general:

> Courus des femmes, le plaisir et la vivacité les emportent; mais bientôt la multiplicité des objets ne leur offre plus de variété; rien ne pique leur goût, et leurs sens sont émoussés. Malheureusement pour eux ils se sont fait un métier d'être aimés des femmes; ils en veulent soutenir la gloire; ils y sacrifient le plaisir, le repos et la probité. Toutes leurs intrigues leur paraîtraient souvent insipides, s'ils n'y joignaient le goût de la perfidie. Le plaisir les fuit: et lorsqu'en vieillissant ils sont obligés de renoncer au titre d'aimables, inutiles aux femmes, au-dessous du commerce des hommes, ils sont le mépris des deux sexes (I, 159).

Nevertheless Madame de Luz's mode of belief is as condemnable as Thurin, Maran, Marsillac and Hardouin's because it is excessive. Duclos makes known his concept of acceptable virtue in the following maxim: "Quand on connaît les limites de la vertu, quand on ne s'exagère point ses devoirs, on est incapable de les violer" (I, 159). Madame de Luz exaggerates her duties and she constantly fails to recognize man's true nature, his limits, his moral weakness. Duclos rejects virtue for the sake of virtue because it fails to take into account the human condition. Excess of virtue and accompanying moral scruples are just as damaging to man's happiness as vice.

Duclos' ethical problem is how to reconcile virtue with nature, physical happiness with a clear conscience. Duclos is preoccupied by an ethical problem germane to the eighteenth century:

> Le grand rêve moyen [in the eighteenth-century] est bien d'accorder le bonheur et la bonne conscience, la jouissance et la vertu . . . . le

> bonheur doit posséder le double privilège de mettre l'âme en mouvement et la conscience en repos.[20]

Duclos distinguishes three principal kinds of love: amour-physique, amitié, and amour-véritable.[21] Amour-physique is the specific property of the body: an appetite for pleasure which is violent, involuntary, and short-lived. It is egotistical and is characterized by its transitory nature. Amitié has its source in the heart. It is a gentle, non-violent feeling which turns us out, away from ourselves, toward the object of our love. It is superior to amour-physique because it is constant, tender and altruistic. It constitutes a continuously pleasurable state. Duclos' ideal is, however, amour-véritable, the combination of amitié and amour-physique, of the heart and the body. Duclos' concept of true love is very much like that of Delisle de Sales, which Mauzi describes pointedly:

> Condamnant comme deux excès opposés l'amour platonique et l'amour physique, Delisle de Sales déclare: 'l'amour est vil sans l'union des âmes, mais, sans l'intérêt des sens, il n'est rien.' L'amour vertueux, tel qu'on le comprend au XVIII^e, n'a donc rien de commun avec l'amour platonique. Il peut fort bien être charnel. Mais il doit s'accompagner d'une élévation de l'âme et d'un enrichissement du coeur, qui transforment l'expérience amoureuse en un progrès moral.[22]

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[20]Mauzi, pp. 147-48.

[21]For an expanded discussion of Duclos' ideas on love see Skrupskelis, pp. 200 ff.

[22]Mauzi, p. 477

Duclos roundly condemns amour-physique as a means of arriving at happiness. Thurin, Marsillac and Hardouin degrade their duties because of it: Thurin is false to his obligation as judge, Marsillac to his basically good nature, Hardouin to his priestly office. Each illustrates moral recidivism. None arrives at a lasting state of happiness. In contrast, Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran achieve momentarily an equilibrium between the aspirations of the soul (the desire for virtue) and the needs of the body, and an accompanying state of happiness.

While together in Burgundy, Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran openly express their love and reach a state of emotional and physical stability through acceptance of nature (their natural inclinations for one another, mutual passion), and through respect for Madame de Luz's sense of virtue (they do not make love). Madame de Luz momentarily ceases her scrupulous self-analysis, her quest for perfect virtue; she allows nature to voice itself while she keeps its course in check. No doubt she is guilty of emotional infidelity to her husband, but human nature is such that she is not master of her heart. She attains the sense of happiness by not exaggerating the rights of duty and virtue.

Through the power of love Madame de Luz's virtue becomes a contagious force. As I have noted, Saint-Géran is morally ennobled once he is purged of sheer amour-physique: "Insensiblement M. de Saint-Géran s'était fait aux idées et à la vertu de Madame de Luz" (I, 159). Saint-Géran's physical desires

are purified, transfigured, taking on a spiritual dimension. He undergoes a new consciousness akin to neo-Platonic courtly love: constant, unrequited physical desire which is sublimated and from which spiritual pleasure and happiness are derived: "Il semblait que son amour ne fût plus qu'une amitié tendre, une jouissance de l'âme, qui renaît d'elle-même, toujours nouvelle, et préférable sans doute au commerce le plus vif" (I, 159). Saint-Géran is spiritually uplifted; his conduct and happiness now contrast strikingly with those of Thurin, Marsillac and Hardouin. However superior Saint-Géran's amitié may be to the amour-physique of the seducers, it is not a source of ultimate happiness: it does not do complete justice to the body's needs. Although the spiritual pleasure may be constant in such a relationship, there will always be sexual tension which incessantly threatens to disrupt the tenuous equilibrium established by moderation. Duclos' solution is amour-véritable, which he does not openly describe in the novel. He does so, on the other hand, through negative example: Madame de Luz's failure to achieve happiness and the ironic denouement.

Duclos' ideal of the sort of love which seeks to integrate body and soul is at odds with Madame de Luz's concept of love. She incarnates an idealized notion in which attraction is founded on mutual esteem derived from inflexible fidelity to the concept of marital duty. Duclos seems to believe that love based on natural inclination has rights superior to those of a marriage of convenience. Saint-Géran

apparently speaks for Duclos when he says:

> N'avons-nous pas à la cour une estime singulière pour les amans dont le commerce est fondé sur une passion que la constance rend respectable? De tels amans sont plus estimables que des époux que les lois forcent de vivre ensemble; car il faut qu'une passion toujours heureuse et toujours constante soit fondée sur des qualités supérieures, et sur une estime réciproque (I, 158)

When Baron de Luz dies Madame de Luz substitutes an interior impediment, the traditional love formula, for the exterior obstacle, marriage. However, her feelings of guilt are really born out of her frustrated desire to exceed the human limits of virtue. She rejects marriage and happiness with Saint-Géran because, even though objectively innocent, she believes herself unworthy of him. Her stubborn clinging to the Cornelian concept of love is, in the end, ridiculous because it is based on false assumptions: she is innocent and Saint-Geran's love is not based on esteem alone. Madame de Luz rejects l'amour-véritable in favor of an abstract and artificial formula. For lack of a realistic assessment of the human condition she prefers self-destruction to tangible happiness.

As Emile Henriot points out: "Duclos portait en lui un goût certain pour la pureté. Ce moraliste croyait sincèrement à la morale."[23] However, as a moralist in the tradition of the seventeenth-century, he viewed the world objectively and

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[23]Emile Henriot, Les Livres du second rayon (Paris, 1948), p. 175.

saw evil as a basic characteristic of human nature just as Pascal and La Rochefoucauld did. But in the spirit of the eighteenth century he rejected any Pascalian metaphysical explanation for man's duality. He posits terrestrial happiness as man's goal. Through reason and moderation he seeks a practical way to reconcile nature/passion and reason/virtue. It is as though he were applying the seventeenth-century aesthetic ideals of balance and harmony to an ethical problem. While conceiving of nature as basically evil, he does not advocate vice as do Thurin and Hardouin because vice does not lead to lasting happiness. Duclos' empirical ethics similarly condemns excessive will to virtue because it does not conform to the human condition and thus impedes happiness. Since men are by nature weak and given to vice one must harmonize nature and man's aspiration to virtue in order to obtain peace of mind and happiness.

One critic condemns Duclos' ethical compromise, asserting:

> Bien loin d'être sadique, Duclos n'a même pas le courage d'un hédonisme revendicatif. Il quête l'indulgence et propose le compromis . . . . Cette sagesse n'est pas méprisable en elle-même, elle pourrait avoir sa grandeur: mais il faudrait renverser tout un système moral que Duclos ménage.[24]

I affirm that, on the contrary, Duclos was seeking a practical avenue to happiness in response to contemporary

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[24] Henri Coulet, Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution (New York, 1967), p. 388.

moral and social systems. He was not a radical. He did not choose to topple the existing moral system, as Sade would propose later in the century. Given Duclos' propositions that man's nature is basically corrupt and his belief that man's first objective should be terrestrial happiness, his plea for indulgence, for ethical compromise, must be considered a practical resolution of a moral dilemma. Moreover, it was a typically eighteenth-century response: it was practical, having tangible happiness as its objective; it was comprehensive and realistic because it took into account man's dual nature; it rejected a metaphysical resolution; it avoided extremes which endanger the balance between body and soul, a balance deemed necessary for happiness.

Critics class Madame de Luz under various categories--the novel of analysis, the licentious novel, the novel of manners. Skrupskelis, for example, declares that it begins as a demonstration of a thesis, soon becomes a novel of psychological analysis, and, at times, seems to evolve into a roman de moeurs.[25] This multiplicity of generic labels would apparently pose an esthetic problem, since the novel does not fit nicely into any single category. Skrupskelis' criticism, for example, implies that Duclos did not conceive of an esthetic whole, that his manner of writing is eclectic and that his novel lacks esthetic continuity.

Skrupskelis and other critics single out one special

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[25]Skrupskelis, p. 226.

characteristic of the novel, a feature enabling the commentator to "fit" the novel into a genre already known. When the novel does not fit perfectly into any recognized category, it is considered inferior or esthetically flawed. Such critical estimates presume that the novelist's intention was, in fact, to write a novel definable in one traditional type or another. When the novelist does not measure up to his presumed intention, he is summarily deemed inferior.

A close analysis of the form and techniques employed by Duclos will show why critics have so diversely categorized his novel and what his real intentions were. Our esthetic evaluation will not be based upon an *a priori* estimate of *Madame de Luz* (i.e. does it measure up to our conception of a good novel of analysis), but upon an *a posteriori* judgement (do the form and techniques expose the novelist's intention and does he thereby create a satisfying esthetic whole).

Duclos was writing in the tradition of the seventeenth-century French *moralistes*, and, in particular, of the classical novelists. His object was to paint the reality of human nature, as it is, not as it ought to be. He is the *moraliste*, "a social observer who scrutinizes human social experience for its profound significance."[26] The novel as a whole is developed with the techniques of the classical novelist. It is basically aristocratic literature: its frame of reference is a closed society, the court, Parisian and provincial nobil-

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[26]Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Worldliness* (Princeton, 1969), p. 41.

ity and commoners associated with this notably hermetic milieu. The principal action involves the classical trio, husband, wife and wife's lover. The lover is intent on taking the wife away from the husband. The principal dramatic situation is blocked in one main sense: adultery is excluded. Yet it is impossible to stifle the mutual passion of wife and lover. In general, in episodes A and B everything is subordinate to the psychological mechanisms governing the relations among the characters. The action is linear and not complex. The classical principle of compression is adhered to: the novel is relatively short when compared, for instance, with the heroic novels of the seventeenth century, the picaresque novel of Lesage or those of Marivaux and Rousseau. The time elements are homogeneous, following in chronological development. Objects and physical reality in general have no esthetic value. Things are not described and there is no picturesque. There is no physical description of the characters: one does not know the color of the hair, eyes, etc. of Madame de Luz or of Saint-Géran. Rather, Duclos portrays their moral characters. He builds portraits in the tradition of the moralistes such as La Bruyère. His conception of human nature is essentialist: each character has a certain stable structure which always remains the same, although there may be some character development and non-essential change. In general, the characters have a dominant trait which becomes more and more marked as the action develops: for example, Madame de Luz's mania

for perfect virtue becomes stronger and more inflexible as the novel progresses even though her conception of human nature and the human condition changes.

In the moral portrait, Duclos, like his classical precursors, categorizes and abstracts, seeking the general and the typical. In the case of Thurin and Hardouin, for example, Duclos first depicts the general type to which the character belongs, before portraying the individual character.

The very structure of the novel evinces the same technique. Duclos first states his major themes generally and abstractly, before applying them to the particular, the story of Madame de Luz. Duclos is interested in showing the relationship of the individual to general humanity (i.e. the three classes of human beings discussed earlier.) Moreover, Duclos the moraliste penetrates the facade of the individual characters and reveals their true natures. Because the individual stands for the group, Duclos' satire or moral judgements attack the group as a whole: the libertine, the new breed of magistrates, the director of conscience, etc.

Duclos' classical concern with general humanity is also evidenced by his use of the maxim. The maxim, as Brooks states, is placed under the emblem of penetration, as a means of arriving at truth, of demystification, "it is . . . a final statement about men."[27] The psychology of the characters which Duclos explores is so general that it can be stated in aphorisms.

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[27]Ibid., p. 64.

Certainly these psychological formulas are directly related to the psychological action of the novel, but they also have a universal value. If they were taken out of the context of the novel, they would stand alone as pure psychology with universal application.

Duclos' language is classical in its brevity and transparency. It is not mannerist. It is incisive, clear, and lucid, totally lacking in lyricism. The tone is direct and even abrupt. It is devoid of images. Duclos does not really describe, he suggests. George May sums up the effect of this type of writing when he says:

> . . . Il [le langage] demeure résolument abstrait et glacé, et semble s'efforcer de se détacher par une sécheresse calculée de la réalité qu'il figure. Plus il est alors éteint et dénué d'images, mieux il réussit quelquefois à suggérer par une sorte de sorcellerie purement cérébrale ce qu'il ne décrit pas réellement . . . . Il faut ajouter que cette combinaison d'un contenu réaliste avec une expression abstraite et gourmée est souvent responsable du charme artificieux mais efficace de certains de ces romans, notamment de ceux de Marivaux, de Crébillon et de Duclos.[28]

It is precisely the cerebral nature of Duclos' style that makes it so well suited to the simple and direct relation of the sinister events in Madame de Luz. He does not mince words with idle poetics. His is a very "masculine" relation of events and his point of view is hard-headed and manly.

Duclos' use of classical novelistic techniques creates

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[28]May, pp. 66-67.

a distance between the reader and the characters. Duclos, in fact, maintains a certain ironic distance between the reader and the protagonist. This is contrary to Rousseau and Richardson, for example, who seek to identify the reader and the protagonist. This classical esthetic of distance is achieved in Madame de Luz by Duclos' tone and language--he is the narrator who sits in judgment of his characters. The reader is guided by the distanced evaluations of this narrator. In short, the narrator, the reader's surrogate, arrests the action to suggest final judgments. The worldly didacticism of the narrator permeates the novel and can best be seen in the maxims which tend toward terminal aphorism: "Le respect d'une passion naissante est plus sûr que la reconnaissance d'un amour heureux et satisfait" (I, 150); "La nature est avant tous les devoirs, qui ne consistent souvent qu'à la combattre" (I, 152); "La nature n'a attaché la vivacité de nos goûts qu'à la nouveauté des objets" (I, 159); "Un scélérat n'a point de remords, mais il a de l'orgueil" (I, 173). Through maxims of this kind and similar judgments, the narrator manifests his control over the characters. His world view and understanding are superior to those of his characters. He sees far beneath their exterior facades. He penetrates their real natures and the reader accepts the narrator's judgments at face value.

Our discussion would seem to indicate that Madame de Luz is, in fact, simply a classical novel of psychological analysis constructed in the same manner as the Princesse de Clèves.

This is not, however, the case. We have not yet considered episodes C and D which are autonomous, only tenuously related to the principal action of the novel. In these two episodes Duclos shifts the center of the reader's interest from the self-analysis and moral conflict of Madame de Luz to the licentious acts of Maran, Marsillac and Hardouin. In neither episode does Madame de Luz endure moral conflict: she is unconscious when she is raped. Her reason is caught in no moral dilemma as it is in episode B. There is no cause for an agonizing moral struggle. Episode C is very short--the rape is simply recounted. In episode D, the core of interest is Hardouin's character and his machinations.

Judged from the perspective of the novel of analysis, Duclos can be criticized for his shift from the novel of psychological analysis to the novel of licentious adventure in which psychological exploration is replaced by narration of promiscuous events. But the form of the novel indicates that Duclos' overriding intention is obviously not to write a pure novel of psychological analysis. His intention is to ironize, to criticize the presumptuousness of the moral ethic of Madame de Luz. While using the tools of the moraliste and the narrative techniques of the classical novelist in episodes A and B, in episodes C and D he exploits the principal device of the philosophical tale: multiple and repetitive episodes to prove a philosophical or moral point of view.

The general themes of Madame de Luz, happiness and the problem of evil, are common themes of the conte philosophique.

Maran and Marsillac are like many characters in the philosophical tales, since it is generally admitted that the characters in the eighteenth-century tale are not sufficiently developed to merit the term "characters," but serve to illustrate ideas. Moreover, the naïve nature of Madame de Luz establishes her kinship with the protagonists of many such tales. She is a kind of ingénue: naïve, idealistic and innocent. Her dialogues with Thurin clearly establish this aspect of her character. She believes men are basically good and virtue, sustained by Providence, has value. Duclos sends this ingenuous protagonist on her way into a cruelly realistic world. Consequently, the whole movement of the novel is toward a negation of her notions and values. In fact, the philosophic climax of the novel appears to come right after the Hardouin rape, when Madame de Luz ascribes the problem of evil to Providence. One can say that the novel entails the education of Madame de Luz: she, like Candide, moves from an optimistic assessment of humanity and the human condition to a relatively pessimistic one.

Episodes C and D thus serve as an anti-climax to episodes A and B: they deflate whatever grandeur Madame de Luz may have derived from adhering to her code of virtue. They underscore the unhappiness she derives from her inflexible quest for virtue by compounding her misfortune and exaggerating the fact that evil is everywhere. Compromise for her is therefore necessary.

The principal narrative devices of the classical novel

in no way detract from Duclos' purpose. In fact, the classical techniques and the classical esthetic of distance are ideally suited to his ironic purposes. In none of the episodes does the reader identify with the protagonist. He witnesses the unfolding of her drama, but does not actively participate. He merely watches and judges from a distance. Duclos' judgements during the first two episodes and the classical distance sustained therein prepare the reader for the shift from psychological analysis to condemnation, implied ironically.

In keeping with this fundamental intention, the tone of the novel becomes suffused with irony and satire in episode D. If episodes A and B set up the seventeenth-century moral ideal, episode D attacks the source of that ideal. What could be more devastating to that ideal than to satirize the very basis of seventeenth-century social, political and moral values, the Church? Duclos initiates episode D with a statement which, in view of subsequent events, is charged with irony:

> Mais la religion, qui semblait lui [à Madame de Luz] avoir exagéré d'abord l'horreur du précipice où elle était tombée, parut bientôt lui offrir la seule voie d'en sortir, en se jetant entre les bras de Dieu, toujours ouverts au crime repentant (I, 194).

Satirical portraits of the Directors of Conscience and of Hardouin, the representative of that religion, quickly follow. They are the "open arms" to whom the repentant sinner comes for consolation.

Duclos' irony is particularly militant with regard to Hardouin. The hyperbolic intensity of the qualities ascribed to Hardouin in the initial portrait is quite revealing: "Un fort renommé pour sa piété et pour ses lumières. Flambeau de la vérité, ennemi du crime . . ." (I, 195). Duclos does not relinquish his ironic view of Hardouin. The author declares: "Il [Hardouin] savait le grand art de calmer et écarter les remords; et il n'eut pas de peine à faire sa paix avec sa propre conscience" (I, 200).[29] Far from detracting from Duclos' purpose, the satirical portrait of the man of God, representing religion, reinforces Duclos' ironic aims: Madame de Luz's quest for absolute virtue has neither practical value (it does not lead to earthly happiness), nor metaphysical value (Providence is shown to reject virtue through its earthly representative, the priest). The ironic tone of episode D makes Duclos' attitude toward Madame de Luz very clear: she does not stand for the paragon of moral virtue to be emulated, but for the woman misled by a false conception of moral virtue.

We can conclude, then, that in Madame de Luz it is not a question of the novelist beginning one type of novel, and suddenly changing to another type without reason. Rather,

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[29]Because of this passage Albert-Marie Schmidt believes Hardouin is "une sorte d'illuminé quiétiste, un adepte du pur amour . . . . C'est la fausse pureté mystique qui va perpétrer contre la pureté de Mme de Luz le crime dont elle mourra." p. 149.

Duclos has created an esthetic whole in which different sorts of novelistic techniques are used to achieve a coherent entity. Characteristics of the novel of analysis, the novel of manners, the philosophical tale, and literary devices and modes like caricature, portrait, maxime, satire and irony are blended to produce a new and different ironic effect. Episodes A and B, which constitute the novel of psychological analysis, present the reader with moral conflict and a protagonist of singular moral stature. Episodes C and D, which illustrate the technique of the philosophical tale, deflate the heroine and her moral ideal, so that in the dénouement, she is both pathetic and somewhat ridiculous.

Virtue for Duclos is careful adjustment to la mondanéité so as to get along in society without destroying oneself by extremes. The implied moral of the novel, indicated through negative examples, is precisely that the individual must not embrace an inflexible ethic which does not realistically deal with the human condition; one which prevents the individual from fully realizing happiness within the limiting framework of society. The contrapuntal form of the novel translates this moral lesson.

CHAPTER III

Les Confessions du Comte *** and Les Mémoires sur les moeurs de ce siècle

A brief discussion of the relationship of Madame de Luz to two subsequent pseudo-autobiographical novels, Les Confessions du comte *** (1742) and Les Mémoires sur les moeurs de ce siècle (1751), will confirm certain conclusions we have drawn in our discussion of Duclos' first novel. It will also expose the unique place of Madame de Luz in Duclos' novelistic production.

The Confessions and the Mémoires might be labelled "boudoir picaresque." They both portray the sentimental education of a young honnête homme by an experienced lady of the world, his subsequent exploits as an "homme à la mode" amid the moral corruption of Paris of the Regency and post-Regency, and his final conversion to marital constancy through spiritual love. In both novels, the narrator serves as a kind of connecting link between adventures which illustrate various types of love: amitié, amour-goût, amour-passion, amour-vanité. Duclos is a metaphysician of love and the narrator's adventures permit Duclos to analyze the nature of love.

The Confessions record the amorous conquests of the narrator. Madame de Valcourt introduces the count to the

pleasures of the flesh and Madame de Rumigny continues the count's education in the way of the world. The narrator catalogues more than twenty seductions of French women as well as an adventure with a Spanish noblewoman, Dona Antonia, an Italian, signora Marcella, and an English woman, Milady B***. These last three episodes serve to contrast three different kinds of love with the amour-vanité of the Parisian coquette. The experience of the count constitutes a tableau of Parisian aristocratic and bourgeois social and sexual manners. The men and women are motivated by vanity and the novel lists many female social types: coquettes like Mme de Suzanne and Mme de Persigny; the fausse-dévote, Mme de Gremonville; the blue stocking, Mme de Tonins; the possessive, tasteless and unfaithful bourgeois, Mme Dornal; the capricious Mme d'Albi; the bourgeois who passes her time in imitation of the grandes dames, Mme Ponchard. The count's liaisons depend upon two things: the circumstances which bring him into contact with a particular woman and the effect the liaison would have on his reputation. If the conquest will add to the count's public reputation, then he undertakes the seduction. In contrast to the fatuity and inconstancy of the count's many affairs based on amour-vanité, the novel includes two examples of love based on real and lasting affection. The count is very much taken by the affection manifest in the attitude of Julie and her fiance. The count becomes their

benefactor and sees to it that they have sufficient money to be married. Deeply moved by their love, he resolves to have the same kind of relationship with Madame de Selve. Although he relapses into libertinage, his affection for Madame de Selve and her fundamental goodness and good judgment cause him to see the errors of his conduct. He reforms, leaves Paris and finds happiness in marriage with Madame de Selve.

The Mémoires sur les moeurs de ce siècle repeat the basic structure of the Confessions, but Duclos reduces the number of episodes and in their place substitutes discussions of the nature of love. These are given by the Marquise de Retel, Madame de Saintre and Madame de Canaples, while analysis of marriages of convenience is provided by the Comte de Vergi. Although contemporaries judged the Mémoires a failure, in part because of the discussions, this novel is valuable to the scholar of Duclos. Its discussions of the nature of love complement the action of the Confessions and of Madame de Luz by clarifying Duclos' notions about love.

In contrast to the Confessions, in which the count begins his apprenticeship in the ways of love by being exposed to amour-vanité, the narrator of the Mémoires first experiences a sentimental attachment for a virtuous noble-woman seven years his senior, Madame de Canaples. At first the timid young man's intentions are innocent, but instinct

soon drives him to try to seduce her. Her virtue prevails. Then, as in the Confessions, an experienced woman, the Marquise de Retel, educates the young novice in the art of love and in the nature of love. The amorous education of the narrator continues with new conquests. Vanity more than anything else determines his actions. His expertise is celebrated and he is sought after by many "femmes à la mode." But the narrator, writing in retrospect, comments good-humoredly about the fatuousness of his conduct and the absurdity of the social game of bedroom conquests. However, the portraits of the coquettes whom the narrator seduces are counterbalanced by the presence of the reasonable, virtuous and sensitive Madame de Canaples. She is responsible for converting the narrator to the path of virtue and arranges for him to marry the virtuous and beautiful Mlle de Foix with whom the narrator has fallen in love.

Our resume of the Confessions and of the Mémoires suggests that the form of these two novels differs from that of Madame de Luz. Indeed the third person narrative and the ordered structure of Madame de Luz contrasts with the first person narrative and the episodic construction of Duclos' later novels. The latter contain many episodes, but the action is not unified by any single, dominant plot. Madame de Luz, on the contrary, is built on one principal plot development which dominates and unifies the action of the novel. The careful composition of this novel has led Meister to conclude that it is Duclos' best in terms of structure:

> A n'en point douter, Duclos, pour ce qui est de la composition avait avec son coup d'essai réussi son coup de maître. Mme de Luz est un roman très fortement charpenté: trois hommes, dont chacun s'oppose aux deux autres, font successivement obstacle à la vertu de l'héroine. En revanche, dans ses deux autres romans, Duclos a abusé de la technique des mémoires qui consiste à faire entrer en scène n'importe quand un personnage nouveau, pas encore annoncé, et à oublier les précédents.[1]

Although the basic form of Madame de Luz differs from that of the later novels, Duclos' style and descriptive method are constant from one novel to the next. In each work, the style is sober, direct and succinct. A dry and analytical tone results. Furthermore, in imitation of the classical moralistes, he uses portraits and maxims. The portraits tend to discount the physical in order to define the moral nature of the person. Duclos aims at illuminating general truths and general categories. His method is two-fold: he may present an individual example and draw general conclusions in the form of a maxim or he may present a description of a general type and then apply it to a particular individual. Examples of the first method are manifold in his works. For example, the count's affair with Mme de Tonin leads him to conclude: "L'opinion nous détermine presque aussi souvent que l'amour."[2]

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[1]Paul Meister, Charles Duclos (Genève, 1956), p. 207.

[2]Duclos, Les Confessions du comte ***, in Romanciers du XVIII^e siècle (Paris, 1965), p. 250. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

The second method is evident in the way Duclos presents Thurin and Hardouin. A general portrait of the men of their profession precedes their appearances. The same is true in the Confessions when, for example, the count gives a general moral and psychological portrait of the members of the judiciary before describing his relationship with Madame de***, the judge's wife. In this method Duclos obviously imitates the classical moralistes, but unlike those created by his predecessors, Duclos' portraits in the Confessions and the Mémoires tend to be social types, men not man in general. This tendency is almost equally prevalent in Madame de Luz, where the social milieu recedes into the background as the characters and their actions take on universal significance.

Duclos' tendency to describe social types rather than universal types carries over to his treatment of love. In the Confessions and the Mémoires, he is concerned with man in his social environment. Duclos clearly states the bond between society and the passions at the beginning of the Mémoires:

> Les hommes ont toujours eu les mêmes passions; mais celles qui nous sont les plus naturelles prennent, suivant les lieux et le temps, différentes manières d'être qui influent sur la nature même de ces passions.[3]

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[3]Duclos, Mémoires sur les moeurs de ce siècle, in Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1806), vol. VII, p. 221. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

In Duclos' last two novels, he attempts to define the many forms that passion takes under the influence of society. These two works deal with love to the exclusion of other themes which preoccupied eighteenth-century novelists. In particular, they portray the principles of cynical Don Juans who are motivated by vanity. The French Don Juan seeks to build up a reputation through conquests. In fact, he limits his ventures to sure victories: "L'attaquer et ne pas réussir, c'était me perdre; un homme à la mode ne doit jamais entreprendre que des conquêtes sûres." (Confessions, p. 247). Sensual pleasure is a secondary concern: " . . . le sentiment se trouve intéressé dans le commerce des femmes, et . . . on est assez heureux d'y rencontrer le plaisir" (Mémoires, p. 321). The count and the narrator illustrate this kind of love, just as Thurin does at the beginning of his relationship with Madame de Luz before amour-vanité degenerates into amour-physique. Both the count and the narrator come to reject amour-vanité in favor of another form of love.

This form of love, which we shall call true love or amour-véritable, begins mysteriously, infiltrating two hearts before the parties are aware of the real nature of their sentiments. The birth of love is described in both Madame de Luz and Les Mémoires. In both novels it begins as a combination of amitié which results from esteem for a person and natural inclination. Madame de Luz and

Saint-Géran, the narrator and Madame de Canaples fall in love in exactly the same manner and do not understand the real character of their feelings. At first, the unwitting lovers derive pleasure from a kind of Platonic relationship. But instinct soon emerges and the parties are forced to admit the real nature of their attachment and to contend with the physical desires their sentiments engender. By its emotional depth this type of love contrasts markedly with the shallowness and inconstancy of amour-vanité. This kind of love which combines inclination and esteem would seem to offer a potential source of constancy and happiness. In the Confessions, the count's marriage with Madame de Selve, and in the Mémoires, the narrator's marriage to Mlle de Foix would seem to confirm this hypothesis. It is possible to disagree with this conclusion. Meister does when he says:

> Pour courtois qu'il fût, Duclos . . . considérait que le vrai de l'amour est l'amour physique. On pourrait objecter, il est vrai qu'il arrive à Duclos, comme à quelques autres de ses contemporains, d'associer au plaisir la sensibilité et jusqu'à la vertu, ou que parfois il trouve des accents d'une délicatesse non moins émouvante qu'émue . . . . Ajoutons que, dans ses romans, le dénouement toujours élève des pensées, dans la mesure où le héros finit par y découvrir le véritable amour, condamne en lui l'ancien libertin et se détache du monde. Mais cette fin d'abord n'est là, apparemment, que pour sauvegarder la moralité du livre, elle est une concession à un plan conventionnel qui était imposé à Duclos . . . .[4]

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[4]Meister, p. 211.

Contrary to Meister's thoughts, it would seem that the final episode of the Confessions and the Mémoires cannot be dismissed as simply a convention. Moreover, as Skrupskelis points out, certain of Duclos' maxims express ideas which correspond to amour-véritable.[5] For example, Duclos is careful to contrast the ephemeral nature of amour-vanité and amour-physique with the constancy of amour-véritable: "Le plaisir n'est qu'une situation, le bonheur est un état." (Mémoires, p. 297). Amour-véritable is a state because its spiritual dimension begets constancy. Furthermore, the superiority of true love is clearly stated in another maxim: "Le véritable amour est presque une vertu, et lorsqu'on le ressent, on n'a point de fatuité" (Mémoires, p. 245). The count voices Duclos' ideal of love when he says: " . . . c'est le comble du bonheur de goûter avec la même personne les plaisirs de l'amour et les douceurs de l'amitié, d'y trouver à la fois une amante tendre et une amie sûre" (Confessions, p. 260). True love finds expression in the principal episodes of Duclos' novels. We have seen that Madame de Luz does not portray the results of true love, because the heroine rejects the potential happiness inherent in that state. In contrast, the Confessions expose a positive example of the

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[5]Viktoria Skrupskelis, Duclos as a Moralist (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, 1966), pp. 190-191.

benefits of true love and thereby suggest the kind of future that Madame de Luz renounces because of her inflexible will.

It is evident, then, that Duclos' concept of love remains constant in all three novels and that his later novels serve to clarify his attitude toward the Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran relationship. Nor do his style and manner of writing change from one novel to the next. However, the careful composition of Madame de Luz and its metaphysical themes contrast with the episodic structure of the Confessions and the Mémoires and their restricted thematic content. The Confessions and the Mémoires are novels of manners and are valuable as social documents, but their relationship to the principal novels of the century is limited. In contrast, the structure of Madame de Luz, its characters and its philosophical themes bear a definite resemblance to those of important novels of the eighteenth century, a similarity we shall now discuss.

CHAPTER IV

L'Histoire de Madame de Luz and the development of the eighteenth-century French novel

In the history of the French novel Madame de Luz does not constitute a literary milestone in the development of the genre. Rather it is an eclectic novel bringing together several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century novelistic currents. It incorporates elements from the seventeenth-century novel, reveals certain novelistic preoccupations germane to the mid-eighteenth-century, and introduces elements exploited by novelists later in the century.

We have already discussed Madame de Luz as a classical novel of analysis profiting from the manner and techniques of the French classical novelist and moraliste and continuing the tradition of the analytical novel made popular by Madame de Lafayette. Madame de Luz's kinship with novels of this type--La Princesse de Clèves, Manon Lescaut, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Adolphe, Armance, and Dominique--is unquestionable.

Even though Duclos depends primarily on the form and techniques of the French classical novelist and the stance of the moraliste, he does borrow elements from other types of novels which had success in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in particular, the pseudo-

historical genre, popular around 1700. Courtilz de Sandras, Saint-Reel and Hamilton use history as a principal fictional device. These writers insert their fictitious accounts in the framework of official history, thereby giving their narrative "la caution illusoire de l'Histoire."[1] A reader who does not possess a detailed historical background has great difficulty distinguishing historical fact from fiction. Duclos imitates these writers by his inclusion of historical figures who become principal characters in the novel: the baron and baroness of Lux [Luz], Biron, Turin [Thurin], and Fleury. He so mingles fact and fiction that a reader could easily be deceived into believing that the adventures recounted actually happened to the historical Madame de Lux [Luz]. (Was the real baron de Lux a conspirator? Was he actually acquitted by Henri IV because the baroness committed adultery with Turin?). Duclos adroitly blends historical fact and narrative fiction to create an illusion of historical veracity, thereby continuing the pseudo-historical tradition.

Besides continuing the tradition of the pseudo-historical novel and the French classical novel, Madame de Luz stands out as a typically eighteenth-century novel by its thematic content. Duclos was one of the first eighteenth-

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[1]Frederic Deloffre, La Nouvelle en France à l'âge classique (Paris, 1967), p. 57.

century novelists to write a very successful and important novel using multiple adventures to advance a moral and a philosophical position. Duclos derives this technique from the outright novel of adventure like the picaresque Gil Blas, but his novel distinguishes itself from the novel of adventure by the serious intention of the writer and by the philosophical and ethical nature of the themes.

In fact, Madame de Luz suggests many of the same questions treated later in Voltaire's contes, Diderot's La Religieuse and Jacques le fataliste, and Sade's Justine. Through adventures and negative examples these writers propose an anti-traditional code of ethics, an anti-traditional philosophy or an anti-traditional world view. Duclos' preoccupation with representative themes locates Madame de Luz in the mainstream of the mid-eighteenth-century novel.

In addition, Duclos' novel became a "succès de scandale" and was one of the first eighteenth-century licentious novels. According to S. Paul Jones, the current of licentious tales and novels began about 1740:

> The number of frankly pornographic or obscene works is comparatively small . . . . A number of tales published after 1740 might be classified, however, as libres or licentieux without being obscene.[2]

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[2]S. Paul Jones, A List of French Prose Fiction from 1700 to 1750 (New York, 1939), p. XXVii.

The popular success of Madame de Luz no doubt encouraged other writers, including Laclos, to court quick success by pandering to the mid-century predilection for erotic narratives.

Eighteenth-century licentious writings fall into two categories. In one type, the writer simply recounts an erotic episode with no underlying didactic intention. Vivant Denon's Point de lendemain is a representive example. In the second class, the writer intends the licentious episode to publicize a moral or philosophical lesson or to satirize. Crebillon's Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit, the Marquis d'Argens' Therese philosophe, Diderot's La Religieuse, and Sade's Justine illustrate this variety. Both types of licentious fiction generally rehabilitate the passions by portraying the value of sensual pleasure. In Point de lendemain, for example, a night of sensual delights is recounted without a note of moral condemnation. In La Religieuse Diderot attacks the inhibiting of natural sexual desires as inimical to the well-being of human beings because it results in sexual perversions and madness.

Madame de Luz obviously belongs to the second category of licentious fiction. It is well known that most of the writers of licentious tales postulate the goodness of human nature. What renders Duclos' novel unique for 1740 is his insistence on the theme of corrupt nature and his portrayal of moral nihilists who first violate the

ethics of la bienfaisance and then go unpunished. Few writers of licentious tales embrace an ethical system which makes sensual pleasure an absolute. Most of these writers follow a middle-of-the-road concept similar to Diderot's: the passions are good as long as they do not violate the rights of another human. No doubt Duclos, himself, takes this ethical stand; but, unlike usual writers of licentious fiction in the seventeen forties, his novel includes the elements of materialistic naturalism which Sade will develop at the end of the century. Thurin expounds it and episodes B, C and D demonstrate it. Discounting Duclos' personal code of ethics, his novel does bare a philosophy that makes pleasure an absolute.[3] This philosophical dimension distinguishes Madame de Luz from the more common mid-century licentious tale, which does not meddle in radical ethics.

Madame de Lafayette

We have implied throughout our discussion of Madame de Luz that Duclos' novel resembles La Princesse de Clèves and may be, in fact, a kind of "ethical parody" of Madame de Lafayette's novel. A comparison of the two novels will serve to establish Madame de Luz's filiation with La

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[3]Crocker makes the following statement with regard to this point: "While Duclos does not, like his last villain, embrace and urge moral nihilism, there is nothing to prevent others from drawing that lesson from the pictures he offers." Crocker, p. 429.

Princesse de Cleves, to bring out the patently eighteenth-century characteristics of Duclos' novel, and to measure in some degree the evolution of the French novel from 1678 to 1741.

La Princesse de Clèves and Madame de Luz are both short novels whose origins have been traced to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century short story:

> Sans perdre l'avantage que lui confère la vraisemblance et le naturel, la nouvelle assimile si bien les techniques plus complexes du roman qu'elle supplante le dernier en devenant elle-même "petit roman." Dès lors, il existe dans la littérature française un type d'oeuvre dont la Princess de Clèves est, tant par ses proportions que par son respect d'une certaine vérité historique, un représentant caractéristique.[4]

Both novels are characterized by brevity and little dialogue when compared with later novels by realists like Flaubert. Madame de Lafayette and Duclos rely principally on an abstract vocabulary with few images. In fact, the vocabulary in episodes A and B of Madame de Luz is strongly reminiscent of that of La Princesse de Clèves, reflecting the similarity of situation and themes: expressions like passion, estime, gloire, mériter, digne, indigne, repos and vertu are an integral part of Madame de Luz's and Saint-Géran's vocabulary. These terms translate the same concept of love which in part prevents the union of La Princesse de Clèves and Nemours.

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[4]Deloffre, p. 101.

In both novels the sparseness of the language contrasts with the explosive content; the novels' substance is rendered all the more cruel by stylistic transparency. No curtain or veil of language separates the reader from the stark reality of the events recounted. In the case of La Princesse de Clèves the limpid expression conveys the enormity of the heroine's passion. In Madame de Luz the nudity of the language renders the odious nature of Thurin and Hardouin and the cruelty of fate (Providence) which persecutes virtue.

La Princesse de Clèves is a true classical novel of psychological analysis: the tension and crisis are wholly internal, the result of a searing moral conflict between the protagonist's reason and heart. The drama takes place in the consciousness of the heroine and the reader's interest is concentrated on her emotional trauma. In Madame de Luz episode A and B present internal tension and crisis of a quality less intense than those in Madame de Lafayette's novel. This fact may be accounted for by the character of the heroine: she remains too naive and innocent, too passive throughout the novel, for the reader to really believe that she endures the decimating passion of the Princesse de Cleves. Furthermore, Madame de Luz is briefer than La Princesse de Clèves. Midway through the novel Duclos shifts the center of interest from internal moral conflict to external adventures. Madame de Luz is, in fact,

less a story of internal tension and crisis caused by passion, than of moral crisis brought on by the naïveté of the protagonist and by external events [traps] generated by a persecuting fate. The brevity of the novel and its mixed themes prevent Duclos from developing and exploring a full-blown and scorching drama of illicit love and its fateful consequences. This fact is, however, a major indication of the novelistic preoccupations generic to the respective centuries: the seventeenth-century classical writer concerned himself with the "realistic" portrayal of human emotions, in particular, tragic passion, whereas the eighteenth-century novelist became more and more interested in ethical and philosophic considerations and used fiction as a springboard for illustrating ethical, philosophical and metaphysical questions.

The two novels are alike, however, in that external nature and physical description are non-existent. Each depicts moral man and human nature and ignores physical nature. This can be explained by the aristocratic nature of the two works. They treat a small segment of society--the aristocracy--as though it were a true image of society in general. Such a supposition was characteristic of the novel of analysis before 1760:

> L'évolution que subit le roman d'analyse dévoile aussi ses limites. Lié à une société dont il veut être la <u>parfaite imitation</u>, tout ce qui se passe au-dehors lui reste par essence étranger . . . . Les écrivains--surgis eux-mêmes de

> milieux nouveaux et divers--découvrent qu'il y a non pas une, mais deux sociétés: celle, précise et limitée, que décrivaient les romanciers du grand siècle, et celle, très vaste, très obscure, dont ils ne parlaient pas parce qu'ils n'avaient pris la peine de la voir. Disons très grossièrement: la société de cour et la société bourgeoise, dont les usages, les préoccupations, les intérêts se complètent sur certains points, s'opposent sur d'autres. Le roman d'analyse essaie en vain de rendre compte de ce phénomène.[5]

The picturesque, realistic description of physical surroundings and detailed rendering of the physical appearance of characters became necessary only after the scope of the French novel was expanded to treat all levels of society. The synthesis of psychological analysis and detailed description of physical milieu became an important novelistic preoccupation after 1760. Like Madame de Lafayette, Duclos depicts the moral character of a closed society, rather than the physical reality of a bourgeois society. In this respect, Madame de Luz is traditional and Duclos is not an innovator.

Indeed, both novelists reveal their characters by the same devices: by their actions, by their reactions to events and by interior monologues. La Princesses de Clèves includes, however, characters who fulfill the same function as the confident in the French classical tragedy. Madame

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[5]Bernard Pingaud, Madame de La Fayette par elle-même (Paris, 1959), p. 154.

de Chartres, le Prince de Clèves, and le Vidame de Chartres are characters to whom La Princesse de Clèves and Nemours can reveal their secret passion. This technique of self-revelation is absent in Madame de Luz. Duclos wants his heroine to be absolutely alone, with no one to consult. Her moral anguish, her scruples and her indecision in episode B are thereby heightened, and her decision to consult Hardouin in episode D is more credible. In the eighteenth century, the convention of the confident in the novel fell into disuse as new techniques were used (i.e. the correspondent in the epistolary novel).

The basic plight of the two heroines and the denouements of the novels are also alike. The principal subject is love--illicit passion that cannot be overcome. Madame de Lafayette focuses the reader's attention on passion which is truly violent. It begins as a coup de foudre and ends in the death of the heroine. Bernard Pingaud clearly summarizes Madame de Lafayette's aim:

> Ce n'est pas la naissance de l'amour qui l'intéresse [Madame de Lafayette]. Elle veut seulement marquer son caractère intempestif pour pouvoir ensuite dénoncer ses faiblesses. Toute sa démonstration repose sur l'idée que l'estime et la connaissance mutuelle--qui introduirait peu à peu l'amour dans l'ordre de la tranquillité--sont incapables de provoquer cette passion ou de la soutenir . . . . L'Amour ne peut être qu'un motif de rupture: il est toujours présent, n'a ni passé ni avenir; rien ne le prépare, rien ne lui ressemble. Son apparition foudroyante

> dresse autour de celui qui l'éprouve un décor nouveau, inaugure un monde, un temps inattendus, qui ne sont que la répétition du premier coup d'oeil.[6]

Duclos' treatment of love is very different. The passion impelling Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran has been nurtured by time and is not a coup de foudre. Moreover, the reader derives the impression that the protagonists' mutual estime and friendship are sufficient to sustain their passion. In short, love is not a violent, destructive and disastrous force. This point is of the utmost importance. It reveals two very different attitudes toward love. In the case of La Princesse de Clèves, Madame de Lafayette illustrates with the premise that love and happiness exclude each other. Madame de Clèves believes she could never find happiness in her relationship with Nemours, because once the amorous "chase" had ended in possession, Nemours would seek additional conquests and Madame de Clèves would languish in jealousy. Assuming that this principle of human relations is valid, one sees that passion is inimical to le repos and le bonheur. The only reasonable stance is an heroic asceticism, the renunciation of passion through force of will, even though it may result in death. In short, Madame de Lafayette's novel reflects the belief of certain seventeenth-century contemporaries who, like

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[6] Ibid., p. 70.

Pascal, thought that man's nature is corrupt and that happiness is therefore impossible through the gratification of concupiscence, the foremost product of that corruption.

As for Duclos, he begins ostensibly with the same premise as Madame de Lafayette: repos and bonheur can be derived only from doing one's duty and by rejecting illicit love no matter how justified that passion may be. However, Duclos' novel does not show mutual passion as destructive. To the contrary, Duclos portrays rejection of that passion as destructive. In short, his ethical position is the very opposite of Madame de Lafayette's. While openly admitting the corrupt nature of man, he is optimistic about man's potential for achieving natural happiness. Duclos rejects the Jansenist mode of asceticism and proposes a more "humanistic" resolution to the problem of happiness: illicit physical union is justified when inclination is founded on amour-véritable and when the impediment, marriage, is essentially a social convention. For this reason, Duclos portrays love as good in itself, as a positive force for good (i.e. it is love which ennobles the character of Saint-Géran in Burgundy). Thus Duclos' concept of love contrasts markedly with that of Madame de Lafayette's, testifying to the evolution in ethical norms from 1678 to 1740. If Madame de Lafayette's novel rejects earthly happiness through passion as impossible, and instead favors a stoical, heroic

attitude, Duclos' work concerns itself with terrestrial happiness, rejects heroics as inimical to happiness and openly advocates compromise, the nemesis of heroism.

Madame de Lafayette's attitude toward love is justified perhaps by the kind of society she describes. The principal action of La Princesse de Clèves takes place at the court of Henri II. The oppressive atmosphere here (a transposition of the atmosphere at the court of Louis XIV) is essential both to the plot and to Mme de Lafayette's moral lesson. In this huis clos "les bienséances" are all-important. They have in fact replaced morality as guiding principles and are often at odds with morality. Moreover, appearances are totally deceiving--the brilliant, aristocratic overlay conceals the moral degradation of the nobility. Ambition, politics and egoism determine love, not natural inclination. In this society supercharged with tension, every gesture is watched as a sign of secret feelings. Perfect self-control is necessarily a prerequisite for social survival. Candor and naturalness are alien and artificiality is the norm; the natural drives are masked, the real nature of characters is hidden and deceit is the rule. Ambition and vanity are the principal forces of motivation. Furthermore, the role of chance is reduced to a minimum while it is the interaction of personalities which advances the dramatic action. No doubt each liaison Mme de Lafayette depicts is replete with sexuality,

but that sexuality is latent. The sexual relations of the characters remain hidden and the principal motivation of the characters does not seem to be sexual pleasure, but ambition: at the court, one intends to advance through commerce with the most important figures.

Duclos' treatment of society and sexuality is very different in Madame de Luz, and justifies his conception of love and morality. The court of Henri IV plays a very minor role in the novel. In fact, the reader has scant knowledge of life there. Duclos makes no effort to create a suffocating atmosphere replete with intrigues and cabales, with deceit a rule and a necessity. It is through the personal experience of the commoners associated with the aristocracy, Thurin and Hardouin, and their personal philosophies that Duclos suggests the ethos of the court. The fact that it plays a really insignificant role in the novel mirrors the fact that the salons, and not the court, were the new centers of aristocratic social life in the eighteenth-century. Just as Mme de Lafayette reflects the importance of the court of Louis XIV on the seventeenth-century society in her novel, so Duclos mirrors the decline of its importance. Thurin, spokesman for his society, exposes a change in social values. He acknowledges sensual pleasure rather than ambition as the principal motivating force of the aristocracy. Thurin's open avowal of the role

of sensual pleasure in the conduct of men contrasts with the silence of Madame de Lafayette's characters with respect to it.

The presence of the commoners, Thurin and Hardouin, is indicative of the openness typifying the society Duclos describes. The bienséances are hardly alluded to after episode A; and Mme de Luz does not endure the terrible tension of having to watch every move others make because she lives in huis clos. Thus Madame de Luz indicates a new social openness alien to the complete partition of the classes in 1678 rendered so strikingly in La Princesse de Clèves. Nevertheless, Duclos' novel portrays a kind of tension for he substitutes a species of metaphysical huis clos for Madame de Lafayette's social huis clos: universal moral corruption, from which there is no escape, persecutes virtue and innocence. Chance becomes a principal device for illustrating this metaphysical condition. The human condition for the innocent and virtuous consists of traps, situations which destroy virtue and which are directed by an inimical fate. In La Princesse de Clèves the huis clos is a totally human construction made possible through the close relation of the members of the court, the extreme importance of the bienséances, and man's natural moral weakness. In Madame de Luz vice and chance determine the chain of events, which have more than strictly psychological significance: man cannot escape his own moral corruption

and if he tries, fate undermines moral resolution through events and the moral weakness of others. The result is that the heroic in La Princesse de Clèves (Mme de Clèves can and does resist social and emotional pressures to yield to her passion) becomes pathos in Madame de Luz. In spite of heroic resistance Madame de Luz is a pawn, her resistance is futile, even ridiculous, since she is forced to give to those she does not love that which she refused to the person she loves.

In Madame de Lafayette's universe, reason and self-control have meaning and constitute an ideal. By 1740 that perfect self-control which so marks the character of Madame de Clèves is no longer an ideal.

The sensibility of Madame de Luz, quite pre-Romantic in her abandonment to emotional outbursts, illustrates the eighteenth-century preoccupation with feeling and expression of emotion. Madame de Luz, in contrast to La Princesse de Clèves, does not hesitate to manifest her anguish. Duclos' novel serves, then, to illustrate the direction of the novel away from classical restraint and seventeenth-century stoicism toward the sensibilité and sensiblerie of the second half of the century. The emotional outbursts of an Eleonore (Adolphe) are already present in Madame de Luz.

To summarize briefly: it is evident that both La Princesse de Clèves and Madame de Luz propose that human nature is per se corrupt. Both novels portray man's moral

weakness. However, in La Princesse de Clèves the valiant struggle and moral victory of the heroine overshadow everything else. Her death represents a kind of apotheosis. For Madame de Lafayette virtue is considered independent of circumstances and she believes reason and will can dominate passion if the human being wills it. Mme de Lafayette's novel is not concerned with physical happiness because it begins with the fatalistic premise that passion and happiness are mutually exclusive. What is important is one's gloire, one's self-esteem. Fatality is man himself, his moral weakness, rather then an external force, a malignant and active fate which persecutes virtue. This pessimistic, Pascalian attitude is not that of the eighteenth-century philosophe, Duclos. Madame de Luz begins with the same metaphysical point of departure as La Princesse de Clèves, namely the corruption of human nature. But even though Duclos depicts the prostitution of moral values to sensual pleasure, he does not show passion to exclude happiness. On the contrary, satisfying passion is a prerequisite for happiness. Duclos' cardinal consideration is terrestrial happiness and how to achieve it by reconciling sexual inclination with moral duty. Duclos sees man in society, beset with circumstances which alter the nature of duty and virtue. For him, virtue and duty are not absolutes, but are relative and depend on circumstances. Men's actions should be judged in terms of mitigating circumstances.

The eighteenth-century concern with good and evil is uppermost in Duclos' mind. He preaches indulgence, a proposition untenable in the ethic depicted by Mme de Lafayette. Duclos, like the other philosophes and moralistes of his time, is not concerned with abstract concepts of conduct. He is preoccupied with practical avenues to terrestrial happiness. His solution, moral compromise, is contrary to the stoical heroism of La Princesse de Clèves. Duclos, like Montaigne, Gassendi and Saint-Evremond substitutes "l'hédonisme humaniste" for Mme de Lafayette's "pessimisme anti-humaniste."[7]

The filiation of Madame de Luz and the Princesse de Clèves in form, technique, and psychological analysis places Duclos' novel squarely in the tradition of the short analytical novel, but our comparison has also shown that Duclos' novel illustrates as well many of the attitudes and changes which mark the evolution of the French novel from 1678 to 1740.

Crébillon fils

While there is little doubt that La Princesse de Clèves is the principal model and source of inspiration of Madame de Luz, the influence of Crébillon fils on Duclos'

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[7]Georges Coulet, Le Roman jusqu'à la révolution (New York, 1967), p. 261.

fiction deserves consideration. Crébillon *fils* was one of the most popular and most imitated novelists from 1731 to 1760. Peter Brooks, among others, has noted the similarities which link Crébillon *fils* and Duclos' novels, in the genre designated by Brooks as "the novel of worldliness."[8] Crébillon *fils*' early novels deal with the sexual attractions as a source of social relations, but I prefer not to call them "licentious" because the sexual act is not treated openly. Nevertheless, Crébillon *fils*' subject matter is the same as that of the licentious novel. Duclos was well read and there is no reason to doubt that he was familiar with Crébillon *fils*' first two novels: *Les lettres de la Marquise de M*** au Comte*** R**** (1731) and *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* (1736-38). In fact, Duclos' *Confessions* may well represent a sequel to *Les Egarements*, in which a young Meilcour practices the art of libertinage motivated solely by *amour vanité* until he discovers the benefits of *amour véritable* through his association with Madame de Selve. *Madame de Luz* may owe something to *les Lettres de la Marquise*. The two novels differ in form. Crébillon *fils* limits his subject to the consequences of durable passion in a society in which love is a very ephemeral emotion, while Duclos opens his subject

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[8] Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Worldliness* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 11-43.

to the metaphysical implications of persecuted virtue. In spite of these obvious differences, the two novels share certain general features which merit comparison.

Crébillon fils has been called "le philosophe des femmes," primarily because of his portrayal of the female heart in novels like Les Lettres de la Marquise de M*** au Comte de R***. This epistolary novel treats the traditional conflict between the married heroine's desire to remain virtuous and her passion for another man, but the real dramatic interest is derived from the vacillating moods of the Marquise to the suspected and the real actions and attitudes of the Count. The first person narrative is ideally suited for the minute revelation of the tension/calm theme, manifest in the heroine's moods which oscillate from a state of love/security/calm to one of suspicion/jealousy/torment. The Count, the Marquise's lover, is not described objectively, but the reader does come to know his character second hand through the Marquise's lively reactions to his actions, to his letters, and to his waning correspondence and final silence soon after he has succeeded in seducing her.

The tone of the Marquise's letters ranges from the cynicism of a well-informed woman of the world (hard, cold, incisive, and scornful of men) to the lyricism of a woman passionately in love who asserts, "Ce n'est que dans un amour aussi violent que [le sien], qu'on peut goûter une

joie véritable. On s'ennuye quand on aime médiocrement."[9] Moreover, her moral character is tarnished when she participates in her husband's extra-marital affairs and goes so far as to effect a reconciliation between the Marquis and his lover, the Count's cousin. An excellent analyst of psychological motivation, she actively attempts to revitalize the Count's passion for her by exciting his jealousy. The Marquise's personality traits and her actions contrast with Madame de Luz's passive nature, based on fundamental innocence and naivete. In spite of these differences, the two heroines are victims of the same social forces and share the same moral dilemma in which their sense of virtue conflicts with their natural inclination.

Virtue, for the Marquise, is tantamount to maintaining reputation. For her, virtue is, in fact, totally devoid of metaphysical and religious connotations. The same is true of Madame de Luz's concept of virtue. While the source of Madame de Luz's inflexible will to virtue is not defined, it is never implied that she acts out of religious conviction. On the other hand, both Madame de Luz and the Marquise resist passion in the name of virtue, but the real source of their resistance appears to be fear of passion:

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[9]Crébillon fils, Lettres de la Marquise de M*** au Comte de R*** (Amsterdan, 1753), I, p. 135. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

> En fait les héroines de tous ces romans, chez Crébillon, chez Mme de Ricoboni, déjà chez Mme de Lafayette, résistent au nom d'une sorte de fidélité aux conditions qu'elles ont fixées elles-mêmes, dictées par l'honneur au dix-septième siècle, par l'honnêteté au dix-huitième, plus qu'au nom de la véritable vertu. Et surtout par peur de l'amour. L'amour est un mal, le bonheur qu'il donne est passager. Sans illusions sur la fidélité que leur conserverait leur amant, 'aguerries contre l'amour' par un mariage malheureux . . . ces femmes trahies ou ces jeunes veuves, ont comme l'Hortense du Prince travesti, tiré de leur expérience une philosophie désenchantée qui doit encore plus à l'exemple d'une autre, de cette princesse de Clèves dont le modèle est présent en filigrane derrière toutes ces figures de femmes blessées. . . . [Leurs refus] sont dictés non par un coeur incapable d'aimer, mais par une sensibilité qui se défie d'elle-même.[10]

Both Madame de Luz and the Marquise were committed at an early age to marriages which could not satisfy them. In the case of the Marquise, the unfaithfulness of the Marquis made their union unhappy. For Madame de Luz, the age of the Baron and her long-standing attachment to Saint-Géran constituted primary obstacles to marital happiness. Both heroines are faced with a similar dilemma. The Marquise defines it as "comment accorder l'honneur du sexe et l'amour qui la tourmente" (II, 16). Fear of passion and resistance to it is no solution, for passion is presented as independent of reason's dictates. Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran

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[10]Laurent Versini, Laclos et la Tradition (Paris, 1968), pp. 111-112.

assign passion's origin to the heart, over which they have no control. The Marquise declares, " . . . il n'a point dépendu de moi de ne vous pas aimer; les mouvements du coeur ne sont pas soumis à la réflexion . . ." (I, 77). Both heroines resist passion, unable to stifle their natural inclinations: duty and reason diametrically oppose nature and heart. This fundamental rent in their beings precludes the psychological harmony necessary for peace of mind and happiness.[11]

In the course of Crébillon fils' novel, the Marquise succumbs to the dictates of nature and suffers and dies because of it. Madame de Luz valiantly defends her virtue but dies equally miserable. Does this mean that Crébillon fils favors strict adherence to marital fidelity and that Duclos belittles or subverts the idea? To answer this question, both writer's attitudes toward love and society must be considered.

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[11]Clifton Cherpack describes the nature of the Marquise's love in the following manner, included in this text because it also applies to Madame de Luz:

"More common in Crebillon's works is a kind of involuntary love based on the passive psychology, popular in the eighteenth-century, in which the autonomous emotions inevitably conquer reason even under the most adverse circumstances . . . . Emotions are dominant in man because, unlike learned codes of conduct, they are the authentic manifestations of nature in man. So reasoned the partisans of the mouvement of ideas in the eighteenth-century called sensibilité." An Essay on Crébillon Fils (North Carolina, 1962), p. 19.

The epistolary form of the Lettres de la Marquise centers the reader's interest on the emotional flux of the Marquise's consciousness. Yet it is entirely misleading to claim that Crébillon fils' only interest is to portray the tribulations of a female heart. The Marquise's moral dilemma and her relationship with the Count constitute only one example that suggests general implications concerning the social relationships of the sexes in the post-Regency aristocracy. In many ways, Crébillon fils' novel is a "comedy of manners"[12] with very serious overtones. According to Crébillon fils' novelistic picture, social interaction in this society turned on sexual impulse. He is not interested in erotic force for its own sake, but chiefly "in so far as it effects relations between the sexes."[13] Thus, the war between the sexes--"les guerriers contre les belles" (II, 55)--is at the core of Crébillon fils' novels about this society. The same can be said of Duclos' novels even though Madame de Luz is less a novel of manners than a philosophical statement of the problem of evil. Peter Brooks classifies both novelists as writers of "worldliness" because both novelists are concerned with sociability, with the way society works and

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[12]See, for example, Letters XXXV, CLVI, XLVII, XLVIII, LXIV, XL, XLIV.

[13]Cherpack, p. 33.

with the sources of social relations. Both writers attempt to define a modus vivendi acceptable to this society. Thus, the subject matter of both novels is limited to the relations among members of the aristocracy, which came to depend on sexual attraction, the hub of social motivation, if we can believe their fictional representation of "worldliness." This conception of social relations is best seen in the attitude of the men depicted in the two novels. They are all, to a greater or lesser degree, libertines. Their first objective is to assault the virtue of the woman with whom they are enamoured. Invariably, they use the same formulas and the same techniques. With the exception of Saint-Géran, none of the male characters gets beyond sensual love. Nevertheless, neither Crébillon fils nor Duclos voices violent opposition to the "way of the world." As men themselves, they freely participate in the society their writings describe. They write from within that society, as members in good standing, and not as alienated pariahs such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Duclos' maxim, "l'homme sociable est le citoyen par excellence" (I, 161), could well have come from Crébillon fils' pen. In the tradition of the seventeenth-century moralistes and classical writers, they enjoy the society they write about.

Social hell is exile in the provinces.[14] This point of view is essential to understanding the ethical standards proposed by Crébillon *fils* and Duclos. Like Catholics before the Reformation who criticized individuals and practices without intending to destroy the main body of the Church, so Duclos and Crébillon *fils* criticize the excesses of individuals which rendered them unhappy or dangerous to society. Crébillon *fils* and Duclos' principal ethical concern is the enunciation of a philosophy of *savoir vivre* which allows for a sufficient development of the "moi" without excesses.

Their conception of human nature, naturally subject to instinct, and their social ideals determine in large mesure the kind of evil they portray. They treat ontological evil in contrast to Rousseau, who emphasizes sociological evil: evil is a product of human nature rather than a product of society; men are universally weak, given to passion. This view of human nature affects both writers' notions of love.

Crébillon *fils*' concept of the nature of love is more radical than Duclos' because he presents love as an ephemeral phenomenon. The value of this kind of love is in the

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[14] "For Crébillon, Duclos, Marivaux, even Laclos, as for Madame de Lafayette and the *moralistes*, while life in the enclosure may be an ordeal for the personal consciousness, life outside is unthinkable--obscured, desolate, unnameable, literally inexpressible." Brooks, p. 286.

sensual intensity of the moment. Lacking a spiritual dimension, love is temporal and extremely volatile. The intensity of the physical sensation determines the relative value of love. But repetition diminishes pleasure. Once a woman's virtue has been overcome, physical union becomes humdrum and love dissipates. This theme of inconstancy is a recurring leitmotif throughout Les Lettres de la Marquise:

> Quelquechose qu'on dise de la constance, elle ne dure qu'autant que l'amour; et d'ordinaire il ne subsiste qu'autant que les désirs qu'il fait naître ne sont pas entièrement satisfaits (II, 117).

And:

> Se piquer de fidélité pour un homme, est le plus triste personnage du monde. La constance n'est qu'une chimère, elle n'est pas dans la nature, and c'est le fruit le plus sot de toutes nos réflexions (II, 124).

Because of Crébillon fils' concept of the nature of love and its effect on social relations, his novels are imbued with a kind of cynicism and fatalism about the outcome of human adventures motivated by love. These relations are destined to be short-lived.

Duclos also portrays this kind of love. Thurin, Hardouin, Marin and Marsillac illustrate it. But Duclos does affirm the existence of old-fashioned love, which has a spiritual dimension, is constant and offers the possibility of happiness.

In spite of different notions about the nature of love, both writers share the same attitude toward their

heroines. The Marquise and Madame de Luz cling to outmoded concepts of love, ethics and society. As a consequence, they are unable to adapt to the realities of their own century and ethos. It is precisely this inflexibility which renders them victims. To understand each writer's attitude toward his heroine, one must keep in mind the contemporary aristocratic attitude toward virtue:

> . . . dans cet univers sceptique et cynique, la vertu attire le persiflage qui ne veut y voir que pruderie ou un ridicule provincial. La vertu, pour la bonne compagnie parisienne, ne peut être qu'un préjugé d'un autre temps, d'une classe inférieure, d'une contrée reculée que la capitale n'a pas encore éclairée.[15]

Crébillon fils' Marquise dies because she feels guilt not founded upon reasonable cause and because she cannot accept the ephemeral nature of love as exhibited in this society; Madame de Luz dies because she feels guilt without cause and because she rejects happiness through amour-véritable. Neither Crébillon fils nor Duclos finds the suffering of his heroines sublime. Their heroines suffer because they have been unreasonable in their assessment of the human condition and the social realities. Neither writer condemns the natural desires of his heroine. The sexual drive is the natural expression of the "moi" and should not be fettered by unreasonable social or spiritual restrictions.

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[15]Versini, p. 109.

Both novelists are concerned with terrestrial happiness within the tightly structured framework of eighteenth-century Parisian aristocratic society. Duclos, as we have seen, proposes moderation and moral compromise as a solution to the problem of happiness. Crébillon fils suggests the same manner for being happy in society; compromise and rationalization constitute the implied moral of his l'Ecumoire, published one year after Les Lettres de la Marquise. Both writers, then, share a similar notion about ethics. Their ideal seems to be practical morality as opposed to the abstract notions espoused by their heroines. In Madame de Luz and in Les Lettres de la Marquise, the novelists are illustrating the same moral lesson which Ernest Sturm sums up in discussing Crébillon fils' novel:

> En un temps où les valeurs subissaient une rapide transformation, c'est la tragédie d'une femme qui n'ose offenser les conventions, même si celles-ci doivent bouleverser son existence. Déchirée entre le rigorisme d'une morale inadéquate et ses propres désirs érotiques, la Marquise marque par son drame le niveau le plus bas d'une courbe soulignant la détérioration de la supériorité aristocratique . . . Il [Crébillon fils] suggère comment, par une adhésion à des principes anachroniques, la Marquise ruine graduellement sa propre vie.[16]

Duclos, of course, suggests the very same thing about Madame de Luz. Ethical codes and notions which conflict

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[16]Ernest Sturm, Introduction to his edition of Crébillon fils' Lettres de la Marquise de M*** au comte de R*** (in press), p. 29.

with the times, which cause tension and ultimate unhappiness, should be modified the better to suit the temper of the times and the evolving social realities.

Although Duclos and Crébillon fils prescribe nearly identical solutions to the dilemma of virtue versus nature, Crébillon fils' novels are fundamentally pessimistic, because permanent happiness through lasting love is excluded. Since social relations in his novels are determined by temporal amour-goût, his characters are destined to perpetual Pascalian inquiétude because of the natural inconstancy of the love depicted. Crébillon fils' characters, like Laclos' libertines, are doomed to live out their lives in perpetual transition from one sensual affair to another. In contrast, Duclos' novels can be termed optimistic. Implied in Madame de Luz is the real possibility for achieving lasting calm and reasonable happiness through amour-véritable. Madame de Luz is ultimately condemned because she rejects this possibility. This possibility is given positive illustration in Duclos' Confessions du Comte***, when the count discovers calm and happiness through his love for Madame de Selve.

Prevost

Prévost's Manon Lescaut, published the same year as the Lettres de la Marquise,[17] portrays the very same society and ethos as does Crébillon fils' novel but expands the social scope. This novel includes good men and moral reprobates from many social classes: Des Grieux, the principal protagonist, is a provincial with the title of "chevalier de Malte"; Manon is a provincial bourgeoise who prostitutes herself to a Parisian bourgeois and nobleman; M. de G . . . M . . . is a corrupt Parisian fermier-général; Lescaut, Manon's brother, is a small time gangster who introduces Des Grieux into the Parisian underworld; Tiberge, Des Grieux's faithful friend, is a provincial who follows Catholic orthodoxy, becomes a priest and practices his religious and moral ideals amid the moral abandon of Paris. The novel evokes contemporary manners and institutions, in particular, people's quest for pleasure, their subsequent need for large sums of money gained by any means, the ensuing immorality and those institutions established to punish vice: Saint-Lazare, l'Hôpital, le Châtelet, and the policy of exporting recidivists to the French colonies.

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[17] Scholars have debated the question of the publication date of Manon Lescaut. Georges Matoré, for example, accepts 1731 as the year in which Manon first appeared, and bases his edition on the 1731 text. Claire-Eliane Engel in Le Véritable Abbé Prévost (Monaco, 1957) pp. 115-127, makes a very good case for 1733 as the year in which Manon was first published.

In spite of Prévost's successful rendering of the society of the Regency, Manon Lescaut can hardly be considered a realist or naturalist novel. Physical description in the manner of the realists is almost totally absent from the work. Nor is Manon basically a romantic novel, in spite of the sentimental nature of Des Grieux and the pathos of certain scenes. Manon Lescaut is, above all, a novel of passion which, as Raymond Picard has shown, resembles a Racinian tragedy.[18] It is a psychological novel of analysis whose events turn on a very simple formula, clearly defined by Des Grieux: "Manon était passionnée pour le plaisir; je l'étais pour elle."[19] These two penchants are tragic complements. Manon is fundamentally Epicurean and pagan and needs large sums of money to satisfy her natural desires. Without physical well-being, she cannot be tender: "Crois-tu [Des Grieux] qu'on puisse être bien tendre lorsqu'on manque de pain? La faim me causerait quelque méprise fatale; je rendrais quelque jour le dernier soupir, en croyant en pousser un d'amour" (p. 83). Des Grieux does not command the financial resources to satisfy Manon's desires, but likewise cannot renounce his passion

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[18]Raymond Picard, "L'Univers de Manon Lescaut," Mercure de France, nos. 1172, 1173 (avril-mai 1961), pp. 606-22, pp. 87-105.

[19]Abbe Prevost, Manon Lescaut (Paris, 1959), p. 63. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

for her. Consequently, he resorts to crimes, the most efficient way to make money fast. The Parisian pleasure-seekers are easy targets; Des Grieux and Manon exploit them, but not with impunity. The penal institutions, which serve to protect the rights of the corrupt rich like M. de G . . . M . . . , separate the lovers, render them miserable, and ultimately create a tragedy in the name of civil justice.

Although social institutions are compromised in Manon, Prévost is not really concerned with social evil. Society is not the ultimate cause of moral evil; this evil is in the nature of man. Manon Lescaut is written in the Racinian tradition: the heroes are neither completely good nor completely bad. Passion is shown to be a force which the will seems powerless to control and which is a source of moral degradation and self-destruction. But contrary to the Racinian mode, Des Grieux defends passion as being natural and therefore good: "Si les relations qu'on en fait sont fidèles, ils suivent les lois de la nature" (p. 215). Now the hallmark of Des Grieux and Manon's relationship is spiritual fidelity, but the protagonists come to an unfortunate end. Are the laws of Nature, then, vicious? Is the whole Parisian milieu corrupt because it is following the laws of Nature? If this is so, then evil is inherent in human nature and, in a Christian context, is ultimately associated with the divine will.

Madame de Luz, as we have already seen, posits the same ontological problem: passion is natural, but is Nature good? Madame de Luz believes that Nature is not good; she is afraid of the dictates of Nature and prefers abstinence to physical pleasure. But her plight is no more fortunate than those of Manon and Des Grieux. The really evil men, Thurin and Hardouin, like M. de G . . . M . . . seem protected from misfortunes. Yet both Prévost and Duclos claim that their novels serve a useful purpose, useful because they treat current ethical problems and because they expose the real nature of vice.[20]

Prévost and Duclos write in the tradition of the moralistes; they observe man in society and paint his nature according to their observations. Their novels portray immorality the better to instruct the reader of the dangers of vice:

> Les préoccupations morales n'ont en effet jamais abandonné ni Prévost ni son époque, . . . La doctrine de l'art utilitaire qui remonte à Horace, dont Prévost était un admirateur, a dominé toute l'époque classique, mais alors qu'on pense généralement, vers 1660, que la littérature, pour être morale, doit surtout peindre des actions vertueuses, on présente de plus en plus, à partir de 1680,

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[20] In "L'Avis de l'auteur" Prévost says: "Outre le plaisir d'une lecture agréable, on y trouvera peu d'événements qui ne puissent servir à l'instruction des moeurs; et c'est rendre, à mon avis, un service considérable au public, que de l'instuire en l'amusant." p. 16.

Duclos claims that his purpose is to demonstrate that a woman can be dishonored and still be innocent of crime. Oeuvres, ed. Villenave (Paris, 1821), vol. I, p. 215.

> des personnages peu exemplaires. Les écrivains n'en croient pas moins faire oeuvre utile et ils moralisent de manière souvent intempestive.[21]

The immorality portrayed in both novels is not, however, redeemed by a concrete example of the rewards of virtue. In both novels, the ignominious go unpunished while the innocent or the good-at-heart suffer (Des Grieux and Manon are not presented as evil beings, while M. de G . . . M . . . is). Moreover, in Manon, the problem of moral responsibility is complicated by Prévost's novelistic art. His protagonists are presented as basically good, and their intentions justify their actions. In spite of their crimes, they remain sympathetic to the reader. Just as in Madame de Luz, guilt is determined by the intention of the agent and the circumstances under which the act is committed. Absolute moral standards are replaced by relative ones. Furthermore, for the narrator of Madame de Luz, terrestrial happiness should be man's salient concern. The traditional Christian notion of ultimate happiness, the Beatific vision as a reward for earthly suffering, is displaced by an Epicurean insistence on earthly happiness. Des Grieux expresses the same belief when he says:

> . . . le bonheur que j'espère est proche, et l'autre est éloigné; le mien est de la nature des peines, c'est-à-dire sensible au corps, et

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[21] Abbé Prévost, Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, critical edition by Georges Matoré (Paris, 1953), p. xxxv.

> l'autre est d'une nature inconnue, qui n'est certaine que par la foi . . . . l'amour, quoiqu'il trompe assez souvent, ne promet du moins que des satisfactions et des joies, au lieu que la religion veut qu'on s'attende à une pratique triste et mortifiante . . . . de la manière que nous sommes faits, il est certain que notre félicité se trouve dans le plaisir . . . . or le coeur n'a pas besoin de se consulter longtemps pour sentir que, de tous les plaisirs, les plus doux sont ceux de l'amour . . . . les délices de l'amour . . . sont ici-bas nos plus parfaites félicités. (pp. 108-110).

But what acts can be justified and what acts cannot in the pursuit of terrestrial felicity? The attitude of Des Grieux, the narrator, is that all of his acts are justified by his uncontrollable passion for Manon. From a strictly individualistic point of view, Des Grieux can defend his actions; Prévost, the novelist, uses his art to keep his hero sympathetic in the eyes of the reader. As a result, the reader feels that the rights of an individual take precedence over the collective well-being.

Now Duclos' utilitarian ethics would oppose such a radical departure from traditional moral notions. Social evil cannot be condoned. There is no doubt that Duclos rehabilitates passion as a natural expression of man's nature in the same way that Des Grieux does. But, on a practical level, Duclos would condemn anti-social behavior, even though his novel poses the same problem of moral responsibility as does Manon. Is, for example, Marsillac responsible for his crime against Madame de Luz? Did he have the moral power to resist or was his volition paralyzed

by Nature? Certainly he is guilty of a crime, but is he responsible? If human nature is basically corrupt, to whom does one assign the metaphysical guilt?

This question of moral responsibility crops up again and again in Manon Lescaut, but nowhere is it expressed more clearly than when Des Grieux declares:

> O cher ami [Tiberge]! . . . c'est ici que je reconnais ma misère et ma faiblesse. Hélas! oui, c'est mon devoir d'agir comme je raisonne! mais l'action est-elle en mon pouvoir? De quels secours n'aurais-je pas besoin pour oublier les charmes de Manon? (p. 111).

Tiberge responds by accusing Des Grieux of Jansenism, that is the doctrine that man is not free to act without the assistance of divine grace. Des Grieux insists time and again that he is unable to resist his passion for Manon. We can reject Des Grieux's claims by arguing that free will does exist and that Des Grieux simply excuses his own moral weakness with a Jansenist rationalization. Raymond Picard, for example, assumes this premise and argues that Manon is not a Jansenist novel.[22] But it is difficult to argue away the fact that Manon poses the same problem of evil and free will as the Jansenist writings. The Jansenist element in Manon is summed up by Paul Hazard:

> Des Grieux est un chrétien auquel manque la grâce: et, privé de la grâce, que peut-il faire, sinon se laisser aller à son penchant? La fatalité

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[22]Picard (mai 1961), pp. 78-99.

> qu'il invoque comme excuse est celle de la prédestination; elle est janséniste.
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> Excellent psychologue, il analyse clairement son cas. Il est pris entre deux 'délectations': l'une qui le sollicite vers le bien, l'autre qui l'emporte vers la volupté; c'est la seconde qui est victorieuse, et toutes les forces humaines n'y peuvent rien changer. Car l'homme n'est pas libre; il suit inévitablement, nécessairement, celle des deux délectations qui est la plus forte. Il est faux de dire, suivant la doctrine orthodoxe telle qu'on l'enseigne à Saint-Sulpice, que notre volonté conserve la faculté de choix . . . . la vertu est amère, et repoussante, et ceux-là seuls sont capables de suivre ses voies difficiles qui sont guidés par la main de Dieu. La volupté, au contraire, est attirante, et douce, et telle qu'il ne faut rien de moins qu'une intervention surhumaine pour dissiper ses prestiges enivrants.[23]

Hazard's analysis pinpoints the metaphysical implications of Manon. However, can Jansenism be fitted into the broader context of eighteenth-century lay thought? Raymond Picard stresses, for example, the great difference between the Jansenist ideals of moral asceticism popularized by Port Royal and those of Des Grieux. George Matoré has suggested that the eighteenth century synthesized certain Jansenist notions with the new lay morality:

> . . . le jansénisme a peut-être joué dans la pensée de notre auteur [Prévost], et en général dans l'évolution de la sensibilité vers 1725, un rôle plus important que celui qui lui était assigné jusqu'ici . . . . Il serait étonnant qu'un mouvement d'une telle ampleur ait limité ses manifestations au domaine de la religion et de la politique; la marque de

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[23]Paul Hazard, Etudes critiques sur Manon Lescaut (Chicago, 1929), pp. 66-67.

> l'esprit janséniste se fait sentir, croyons-nous, dans la nouvelle conception du bonheur qui se développe au début du XVIII^{e} siecle, et dans le caractère de fatalité assigné par le préromantisme naissant à la passion amoureuse . . . . le jansénisme de Prévost et de ses contemporains est bien différent de celui de 1660: de la vieille doctrine de Port Royal, il ne subsiste qu'un cadre sans liaison organique avec son contenu. Alors que la morale janséniste était une morale de salut, la felicité ne pouvant être atteinte qu'en Dieu, la génération préromantique de 1725 va adopter une conception laïque du bonheur. . . . l'abandon de la hiérarchie sociale et politique du classicisme, dont Dieu était à la fois l'auteur et l'élément principal, allait jeter les esprits dans l'individualisme et les entraîner à rechercher un bonheur personnel et laïque . . . . Le Jansénisme se retrouve dans la conception fataliste de la vie. . . . L'Homme est le jouet de ce qu'on continue à appeler la Providence, mais qui n'est déjà plus (Chamfort le remarquera plus tard) que 'le nom de baptême du hasard'.[24]

Certain basic Jansenist notions, popularized by moralistes like Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, were taken out of their original religious context and were laicized. In the eighteenth century this pessimistic Jansenist current, which emphasized the corruption of human nature, was amalgamated with the Epicurean one of Gassendi, Cyrano, La Fontaine and Saint-Evremond. The Jansenist Bien Absolu, eternal salvation through the grace of God, was displaced by that of earthly happiness. But the Jansenist legacy of a corrupt human nature, incapable of resisting passion,

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[24]Matoré, pp. xx-xxiv.

and the notion of a Providence, all powerful in determining man's fate, survived.

Manon portrays this synthesis of Jansenism and Epicureanism. Des Grieux and Manon seek immediate satisfaction of their desires, not a reward after life. In fact, Des Grieux's discussion of love while he is incarcerated at Saint Lazare constitutes a plea for a religion of sensual love. He states that his will has been neutralized by passion and that he does not have the moral strength to overcome his passion. But fate, or Providence, is the decisive factor in bringing about the tragedy. Fate produces one misfortune after another which force Des Grieux to commit one moral evil after another. The moral responsibility is ultimately traced back to God himself.

The parallel between the role of fate or Providence in Manon and its role in Madame de Luz are patent: human nature was created corrupt; Providence condones moral evil by allowing it to exist and persecutes certain individuals by heaping misfortunes upon them. Fate is cruel and implacable. But Madame de Luz is a very secular book without the profound religious dimension of Manon. Madame de Luz is not fundamentally religious. Catholicism is portrayed as an institution which unscrupulous men like Hardouin manipulate to their own ends and which worn-out coquettes and prudes use to mask their own social impotence. Religion is hardly a viable impulsion in the lives of the characters.

Consequently, Providence seems like a foreign and arbitrary force with which the characters have no means of communication.

On the contrary, in Manon religion plays a very important role in the psychological drama of the Des Grieux because "à chaque détour de l'histoire, le sentiment religieux réapparaît, pour compliquer le sentiment de l'amour, pour le contrarier, pour l'enrichir de douleur et de remords . . . ."[25] At times in the novel Des Grieux's religious sensibility reasserts its rights only to be overwhelmed by "Nature." But his religious aspirations are deeply felt in spite of his Epicurean life style. This religious dimension of the novel reinforces the impression that Providence is a real presence in the novel and not simply a deus ex machina conjured up to explain misfortune. The religious dimension of Manon renders impossible any simple Epicurean solution to the problem of Nature and the human condition:

> Qu'on suppose une conception épicurienne de la vie, et le roman changera de caractère; il ne sera plus qu'un hommage à la passion triomphante; Des Grieux surmontera les obstacles que la societé lui oppose, aimera Manon dans la joie, et tous deux célèbreront Eros vainqueur. Or, il n'en va pas ainsi; à chaque détour de l'histoire, le sentiment religieux réapparaît, pour compliquer le sentiment de l'amour, pour le contrarier, pour l'enrichir de douleur et de

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[25]Hazard, p. 56.

remords: pour le compliquer, et sans doute
pour le rendre plus cher.[26]

The sincere religious aspirations of Des Grieux negate any possibility for a moral compromise in the manner of Duclos or Crébillon. Regardless of the physical pleasure Des Grieux derives from his relationship with Manon, his religious sensitivity lurks in the background. He cannot shake himself entirely free from it in spite of his justifications for his conduct. The intermeshing of the religious element and of the theme of fatality underlines the religious nature of fatality and makes its role in the lives of the characters all the more real and dramatic. Des Grieux's moral weakness is not the ultimate source of his moral degradation, for it is only a part of the total cosmic picture. From the beginning to the end of the novel, the problems of man's fate in relation to a Christian concept of the nature of God are reinforced by the religious aspirations of the hero.

The author of Madame de Luz, on the other hand, does not consider religion to be of crucial importance in the lives of his fictional characters or in the life of the society he depicts. Duclos and his narrator entertain an Epicurean conception of life. No doubt, Duclos chooses to leave out the complicating dimension of sincere religious

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[26] Ibid., p. 56.

aspiration because he proposes the Epicurean formula as a solution to man's ethical dilemma; had a moderate "Eros" or Nature overcome Madame de Luz's restraint, Fate or Providence would have been placated and the story would have ended happily. But because religion is not really organic to the plot in Madame de Luz, the Providence to which Madame de Luz ascribes her misfortunes seems more like pagan Fate than Christian Providence. In fact, the introduction of the Providence motif is rather schematic when compared to the way Prévost handles it in Manon. No doubt Prévost, the priest, because of his religious training and his own religious vocation, understood intimately the real strength of religious sentiments. He understood, too, the implications of the belief in a personal God who actively participates in the lives of his creation through Providence. For this reason, religion and Providence are felt as crucial forces in his novel. To the contrary, Duclos, the philosophe, whose whole life was bound up in society and social relations, gave little credence to the validity of religious ideals. His novels reflect his social preoccupations and his lack of religious ones.

The fact that Nature, moral evil, religious aspirations and a persecuting fate are so intertwined in Manon, whereas the themes of Nature and of persecuting fate are introduced in a rather arbitrary manner in Madame de Luz, has caused at least one critic to state that Prévost's

novel is much closer to the universe of Sade than that of Duclos. Duclos treats the theme of virtue persecuted by Providence as though it were an exercise; Prévost does not.[27] This opinion is no doubt derived from the fact that Providence in Manon is felt to be an organic player in a tragedy of human destiny. But the role of Providence in Des Grieux's misfortunes is somewhat obscured by his and Manon's moral weakness. The psychological interest of the novel is enriched, but the criminal role of fate is mitigated to such a degree that a case can be made against calling the work a Jansenist novel. In Madame de Luz, the malignant role of fate or Providence is explicit since the heroine is guilty of no moral evil, overcomes her natural inclination and can hardly be considered morally responsible for being raped. In Prévost's novel, Manon and Des Grieux are presented as basically "good-hearted" people; in spite of their crimes, they are attractive characters. Their natures are not corrupt like those of Thurin, of Hardouin and of Laclos and Sade's characters who wilfully commit evil for the sake of evil.

Both novelists write in the classical tradition. Their style is simple and sober. The adventures they expose constitute a moral lesson through negative examples. Both novels contain pre-Romantic elements, but while

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[27]Versini, p. 621.

Prévost exalts the "man of feeling," Duclos' model is still the "honnête homme" as exemplified by Saint-Géran. Both novels treat the same morally corrupt society. The action develops out of the Jansenist proposition that human nature is universally subject to the corruption of Nature. In both novels, the source of ontological evil is ultimately linked to the nature of God and Providence. While Manon treats this problem of evil through the complex psychological states of Des Grieux, which are complicated by his deep-felt religious aspirations and by the misfortunes which befall the protagonists, Madame de Luz is a more explicit though schematic statement of the problem of evil. While Des Grieux's exposition of pleasure as the natural absolute of man links Manon to the materialists like Sade who exalt passion and moral evil, Des Grieux's basic innocence, his "good intentions" cloud that comparison. Whereas a Thurin, who expounds a similar doctrine of pleasure and who commits evil for the sake of evil, is fundamentally a Sadian type, his presence in Madame de Luz makes Duclos' novel a clear antecedent to the fictional universes of Laclos and of Sade.

Marivaux

For reasons of chronology, I will now discuss La vie de Marianne, Pamela, and La Nouvelle Héloise, three novels which, in the main, contrast with Madame de Luz.

These works are particularly important in establishing the novel of sensibility in French literature. This genre eventually displaced those termed the impersonal, the analytical and the licentious.

The publication of La Vie de Marianne was contemporaneous with that of Manon Lescaut and Les Lettres de la marquise. It appeared in parts in 1731, 1734, 1735, 1736, 1737 and 1742. One regrets that Marivaux did not conclude it. La Vie de Marianne is a long novel, episodic in nature as its dates of publication suggest. Deloffre classes it with the "genre romanesque ou galant" because of the role of chance, the passiveness of the heroine and the conception of love as a noble sentiment.[28] In length, Marianne resembles the extended seventeenth-century heroic novels and contrasts with the brevity of Madame de Luz. This difference is striking when we consider that books two and three of Marianne describe one single day in the life of the heroine; this section is almost as long as Duclos' entire novel.

A third-person narrative marks Madame de Luz; Marivaux, on the contrary, adopts the first person and pretends his novel is a countess' memoirs, found in a country estate near Rennes. The "I" form adds credibility to the

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[28]Marivaux, La Vie de Marianne, ed. Frédéric Deloffre (Paris, 1963), p. vi. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

story as the countess recounts her youthful adventures and misfortunes; it permits a conversational style, the inclusion of portraits, moral and social reflexions, and digressions, as well as a detailed analysis of the heroine's feelings. The events of the novel serve to bring out the moral and psychological nature of the heroine and provoke her reflections. Marianne's reflexions account for the prolixity of the novel and are a principal method for revealing the personality of his heroine. This was, of course, Marivaux's overriding intention. He was successful:

> Le roman français n'offrait jusqu'alors aucune figure qui fut si complète et si minutieuse. Pour la première fois, un personnage vit tout entier devant nous, non pas à telle heure choisie ni au gré d'une aventure exceptionnelle, mais à chaque instant de sa vie, du moins pendant plusieurs années.[29]

Duclos, as we have seen, does not concentrate on an extensive character portrayal since his purpose is philosophical and ironic.

The different novelistic aims of the two authors, as well as their varying personalities, are manifest in their respective styles. Marivaux's expression is characterized by an effort to make minute distinctions: " . . . la forme particulière que prend la finesse de Marivaux consiste à pousser plus loin que les distinctions communes"

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[29]Marcel Arland, Marivaux (Paris, 1950), p. 55.

(lxi). As a result, his sentences are often long and include appositions and other linguistic devices intended to define varying shades of sentiment. Duclos' manner of writing, as we have noted above, is direct; his sentences tend to be short, concise and aphoristic.

The memoir form, purporting to be a true biography, warrants the incorporation of all social milieux encountered by the heroine. Marivaux is justified, then, in including a wide social spectrum, ranging from the common people of Paris to the aristocracy. Nowhere is his description of the common people more piquant than in the dispute between Madame Dutour and the coachman, an event which prompts Marianne to trace a general portrait of the Parisian common people. Duclos, of course, is not innovative; he follows classical precedent, restricting the society in Madame de Luz to elements closely associated with the aristocracy.

The two novels are alike in portraying the misadventures of a virtuous heroine. Early in Marivaux's novel Marianne introduces this theme in a vein similar to Duclos' opening sentence in Madame de Luz: " . . . il faut que la terre soit un séjour bien étranger pour la vertu, car elle ne fait qu'y souffrir." (p. 18). This theme is worked out in the events of the novel. Marianne is an orphan whose virtue is threatened in the first three books by the "Tartuffe" M. Climal. However, Marianne has been brought up by a virtuous woman, whose legacy to the heroine

is an apology of virtue (p. 19). Marianne's sense of virtue is due not only to her upbringing, but also to the superior quality of her soul. She is no ordinary orphan of low birth and low character. While the social position of her parents remains a mystery, it is hinted that her mother was of high birth: " . . . j'étais vêtue d'une manière trop distinguée pour n'être que la fille d'une femme de chambre" (p. 11). In addition, Marianne is sure that she was born of parents of quality. Her natural sense of virtue, her sensibility, and her innate superiority contrast with the vulgarity of Madame Dutour and are evident to Madame Miran and to Valville. Now, although the novel is unfinished, the critic is safe in theorizing that Marivaux may have intended to reveal Marianne's parentage by some deus ex machina, similar perhaps to the strawberry mark in Fielding's Joseph Andrews. This turn of events is implied from the very beginning of the novel by the editor's statement that the memorialist is a countess. Thus, from the first pages of the work, we know that Marianne is a novel of social conquest. Although the virtuous heroine may be for a time at the mercy of vicious people, virtue eventually masters vice.

Of Marivaux's wicked characters, two resemble Hardouin: M. Climal and the Abbé of Book IX. All three characters are religious hypocrites whose religious affiliations serve lecherous ends. Climal is a faux-dévot

who, like Hardouin, has a reputation for piety. But in contrast to Duclos' debauched priest, Climal is a weak but not thoroughly bad man. His deathbed repentance bears out this appraisal. Climal is representative of Marivaux's characters in general; with the exception of the Abbé, they are neither saints nor devils. In addition, none of them expounds an ethic justifying vice. In both novels, their vicious treatment of Marianne and Madame de Luz leads to pathetic scenes depicting the emotions of the heroines.

In Marianne, if fate is kind to most of the characters because they are not fundamentally evil, it deals harshly indeed with the unrepentant Abbé who debauched a nun and who played a major role in the plot to ruin Tervière's reputation. He is repudiated by his uncle, the Barron de Sercour, is later jailed and dies in prison. His fate contrasts with that of Thurin, Marsillac and Hardouin, who go unpunished for their crimes. Duclos, of course, implies that Providence rewards vice. Marivaux contends the very opposite: "L'abbé était un perverti, un faux-dévot en un mot, et Dieu, qui distingue nos faiblesses de nos crimes, ne lui fit pas la même grâce qu'à elle [the nun the Abbé seduced]" (p. 464). In fact, throughout the novel Providence plays a significant role in determining the character's fate. Very early in the novel Marianne defines the source of her experiences: "Le destin ne tarda pas à me les [les aventures] annoncer; car dans la

vie d'une femme comme moi, il faut bien parler du destin" (p. 17). Destiny, which is equated with Providence, is a positive force whose ways Marianne may not understand, but whose wisdom she can trust:

> Marivaux rejette l'idée qu'un hasard aveugle préside à ce qui nous arrive . . . . Qu'il s'agisse du malheur initial qui la [Marianne] frappe ou d'autres accidents facheux ou providentiels, tout doit être rapporté à l'intervention de ce destin tantôt complice et tantôt malicieux . . . . Marianne se livre à son destin, non par un fatalisme aveugle, mais parce qu'elle sait qu'elle peut lui faire confiance (pp. 1-li).

Marivaux's optimistic assessment of the role of Providence and his heroine's eventual conquest of obstacles to her happiness posit this novel in the comic tradition:

> . . . comedy envisions a world which is not only good, or at least potentially so if men only have the sense to recognize it, but one which works unsystematically, in which there is no traceable chain of cause and effect. Furthermore, it is a world which quite surprisingly moves men without their volition toward their destiny. If character makes plot in tragedy, the world often manages it in comedy, and the deus ex machina, coincidence, sudden reversals--a fortunate shift of the wind or the chance discovery of a lost will--are the devices by which its workings are manifested.[30]

And most important to comedy is the happy ending. In Marianne chance works out the destiny of an unfortunate orphan girl who becomes a countess.

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[30]Alvin B. Kernan, The Plot of Satire (Hew Haven and London, 1965), pp. 194-195.

In contrast, Duclos' treatment of the misfortunes of virtue is in the tradition of irony and tragedy. It is "like a comedy in reverse."[31] In addition, Madame de Luz is like an ironic tragedy because: " . . . the ironic element increases, the heroic decreases, and the characters look further away and in smaller perspective."[32] This is of course precisely the effect Duclos projects in Madame de Luz. Not only is the heroine's death the tragic resolution of the story, but there is nothing heroic about that death.

Contemporaries associated Duclos and Marivaux's novels because they treated similar subject matter, illustrated by Diderot's tongue-in-cheek comment:

> Formule d'un antisomnifère des plus violents
> . . . . Prenez de . . . .
> De Marianne de du Paysan parvenu, par . . . quatre pages
> Des Egarements du coeur, une feuille.
> Des Confessions, vingt-cinq lignes et demie.[33]

However, in spite of superficial thematic similarities, we have remarked distinct differences between Madame de Luz and Marianne in the style, the novelistic intention and the moral nature of the villains. Marivaux's principal intention is to develop in detail the character of his heroine and the events serve that purpose. Duclos, to the contrary, uses his heroine's misfortunes for philosophical

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[31] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York, 1966), p. 216.

[32] Ibid., p. 221.

[33] Les Bijoux indiscrets (Paris, Nilsson, s.d.), p. 202.

ends. In Marianne, Marivaux depicts a just and active Providence overcoming evil. Duclos, of course, represents the exact opposite. In the development of the novel, Marianne points toward Richardson's Pamela or Virtue Rewarded and La Nouvelle Heloise while Madame de Luz announces the licentious and pessimistic current.

Richardson

The basic similarity of situation between Marianne in the first three books and Richardson's Pamela was not overlooked by French readers of Pamela.[34] But Richardson devotes his whole novel to Mr. B's continuing machinations to seduce Pamela, reserving the last pages to rehabilitate Mr. B's character. In addition, Richardson includes truly sinister characters like Mrs. Jewkes. As a result, Pamela deals almost exclusively with the theme of inflexible chastity and the efforts of a man, driven by lust, to undermine it. Richardson's portrayal of the misadventures of Pamela links his novel with Madame de Luz. Both works were published in 1740.[35] F. C. Green believes that Duclos' description of the misfortunes of virtue prepared French public taste for Richardson's novel.[36]

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[34]Gustave Larroumet quotes Diderot, Grimm, le president Henaut and others. Marivaux, sa vie et ses oeuvres (Paris, 1894), p. 314.

[35]See footnote 1 of my bibliography.

[36]Duclos, Considérations sur les moeurs, ed. F. C. Green (Cambridge, 1939), p. vii.

While it is true that the novels share a common principal theme, they differ radically in length, form, tone and ethical lesson. Pamela's subtitle "Virtue Rewarded" suggests the gulf separating Richardson's treatment of persecuted virtue from Duclos'. Richardson's account, dictated by a Puritan ethic, describes an idealistic social and moral victory: a servant girl who succeeds in protecting her virginity is rewarded with marriage to an aristocrat. The unlikelihood of such an issue is overridden by Richardson's didactic intention:

> . . . Providence never fails to reward . . . honesty and integrity: and that God will, in his own good time, extricate them by means unforeseen, out of their present difficulties, and reward them with benefits unhoped for.[37]

Madame de Luz, of course, develops an antithetical thesis.

In creating this Cinderella-like story, Richardson introduces many strata of society into the novel: the poor farmer, Goodman Andrews, the servants, Mrs. Jarvis and Mrs. Jewkes, the aristocrats, Mr. B. and Lady Davers to name only a few. This tendency is typical of the English novel and contrasts with the tendency of many seventeenth and eighteenth-century French novelists to exclude the lower classes. This difference can be explained in part by the

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[37] Samuel Richardson, Pamela or Virtue Rewarded (New York, 1958), pp. 530-531.

fact that authors like Richardson, bourgeois by birth and by outlook, wrote for a growing literate bougeois audience, while Duclos wrote to please aristocratic readers.

The most significant difference, however, between Pamela and Madame de Luz is Richardson's narrative technique. He adopts the epistolary form to develop Pamela's personality with immediacy, to detail her domestic life and to penetrate the private lives of the characters. His narrative method contrasts with the "selective and summarizing tendency"[38] characteristic of Duclos and most French fiction before 1760. The end product of Richardson's technique is emotional: the reader identifies with the heroine. Richardson does not hesitate to capitalize on the emotionalism inherent in his subject matter to arouse the sensibility of his reader. Richardson's narrative manner creates a new esthetic, one that contrasts with Duclos', and one that Rousseau adopts:

> Both Richardson and Rousseau redefine the kind of response a reader is supposed to make to a novel: from the detached, intellectual, evaluative, we move to the involved, emotional, sympathetic. With the novel of worldliness, the reader's participation was on the levels of epistemology (finding people out) and social ideology (judging the extravagant or mistaken); the measure of realism demanded by such a novel was that of the classically vraisemblable, the morally and psychologically accurate and appropriate; narrative development

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[38] Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959), p. 192.

> was subordinate to scenic representations of manners, and the arrest necessary to present a total "metaphoric" summary and evaluation of character and motive. Clarissa and La Nouvelle Héloïse define the experience of reading as vicarious emotion, and therefore posit new esthetic criteria. Of primary importance now is the tangibility of the atmosphere each novel creates, the physical reality of its fictional world which fosters and authenticates identification.[39]

Rousseau

The influence of Richardson on the French novel is particularly clear in La Nouvelle Héloïse. Like Richardson, Rousseau portrays a benign Providence and proposes to illustrate the rewards of virtue; he adopts the epistolary form, exploits an esthetic of participation, aims at arousing the moral sensibility of his reader through passages which lay bare the souls of his protagonists, details the domestic life of his characters and includes many social levels. However, Rousseau adopts Richardson's narrative technique to deal with French social and ethical concerns and with traditional French literary themes and situations. It is clear that Rousseau intends La Nouvelle Héloïse to be an antidote to the licentious writings of Crébillon fils, Duclos and others and that it is to confound the immorality of Parisians who ridiculed marital fidelity.

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[39]Brooks, pp. 169-170.

> doivent combattre et détruire les maximes des grandes sociétés; ils doivent les montrer fausses et méprisables, c'est-a-dire, telles qu'elles sont. A tous ces titres un Roman, s'il est bien fait, au moins s'il est utile, doit être sifflé, haï, décrié par les gens à la mode . . . .[40]

In opposition to Duclos' development of ontological evil in Madame de Luz, Rousseau is convinced that evil is sociological: "La nature les [les belles âmes] fit, vos institutions les gâtent" (p. 27); "Depuis que tous les sentiments de la nature sont étouffés par l'extreme inégalité, c'est de l'inique despotisme des pères que viennent les vices et les malheurs des enfants . . . . Voulez-vous remédier au mal? remontez à sa source. S'il y a quelque réforme à tenter dans les moeurs publiques, c'est par les moeurs domestiques qu'elle doit commencer, et cela dépend absolument des pères et mères" (p. 24).

Rousseau deals with the same problem as Duclos, marriages of convenience. But if Julie is a victim of a marriage of convenience, as a wife she is also a paragon of virtue to be emulated by her children because:

> les jeunes filles n'ont point de part aux désordres dont on se plaint. En général, leur conduite est regulière, quoique leurs coeurs soient corrompus. Elles obéissent à leurs mères en attendant qu'elles puissent les imiter. Quand les femmes feront leur devoir, soyez sûr que les filles ne manqueront point au leur (p. 24).

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[40]Rousseau, Oeuvres complètes, vol. II (Paris, 1961), p. 22. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

Virtue is contagious and Rousseau intends that his idealized picture of the happy family, made so by the virtuous wife, will infect his readers with like virtue. In his "Seconde préface" Rousseau imagines the kind of effect his novel might have:

> J'aime à me figurer deux époux lisant ce receuil ensemble, y puisant un nouveau courage pour supporter leurs travaux communs, et peut-être de nouvelles vues pour les rendre utiles. Comment pourroient-ils y contempler le tableau d'un ménage heureux, sans vouloir imiter un si doux modèle? (p. 23).

The idealistic portrait of Julie at Clarens and the description of generous souls like Milord Edouard and Wolmar contrast with Duclos' moral nihilists and result from Rousseau's conception of human nature and from his theory of emulation.

In spite of the didactic content, La Nouvelle Héloise is remembered as a great novel of love which, like Madame de Luz, opposes marital virtue and natural inclination. That struggle is all the more painful since the reader participates in the awakening of love between Julie and Saint-Preux before society blocks their rightful union in marriage. The expression of their love introduces a new prose style into the French novel, one that is radically different from the sober, concise and analytical manner of Duclos. Rousseau calls these letters "Hymnes" (p. 16)--a term that suggests the lyrical nature of so many of them.

In fact, the images, the rythmn, the repetition of sounds and the inspiration converge to create lyrical prose poetry.

The love of Julie and Saint-Preux is expressed in the most memorable and most lyrical passages. Their sentiments, like those of Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran, are natural and good. In addition, in VI, letter 6, Julie explains that she and Saint-Preux have purified and transfigured their love into a tender friendship. We have pointed out that a similar transformation occurs while Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran are in Burgundy. However, in both novels, passion is ever ready to reassert itself. Although Rousseau sets out to rehabilitate marital virtue through the idealized portrayal of life at Clarens in Book IV, Julie's excursion with Saint-Preux on the lake in Book V and Julie's last letter to him illustrate her lasting passion:

> Oui, j'eus beau vouloir étouffer le premier sentiment qui m'a fait vivre, s'il s'est concentré dans mon coeur. Il s'y réveille au moment qu'il n'est plus à craindre; il me soutient quand mes forces m'abandonnent; il me ranime quand je me meurs. Mon ami, je fais cet aveu sans honte; ce sentiment resté malgré moi fut involontaire, il n'a rien coûté à mon innocence; tout ce qui dépend de ma volonté fut pour mon devoir. Si le coeur qui n'en dépend pas fut pour vous, ce fut mon tourment et non pas mon crime (p. 741).

At the end of the novel inclination once again threatens marital fidelity but death saves Julie from potential

adultery: "Un jour de plus, peut-être, et j'étais coupable" (p. 471).

Like Duclos, then, Rousseau treats the theme of happiness in the context of marriage. Rousseau's ideal of happiness, like that of Duclos, is the reconciliation of heart and reason, passion and peace of mind:

> . . . les plus doux sentimens devenus légitimes ne seront plus dangereux; quand il ne faudra plus les étouffer on n'aura plus à les craindre. Loin de résister à des sentimens si charmans, nous en ferons à la fois nos devoirs et nos plaisirs; c'est alors que nous nous aimerons tous plus parfaitement, et que nous goûterons véritablement réunis les charmes de l'amitié, de l'amour et de l'innocence (p. 671).

Although he ostensibly sets out to equate happiness with marital fidelity, the ordeal at the lake and the last pages of his novel dovetail neatly with one of the moral lessons in Madame de Luz: marital fidelity per se cannot be equated with peace of mind and happiness.

La Nouvelle Héloïse is a powerful novel because Rousseau is true to human nature and does not permit his moral purpose to pervert the faithful rendering of the passion of his protagonists. Rousseau's novel contrasts with Duclos' treatment of moral nihilism and of ontological evil. However, the point of view of the narrator in Madame de Luz who condemns libertinism and Duclos' portrayal of the legitimate rights of true love suggest that Duclos' personal moral ideal is similar to that of Rousseau:

> Duclos substitutes a form of love in which the heart and the senses, amitié and amour-physique, provide the dominant ingredients. . . . Belonging to the Regency, he is not one to eliminate the physical element from love. At the same time, he announces Rousseau's generation, for his notion of amitié contains already gentle overtones of virtue which becomes a prime consideration in the ideal of love of the Nouvelle Héloise.[41]

Voltaire

Two works by Voltaire, Rousseau's contemporary and his opposite in certain personality traits, resemble Madame de Luz. Voltaire's knowledge of Duclos and of Duclos' writings can be established without difficulty. There are approximately two hundred and fifty references to Duclos in Voltaire's correspondence, including letters addressed directly to Duclos. Moreover, there can be no doubt that Voltaire was familiar with Duclos' literary works. He praises Acajou and Zirphilie[42] and l'Histoire de Louis XI,[43] comments on the Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des moeurs du XVIII^e siècle,[44] recommends

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[41]Viktoria Skrupskelis, Duclos as a Moralist (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Illinois, 1966), p. 219.

[42]Voltaire's Correspondance (Genève, 1953-). Letter no. 2731.

[43]Letter no. 2849.

[44]Letter nos. 4212, 4224, 8214n., 8248, 11525, 11588.

reading Duclos because of his style,[45] and evaluates the Confessions de comte de *** as follows:

> J'ai lu enfin les Confessions du Comte de ***: car il faut toujours être comte ou donner les mémoires d'un homme de qualité. J'aime mieux ces confessions que celles de St. Augustin; mais franchement ce n'est pas là un bon livre, un livre à aller à la postérité. Ce n'est qu'un journal de bonnes fortunes, une histoire sans suite, un roman sans intrigues, un ouvrage qui ne laisse rien dans l'esprit, et qu'on oublie comme le héros oublie ses anciennes maîtresses. Cependant je conçois que le naturel et la vivacité du style, et surtout le fond du sujet aura réjoui les vieilles et les jeunes, et que ces portraits qui conviennent à tout le monde, ont dû plaire aussi à tout le monde.[46]

Voltaire was, then, familiar with Duclos' writings and even though he does not refer to Madame de Luz in his correspondence, it is difficult to believe that he was not also familiar with such a scandalous success as Madame de Luz, a novel present in so many boudoirs. Voltaire may have considered Duclos' first novel a bagatelle, an attitude he adopted toward the genre in general.[47] His disposition toward the novel may account for his silence concerning Madame de Luz. Although one cannot point to a

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[45] Letter no. 8803.

[46] Letter no. 2420.

[47] "As a rule he [Voltaire] disliked novels, considering them frivolous, and made exceptions only for the short oriental tale provided with a philosophical background." Norman L. Torrey, The Spirit of Voltaire (New York, 1938), p. 106.

direct statement by Voltaire that he read this novel and had it in mind when he composed certain scenes in his tales, it is nevertheless plausible. Now it is common knowledge to students of literature that the themes of Providence, good and evil, happiness and persecuted virtue are present in most of Voltaire's _contes_ (c.f. _Zadig_, _Candide_, _L'Histoire de Jenni_), but his manner of treating these themes in _L'Ingénu_ and _Cosi-Sancta_ immediately brings to mind _Madame de Luz_. Both of Voltaire's tales were written after Madame de Luz at a time when Duclos' reputation was at its zenith; _L'Ingénu_ was published in 1767 and _Cosi-Sancta_ in 1784. We know that Voltaire was quick to parody philosophic ideas and literary plots which had gained notoriety and it seems that _Madame de Luz_ popularized the theme of persecuted virtue so that it became a commonplace after 1740. It is plausible that Voltaire parodies _Madame de Luz_ in certain scenes in _L'Ingénu_ and in _Cosi-Sancta_, and presumed his readers would recall the plight of Madame de Luz.

In _L'Ingénu_, Voltaire creates a moral situation very similar to that of Madame de Luz. In order to save the life of her future husband, l'Ingénu, Madame de Saint-Ange, is forced to have sexual relations with a powerful nobleman, M. de St.-Pouange. Like Madame de Luz, she is "entourée

. . . de pièges"[48] created by evil men. Her innocence makes her vulnerable and in desperation she turns for advice to a Jesuit who, like Hardouin, uses casuistry to justify a moral evil; the Père Tout-A-Tous puts religion in the service of evil. Moreover, like Madame de Luz, Madame de St-Ange does not clearly distinguish between a misfortune and a crime even though l'Ingenu makes it clear that crime and innocence depend on the intention of the agent: "Vous [Madame de St-Ange] coupable! lui dit son amant [l'Ingénu]; non, vous ne l'êtes pas; le crime ne peut être que dans le coeur, le vôtre est à la vertu et à moi" (p. 297). But Madame de St-Ange feels guilt because she believes that she has sacrificed her virtue. According to human notions of justice, her fundamental innocence and her ordeal, ought to qualify her for happiness. However, she falls ill and dies while her persecutors do not suffer. Voltaire concludes that "malheur n'est bon à rien" (p. 301). The whole tale deals with ontological evil, but in his tongue-in-cheek tone, Voltaire does not trace it back to its ultimate source, Providence, as he does in other contes. After reading both L'Ingenu and Madame de Luz the reader is left with the same unresolved question: why should the innocent suffer and the evil go unpunished? Just as in

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[48]Voltaire, Romans et contes (Paris, 1954), p. 286. Subsequent reference to this edition will appear in the text.

Madame de Luz, the role of the priest in L'Ingénu suggests that evil is related to Providence. In fact, given the Christian concept of the nature of God, the problem of ontological evil leads ultimately to the nature of Providence and the role of Providence in the human condition.

Cosi-Sancta, like Madame de Luz, is an explicit statement of the relationship of ontological evil and Providence. Furthermore, this conte resembles Madame de Luz in too intimate a way to dismiss lightly the possibility that Voltaire was not parodying the theme of persecuted virtue as expressed in Duclos' novel.

Voltaire begins his tale with a prediction by a priest that Cosi-Sancta will suffer because of her virtue, will have to commit three marital infidelities, but will nevertheless be canonized. One assumes, of course, that the priest is the recipient of a religious revelation from an all-knowing God. Like Madame de Luz and the traditional heroine, Cosi-Sancta was made to marry an older man. Later, she falls in love with a young man her age, but resists her passion in the name of virtue. In spite of her virtuous conduct, the suitor persists and is eventually killed by the jealous husband. At this juncture in the story, the narrator refers directly and ironically to Providence:

> Cosi-Sancta se ressouvint alors de l'oracle; elle craignit fort d'en accomplir le reste. Mais, avant bien fait réflexion qu'on ne peut

> vaincre sa destinée, elle s'abandonna à la Providence, qui la mena au but par les chemins du monde les plus honnêtes. (p. 656).

The irony of this passage is clear in light of subsequent events. The "chemins . . . les plus honnêtes" are no less than three acts of rape. The first instance reminds the reader of Madame de Luz, who was also the victim of three rapes. In order to save the life of her husband who is charged with the murder of her suitor, Cosi-Sancta is forced to cede her virtue to the proconsul Acindynus. On two other occasions she gives up her virtue in order to save the life of a brother and the life of her son. Now according to dogmatic morality, she is guilty of evil. Nevertheless she is canonized and her tomb bears the humorous inscription: "Un petit mal pour un grand Bien" (p. 658). In spite of Voltaire's mocking tone, this tale illustrates a serious moral lesson: the end justifies the means. The intention of the agent and the result of the act determine the ethical nature of the act. Norman Torrey has given ample proof that Voltaire practiced this principle in his daily life.[49] In Le Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire makes it very clear that his concept of virtue is completely devoid of religious or metaphysical dimensions:

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[49]Torrey, pp. 120-139.

> Qu'est-ce que vertu? Bienfaisance envers le prochain. Puis-je appeler vertu autre chose que ce qui me fait du bien? La vertu entre les hommes est un commerce de bienfaits; celui qui n'a nulle part à ce commerce ne doit point être compté.[50]

This is of course the very attitude that Duclos adopts in Madame de Luz when he distinguishes between a crime and a misfortune. Religion does not determine the morality of human conduct. In judging acts human and circumstantial elements must be weighed; the intention of the agent and the conditions under which the act is committed, as well as the result, determine the goodness or badness of an act. Neither Voltaire nor Duclos tolerates formulas, religious or other, which determine a priori the moral nature of an act. Their moral relativism justifies both the actions of Cosi-Sancta and those of Madame de Luz and is also at the heart of their attitudes toward happiness and Providence.

Both writers see the human condition in strictly human terms. They reject the notions of eternal reward for terrestrial suffering. It is for this reason that they treat the role of Providence in the suffering of their heroines in such a negative way. The suffering of the innocent does seem unjust if one denies the possibility of reward after death. Neither writer alludes to this

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[50]Voltaire, Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1828), vol. VIII, pp. 373-374.

Christian belief the better to stress the disparity between the moral goodness of their heroines and the ignominy of their fate. Both writers are fundamentally Epicureans; their notions of good and bad ultimately depend on the question "what is the best way to bring about earthly happiness?" This question is asked with the implicit belief that "Malheur n'est bon à rien" (p. 301).

The problem of evil and of earthly happiness are also key questions in the last two novels I shall discuss, Les Liaisons dangereuses and Justine.

Laclos

Laclos was born in 1741, the year that Madame de Luz was first published. Les Liaisons dangereuses first appeared in 1782, the year that the third edition of Madame de Luz was published. These coincidences indicate that Duclos was very much a literary presence during Laclos' formative years. Laclos grew up during the years that Duclos was at the height of his literary popularity and of his political influence in the Académie Française. Versini points out that Les Liaisons dangereuses reveals a Laclos who possesses a solid reading background:

> La fréquence des citations, des reminiscences et des allusions, coquetterie de l'homme cultivé, avertit que la formation de Laclos est avant tout livresque. S'il [Laclos] a pu réussir sans coup d'essai, sans laisser de ces oeuvres de jeunesse si précieuses pour l'étude de génèse, c'est qu'il a su profiter

> sans esclavage de tout un passé et emmagasiner par la lecture une culture et une science de l'homme jusqu'au jour où il a pu en faire la synthèse . . . .[51]

Given the popularity of Duclos' writings during Laclos' adolescence and Laclos' broad reading knowledge, it is improbable that Laclos was not familiar with Duclos' most successful novels, Madame de Luz and les Confessions du Comte ***. Laclos makes no mention of Duclos' works in his private or public writings, but the alert critic is conscious of certain general similarities between the two men's work, affinities which Meister sums up:

> Laclos a pu cependant s'inspirer de la sécheresse nette, abstraite et distinguée du style de Duclos, de la morale et de la stratégie amoureuse que développent ses séducteurs, de la physiologie de l'amour-vanité qui s'étale en particulier dans les Mémoires sur les moeurs, d'un romanesque, enfin, qui ne s'attache qu'à l'analyse psychologique et fait, avec plus ou moins de sincérité, profession de ne dépeindre le mal que pour le réprimer.[52]

According to Tilly's Mémoires Laclos foresaw the immediate success of Les Liaisons dangereuses due to the licentious nature of its themes and plot.[53] Could the success of Madame de Luz, also due in great part to the

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[51] p. 641.

[52] p. 136.

[53] Mémoires du Comte Alexandre de Tilly, pour servir à l'histoire des Lettres en France depuis MDCCLXII, jusqu'à nos jours, ou Journal d'observation (1828), as quoted in Laclos, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1959), pp. 707-712.

licentious nature of its themes and plot, have influenced Laclos' choice of subject matter?

The direct influence of Madame de Luz on Laclos' novel may be a question of speculation and even a moot point, but there can be no doubt that both novels participate in a common literary tradition. Versini's discussion of Les Liaison dangereuses clearly shows that Laclos' novel is "un point d'aboutissement, un carrefour où de multiples traditions sont confrontées."[54] Our discussion will compare Madame de Luz and Les Liaisons dangereuses and will demonstrate that Duclos' novel represents one of these literary traditions.

A. Augustin Thierry states that Les Liaisons dangereuses could be subtitled "la vanité dans le crime."[55] The epistolary structure of the novel develops this theme of the crimes perpetrated by amour-vanité like a mathematical formula. Jean-Luc Seylaz gives us a detailed analysis of what he calls "la géométrie sensible" of the novel: the rigorous structure created by the careful juxtaposition of letters. Laclos' novel is a diabolical comedy of manners with a unique nucleus, the libertine couple:

> Ce qui domine les Liaisons dangereuses et leur donne une unité organique, c'est donc la

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[54]Versini, p. 16.

[55]Les Liaisons dangereuses de Laclos (Paris, 1930), p. 45.

> complicité du couple Valmont-Merteuil. C'est aussi leur duplicité, ce double visage des protagonistes: Valmont amoureux (ou plutôt feignant de l'être) et roué; Mme de Merteuil femme du monde respectable et femme perverse.[56]

Laclos carries the classical notion of esthetic distance to an extreme of perfection. His point of view is absent from the novel while Valmont and Merteuil's points of view dominate the novel. Their letters set its tone, one of complete sexual licence and cultivated persiflage; one of intellectual superiority; one which ridicules traditional values; one which reinforces the ineluctable triumph of evil. The epistolary form permits the characters to direct the action of the novel from their own point of view without obvious intrusions by the author. Brooks compares Laclos' technique with Duclos' and concludes:

> Whereas in the novels of Crébillon, Duclos, and Marivaux--as in the writings of the moralistes--we were guided by the distanced evaluations, the "pénétrations" and "fixations" of the narrator, here, in the epistolary drame the characters alone use these techniques on others: ways of knowing and of rendering are weapons for their own personal combats and no narrator or reader's surrogate intervenes to arrest the battle and suggest final judgements.[57]

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[56]Jean-Luc Seylaz, Les Liaisons dangereuses et la création romanesque chez Laclos (Genève, 1958), p. 27.

[57]Brooks, pp. 174-175.

Laclos' own moral point of view vis-a-vis that of his protagonists is still very much a mystery, a fact which has emptied many a critical inkwell, but the problem remains unresolved.

We have noted a similar problem with regard to Madame de Luz: the Thurin ethics go practically unchallenged during the novel. As a result, a reader might infer that in Duclos' judgement Thurin's views are justified just as he might conclude that Valmont-Merteuil represent Laclos' ethical point of view. However, although the narrator does not openly challenge Thurin's views, which are given credence by the events depicted, he does propose an alternative solution, manifest in Saint-Géran's conduct. No such alternative is presented in Les Liaisons dangereuses. As a result, by careful reading of Madame de Luz the critic can extract an implied moral; no such implied moral is present in Les Liaisons. This difference leads us to conclude that Duclos is consistently more concerned with ethical problems than with novelistic technique, whereas Laclos sacrifices an implied moral to the dictates of esthetic perfection.

While the novelistic form of Les Liaisons dangereuses and Madame de Luz differ, parallels can be drawn in characterization. We have already shown that both Madame de Luz and Crébillon fils' marquise represent traditional moral and religious values inherited from the seventeenth

century. Madame de Tourvel is also an anachronistic character who has much in common with Madame de Luz. Like Madame de Luz, la présidente's vocabulary includes elements of seventeenth century usage which contrast with the style of Merteuil and Valmont. Jean-Luc Seylaz and Dorothy Thelander discuss la présidente's use of traditional linguistic resources as a means by which Laclos establishes her filiation with the French classical heroine.[58] Her moral struggle, like Madame de Luz's, is the traditional one between will to virtue and natural inclination. Unlike Madame de Luz, Madame de Tourvel's modesty and fundamental sense of virtue, besieged by the psychological machinations of the consummate actor Valmont, lack the power to keep instinct in check.

The bond linking Valmont, Merteuil, Thurin and Hardouin is evident: they are libertines. Like Thurin, Valmont is cynical and expresses a comparable pessimistic evaluation of human nature: "Voilà bien les hommes! Tous également scélérats dans leurs projets, ce qu'ils mettent de faiblesse dans l'exécution, ils l'appellent probité."[59]

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[58]Seylaz, pp. 57-76.

Dorothy Thelander, Laclos and the Epistolary Novel (Genève, 1963), pp. 136-137.

[59]Laclos, Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1959), p. 137).

Like Hardouin, Valmont does not hesitate to use religion to achieve blasphemous ends. But Valmont distinguishes himself from these predecessors by the refinement of his technique. He does not blackmail his victim into submission like Thurin or use opium like Hardouin. He understands the basic sensual nature of human beings and takes great pleasure in the art of seduction. Each obstacle and complication to that seduction is invited. Thurin and Hardouin, to the contrary, are frustrated by obstacles because their purposes are to derive physical pleasure from intercourse as quickly as possible. Thus, for them, physical pleasure is an end, whereas for Valmont and Merteuil:

> . . . le plaisir apparaît . . . davantage comme un moyen que comme une fin; et parmi les motifs qui les animent, les plus ordinaires sont le goût de la difficulté, celui de la virtuosité et le plaisir que procure la maîtrise de soi et des autres.[60]

Valmont acts out of almost pure vanity, while Thurin and Hardouin are motivated almost exclusively by the desire for physical pleasure. Compared to the intellectual manner in which Valmont plans and executes his assault on virtue, Thurin and Hardouin's actions seem like those of crude and bungling neophytes.

What is true of Valmont is equally true of Madame de Merteuil. She is a character without precedent in the

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[60]Seylaz, p. 51.

eighteenth-century novel. Her presence in Les Liaisons dangereuses sets Laclos' work off from Madame de Luz and other licentious writings. Her "profession of faith" in letter 81 reveals a character formed through rigorous self-analysis and self-control. These qualities make possible her extreme duplicity and are in part responsible for her revolt against the slavery of women, a revolt which sets the stage for the novel's final outcome.

As for Cécile and Danceny, they are mediocre human beings whose moral weakness, like Marsillac's, gives credence to statements that human nature is morally corrupt. They vacillate between good and evil and act according to circumstances. Early in the novel for example, Danceny would like to seduce Cécile, but hesitates. Soon after, Madame de Merteuil seduces him without resistance, just as Valmont debauches Cécile without opposition. However, when Danceny learns of Valmont's seduction of Cécile, he is outraged and morally indignant.

These characters reflect a society which is very similar to the one described by Duclos. It is corrupt and celebrates the exploits of the libertines. As Thierry says with respect to Valmont:"...chez lui la vie mondaine exaspère la sensibilité en l'irritant."[61] This society

derides virtue just as Thurin did. Virtue is not an ideal to be practiced but a ridiculous anachronism. But while in Madame de Luz the attack on conventional ethical notions is limited to a few sections of the book, the attack on traditional moral values is the overriding tone of the Valmont-Merteuil letters, and thereby of Laclos' novel as a whole:

> . . . le roman entier peut être considéré comme une entreprise de démystification, dans la mesure où les valeurs attachées traditionnellement ou conventionnellement à l'image de l'homme classique se trouvent sans cesse récusées et soumises à l'action corrosive du persiflage.[62]

Duclos' novel avoids the adoption of the ethical point of view of its libertine characters, by the inclusion of two other moral points of view. On the contrary, Laclos' novel concentrates on the elaboration of an apology for a libertine ethic. But what sets Laclos' novel apart from Madame de Luz and other licentious writings is Laclos' unique variation of the theme of libertinage.

Most licentious writings depict or exalt the pleasures of the flesh at the expense of spiritual love; but the whole action of Les Liaisons dangereuses is an exaltation of reason and intelligence at the expense of the spiritual dimension of human nature. In the course of Laclos' novel, intelligence, which under-estimates the force of human

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[62]Seylaz, p. 95.

emotions becomes a fatality itself. What is fascinating in Les Liaisons dangereuses is that Laclos combines the principal character trait of Madame de Luz and those of her oppressors in the characters of Valmont and Merteuil: Laclos' protagonists exhibit the will power of Madame de Luz and the moral nihilism of Thurin and Hardouin. Laclos portrays consummate vice derived from the passions dominated by reason--a total perversion of traditional ethics according to which reason, governing the passions, will result in virtue. Moreover, Laclos portrays the total separation of love, passion and the sexual act. Valmont and Merteuil act out of pure vanity. They adhere to Thurin's principle that pleasure is the fundamental source of human action. They exploit this principle in their relations with others, but they themselves transcend passion through will power. We have shown that Madame de Luz separated heart from action: she could not control her inclination for Saint-Geran, but she could and did control her physical response. This very principle is perverted in Les Liaisons dangereuses, because will power is in the service of evil. The most striking example of this control is Valmont's rejection of la présidente in the name of his libertine principles. There is no doubt that his relationship with Madame de Tourvel is more than a simple physical conquest which gratifies his vanity. In letter 125, he admits that his feelings for la présidente have gotten out of control.

While he cannot control his "heart," his reason does dictate his actions (aided naturally by Madame de Merteuil's promptings) and he sends the letter of rupture to *la présidente*. Thus, just as Madame de Luz rejected passion through will power in the name of virtue, so Valmont rejects his inclination for Madame de Tourvel through will power in the name of vice.

It is this self-control which distinguishes Valmont and Merteuil from Hardouin and Thurin. Thurin and Hardouin are victims of instinct and rape Madame de Luz to satisfy their passions. In Laclos' novel, the complicated machinations of Valmont and Merteuil are the real source of pleasure for the protagonists, while the sexual act itself is de-emphasized. The real intention of Valmont and of Merteuil is to cause the other to admire his tactics. In letter after letter, Valmont and Merteuil insist on the manner in which they prepare the ground for their final assault; " . . . la justesse du calcul leur procure un plaisir sans mesure avec l'importance réelle du succés remporté."[63] Each protagonist seeks an audience in the other and each alternates in exposing his amorous exploits. His intention, like that of play actors, is to capture the imagination and admiration of his audience and to evoke praise and applause at the end of his performance. Ironically, given the degree of the protagonists' pride and

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[63] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

vanity, mutual admiration is not forthcoming and jealousy ensues: vanity, the source of their liberation from emotional relationships becomes the source of their undoing. Will power falls victim to uncontrollable emotion and the protagonists destroy themselves. In contrast, Thurin and Hardouin act autonomously and secretly to satisfy their purely physical drives.

The immorality of Valmont and Merteuil brings up the problem of evil. What is the source of their moral corruption--human nature or society? Versini argues that Laclos, a great admirer of Rousseau, believes that society corrupts man and social evil replaces ontological evil as the cause of immorality:

> Il [Laclos] dénonce les méfaits de l'hypocrisie, du luxe, du danger des liaisons . . . . La société corrompt l'homme et fait de la femme une esclave. Le mal n'est plus de nature ontologique, mais de nature sociologique, et justiciable de réformes ou d'une révolution. Il n'existe qu'en creux.[64]

But it seems to me that the moral evil Laclos portrays goes beyond the scope of sociological evil and that its origins are indeed in the very nature of man. All the adventures of the Liaisons dangereuses taken as a whole portray pervasive moral weakness even among the virtuous. Aside from Mlle de Rosemonde, who is beyond the age of passions and who plays a minor role in the novel, is there

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[64]Versini, p. 625.

a single character who does not exemplify some sort of moral weakness? Madame de Tourvel, for example, hardly seems a victim of social conditions. Her virtue succombs to her own inclination, to her own instinct. Jean-Luc Seylaz is correct to assert that:

> Laclos . . . révélait la toute-puissance de la sensualité . . . . la force terrible de cet instinct dont l'homme est la proie et la puissance redoutable qu'elle donne à ceux qui connaissent le secret et l'exploitent sans scrupule. Nous avons relevé au chapitre II la similitude de comportement chez Cécile et chez Danceny: l'un et l'autre, bien qu'amoureux, cèdent presque sans résister à l'appel de la sensualité. Et nous comprenons maintenant pourquoi les Liaisons on fait scandale . . . . C'était que, en soulignant comme il l'a fait le comportement de ces deux adolescents, Laclos attaquât ouvertement un des préjugés du temps: la croyance traditionnelle en l'innocence et en la pureté des êtres jeunes. Cécile et Danceny peuvent bien, au dénouement, s'enfuir dans un couvent et l'autre à Malte. Ce qu'ils renient, ce n'est pas un moment d'égarement incompréhensible, mais le vrai visage de leur nature humaine, tel que Valmont et Madame de Merteuil l'ont fait apparaître: un visage dépouillé du masque que l'hypocrisie, le conformisme, les conventions sociales s'entendent à lui donner.[65]

Laclos portrays ontological evil just as Duclos does in Madame de Luz. The defeat of Madame de Tourvel is a confirmation of her basic sensuality. Sensuality, the cause for the moral weakness described in Les Liaisons and in Madame de Luz is in human nature; evil in society is a reflection of ontological evil.

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[65]Seylaz, pp. 92-93.

The sensuality in Les Liaisons is, however, completely disassociated from love. Spiritual feelings are scoffed at, as demonstrated by Valmont's analysis of Madame de Tourvel's sentiments. As Gide said: "la veritable debauche dans Les Liaisons . . . [est] . . . la dissociation de l'amour et du plaisir."[66] Duclos' novel shows this disassociation in the actions of Thurin and Hardouin, but it also portrays the reconciliation of sensuality and sentiment in the principal love affair. The Liaisons illustrates the position of Thurin, rendered more formidable by the introduction of the role of the intellect and by the creation of the geometry of sensual conquest. Laclos' novel is a completely pessimistic rendering of human nature, whereas Duclos' offers the possibility of reconciling instinct and feeling.

Thus Les Liaisons dangereuses and Madame de Luz share certain common elements, but Laclos presents them in extreme form. Les Liaisons is written almost exclusively from the point of view of the protagonists, whereas Madame de Luz exposes three points of view, the heroine's, her seducers' and the narrator's. In Les Liaisons no redeeming example of moral righteousness is presented to counterbalance the principles and actions of the protagonists. In Madame de Luz, Duclos also presents moral nihilists who

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[66] Morceaux choisis (Paris, 1921), p. 144.

disassociate sensuality from sentiment, who commit evil and who go unpunished, but he also rehabilitates passion through amour-véritable. Both novels portray a corrupt society, but the source of that corruption is ontological.

In discussing the evolution of the French novel, Bernard Pingaud concludes with regard to La Princesse de Clèves and Les Liaisons: "à la stratégie défensive de la vertu [represented by La Princesse de Clèves] succède la stratégie offensive de la séduction [shown in Les Liaisons]"[67] Duclos' Madame de Luz stands midway between the two extremes. Madame de Luz, like la Princesse de Clèves, successfully protects her virtue in her relationship with Saint-Géran, but Thurin and Hardouin's passions brutally overcome her virtue. Thurin attacks traditional moral values and exposes man's fundamental moral weakness, but he does not erect an intellectual and "infallible" system of seduction which exploits this human flaw. Merteuil and Valmont adopt Thurin's principles and reinforce them with the powers of the intellect. In comparison to Madame de Luz, the epistolary form and the complicity of the designing couple makes Les Liaisons a complete portrayal of the offensive strategy of seduction and a far more concentrated attack on traditional ethical standards.

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[67] Mme de la Fayette par elle-même (Paris, 1959), p. 153.

Sade

Laclos' novel demonstrates one issue of the theme of ontological evil and the pleasure principle: the rational exploitation of moral weakness and the dehumanization of love through will power. In contrast, Sade's Justine represents a more common outcome of libertine philosophy exposed in Madame de Luz: rejection of self-control and justification of moral evil as a manifestation of the dictates of "Nature." Sade's deterministic philosophy is clearly delineated in the three versions of Justine: Les Infortunes de la vertu (1787), Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu (1791), and La Nouvelle Justine (1797). The filiation between Madame de Luz and the three versions of Justine was first suggested by Villenave in 1821:

> Il y a tout lieu de croire que c'est le roman de Duclos qui a donné au comte de Sade la première idée de son infâme Justine ou les malheurs de la vertu. Mais les tableaux tracés par Duclos ne font point rougir la pudeur, et ceux du comte de Sade la révoltent jusqu'au dégoût. La morale du premier ouvrage est triste; celle du second est horrible. Duclos peint les moeurs d'un siècle corrompu; de Sade se livre aux déreglemens d'une imagination en délire: ce sont les rêves d'un cannibale, écrits avec de la boue et du sang par le vice en fureur.[68]

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[68] Duclos, Oeuvres (Paris, 1821), pp. vi-vii.

Villenave's conjecture cannot be proven by any extant statement by Sade. However, Albert-Marie Schmidt, in an article entitled "Duclos, Sade et la littérature féroce," argues persuasively in favor of this hypothesis:

> Entre Madame de Luz et la Justine de Donatien de Sade, ressemblance de ton, de doctrine, de plan, de procédés . . . . nous remarquons tout d'abord, qu'il serait absurde de supposer que Sade, grand liseur, ait pu ignorer l'Hisoire de Madame de Luz, à laquelle le public français de XVIII^e siècle a toujours dispensé ses suffrages. En outre les honneurs divers dont Duclos ne cessa d'être gratifié jusqu'à sa mort (1772) ajoutèrent chaque année à cette ouvrette un lustre nouveau. Elle jetait encore en 1782 un assez vif éclat pour que l'on fut incité à en procurer une édition posthume.[69]

Schmidt goes on to compare specific passages from Les Infortunes and from Madame de Luz which express similar ideas in an analagous vein. Paul Meister agrees with Schmidt's fundamental premise: "Nul doute que Sade ait puisé chez Duclos l'idée première de son roman, à savoir que la vertu est loin d'être ici-bas récompensé par le bonheur."[70] But he disagrees strongly with Schmidt's conclusion that a common philosophical spirit unites Duclos and Sade:

> Rien de plus dangereux, au demeurant, que de vouloir établir une parenté d'esprit et de caractère entre ces deux auteurs . . . . Le rêve d'une gigantesque encyclopédie des anomalies sexuelles, l'athéisme noir, l'obsession du sang et l'esprit libertaire

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[69] Revue des sciences humaines (avril-sept. 1951), p. 151.

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> de Sade ne trouvent pas la moindre place, même au titre de la promesse, chez Duclos. L'auteur de Justine a pu trouver chez Duclos un thème, mais il y a entre eux de parenté ni d'esprit, ni de ton, ni d'art.[71]

In opposition, Lester Crocker defends Schmidt's position and dismisses Meister's arguments as constituting too narrow an interpretation of the novel:

> Paul Meister takes Duclos at his word, when the latter writes that his purpose was only to show that a woman can be dishonored without being criminal. He disposes of Duclos' statement ("Baroness de Luz is one of the strangest examples of the misfortunes which follow virtue," and "It seems that a woman's virtue is in this world a foreign being, against which everything conspires") by asserting that they represent only the victim's viewpoint (although she does not utter them). But Duclos' own protestation, the amplitude of the development and its obvious metaphysical implications indicate the contrary. Meister is himself compelled to enlarge the theme to include the idea that fate "is not concerned with punishing or rewarding; it is blind and, in fact, not deserved or undeserved"--a theme which is already perilously close to one he rejects. At the end, however, Meister admits that the reader is right in retaining the thesis which may not have been Duclos'.[72]

With certain reservations, I agree with Crocker. Meister tends to confuse a work of fiction and the personal views of its author. A work of fiction is an autonomous world whose meaning may or may not correspond to the world view of the author. Thurin's philosophy and the obvious

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[71] Ibid., p. 140.

[72] An Age of Crisis (Baltimore, 1959), p. 429.

metaphysical implications of the plot of Madame de Luz may not constitute Duclos' own personal world view. Nevertheless, Duclos the novelist consciously developed themes and a plot which inspired Sade: a pessimistic assessment of human nature, characters who expound a philosophy which justifies vice, and adventures which seem to confirm that Providence rewards the wicked and punishes the virtuous. We shall examine Madame de Luz and Justine to show that they are alike in a skeletal way, but that they differ in fundamental ways too.

We have already established that Duclos adopts a uniform third person narrative. In contrast, Sade combines the third person with the first person: the bulk of his novel is recounted in the first person by Justine, but her narration is contained in a brief objective account of the dominant theme of the novel, the manner in which Providence persecutes virtue. The plots of the two novel are alike in that a good part of the action of Madame de Luz and the unique action of Justine turn on the sexual misfortunes of a heroine whose virtue is beyond reproach and who takes pride in her virtue. But if Duclos exposes a pessimistic philosophy of man and offers examples which confirm that philosophy, the inclusion of the Saint-Géran and Madame de Luz episode and the point of view of the narrator allay the effect of that philosophy and of those examples. Sade's novelistic techniques, on the contrary, are geared solely

to his philosophic ends--a philosophy defined by Maurice Heine as "une conception philosophique, systématiquement pessimiste."[73] Because of his philosophic preoccupations, Sade leaves aside the classical love triangle the better to synthesize the scandalous elements of Madame de Luz: the notion that virtue is anti-Nature; the libertine who philosophizes; licentious adventures in which vice triumphs over virtue; the proposition that Providence succors vice and chastises virtue. Sade exploits these elements systematically; almost every episode in Justine betrays the same formula: at first, Justine lauds Providence as the conserver of virtue; there immediately begins an adventure in which the virtuous heroine is obliged to submit to sexual assaults and perversions; during the course of the adventure, a libertine expounds a philosophy of "Nature" according to which his sexual licence represents the will of "Nature"; Justine escapes and lauds Providence for protecting the virtuous; a new adventure befalls the heroine. Each adventure contradicts Justine's conception of the nature of Providence, since at no time in the novel are the virtuous protected. Justine is spared death at the hands of her persecutors, so that "Nature" can strike her down with a bolt of lightning at the end of the novel. In contrast to the plight of the virtuous, the

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[73] Le Marquis de Sade (Paris, 1950), p. 229.

moral nihilists not only go unpunished, but are actually rewarded for their crimes: the Count de Bressac inherits two fortunes, Rodin becomes the first surgeon to the Empress of Russia, Clément is made head of the Bénédictine order, Roland acquires a vast sum of money, Cardoville is named to the administration of the Province ***, and Saint-Florent is named to the General Supervision of Colonial Trade.

The basic elements of Sade's formula are no doubt present in one adventure or another in Madame de Luz, but Duclos does not employ them systematically to demonstrate the eternal victory of vice over virtue. Duclos vacillates between writing a purely philosophical novel and a classical novel of analysis, between a strictly pessimistic novel and one which offers a middle-of-the-road ethical solution to the problem of sensuality. In contrast, Sade does not hesitate to write a purely philosophical and pessimistic novel, and synthesizes elements from Duclos' novel to exploit his unique theme.

To capitalize on the theme of persecuted virtue, Sade also borrows the basic outlines of certain of Duclos' characters. Madame de Luz and Justine are alike in that both are extremely virtuous, take pride in their virtue, and are passive victims of sexual crimes. But Duclos' heroine is an aristocrat and possesses many qualities which point to her seventeenth-century ancestor, Madame de Clèves.

In particular, she illustrates the French classical heroine's moral struggle between duty and inclination. In contrast, Justine is a bourgeois whose language and moral notions do not reflect those of a seventeenth-century classical heroine. She is never a victim of passion, for she is consistently repulsed by the actions of her assailants. Her virtue is not due to literary parentage with a particular model as is the case with Mme de Luz whose character resembles la Princess de Cleves. Justine's sense of virtue is the result of her physical constitution. Sade makes this clear at the beginning of the novel by contrasting Justine with her sister Juliette:

> . . . Juliette . . . dont le caractère et l'esprit étaient à fort peu de choses près aussi formés qu'à l'âge de trente ans, . . . ne parut sensible qu'au plaisir d'être libre, sans réflechir un instant aux cruels revers qui brisaient des chaînes. Pour Justine, sa soeur, venant d'atteindre sa douzième année, d'un caractère sombre et mélancolique, douée d'une tendresse, d'une sensibilité surprenantes, n'ayant au lieu de l'art et de la finesse de sa soeur, qu'une ingénuité, une candeur, une bonne foi qui devaient la faire tomber dans bien des pièges. . . . Cette jeune fille avait une physionomie toute différente de celle de Juliette; autant on voyait d'artifice, de manège, de coquetterie dans les traits de l'une, autant on admirait de pudeur, de délicatesse et de timidité dans l'autre.[74]

It is precisely the "physionomie" or physical make-up of Justine which causes her to adhere to virtue. In

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[74] Oeuvres Complètes du Marquis de Sade (Paris, 1966), vol. 14, pp. 235-236.

contrast, Duclos never discusses the reasons for Madame de Luz's will to virtue, but the reader gathers that it is a combination of basic goodness and of her concept of love derived from mutual esteem. Thus, the cause for Madame de Luz's conduct are more complex than that which motivates Justine.

Both novels portray libertines who commit evil and who justify their acts by claiming that human nature is corrupt. But the reader notes an important difference in the manner in which Duclos and Sade develop these characters. To create his moral reprobates, Duclos consciously adheres to the classical principle of universality. His libertines are meant to reflect general human nature. The crimes of Thurin, Marsillac, Maran and Hardouin are not exceptional since they show normal sexual instinct aroused, taking advantage of circumstances, and achieving resolution by natural means. In contrast, Sade's libertines go beyond the bounds of common humanity. Sade was aware of this fact and writes in his "Avis de l'Editeur"

> . . . il existe une classe d'hommes chez laquelle le dangereux penchant au libertinage détermine les forfaits aussi effrayants que ceux dont les anciens auteurs noircissaient fabuleusement leurs Ogres et leurs Géants, pourquoi ne pas préférer la Nature à la Fable? Et pourquoi refuser les plus beaux effets dramatiques dans la crainte de n'oser fouiller cette carrière? . . . Qui retiendrait donc le Romancier? Toutes les espèces de vices

> imaginables, tous les crimes possibles ne sont-ils pas à sa disposition? N'a-t-il pas le droit de les peindre tous pour les faire détester aux hommes?[75]

Sade renounces the classical attempt to paint general humanity in order to exploit the exceptional and to achieve a resounding dramatic effect. His characters are, in fact, monstrous examples of moral nihilism and sexual perversion while those of Duclos' exemplify pedestrian sexual drives and conventional immorality.

In spite of this difference of degree, the moral nihilists of both novels belong to the same class of men, the morally corrupt. Villenave, Schmidt and Crocker have compared Madame de Luz and Justine in part because of this similarity and because the events in each novel seem to confirm the ethical notions expressed by Thurin and by Sade's characters. At the root of this ethic is the proposition that human nature is morally corrupt and that instinct rules men. In Madame de Luz, an initial statement by the narrator proposes this theme: "Il semble que la vertu d'une femme soit dans ce monde un être étranger, contre lequel tout conspire" (I, 147). Thurin's defense of pleasure compliments this proposition and the events of the novel bear it out.

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[75] Ibid., p. 49.

Sade's novel is a complete statement, a logical issue, of the philosophical seeds contained in Madame de Luz: the nature of evil is ontological; "Nature" and Providence are anti-virtue; pleasure is the most natural manifestation of human nature. Justine is a hyperbolic statement of the problem of ontological evil since all the people with whom Justine deals are exceptional purveyors of vice. Each of these characters repeats the same well-developed materialistic philosophy which is a logical amplification of certain concepts exposed in Madame de Luz. For Madame Dubois, Coeur-de-fer, the count de Bressac, Saint-Florent, Robin, Roland and the others, "Nature" expresses its dictates through instinct; these dictates must be followed regardless of these persons' traditional moral traits; "Nature" is basically destructive and creates only to destroy; a person who follows "Nature," commits evil and destroys, thus fulfilling the ends of "Nature." For these characters, virtue and emotions such as pity are manifestations of weakness and are unnatural because they impede "Nature's" progress. Like Thurin and Hardouin, they deny "the validity of all distinctions of moral value."[76]

Yet Sade's characters demonstrate an aspect of pleasure unknown to Duclos' libertines: the conjunction

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[76]Crocker, p. xv.

of pain and exquisite pleasure. Neither Thurin, Maran, Marsillac nor Hardouin takes pleasure in torturing his victim. However, this is the very essence of the sadist's sexual experience.

To depict the unusual aspects in the sources of his characters' pleasure, Sade resorts to physical descriptions and methods not unlike those in Gothic novels. Maurice Heine has compared the techniques of Ann Radcliffe, Horace Walpole and Sade and has shown that these writers use analagous methods to arouse the reader's sense of horror.[77] Justine catalogues sadistic acts set in exotic surroundings: for example, Roland's castle with its subterranean torture chamber hung with skeletons; the isolated abbey of Sainte-Marie-des-Bois with its debauched priest and its mysteries; the isolated estate at which Monsieur de Gernande keeps his wife incommunicado so that he can bleed her. Sade does not spare the reader a realistic detailing of the perversions carried out in these strange sites. The whole mood of Justine created by Sade's physical description of the tortures administered to Justine and the Gothic settings contrasts markedly with Duclos' "metaphysical" style, his very sober and classical descriptions, and with the undistinctive settings where the libertines assault Madame de Luz's virtue. In spite of

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[77] "Le Marquis de Sade et le roman noir," reprinted in Oeuvres complètes du Marquis de Sade, vol. 3, pp. 27-48.

common thematic and narrative elements, the overriding tone and effect of Duclos' novel are very different indeed from those in Justine. Duclos narrates events, but makes no effort to instill horror in the reader. In contrast, Sade uses many devices to create an atmosphere of horror.

The manners in which Sade and Duclos write betray two different moral intentions, each growing out of an attitude toward love. Sade is an absolutist who rejects the sentimental dimension of love. Crocker pointedly sums up Sade's revolt against spiritual love:

> Sade conceived one of his main goals to be stripping the idol of love of all its false attractions, restoring it to its status as animal pleasure in which we have the desire and right to wallow, to any excess. . . . Sade, then, destroys the notion of love as something pure and lovely; it is, rather, much worse than merely bestial; it is cruel, and its freest and fullest expression is in torture and death.[78]

The libertines in Justine act out this reduction of love to the status of pure instinct. Likewise in Madame de Luz Thurin and Hardouin exhibit similar motivation and Thurin professes a similar belief. But we must not conclude that Duclos rejects the existence and validity of spiritual love. Unlike Justine, which portrays no example of spiritual love, Madame de Luz does. The principal episode in the novel describes the sentimental attachment of the heroine

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[78] p. 101.

and Saint-Géran--a relationship which transcends physical desire. Moreover, the moral point of view of the narrator counters Thurin's extreme moral position. Even though the events in the novel seem to confirm Thurin's ethical position, one must not discount the attitude of the narrator, whose position takes into account the power of instinct, but does not reject, for all that, the possibility of spiritual love. Madame de Luz and Saint-Géran incarnate that possibility. We have seen that in Duclos' two later novels he does describe perfect love or amour-véritable, which combines the physical and the spiritual. If Madame de Luz is unworthy of our sympathy at the end of the novel, it is because she rejects the possibility of happiness through love. Justine and Madame de Luz are very different in that Sade does not distinguish between pleasure and happiness, while Duclos does.

The count in the Confessions seems to echo the attitude of the narrator in Madame de Luz when he says: "Le plaisir n'est qu'une situation, le bonheur est un état."[79] Thurin, and Sade's libertines deny the validity of spiritual love as a source of happiness and equate happiness with pleasure. However, the narrator in Madame de Luz speaks out against libertinism precisely because

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[79] Romanciers du XVIII[e] siècle (Paris, 1965), p. 297.

it represents constant emotional flux. In contrast, happiness is a spiritual matter and requires the satisfaction of both the body and soul.

The principal theme of Madame de Luz is not exclusively metaphysical evil or the persecution of virtue because it is unnatural, but these themes in relation to man's potential for happiness. Duclos posits amour-véritable as a very real source of happiness and rejects libertinism as a valid one. But in spite of this portrayal of love and of Duclos' own ethical standards, his objective rendering of a philosophy of pleasure through Thurin and his treatment of inflexible virtue persecuted by evil men and by Providence, make Madame de Luz a clear precursor to the three versions of Justine.

Madame de Luz is pre-Sadist to the extent that Duclos' novel contains the roots of a method and a philosophy that Sade will systematically develop and exploit. Yet, as we have noted, there are basic differences between the two novels. Duclos' thought is oriented toward achieving happiness in society, while Sade proposes absolute individual freedom. Duclos adheres to certain classical esthetic and moral norms, while Sade allows his imagination free rein.

Madame de Luz is a hybrid novel which joins elements of the classical novel of analysis with those of the

philosophical novel of adventure. Both novels portray ontological evil and the victory of vice over virtue and implicate Providence in that victory. It is incorrect to equate Duclos' ethical viewpoint with that of his moral nihilists; in contrast, Sade's philosophy of "Nature" is voiced through his novelistic figures. Duclos' dry and analytical style, devoid of physical description, contrasts with Sade's detailing of the physical world. If Duclos aims to portray general humanity, Sade takes pleasure in creating exceptional characters, moral monsters. Duclos proposes the traditional belief in spiritual love, but Sade reduces love to a purely physical phenomenon. In spite of these differences which reflect both the personality of the writers and the period when they were writing, the skeleton of the two novels reveal analagous themes, characters and narrative methods.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

The transitional nature of Mme de Luz is clear in terms of its form and moral observations. The novel's structure is hybrid, combining facets of the classical novel of psychological analysis, which deals exclusively with the analysis of the psychological ravages of passion, and the philosophical tale, which exploits a series of adventures to demonstrate a philosophical thesis. The novel also shows an evolution in ethical thought from the time of Madame de Lafayette.

Madame de Luz represents the mainstream of the eighteenth-century novel, in particular, by its thematic content; this finds expression in the adventures of the ingenuous heroine whose moral standards and world view are negated by her adventures. A comparable mode has its most striking expression in Voltaire's contes philosophiques and in Sade's Justine. Paul Meister suggests that the great success of Duclos' writing is due to his flair for treating problems that occupied his contemporaries.[1] The thematic content of Madame de Luz proves this view. Duclos includes those philosophical and moral problems which run

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[1] Charles Duclos (Genève, 1956), p. 134.

through almost all the major novels of the century. For example, he begins Madame de Luz with a very pessimistic assessment of human nature--an attitude which, as Crocker says, dominates both the theological and secular French thought in the eighteenth century.[2] This conception of human nature finds expression in the novels of Crébillon fils, Prévost, Marivaux, Voltaire, Laclos and Sade. In portraying ontological evil Duclos' novel goes so far as to question the role of Providence in acts of evil. His novel does not describe idealized conduct as do many of the novels of the seventeenth century and as will do La Nouvelle Héloïse. Rather, Duclos portrays the evil committed by morally weak men and by moral nihilists. Hence, his novel illustrates the tendency of the French novel of the eighteenth century to become "the evolving fictional study of human propensity for virtue and vice."[3] Like Marivaux, Richardson, Voltaire and Sade, Duclos illustrates the clash of virtue and crime as well as innocence at the mercy of vice.

Madame de Luz is linked to two separate ethical traditions which dominate the French novel after 1730. These two philosophies have as their roots the problem

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[2]Lester Crocker, An Age of Crisis (Baltimore, 1959), p. xiii.

[3]Sarah M. Penick, A Study of the Novels of Charles Duclos (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, The University of Missouri, 1967), p. 81.

of evil and happiness which so monopolized the scrutiny of eighteenth-century French philosophes and other writers.

The problem of evil, innocence and the human condition is an age old dilemma; Catholic dogma had resolved it with its insistence on original sin, grace, free will and eternal reward and punishment after death. The whole question of the role of Providence in the human condition was brought up anew in the seventeenth century by the Jansenist movement. According to Jansenist logic, original sin totally corrupts man's nature. The consequences of this corruption were given eloquent and logical expression in Pascal's Pensées. As we have seen, Duclos posits the moral corruption of human nature at the very beginning of Madame de Luz. His novel illustrates the moral corruption of men, but like Voltaire and other eighteenth-century thinkers Duclos believes that some form of happiness can be derived from a common sense approach to life. In spite of this implicit message in Madame de Luz, critics have convincingly shown that Madame de Luz can be seen as a precursor of Justine. The reason for this confusion lies in the fact that Duclos' novel exposes three moral points of view, each of which can be related to other novels of the eighteenth century.

Madame de Luz embraces one ethical attitude, that of seventeenth-century Christian stoicism. Her ethical code, as we have already noted, is the same as that of

the Princesse de Clèves and of traditional Catholic theologians. It is basically an ascetic doctrine which emphasizes the moral grandeur of man achieved through reason and will. The events of the novel constitute a rejection of Madame de Luz's ethical principles.

The second point of view is the narrator's. It seems to be the same as Duclos'. The narrator's moral notions are in the tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century free-thinkers: a rejection of traditional Christianity and religion as a source of morality. Like the Marquis de Lassay, the narrator suggests a lay morality, that of temperate and selected pleasure.[4] This line of reasoning, which goes back to Montaigne's "Vers de Virgil,"[5] was nurtured during the seventeenth century by the erudite and Epicurean libertines: it culminates in the deism of Montesquieu, Voltaire, the marquis d'Argens, Toussaint, and d'Alembert, as well as in the materialism of Diderot and Helvétius. According to these thinkers, morality and religion are separate. One should follow natural morality, which tends to restrict as little as possible. Enjoyment and virtue will

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[4]Lassay, Armand-Léon de Madaillon de Lesperre, Marquis de. Receuil de différentes choses . . . 4 vols. Lausanne, 1756. See also: Robert Mauzi, L'Idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée française au XVIII^e siècle (Paris, 1965), pp. 180, 387, 461-463.

[5]In this essay Montaigne defends passion as conforming to human nature and proposes that moderate indulgence in carnal pleasures is natural and salutory.

thereby be reconciled since the passions in moderation are good in themselves. Like Voltaire, they believe that virtue consists in doing good to one's fellow man and not in indulging in vain practices of mortification.

The third ethical position is that of Thurin and Hardouin. They are moral nihilists, rejecting the moderation of the narrator's lay morality and the notion of la bienfaisance. Their moral position is an extreme one, the antithesis of Christian stoicism. Since the passions represent nature, man should embrace the passions without restraint. This is of course the nucleus of Sade's philosophy of cruelty. The events of Madame de Luz do not negate Thurin and Hardouin's ethics as they do Madame de Luz's. The reason is that Duclos develops these points of view in a fictional world in which moral evil reigns. Thurin and Hardouin's conduct is a logical response to this universe. In contrast, the narrator and Duclos cling to the notion that, in spite of man's moral corruption, some kind of happiness can be salvaged through moderation. This is implicit in the narrator's attitude toward the libertines while the events of the novel would seem to prove that the nihilists' code of conduct is well suited to "the way of the world." Since Duclos' principal intention is not to delineate a personal ethical code but to dwell on persecuted virtue the moral of the novel is ambiguous and can be interpreted two ways. On the one

hand, the narrator's point of view is that of most mid-century writers while on the other, the unfolding of events and the doctrines preached and practiced by Thurin and Hardouin illustrate immorality and make Madame de Luz a direct forerunner of Laclos and of Sade. Because Madame de Luz contains in varying proportions these three ethical points of view, it acts like a pivot in the history of the novel from 1677 to 1795: it elaborates and renounces the seventeenth-century Christian stoicism of La Princesse de Clèves; it announces in vivid fashion the moral nihilism of Sade; but, through the point of view of the narrator, it advocates the more moderate ethic of Voltaire and Diderot.

In the course of this study I have not contended that Madame de Luz constitutes a masterpiece of the period. Yet it ranks with the principal novels of secondary literary merit, with those of Crébillon fils, Restif and Sade. In discussing Madame de Luz, Emile Henriot states pointedly: "Un romanesque un peu noir, il est vrai, mais la situation est dramatique . . . . Des caractères, un style net et sans apprêt, nulle emphase, le récit est attachant et d'un intéret soutenu."[6] Hence, this short novel can be read with pleasure, but, above all, it is of

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[6]"Duclos," La Revue de Paris, (mars-avril, 1925) 2:606-07.

significant interest to the literary historian who seeks a novel which stands out as an amalgamation of some of the most general novelistic tendencies of the century.

APPENDIX

Appendix

A. Charles de Gontaut, baron and then duc of Biron:

"fils [d'Armand de Biron], célèbre capitaine et diplomate français, né en 1562, décapité à la Bastille le 31 juil. 1602. Destiné de bonne heure à la carrière des armes, il prit part à presque toutes les campagnes que son père conduisit contre les Huguenots vers le milieu du règne de Henri III, et se distingua dès l'âge de dix-huit ans dans l'armée de Guyenne, puis en Flandres (1583) où Armand de Gontaut, envoyé au secours du duc d'Alençon, se maintenait avec peine en présence des forces du duc de Parme. En 1589, on le retrouve au nombre des capitaines des compagnies d'ordonnance que le roi manda auprès de lui pour le servir contre ses sujets rebelles (ordonnance du 6 févr.; Blois). Henri III mort, Biron fut, avec son père, l'un des premiers à reconnaître le nouveau roi pour lequel il emporta par surprise Vendôme (déc. 1589). L'année suivante (1590), il est déjà qualifié « l'un des mareschaux des camps et armées de Sa Majesté » et « colonel des Suisses » qu'il commandait d'ailleurs sous le règne précédent. Il était aux journées d'Arques et à celle d'Ivry (14 mars 1590) où il conduisait un escadron de deux cent cinquante chevaux et reçut deux blessures combattant aux côtés du roi. La même année, il emporte d'escalade la ville de Meulan, et sa conduite satisfait à tel point le roi, que celui-ci peut écrire à Armand de Biron: « Encores que vous soyés le père, vous n'aimes pas tant vostre fils que moy, qui puis dire de luy et de moy: tel le maistre, tel le valet » (27 nov. 1590, cf. Berger de Xivrey, Lettres Missives, III, p. 307). Henri IV en cela se trompait sur le compte du père aussi bien que sur celui du fils. Nommé, en 1591 « mareschal général de camp de l'armée du roy » et capitaine de cinquante hommes d'armes, il entre dans Louviers (juin), concourt à refouler le duc d'Aumale aux environs de Dieppe (aout) et prend une part active au siège de Rouen, où il est blessé d'un coup de pique (Henri IV au duc de Nevers, Gisors, 15 janv. 1592). Quelques semaines plus tard, il se trouvait au combat d'Aumale (5 févr.) à la levée du siège de Rouen (20 avril)

et enfin au siège d'Epernay, où son père fut tué le 26 juil. Le 4 oct., le baron de Biron est crée admiral de France et de Bretagne » en remplacement de Bernard de Nogaret de la Valette; il reprend sur les Ligueurs la ville de Meung-sur-Loire, et met le siège devant Selles qu'il emporte au bout de quelques jours. Après l'entrée du roi à Paris (22 mars 1594), la soumission de Rouen (27 mars) et la prise de Laon (20 juil.), Biron qui avait demandé, sans l'obtenir, le gouvernement de cette dernière ville, et qui venait d'être relevé de ses fonctions d'amiral de France promises à son rival André de Brancas de Villars, commence à manifester quelque humeur contre son mattre qui l'apaise en le créant maréchal de France et en l'envoyant en Bourgogne, dont, après la prise de Beaune, due à sa vigueur, il fut nommé gouverneur et lieutenant-général à la place du duc de Mayenne (20 avr. 1595). Il reconquiert peu à peu toute la partie du duché tombée entre les mains de l'ennemi, prend Auxonne, Autun (8 mai), Dijon (18 mai), et se distingue au combat de cavalerie donné par le roi à Fontaine-Française (5 juin), où il reçoit deux blessures graves. Ce fut probablement en cette même année 1595 que Biron, profitant de son séjour à Dijon, et de la proximité de la Franche-Comté espagnole, entama pour la première fois avec les ennemis de son roi les négociations qui devaient le perdre. « J'ay aussi vérifié, écrit Henri IV à son ambassadeur à Venise, Fresne-Canaye (12 juil. 1602), que le dict duc de Biron feit commencer ce traicté . . . dès l'année 1595, quand ledict archiduc Albert qui estoit lors encore cardinal, vint d'Espagne en Flandres, à quoy il employa cest habitant d'Orléans, nommé Picote, duquel je vous ay quelquefois escript . . . et que la mesme praticque a este continuée et poursuivie depuis sans intermission, tant par ledict Picoté que par d'autres plus gratifiez, principalement depuis la venue par deçà dudict duc de Savoye. »

"Quoi qu'il en soit, Henri IV continuait à voir, en 1596, une confiance si absolue dans le maréchal, qu'en août de cette même année, il le rappela de Bourgogne pour l'envoyer en Flandres prendre le commandement de ses forces et « réveiller son armée » . Biron ne trompa pas l'attente de son maitre, il entra en Artois, défit à plusieurs reprises les Espagnols, prit le château d'Imbercourt et fit prisonnier le gouverneur de la province, marquis de Varambon, qu'il ne relâcha que contre

40,000 écus de rançon. Continuant ses succès, il fit une incursion en Picardie, y pilla le comte et la ville de Saint-Paul, et rentrant en Artois, y fit des courses jusqu'aux portes de Béthune et de Térouanne. La reprise d'Amiens fut en partie son œuvre, il y commandait un camp de quatre mille hommes de pied et de sept cents chevaux. En 1598, la paix ayant été signée avec l'Espagne à Vervins (2 mai) par Sillery et Bellièvre, Biron fut envoyé à Bruxelles avec ces deux diplomates (juillet) pour y recevoir le serment de l'archiduc Albert avec lequel il eut tout le loisir de concerter les plans de trahison qui eussent peut être abouti à un démembrement momentané de la France, sans les indiscrétions commises par La Fin. Créé duc et pair la même année, confirmé dans son gouvernement de Bourgogne, qu'il avait préféré, pour des motifs faciles à saisir, à celui de Guyenne que lui offrait le roi, il fit son entrée solennelle à Châlons le 17 dec. 1598. Ce fut l'année suivante qu'il conclut avec le nouveau roi d'Espagne, et Charles-Emmanuel, duc de Savoie, un traité en vertu duquel il devait obtenir avec la main de l'une des filles du rusé Savoyard, la souveraineté de la Bourgogne, démembrée de la France, et celle de la Franche-Comté à laquelle l'Espagne paraissait disposée à renoncer. C'était, on le voit, la reprise en sous-œuvre du plan longuement caressé par Philippe III; la France à la veille de retomber dans les horreurs de la Ligue, car Biron, en échange des avantages que lui assuraient ses puissants alliés, s'engageait à préparer un vaste soulèvement dans presque toutes les provinces du royaume. Sur ces entrefaites, la guerre fut déclarée au duc de Savoie (11 août) qui se refusait à rendre au roi le marquisat de Saluces, par lui surpris en plein paix sous le règne précédent (1588). Malgré ses accointances avec Charles-Emmanuel, Biron dût marcher un des premiers, et envahit la Bresse. Deux jours après la déclaration de guerre, il enlevait la ville de Bourg dont la citadelle tombait peu après entre ses mains; puis il se saisit de Pont-d'Ain, de Seyssel, la seule place-forte du Bugey, du fort de la Cluze et du pays de Gex, et enfin, en novembre, fut chargé de repousser le duc qui voulait rentrer en Faucigny par le passage de Notre-Dame-de-la-Gorge. Pendant toute la durée de cette campagne, Biron, ainsi que le démontre M. Poirson dans son Histoire de Henri IV, ne cessa de prodiguer aux

ennemis les avis nécessaires pour faire échouer les efforts de l'armée dont il avait le commandement. La valeur de celle-ci ayant déjoué ces combinaisons, il se mit en rapport avec le commandant du fort Sainte-Cathérine et prépara tout pour que le roi fut tué au moment où il visiterait la tranchée. Toutefois, le cœur semble lui avoir fait défaut au dernier moment. Toujours est-il qu'Henri échappa à cet odieux complot. Au cours des négociations pour la paix, Charles-Emmanuel demanda au roi quelques otages, entre autres le maréchal de Biron. Mais le roi qui commençait à soupçonner la fidelité de son lieutenant, refusa net, ce qui n'empêcha pas celui-ci de conclure avec l'Espagne et la Savoie un nouveau traité confirmatif de celui qu'il avait signé précédemment. Ce fut à Lyon où il passa au retour de Savoie, que le roi apprit une partie de la vérité. Les avis lui arrivaient de toutes parts, même de Rome, d'où le cardinal d'Ossat écrivait dès le 11 sept. pour protester contre l'envoi éventuel à Turin du maréchal qui n'en reviendrait sinon « empoisonné et avec la mort au corps » . Biron reçut à cette époque un premier avertissement de son maitre, mais n'en tint nul compte. Au retour de l'ambassade extraordinaire dont le roi l'avait chargé auprès de la reine d'Angleterre, il forma avec le duc de Bouillon et le comte d Auvergne, fils naturel de Charles IX, un complot qui ne tendait à rien moins qu'à priver de la couronne le Dauphin au profit du fils d'Henriette d'Entragues, marquise de Verneuil, maitresse du Bearnais. Les dispositions principales étaient prises, mais Biron se vit forcé de les interrompre pour accomplir la mission dont le roi l'avait charge auprès des cantons suisses et qu'il eût dû remplir dès le printemps de 1600 (Lettres de créance du 30 avr. 1600), si la guerre de Savoie n'était venue déranger ce projet. Brulart de Sillery et Mery de Vic venaient en effet de renouveler avec les Ligues suisses et grises l'alliance conclue avec elles par Henri III en 1582. Il s'agissait de solenniser cet événement, et, à défaut d'un prince de son sang, Henri ne pouvait faire moins que d'envoyer à Soleure un des grands dignitaires de la couronne. Biron fit son entrée dans cette ville vers la fin de janv. 1602 et frappa l'imaginatio des confédérés par le luxe qu'il y déploya. Quand il quitta les Ligues au commencement de février, les députés suisses lui donnèrent rendez-vous à Paris où

ils devaient aller recevoir le serment du roi, mais lorsqu'ils y arrivèrent en oct. 1602, le maréchal était mort depuis près de trois mois. Les évènements en effet s'étaient précipités. Jacques de La Fin, sieur de Beauvais-la-Nocle, le principal agent de Biron, avait livré au roi à Fontainebleau tous les fils du complot. Mandé aussitôt en cour, Biron aurait pu se sauver par la spontanéïté de ses aveux, car le roi lui offrit et lui fit offrir à plusieurs reprises son pardon. Mais tous les efforts de Henri ne purent triompher de la dissimulation du maréchal.

"Livré en conséquence à la justice du Parlement, il fut déclaré, à l'unanimité, « coupable de conspirations faites contre la personne du roy, entreprises sur son Estat, proditions et traités faits avec les ennemis de l'Estat » . Il fut condamné à avoir la tête tranchée en Grève. Les efforts de sa famille et de ses amis pour le sauver furent inutiles et vinrent se briser contre l'inébranlable volonté du roi de faire un exemple (Cf. Mémoires du duc de La Force). Tout ce qu'ils purent obtenir, fut que l'exécution eût lieu dans la cour de la Bastille. Les derniers moments du maréchal ne furent pas d'un résigné, tous les mémoires du temps s'accordent à le reconnaître. « Par la mort de Dieu, si j'avois mon espée, je passerois sur le ventre de tous vous aultres , cria-t-il aux assistants. » Ses dernières paroles furent pour le bourreau: « Boute, boute, et dépesche-moy promptement! » « Il est mort avec un cœur félon et endurci et n'a jamais peu estre persuadé de confesser ce qu'il tesmoignait par ses soupirs et par ses responses incertaines avoir sur sa conscience » (Sillery à Villeroy, Paris, 31 juil. 1602, à 7 heures du soir)."

La Grande Encyclopédie inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts (Paris, n.d.), Vol. VI, 921-923.

B. Jacques La Fin:

"Lafin, famille protestante de la Bourgogne. Trois frères de ce nom, appelés par de Thou, Jean, Philippe et Jacques, figurent plus ou moins honorablement dans notre histoire depuis l'explosion des guerres de religion jusqu'à la fin du règne de Henri IV. Selon les uns, Philippe était l'aîné; selon les autres, c'était Jean; mais tous s'accordent à dire que Jacques était le plus jeune des trois frères. Ce dernier, sieur de Lagin, Pluviers et Aubusson, ne commença à figurer sur la scène des événements politiques qu'en 1574 Compromis dans la conjuration de La Mole, il fut assez heureux pour gagner la Suisse (MSS. de l'Institut, N 256). C'est évidemment à lui que se rapporte l'anecdote racontée par Frisius (Voy. I, p. 255); seulement cet ecrivain a commis une erreur en l'appelant « beau-frère » de Beauvais-La Nocle. En 1576, Jacques de Lafin ratifia, au nom du duc d'Alençon, le traité conclu entre Condé et Jean-Casimir. Il prenait alors les titres de chevalier de l'ordre du roi, conseiller et chambellan du duc d'Alençon (Fonds de Brienne, N 207). Après la conclusion de la paix, il quitta le service de Monsieur pour s'attacher au roi de Navarre. En 1577, il rendit des services au siège de Marmande. Plus tard, au rapport du P. Daniel, Montmorency le chargea de la garde du fort Saint-Eutrope; mais quelque temps après, il le fit emprisonner à Pezenas, on ne nous dit pas pour quel motif, et il ne le remit en liberté qu'à prière du roi de Navarre. En 1590, Lafin commandait à Lagny, qu'il défendit avec bravoure, mais sans succès, contre le duc de Parme. En 1594, Henri IV l'envoya en Provence avec ordre, dit Papon, d'affermir le comte de Carces dans sa résolution de résister à d'Epernon, s'il était assez fort pour lui tenir tête, sinon de le désavouer et de lui faire son procès. Le négociateur se montra digne de la confiance de son maître, en trompant les deux partis. Personne n'était plus propre que Lafin à remplir une mission aussi peu honorable. D'Aubigné en parle comme d'un homme sans foi, sans houneur, sans religion, et comme du plus habile fourbe, qui fût en France. La Force aussi nous le peint dans ses Mémoires comme « la plus méchante créature et la plus abominable que la terre soutint, abhorrée et haïe de tout le monde, » et le témoignage de ces deux écrivains protestants est confirmé par

> Mézeray qui qualifie Lafin d'homme dangereux et double, sans foi et sans honneur. L'infâme conduite que ce scélérat tint à l'égard du maréchal de Biron est connue de tout le monde, et ne justifie que trop ces écrasantes accusations. Après avoir joué aupres de l'illustre guerrier le rôle ignoble d'agent provacateur, il vendit sa tête au prix de 3450 livres, comme nous l'apprend le compte des dépenses de Henri IV pendant l'année 1602, pièce d'une haute importance publiée, dans ces derniers temps, par MM. Cimber et Danjou dans le T.XV des Archives curieuses. Le baron de Biron punit plus tard cette abominable trahison. Ayant rencontré Lafin sur le pont Notre-Dame, il l'abattit de deux coups de pistolet, et le roi, que se repentait peut-être de son inflexible rigueur à l'égard du maréchal, fit facilement grâce au vengeur du sang, à la prière de La Force. Lafin ne succomba pas à ses blessures; mais nous ignorons la date de sa mort. Il avait un fils, nommé Pluviers, sur qui nous ne possédons aucun renseignement."

Eugène & EM. Haag, La France Protestante (Genève, 1966), vol. VI, pp. 200-01.

C. Edme de Malain, Baron of Lux:

> "Ede [sic] de Malain, baron de Lux, était le neveu de l'archevêque de Lyon. Bien vu d'Henri III, il avait sauvé la vie de son oncle en intercédant pour lui lors du meurtre des Guises . . . . C'était un intriguant 'vif, prompt, cault, dissimulé' . . . . Il mourra en duel en 1612."

Pierre de L'Estoile, Journal pour le règne de Henri IV (Paris, 1958), vol. I, p. 677, note 332.

> "Edme de Malain Baron de Lux, lieutenant au gouvernement de cette province [La Bourgogne] qui savait les dernières pratiques de la conspiration fut assez sage et assez heureux pous [sic] ne se pas perdre; il se confia à la clémence du Roy, le vint trouver, et luy déchiffra tout . . . ."

Mézeray, Abrégé chronologique ou extrait de l'histoire de France (Paris, 1672, vol. VI, p. 461.

> "Quant à la graphie Luz, on rencontre Lux dans toutes les sources, mais soit coquille, soit à cause d'une hésitation alors fort répandue entre x et z, Luz se trouve également chez Mézeray, par exemple (vide infra, n. 2, ed. cit., t. VI, p. 405). Duclos n'a donc pas inventé cette graphie, mais l'a adopté, ou pour sa sonorité, ou par refus de tout symbolisme qui pourrait faire de l'héroïne une lumière."

Meister, p. 167.

> "C'est ce baron de Luz qui, pendant la minorité de Louis XIII, fut si attaché à la reine-mère. Il fut tué par le chevalier de Guise. Le fils du baron de Luz, ayant voulu venger la mort de son père, eut le même sort; et ces deux combats furent les principaux motifs de l'édit contre les duels qui fut donné dans cette même année."

Duclos, oeuvres ed. Villenave, p. 202.

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[1]According to Paul Meister this edition was published in 1740. Charles Duclos (Genève, 1956), p. 180.

[2]The Nilsson edition is not included in the major bibliographies listing Duclos' works. However, F. C. Green mentions it in his review of Paul Meister's Charles Duclos and indicates that it was published in the late nineteen-twenties [Modern Language Review, (1957) 52:442]. The only bibliography I have found which lists this edition is the Librairie française: catalogue général des ouvrages en vente au 1er janvier 1933. This edition is not included in the same catalogue for 1930. Hence, the Nilsson edition was probably published between 1930 and 1932.

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