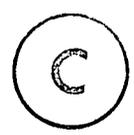


AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION AND HISTORICAL  
IMITATION IN PREVOST'S MEMOIRES D'UN HOMME  
DE QUALITE: A STUDY OF NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

by



HEATHER JEANNE HOLDAWAY

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The University of British Columbia  
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V6T 1W5

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## ABSTRACT

Prévost's early work, Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du monde, has been to a very great extent ignored by the critics who have concentrated almost exclusively on the work's seventh and last tome Manon Lescaut; yet these volumes were produced at a transitional period in the development of the French novel. As a relatively inexperienced novelist, Prévost observed the trends of his time and furbished his work with an aura of reality by means of various synthetic devices. This thesis attempts to analyse some of Prévost's narrative techniques from the perspective of authentic representation and historical imitation. I have endeavored to show that Prévost's art of literary forgery is dependent upon the devices commonly associated with the conventions of the memoir-novel as well as certain techniques which reflect Prévost's skill as an innovator.

The first chapter presents an analysis of Prévost's imaginary Editor and Narrator together with an examination of selected examples of "claims to veracity". This is followed by a brief discussion on the function of the quoted letter, indirect speech, proper names, geographical descriptions and chronology. The examples quoted from the text give some indication of the approach taken by Prévost in the M.H.Q. whereby Editor and Narrator combine forces to give an illusion of external reality to the memoir-novel.

The second chapter comprises two somewhat different aspects of Prévost's handling of material borrowed from outside sources to authenticate the

pseudo-memoir. The first category, dealing with historical material, reveals the important role attributed to History in the fiction of the period. The source of some of Prévost's factual information is considered as well as the relative merits of including precise details to win the reader's belief. Prévost's fascination with History and his interest in the "art" of the historian are clearly evident and can be seen not only serving his need to disguise fiction but also adding an extra dimension to an otherwise lengthy novel of adventure and romantic intrigue. The second category of this chapter investigates material copied, in some cases almost verbatim, from the journalistic sources available to Prévost. Here I have attempted to show how passages from the Gazette de France vouched for the presence of the author/narrator and also provided an important influence directing the course of Prévost's plot. This borrowed material presented in Chapter II illustrates an aspect of Prévost's narrative technique not commonly associated with the author of Manon Lescaut.

Without entering completely into the problem of whether the eighteenth-century reader accepted or merely tolerated the efforts of pseudo-memorialists, I have provided three examples by certain biographers from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which demonstrate that Prévost was considered somewhat of an authority. His authenticating techniques, therefore, aspects that tend to be overlooked and undervalued by critics, were multiple, conscious, designed to be treated seriously and in fact were taken seriously, and, in my view, played a significant and integral part in his creativity.

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Six tomes of Prévost's Mémoires d'un homme de qualité<sup>1</sup> were published between 1728 and 1731. The seventh and last, the Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, appeared as a continuation in 1731, but soon achieved a quasi-separate existence and by 1756 had been published as an independent text eight times. The success of Manon Lescaut has continued into the twentieth-century which has witnessed the publication of many separate editions.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the popularity of this single volume, to date relatively little attention has been given to the first six tomes of the M.H.Q. For example, there have been only two complete editions of the entire work during the last century and a half.<sup>3</sup> (In 1927 there appeared a critical edition of Tome V of the memoirs prepared by Mysie E.I. Robertson,<sup>4</sup> and in 1958 Joseph Ducarre included a few brief extracts in his semi-critical edition of Manon Lescaut.<sup>5</sup>) The third complete edition was begun in 1978 under the direction of Jean Sgard,<sup>6</sup> and Volume I of the Oeuvres de Prévost, established by Pierre Berthiaume and Jean Sgard, will be the primary text of this thesis. Commentaries and notes for this new edition of the text have yet to be published and will appear in the last volume (VIII) of the Oeuvres.

Thus Sgard's Volume I represents the first complete edition of the seven tomes to emerge since the Leblanc edition in 1810. For the first time, this text includes the two Lettres de l'éditeur, the Avant-Propos and the Avis de l'auteur.<sup>7</sup> It uses as its base text the editions of 1753 for Manon Lescaut and of 1756 for the first six tomes, the last editions revised and corrected by Prévost.

The majority of earlier critical studies on the M.H.Q. have examined various aspects of Manon Lescaut to the exclusion of the preceding six tomes; however, certain recent scholars, notably Mylne,<sup>8</sup> Monty<sup>9</sup> and Sgard,<sup>10</sup> have dealt with most of Prévost's work although emphasis, once again, has often been given to the seventh tome of the M.H.Q. It seems useful therefore to examine more closely the first six tomes and to assess them, if possible, separately from the more popular final volume. Although my study will try to fit the story of Manon Lescaut into the framework of the M.H.Q., tome seven will not be analysed in depth.

The study of narrative techniques in the works of Prévost has been of great interest to scholars and literary critics. While very few critics have focused exclusively on techniques of illusion, Mylne<sup>11</sup> and Stewart<sup>12</sup> have concentrated on this topic and have attempted to define some of the conventions of the memoir-novel. My own study will, as a result, restrict itself primarily to an examination of some of the narrative techniques employed by Prévost to perpetrate an illusionary authenticity on his readers.

In my attempt to gather and analyse the necessary background material, the critical and biographical works of Engel, Roddier, Harisse, Sgard and Mylne were consulted,<sup>13</sup> and many articles, especially those contained in the Colloque Prévost proved particularly useful.<sup>14</sup> As well, two works of Georges May have provided some of the background needed to understand the important influence that historical writing had on Prévost's prose fiction.<sup>15</sup> As my study progressed, the identification of sources in the text and

Prévost's use of various journals and newspapers became a major area of interest, an identification that was somewhat hampered by the inaccessibility of resource material and the difficulty of locating eighteenth-century journals. Many sections of the M.H.Q. have proved too difficult to trace beyond Prévost's text. Tome V has been thoroughly researched by Robertson, and although the reader's attention will be frequently drawn to Robertson's edition of the text, an attempt will be made to add to her findings from the point of view of narrative techniques.

A final source which played an essential role in shaping my thesis is the study by Stewart, which examines many of the problems experienced by memoir-novelists in creating an illusion of reality or authenticity in their fiction. Although my thesis accepts and makes use of some of the terminology and categories adopted by Stewart, their specific application to the M.H.Q. will provide, I hope, a fresh perspective.

A possible problem arising in this type of technical study lies in its restrictive nature and the consequent "artificiality" of such an approach. Without denying the existence of the many and varied facets of Prévost's art and style, the focus of my study requires at least a provisional narrowing of perspective that threatens to isolate method from matter, dissecting thereby, the creative process.

A further danger lies in the normal tendency of studies of this kind to go beyond objective analysis to speculation, assigning

interpretations of the author to motives that, in fact, we are necessarily in a poor position to judge. Postulating the intentions of a particular author is a risky pursuit, although the critic's purpose in doing so might originally seem justified. In the case of Prévost, who was writing his first novel in a literary period that was very much influenced by a tendency to disguise fiction, it is difficult not to give some credit to those motivational factors which surely played a role in determining the structure and narrative techniques that came to shape the M.H.Q. Prévost's views on human behaviour, his descriptions of foreign lands and people, his obsession with the destructive force of passionate love and his preoccupation with the cruelty of fate are all contained within a certain framework that was itself dependent upon the current demands for verisimilitude and realistic depiction. By taking note of the techniques to be found in the conventions of the memoir-novel and by analysing Prévost's aim in the light of the obvious and often crude attempts made to appeal to the belief of the reader, one can better understand the dilemma that he faced; his work seems to reflect a need for both a conventional and an original approach, one that would satisfy the basic requirements of the convention and yet allow some measure of freedom of style. Although both aspects are important to an understanding of Prévost's work, the focus of the thesis will be on the particular devices employed primarily for the purpose of lending an air of authenticity to the M.H.Q. This is not to suggest that creating an illusion of reality was for Prévost a prime or major concern; in some instances the inclusion

of techniques of illusion would be little more than an automatic precaution. As well, it is far from certain whether the eighteenth-century reader was genuinely duped or whether he was sophisticated enough to dismiss Prévost's claims to veracity as so much conventional twaddle. While a clear resolution of this problem is unlikely, my conclusion will present some evidence suggesting that the eighteenth-century reader was, in fact, frequently confused in his attempts to sort out the veracity of this pseudo-memoir from that of a number of similar novels or authentic biographical and historical works written in the same period.

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The Mémoires d'un homme de qualité will hereafter be referred to as the M.H.Q.
- <sup>2</sup> There are at least eight editions listed in the bibliography of Jean Sgard's Prévost Romancier (Paris: Librairie Jose Corti, 1968) p. 646.
- <sup>3</sup> L'Abbé Prévost, Oeuvres Choies de Prévost. Avec figures (Paris: de l'imprimerie de Leblanc, 1810-1816, 39 vol. in-8). The Leblanc edition is based on Pierre Bernard d'Héry's Oeuvres Choies de L'Abbé Prévost published in Amsterdam and Paris 1783-85.
- <sup>4</sup> L'Abbé Prévost, Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du monde, Tome V Séjour en Angleterre: édition critique par Mysie Robertson (Paris: Champion, 1934). The first edition was published in 1927.
- <sup>5</sup> L'Abbé Prévost, Mémoires d'un homme de qualité (extraits). Manon Lescaut, édition par Joseph Ducarre, Collection du Flambeau (Paris: Hachette, 1958).
- <sup>6</sup> L'Abbé Prévost; Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du monde - Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, ed. Pierre Berthiaume and Jean Sgard, Tome I of Oeuvres de Prévost, ed. Jean Sgard (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1977)
- <sup>7</sup> Neither the Oeuvres Choies of 1783-1785 nor the Leblanc edition include the Avis de l'éditeur which appeared in the Delaulne edition of 1728. Sgard's edition, which reproduced the letter placed correctly preceding Tome I, heads it Lettre de l'éditeur. As Sgard has based his text on the revised editions of 1753-1756 and has listed the variants to be found from the 1728 Delaulne edition, one must assume that Prévost changed the title at the time of making his corrections and alterations. Unfortunately an asterisk (which indicates that a variant exists) has been placed beside the Lettre de l'éditeur in Sgard's edition but the corresponding entry in the variantes has been omitted.
- <sup>8</sup> Vivienne Mylne, The Eighteenth-Century French Novel: Techniques of Illusion (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1965).
- <sup>9</sup> Jeanne R. Monty, "Les Romans de l'abbé Prévost" in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, edited by T. Besterman, Vol. 78. (Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1970).

- <sup>10</sup> Sgard, Prévost Romancier
- <sup>11</sup> Mylne, The Eighteenth-Century French Novel.
- <sup>12</sup> Philip Stewart, Imitation and Illusion in the French Memoir-Novel, 1700 to 1750 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969).
- <sup>13</sup> See Bibliography.
- <sup>14</sup> L'Abbé Prévost - Actes du Colloque, Publications des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres, d'Aix-en-Provence, Nouvelle Série, No 50 (Aix-en-Provence: Editions Ophrys, 1965).
- <sup>15</sup> Georges May, Le Dilemme du roman au XVIII Siècle (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press et Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963).
- . "L'histoire a-t-elle engendré le roman? Aspects français de la question au seuil du siècle des lumières", Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, Vol. LV, (n.p.: n.p., 1955) pp. 155-176.

## Chapter I

### Authentic Representation

It has been frequently acknowledged by many critics that the reading of fiction has not always been considered a worthy pursuit.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for this are complex, and no doubt were closely related in Prévost's day to the role of "true" history in the authentic autobiographies, memoirs and chronicles of the seventeenth and very early eighteenth centuries. Scholars have suggested that there was a need for fiction to be disguised as history for a number of reasons: historical works, being factual, were seen as capable of the moral edification of the reader; non-historical or "untrue" works, on the other hand, indulged in for mere pleasure or interest, could present the reader with moral dilemmas. This implicit censorship on the early eighteenth-century reader is not widely recognized and is difficult for modern critics to appreciate. Philip Stewart, however, has attempted to analyse this problem:

*The argument that fiction provides only poisoned pleasure proceeds from the implicit syllogism that fiction, being invented, is untrue; being untrue, it is manifestly the opposite of truth; it therefore has all the moral probity of a lie. The resistance disappears when the story is true -<sup>2</sup> or thought to be so; the effect would be the same in either case.*

Rather than stress the moral qualms of the reader, Georges May emphasizes the novelist's need to imitate history, an established and respected genre.

*L'habitude, si irritante pour le lecteur moderne, de faire semblant de cacher l'identité réelle des protagonistes ou les noms de lieu sous des initiales, des points de suspension ou des astérisques, n'était qu'un procédé entre maints autres dans l'arsenal quasi-inépuisable des romanciers désireux de faire passer leurs ouvrages pour ce qu'ils n'étaient pas. Tous les bons romanciers de l'époque Prévost, Crébillon, . . . Laclos, etc., recoururent à des procédés techniques de cet ordre pour libérer le roman de l'hypothèque poétique et lui conférer l'estampille historique.*<sup>3</sup>

During the first half of the eighteenth century, this requirement that memoir-novels be presented as genuine memoirs seems to have led to removing the word *roman* from the titles.<sup>4</sup> To consider such precautions as unnecessary, as well as the various techniques of imitation that finally emerged, is to ignore the very practical problem confronting the authors of the period who were faced with the challenge of making their works acceptable to a publisher and to a fairly wide readership. Georges May points out that in France historical works were more freely accepted at the time than were novels.

*Si Prévost voulut en 1731 se faire passer pour historien, ce ne fut pas seulement, pensons-nous pour les raisons de mode littéraire et en vue des avantages commerciaux justement soulignés par H. Roddier; ce fut aussi et peut-être surtout pour des raisons tactiques et pratiques; les ouvrages historiques pouvaient être imprimés et publiés en France plus librement que les romans.*<sup>5</sup>

A comprehensive examination of the problems surrounding the popularity of fiction can be studied in May's Dilemme du Roman. His conclusions point to a radical change in the number of new novels published during the years 1725-30 and 1731-36. During the first five-year period, which incorporates the years of Prévost's M.H.Q., 51 French novels were published.<sup>6</sup> The second

half decade, however, produced 129 new novels, but publication in the years 1737-44 dropped sharply.<sup>7</sup> These trends would suggest that Prévost's M.H.Q. was written at a time when the popularity of the novel, though strengthening, was still uncertain. One can further assume that his later novels appeared during a period that was more tolerant of fiction. Prévost's histories, which date roughly between 1740 and 1745, were again produced in years considered by May to be problematic for fiction.

Thus it would not seem unreasonable to suggest that, as a result of public scepticism concerning fraudulent histories and memoir-novels and the general difficulties experienced by novelists in publishing their works in France, Prévost himself fell victim to the conventions of the day. These demands would clearly have exercised some influence (and possibly even imposed some form of restriction) on the style of M.H.Q. The use of many of the narrative techniques and devices would have been determined by Prévost's desire to disguise his fiction. It must also be remembered that much of the M.H.Q. was written in France before Prévost finally was able to work in and be influenced by the more liberated atmosphere of either England or Holland.

The dilemma for the contemporary reader caused by the presumed frivolous nature of fiction in this period gives rise to consideration of a second and equally important subject, the reader's belief. The critic today refers to the dual processes of literal and imaginative belief, concepts that, when applied to

the M.H.Q., help to explain in concrete terms the reader's unconscious reaction to the work. Literal belief is predominant in our reaction to the presentation of historical events and personages, and as readers, we are likely to believe in the factual truth of such material. Imaginative belief is, of course, also present in our reaction to all fiction and operates simultaneously with literal belief to lull the reader into a comfortable state of assent. Although it may appear artificial and arbitrary to separate into two parts the belief that a reader has in the authenticity of the text, it is, no doubt, one of the best methods available to us for explaining the development that we, in retrospect, discern in the memoir-novel of the eighteenth century. For example, Stewart uses the two types of belief to explain his theory of an evolution in the memoir-novel.

*Belief, as defined at the outset of this study, is of two kinds: literal and imaginative. Characteristic of the age of memoir-novels is that the second, while cultivated to be sure, was subordinated to the first by the claim of authenticity. That claim lasted as long as it was needed, then waned. . . "illusion", in other words, was acquiring a new meaning, one no longer dependent upon literal belief, but tending toward a modern definition of imaginative, emphatic, provisional belief.*

Stewart then proposes that the modern definition of illusion (that based on imaginative belief) is the one best applied to the works of Diderot and to the later works of Prévost (e.g. Le Monde Moral, 1760). The type of illusion felt to correspond most to the period of the M.H.Q., is the one based on literal belief.<sup>9</sup>

Without wishing to pursue further the definition and use of such terms as *belief, illusion, le vrai, la vérité, realism, authenticity* and

*imitation* in the works of critics other than Stewart, some acknowledgement should nevertheless be given to the study prepared by Mylne, whose appraisal of both the modern and contemporary use of the aforementioned words is informative and valuable.<sup>10</sup> In her discussion of certain narrative techniques used by memoir-novelists, Mylne supports the emphasis placed by Stewart on the creation of literal belief.<sup>11</sup> Although it would doubtless be interesting to try to study in isolation the techniques of illusion based on literal belief, we must recognize that such an approach would depend too heavily on generalities and would ultimately be too restrictive in its point of view. Thus in this study, no attempt will be made to distinguish one type of belief from another. It will be enough to conclude that many of the narrative techniques found operating in the M.H.Q. were primarily intended to capture the reader's literal belief.

The following sections each represent or account for a technique or device used by Prévost in the memoirs. The first two (i.e. the Editor and the Narrator), emerge as the most important incorporating as they do the various letters, Avant-Propos, footnotes, introductions and notices to be found in the M.H.Q. The subsequent sections of this chapter contain examples that have been selected somewhat at random throughout the text and quotations exemplifying the particular device under discussion will be provided. In this, I have been more indicative than comprehensive and it has not been deemed necessary to include all examples in order to substantiate the point being made.

A. The Editor

Although the editor of memoir-novels assumed a variety of different roles, each was employed to give an external appearance of authenticity to the memoirs. By means of numerous claims to veracity, the editor tried to convince the public from the outset that the memoirs were genuine and belonged to a real individual, albeit to an individual whose identity conveniently had to be kept secret. His main and most obvious role was to reveal the source of the manuscript that had been received for publication. Often the documents or letters were found, sent in the mail, left on the editor's doorstep or collected from archives (such as those of the Vatican). As well, since the author was usually anonymous or dead, and therefore unable to explain the manner in which the text reached the public, an editor was needed to present the memoirs to the reader. A secondary role of the editor was to act as critic, translator or censor. Thus, the use of footnotes in many memoir-novels was also part of the convention which based its form on that of the genuine autobiography where editorial touch-ups, additions, deletions or explanations served as aids to the reader.

Prévost's ample use of an editor in most of his fiction would suggest that he considered this technique of prime importance. In the M.H.Q., an anonymous editor introduces the reader to the Marquis de \* \* \*, author of the memoirs, who later takes

the pseudonym Renoncour. Subsequently, in his own turn Renoncour becomes editor of Cleveland (1731),<sup>12</sup> Le Doyen de Killerine (1735-40), Mémoires de M. de Montcal (1741) and Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Malte (1741). However, in 1745 Prévost reverted to his original idea of using an anonymous editor (in Mémoires d'un honnête homme) and spun a lengthy and highly imaginative tale of discovery.

An examination of the M.H.Q.'s two letters from the editor and of the footnotes attributed to him sheds a certain amount of light on the various uses Prévost made of this device. In the first Lettre de l'éditeur, located at the beginning of Tome I, the editor presents the author of the memoirs, thus establishing from the beginning the separate existence of the man of quality. Moreover, circumstances of the meeting of author and editor are not left to coincidence or to chance; the editor, knowing something of the man of quality's reputation, out of curiosity seeks him in the abbey where he has chosen to reside. Thus Prévost's author is neither dead or unknown, though he is not precisely named, and in order to substantiate his existence, witnesses are invented: first, the editor mentions himself, then he cites the abbey fathers and finally the many people in France who had known the man of quality for some 35 years. As well as introducing the author to the reader, the editor performs a second function by establishing at this time the integrity and sincerity of the man of quality, which helps to create a pact of trust and respect between the author and the reader. Furthermore,

the author's impeccable reputation qualifies him for the task of instructor. This is an important consideration as Renoncour's motives become increasingly didactic. For the contemporary reader expecting moral edification, the editor's letter serves as a written form of character reference. For those seeking entertainment and enjoyment, the letter also reveals that the author was an *illustre aventurier* (M.H.Q., p. 9); as such his memoirs promised to provide interesting reading. In either case the opinions of the editor are likely to influence the reader, and thus it might be argued that the editor has a twofold purpose: first, to present an impartial or third-person point of view and, secondly, to shape the important first impressions of his reader and in this way to mould the reader's attitude to both text and author.

Using a "live" author presented Prévost with the problem of hiding the identity of his man of quality. It is interesting to note that the author was depicted as a gentleman of means rather than as a person of lesser social standing, since the latter identity, though less intriguing, would have been easier to hide or disguise from the reader. Furthermore, the letter carefully denies the reader all the pertinent details needed for tracing the author; for example, suspension points are used after the word *abbaye* to disguise the author's retreat, the fathers are called upon as witnesses but are not named, the actual location of the monastery is not given, and finally, the editor reveals that the author himself asked to remain

anonymous, thus offering a plausible explanation for the use of asterisks in the title Marquis de \*\*\*. Indeed, while making a semblance of producing evidence, the letter, in reality, reveals nothing tangible, thus proving the mere conventionality of the device.

A final use of the editor's first letter is the reference made therein to the style of the memoirs. Much as one might find in the preface to a published manuscript, Prévost's editor observes: *Le style est simple et naturel, tel qu'on le doit attendre d'une personne de condition, qui s'attache plus à l'exactitude de la vérité, qu'aux ornements du langage.* (M.H.Q., p. 9) Such an observation contributes in several ways to the authentic appearance of the memoirs: first, it excuses any stylistic shortcomings in the narrative skills of the author, since he is neither a professional writer nor a novelist; secondly, it gives the reader the impression that truthfulness and an exact representation of the facts were the author's prime concern. The editor also prepares his reader for some of the unusual events that are reported by the man of quality, claiming that it is their strangeness that renders them worthy of mention - the commonplace does not merit exposure. Here the editor functions as a filter through which improbable and unlikely tales of adventure may be passed to the reader.

In the second Lettre de l'éditeur, located at the beginning of the fifth tome, the death of the author is announced, thereby providing a convenient and logical exit for the man

of quality. The editor's praise is thus something of a eulogy. The function of the editor is similar in both letters, the second appearing as an extension of the first. Those witnesses claiming to have had contact with the author in the second letter are the editor himself, who is now a close friend, and the members of the public who visited the author at the abbey and obliged him to engage in lengthy and tedious correspondence.<sup>13</sup> We learn that the popularity of the first part of the memoirs (Tomes I to IV) caused the author to regret his fame and we are thus given a further reason for the concealment of the man of quality's identity as well as a plausible excuse for the delay in publication of the last part of the memoirs (Tomes V and VI).<sup>14</sup> The author's advancing age no longer permitted the continuation of such public acclaim and therefore the editor was obliged to delay publication of the last tomes until after his death.<sup>15</sup>

The editor's comments in the second Lettre de l'éditeur concerning the narrative style of the memoirs are expanded to include a more serious discussion of the author's creative ambitions. The editor exposes the author's inner struggle, which is caused on the one hand by his desire to record for didactic purposes virtually all examples of human weakness, and on the other hand by his fear of being accused of unnecessary frankness and possible sensationalism. This last is a skilful strategem intended to draw the reader not only into the soul of the author (thus closing the distance between the

two) but also to set up a system of defence for Prévost. The assumption of the role of critic by the editor allows Prévost to play author against editor in such a way that the author's misgivings, which would likely echo those of Prévost's real life critics, are dismissed as unnecessary by the editor who is a spokesman for Prévost's personal views. Realizing that the public might find some of his material depicting the destructive force of excessive passions somewhat shocking, Prévost allowed the editor to anticipate his critics and launch a campaign in favour of using explicit examples to instruct the naive and unwary public.

The editorial footnotes to be found in the M.H.Q. do not contribute either to the plot or to the reader's understanding of the memoirs. They are external decorations that were conventionally used in the memoir-novels of other writers.<sup>16</sup> The first note, located at the end of Tome II, pretends to offer more insight into the background surrounding the story of the consul and his two wives. The editor explains that the entire adventure was added after publication of the first edition and, more significantly from the point of view of *vraisemblance*, after the death of the consul's second wife. The editor also includes in the note information concerning events that occurred after the death of the author. This apparent updating of information shows the editor dutifully executing the expected functions of his profession; from the point of view of authenticity, appearances are upheld. The

second footnote, a near duplication of those commonly found in most editions of authentic memoirs, is located at the beginning of Tome VII and simply states that certain corrections have been made in order to eliminate some of the many errors that had crept into earlier editions.<sup>17</sup> Although the two footnotes do not play a major part in lending an air of veracity to the memoirs, they contribute nevertheless to the total effectiveness of the pseudo-editor.

The relative success of subsequent narrative techniques inside the main narrative of the M.H.Q. depends largely on the editor; it is his role to shape the reader's first impressions, and to fulfill the functions of his profession such as editing the manuscript or introducing it to the reader. In the M.H.Q. Prévost has tried to achieve this by making use of letters and footnotes. Both devices contribute considerably to Prévost's fictitious *mise-en-scène* where author and editor both assume the proportions of real individuals collaborating in the production of memoirs for the edification and pleasure of the reading public.

B. The Author

The author or narrator in the memoir-novel shared with the editor an equal responsibility for soliciting the reader's belief. His reasons for penning the memoirs should correspond in some degree to the explanation offered by the editor concerning the discovery of the manuscript. In pseudo-memoirs, several different reasons were generally given for the author's writing: a desire to relieve boredom, a wish to write one's life-story for a friend, a need to clear one's name or to prove one's innocence, a desire for vengeance, or a desire to relive one's misfortunes by writing about them. Although the novelist could exercise a certain freedom in his choice of motivation, if he was at all influenced by the current demands for authentic representation, he had to proceed cautiously. Problems could arise if he chose a motive that excluded the presence of a reader; for instance, if a memorialist claimed to be writing for his own satisfaction alone, his reiteration of authenticity would be nonsensical. A further problem for the author might arise from his "excessively omniscient" point of view. The perspective of the author had to be carefully thought out in advance to avoid embarrassing chronological or organizational errors. Whenever the author related something he was incapable of knowing, hearing about or reading, the impossibility of such a situation might become apparent to the reader.

The M.H.Q. reveals the author's motivation in the opening paragraph of Tome I:

*Je n'écris mes malheurs que pour ma propre satisfaction: ainsi je serai content si je retire, pour fruit de mon ouvrage, un peu de tranquillité dans les moments que j'ai dessein d'y employer. (M.H.Q., p. 13)*

The man of quality's need to record his misfortunes suggests a form of cathartic healing that one might well expect to observe in a man who sought peace of mind in a monastery. His motives also show him to be as humble, unambitious, and honest as the reader had already been led to expect from the brief indications provided in the first Lettre de l'éditeur. Such continuity or "collaboration" of ideas is, of course, an important factor in creating a believable author. Once the reader has placed his trust in the basic honesty of the author/narrator it is only reasonable that his expectations should not be too badly disappointed.<sup>18</sup> The author is not like a character in a novel that can withstand analysis or interpretation; he is a narrator and, as such, has a particular role to fulfil.

If the man of quality's first expressions of purpose are unabashedly understated in the opening paragraph of the M.H.Q., his confidence and ambitions show a marked increase in the Avant-Propos and the Avis de l'auteur. The former was placed at the beginning of Tome III and divides the first four tomes of the M.H.Q. into two parts. Tomes I and II received their Privilèges in April 1728, reaching the public some time in

August or September of that year.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand Tomes III and IV were approved by Maunoir only on 19 November 1728 and were not available to the public until 1729. These two latter tomes were initially published under the title "Suite des Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité". The Avant-Propos offers an explanation for this apparent gap in the memoirs. The reader, for example, is not left to wonder if the author grew tired and then regained his strength, or temporarily lost interest in his work. We learn that the author was asked to leave his retreat and tutor the son of a certain Duke of great distinction. Although reluctant to travel at an advanced age, Renoncour agrees to accompany the young Rosemont on a tour of Spain and England;<sup>20</sup> the memoirs, written during the voyage, are withheld from the public until after the death of Renoncour (revealed in the second Lettre de l'éditeur). Thus, the Avant-Propos provides the reader with a not implausible explanation of the difficulty and consequently helps to solve some of Prévost's structural problems.

A secondary role of the narrator in the Avant-Propos is that of forecaster. Since, at this stage of the memoirs, a major shift of emphasis will occur, it is useful to have Renoncour indirectly prepare the reader. When Rosemont becomes Renoncour's pupil, the reader (largely through the ambiguous use of the pronoun *vous*)<sup>21</sup> becomes an equal recipient of his lectures concerning the rewards of virtuous and moral behaviour.<sup>22</sup> However, if the Avant-Propos has revealed Renoncour in a new

role, it is not until the Avis de l'auteur directly preceding Tome VII that one learns how seriously he took his responsibilities, and how ambitious his intentions have become.

The Seventh Tome of the memoirs was added in 1731 after the memoirs had supposedly been definitively terminated. One likely and quite believable manner in which the story of Des Grieux and Manon Lescaut could be included was for Renoncour to admit openly that he had recorded Des Grieux's story in the past and that, because of its length, he had chosen to insert it at the conclusion of his memoirs. Renoncour reminds his reader of his first sojourn at the monastery, from where he travelled to visit his daughter. En route he meets Des Grieux and records immediately his version of the story. The Avis de l'auteur thus serves as Prévost's justification for the position of this lengthy *histoire* which otherwise might have seemed an objectionable digression. Significantly, we learn that Renoncour, after years of writing his memoirs, now concurs with the point of view taken originally by the editor: moral behaviour can be taught through the use of examples which depict human weakness.

*Il ne reste donc que l'exemple qui puisse servir de règle à quantité de personnes dans l'exercice de la vertu. C'est précisément pour cette sorte de lecteurs que des ouvrages tels que celui-ci peuvent être d'une extrême utilité; du moins lorsqu'ils sont écrits par une personne d'honneur et de bon sens . . . L'ouvrage entier est un traité de morale, réduit agréablement en exercice. (M.H.Q., p. 364)*

Des Grieux's edifying story consequently can even provide some form of public service.

*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'instruire en l'amusant. (M.H.Q., p. 363)*

In view of such ambitions one is led to compare Renoncour's new motives as expressed in the Avis de l'auteur with those revealed earlier. Whereas at one time he had chosen to write for his own peace of mind, he now refers to the public as the main beneficiary of his work. Originally Renoncour had stated that his story would be read *si l'on trouve qu'elle mérite d'être lue* (M.H.Q., p. 13), but in the Avis de l'auteur he promises his reader entertainment. Renoncour began his memoirs with the desire to record faithfully all events as they occurred; the complete truth based on objective reporting was assured the reader. The Avis de l'auteur does not echo such intentions; instead, the emphasis shifts to Renoncour's preoccupation with the character portrayal of Des Grieux. Phrases such as *tel est le fond du tableau que je présente* and *j'ai à peindre un jeune aveugle* (M.H.Q., p. 363) suggest the creative novelist at work. Such candid revelations are new in the M.H.Q. and the hand of Prévost is consequently more discernible.

The techniques which seemed prevalent earlier in the M.H.Q., such as the fabrication of an editor, the naming of witnesses to give the author's existence some degree of credibility, claims to veracity and historical reportage are not repeated in Tome VII, with the exception of a single reference at the

beginning of the first part which states: *Je dois avertir ici le lecteur que j'écris son histoire presque aussitôt après l'avoir entendue, et qu'on peut s'assurer par conséquent que rien n'est plus exact et plus fidèle que cette narration.* (M.H.Q., p. 367) Obviously, Prévost still wished to give a certain impression of authenticity to his Seventh Tome but the initial gesture, largely symbolic, is not carried to any great length thereafter. It is possible that, having already established Renoncour as a respectable and trustworthy author, Prévost felt that he could rely upon the existing pact between author and reader in order to exercise his creativity to a greater degree, for example, in the development of areas such as character portrayal, suspense, and dramatic dialogue. It is Des Grieux's story that is now being told; his words, and, most importantly, his personal involvement with the story, draw the reader into the narrative in such a way that allowed Prévost to explore areas of narrative techniques not dependent upon the creation of an illusion of authenticity.<sup>23</sup> The reader becomes increasingly involved emotionally with Des Grieux, while Renoncour, along with his interruptions and digressions<sup>24</sup> fades into the background.

Our brief review of the various uses Prévost made of his author throughout the seven tomes of the M.H.Q. leads us to conclude that in the first six tomes Prévost exploited many of the techniques commonly used by other memoir-novelists of the day. The idea of using a live author, the inclusion of an Avant-Propos, the timely death of the author, and the Avis de l'auteur all

indicate an awareness of the need for chronological consistency. Even the manner in which the Seventh Tome was integrated into the M.H.Q. shows that Prévost maintained both concern for appearances and respect for a literal verisimilitude. However, the Seventh Tome itself reflects a possible maturation of Prévost's style. It is perhaps ironic to observe that Tome VII, with its relative lack of authenticating reassurances, has caught the imagination of both the critic and the public, in contrast to the heavily documented yet comparatively neglected Tomes I to VI that preceded it and the somewhat similar Cleveland that followed.<sup>25</sup> This illustrates, perhaps, that the illusion of authenticity is not created solely by mechanical means but by the force of the first-person narrator which supercedes the reader's awareness of an enclosing framework.

C. Internal Veracity: direct claims and mute testimony

Internal veracity is the term I have chosen to identify the numerous protestations of truth that are to be found within the M.H.Q. Most often they are placed immediately preceding an episode that in itself is a slight digression from the main flow of the memoirs. At other times, the preamble is given prior to a major *histoire* and then doubles in function as an introduction as well as a promise of truth. Material considered under this rubric seems to fall into two groups; the first comprises overt claims that introduce frankly incredible, improbable or unlikely events (such as stories concerning werewolves, clairvoyance, coincidences and the supernatural). The second group incorporates devices scattered throughout the M.H.Q. which bear witness to the truth of the tale by implication only and, as such, impinge less directly on the reader's attention. A typical example might involve the presence of a named celebrity in Renoncour's company at a reception. If such a person is unknown to the reader, it matters not; conversely, if the reader is familiar with the named celebrity or is sufficiently curious to investigate the details, it is left to him to infer that the event related did, in fact, take place and that Renoncour was present. It is clear that such devices work rather subtly on a variety of levels and most probably escaped the direct notice of the average reader of the day.

Traditionally, whenever premonitions were used in memoir-novels, an introductory explanation (in the guise of a claim to veracity)

was often also given. There are relatively few premonitions in the M.H.Q., although examples of clairvoyance expressed in the form of dreams can be found. Interestingly enough, Renoncour's dreams always forecast death,<sup>26</sup> disasters or loss of power, prestige and political influence. He dreams of Law's fall from royal favour in France (M.H.Q., p. 293) and he also foresees the brutal murder of his sister Julie (M.H.Q., pp. 21-22). Renoncour's third dream, foretelling the death of Louis XIV, is introduced with the following comment:

*Je ne sais si je dois raconter ce qui m'arriva la nuit, parce que nous sommes dans un siècle délicat, où l'on ne croit pas les choses extraordinaires; mais comme j'écris sans intérêt, je me satisferai du moins moi-même, en rapportant fidèlement la vérité. (M.H.Q., p. 133)*

The extraordinary premonition is clearly realized when a few pages later the reader is told that on the 11th of September a courier arrived in Madrid bearing the news of the King's demise. (M.H.Q., p. 135)

In the example cited, Renoncour humbly pleads a desire to remain true to himself despite the opposition he expects to face from an unbelieving public. In addition, he repeatedly makes the claim that he is writing *sans intérêt*, a refrain that repeated throughout the M.H.Q. presumably leaves the reader in little doubt as to the unbiased and innocent motives of the author. The claim also serves as a warning to the reader, preparing him for the startling fulfillment of Renoncour's dream. Arming the reader against a possible reaction of surprise or even shock was a conventional device of the memoir-novel,<sup>27</sup> and we have here, possibly, an explanation for Prévost's ample use of forewarnings.

The foremost coincidence to be found in the M.H.Q. centres around the reunion between Renoncour and his nephew and niece, whose real identities are not disclosed until Amulem (their father) sees Renoncour and reveals to the children their true relationship with Renoncour. In view of the exceptional circumstances surrounding this reunion, Prévost prepares his reader with the following declaration:

*La foi du public ne manque pas de se révolter contre les événements extraordinaires. Cette réflexion, qui me naît ici tout d'un coup, est presque capable d'arrêter ma plume, et de m'ôter l'envie d'achever cette première partie de nos voyages. J'avoue que ce qui me reste à dire est capable de surprendre par sa singularité; mais c'est un fait dont mille personnes peuvent rendre encore témoignage, soit en Hollande où il est arrivé, soit en France où il a été connu de la plupart de ceux dont je suis connu moi-même. (M.H.Q., pp. 212-213)*

The shock experienced by Amulem in finding his brother-in-law after many years of separation, causes him to fall into a profound faint, followed by a high fever. In the midst of reporting Amulem's recovery, Renoncour again interrupts his story to declare:

*Je répète encore ici que cette complication d'événements extraordinaires, la rencontre d'Amulem, sa maladie, sa guérison et le déguisement de sa fille pourront sembler difficiles à croire; mais je ne dois point altérer la vérité, pour ménager la délicatesse d'un lecteur trop incrédule. (M.H.Q., p. 214)*

It is difficult to ascertain the reasoning behind the second example quoted, which seems extraneous. It is possible that Prévost followed the conventional method of supporting such a coincidence with claims of truth, or it is possible that he intentionally interrupted the recovery scene to prolong his reader's suspense. Assuming, however, that Prévost's predominant concern was with maintaining belief, it would seem in this case

that he risked betraying to his reader the very problem he strove to solve. Even if we feel that Prévost is heavy-handed in his attempt to authenticate the coincidence, there is no suggestion that belief is endangered; Prévost's method of approach is here merely more evident.

A third and even more unlikely or impossible series of events involves the supernatural. Stories of magicians, werewolves and supernatural phenomenon would have appealed immensely to the reader whose fascination with such fabrications, paradoxically, probably helped to sustain his belief in the memoirs. One particular episode involving Renoncour and werewolves demonstrates by its numerous claims to veracity the precautions taken by Prévost to avoid disrupting his reader's complacency. The example is located in Tome IV; Renoncour and Rosemont are en route to Lisbon. They spend the first night at a hotel near Plazentia where they meet two Spaniards who entertain them with stories of strange and unnatural happenings that have recently occurred in the Kingdom of Leon. Before repeating the Spaniard's stories Renoncour cautions the reader:

*Rien ne me parut plus extraordinaire que ce qu'ils nous apprirent des magiciens ou sorciers dont ce pays est rempli. En rapportant ces sortes d'histoires, je n'en garantis pas la vérité: il me suffit d'être fidèle dans la relation que j'en fais, et d'écrire les choses telles que je les ai entendues. (M.H.Q., p. 186)*

Prévost's strategem is quite clear: He has shifted the onus for "truth" from Renoncour to the Spaniards. Renoncour's integrity is all the more intact in that he himself shows scepticism; the author and reader become partners in doubt.<sup>28</sup>

The story involves the mysterious transformation of two wolves back into the shape of men, a feat witnessed by one of the Spaniards. In a second paragraph, more tales are told to Renoncour concerning the existence of werewolves and the strange death of the innkeeper's wife. Having duly recorded these stories of *couleur locale* in his memoirs Renoncour comments:

*J'ai naturellement un peu d'incrédulité pour tous les événements surnaturels: ainsi, quelque bonne idée que j'eusse de nos deux Espagnols, je regardais leur récit comme un conte inventé pour nous divertir, et je ne pus m'empêcher de leur en témoigner quelque chose en badinant. Ils continuèrent de me protester qu'ils étaient sincères; mais ils ne m'auraient pas persuadé davantage, si je n'eusse été forcé par ce que je vis un moment après, à croire qu'il se passe effectivement des choses étranges dans cette partie de l'Espagne. (M.H.Q., p. 187)*

Renoncour, in fact, does not personally see anything out of the ordinary.<sup>29</sup> He observes the effects of shock on a young traveller who has just witnessed the slaying of a young woman. It is on the basis of this man's condition that Renoncour decides the murder must have taken place. Only in a final paragraph concluding the traveller's tale does Renoncour admit a readiness to believe in the events told to him.

*C'est l'unique fois de ma vie que j'ai cru trouver des apparences assez fortes pour me réconcilier un peu avec les idées de magie et de sorciers. (M.H.Q., p. 188)*

The adventures in Leon are presented in such a way that neither the sensibilities nor the intelligence of the reader are undermined. Renoncour promises a faithful report of his sources, but offers no guarantee of the events themselves. He continually expresses doubt and not until the end admits that strange events seem to have been happening in Spain. Renoncour's partial reconciliation with ideas concerning magic and sorcery

is not over-emphasized. Of course, the extraordinary subject matter depicted in these episodes required that some promise of truth be made and since Prévost shifted the onus of truth from his trustworthy "author" onto the Spaniards, Renoncour was saved thereby from appearing credulous although, quite possibly, he might have been considered naive or impressionable by the eighteenth century reader. Prévost has thus managed to tantalize his reader without destroying the fragile ties that bind the memoirs to a pretense of truth.

In contrast with such ways of softening the impact of the fantastic, we find a second group of devices each of which contains some form of promise of factuality.<sup>30</sup> The following examples have been chosen to illustrate Prévost's skill in this area of authentic representation. In fiction, if something is described that is hard to believe, the narrator can always insinuate that the reader's lack of knowledge is to blame. When the narrator then furnishes an explanation that enlightens the reader, the situation is rendered believable. Although it might also be a good technique occasionally to leave the reader uninformed (at least he would have to withhold judgement for lack of sufficient information), Prévost usually comes to his reader's rescue. An example of such a stratagem can be found in the adventures of Tusculum. Having just discovered a new burial chamber at the site of the ancient ruins, Renoncour and two companions (convenient witnesses) leave to report their success. Renoncour's hair becomes suddenly and mysteriously ignited, a sight that terrifies the onlookers and plunges the three men

into a deep fear of the unknown. The reader is told that this adventure, enlarged by exaggerated versions of the story furnished by the locals, *sera longtemps célèbre à Frascati* (M.H.Q., p. 95). Although the residents of Frascati supposedly are left to ponder for many years the mystery at Tusculum, Renoncour furnishes for the reader of the memoirs a plausible explanation of the fire:

*Cependant je suis persuadé, en y faisant aujourd'hui réflexion, qu'il n'y eut rien que de naturel dans cet événement. J'avais un flambeau à la main en remuant les cendres: l'humidité grasse qu'elles conservaient encore put s'enflammer aisément; et, par la même raison, la flamme dut se communiquer facilement à mes cheveux qui étaient fort longs et chargés d'essence. (M.H.Q., p. 95)*

The passage describing a natural cause of the fire is necessary if the reader is to be left free of doubt concerning the supernatural, a stratagem that allows the reader to enjoy both the fascination and mystery of the unknown and yet to be returned safely in the end to the rational and realistic world of Renoncour's memoirs. An even balance is achieved between the historical validity of the Roman tombs<sup>31</sup> and the suggested presence of a supernatural power. The extra information provided by Renoncour is like a silent force working on the unwary reader and helps to render the episode believable.

Denying the genre of their writing was another curious device favoured by many memorialists. As a procedure, it is handled rather cleverly by Prévost. Well aware that a denial of fiction could necessarily imply an assertion of the memoir, he is able in this way to exact a kind of double duty from this technique.

Furthermore, the repetition of the very word *mémoire* tends to act almost subliminally on the reader until it metonymizes to become "true biography". In instances when Renoncour protests that his work is not fiction, the intention is even more obvious. We have already examined in the first Lettre de l'éditeur the apologies made for Renoncour's stylistic shortcomings (due to his lack of skill as a professional writer). This vein continues inside the narrative when Renoncour edits some of his own material by declaring what he considers to be appropriate for inclusion in memoirs. For example, although claiming to be perfectly capable of describing his sister Julie, Renoncour refrains from doing so in the M.H.Q.

*J'ai encore le portrait de mon aimable Julie si bien gravé dans le coeur, depuis plus de trente ans que je l'ai perdue, que je tracerais ici sans peine les charmes de son visage, de sa taille et de son esprit, si ces sortes de descriptions ne convenaient plus à un roman qu'à une histoire sérieuse. (M.H.Q., p. 18)*

In other cases Prévost uses the word *roman* to different advantage. When Renoncour confronts Rosemont with the possibility of Nadine's retreat to a nunnery, the sacrifice of freedom made by Nadine is described as being *le dernier effort du coeur humain, un effort qui ne paraîtrait pas vraisemblable dans un roman. (M.H.Q., p. 349)* A slight variation in this type of device can be seen when Renoncour censors his own work, and states that some things are better omitted from the memoirs. Rather than describe the tombs and monuments in all the English cathedrals visited while touring Southern England, Renoncour declares:

*ces descriptions seraient ennuyeuses, et par conséquent peu convenables à ces mémoires. Je n'ai pas même dessein d'entrer dans le détail de toutes les villes que nous visitâmes. Il pourrait faire la matière d'un ouvrage particulier, si le peu de*

*temps qui me reste à vivre me permet de l'entreprendre.*  
(M.H.Q., p. 263)<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the memoirs Renoncour apologizes for digressions in his story, or for tales that might be boring. He frequently omits some of his adventures for fear of offending his reader and in some cases he declares that he is not at liberty to reveal certain information. This self-imposed censorship is supposedly to protect the innocent or to avoid agitating the guilty. Although Renoncour claims to have recorded many stories concerning the private lives of the Prince de Condé, of Christine of Sweden, and of the many nobles at the Spanish court (M.H.Q., p. 138), he elects to withhold such information from the public until a more favourable period in time. Thus, by directing the reader's attention to the memoirs and the additions, revisions, and deletions associated with it, Prévost is continually (although often indirectly) reminding the reader that he is not reading a novel.

One final suggestion of authenticity can be seen in the appearance of witnesses and celebrities in the M.H.Q. Without having to call directly upon someone to verify the truth of his story, Renoncour can provide the reader with witnesses in a variety of subtle ways. For example, informing the reader that his peers already possess certain information is enough to instill in the reader a desire to be equally "knowledgeable", convinced as he is through his sense of inadequacy and his desire to remedy the situation. Circumstances are sometimes reversed when the

reader is made to feel privileged for being the first to receive information. This is the technique used when the Prince of Portugal tells Renoncour about the death of Donna Clara. Renoncour passes on to the reader information *qui est encore ignoré de tout le monde à Lisbonne* (M.H.Q., p. 208). By using to his advantage the public love of scandal and gossip Prévost often inserted just the right amount of "society" prattle to capture his reader's complete interest. Truth in such matters is rarely of concern to a lover of gossip. Although, as we have already noted, naming celebrities was a common practice in memoir-novels, some methods were obviously more subtle than others. Quite often it can be reduced to a simple matter of name-dropping (*le hasard nous fit remontrer à Fontainebleau M. le marquis d'Antremont, ambassadeur du roi de Sicile.* M.H.Q., p. 295) In other cases, Prévost showed more interest in the presentation of his celebrity. Cardinal Janson, for example, plays a major role in the baptism of Selima, Renoncour's Turkish wife. The circumstances are such that the reader's attention is directed away from the celebrity witness and onto the event itself, although, interestingly enough, despite the presence of Cardinal Janson, Prévost also includes a number of distinguished people to witness the ceremony:

*Le Cardinal était d'abord dans le dessein de faire cette cérémonie de sa propre main, et de la rendre la plus éclatante qu'il lui serait possible; mais j'y marquai de la répugnance, et Selima peu d'inclination. Il fut résolu que tout se passerait sans bruit dans l'église d'un petit couvent de Bénédictines, qui n'était pas éloigné de notre logement . . . Quelque soin que nous eussions pris pour tenir la cérémonie secrète, nous ne pûmes empêcher quantité de personnes de distinction d'y assister. (M.H.Q., p. 88)*

One final example to be considered indicates the degree of flexibility to be found in Prévost's use of witnesses and celebrities. Shortly after arriving in Madrid, Rosemont and Renoncour attend a party at the home of don Antonio de Salcedo, Governor of Madrid. Renoncour describes the event:

*L'assemblée y était des plus illustres, et nous y fûmes vus avec plaisir. Nous y trouvâmes entre autres monsieur le Comte de Charni et monsieur le Marquis de Leide, qui nous firent mille civilités. Nous aurions pu aisément nous faire connaître d'eux, en leur apprenant nos véritables noms; ils n'ignoraient ni celui du Marquis ni le mien: Mais je n'y voyais aucune utilité, et j'étais bien aise d'attendre le retour de Monsieur le duc de Saint-Aignan, Ambassadeur de France, qui était absent de Madrid depuis quelques semaines.*  
(M.H.Q., p. 144)

The unspoken message of this passage gives witness to veracity; two Spanish gentlemen and the French Ambassador himself vouch silently for Renoncour's attendance. The notion of withholding Renoncour's real identity (which had it been revealed, would have been immediately recognized) is a slight departure from the standard line of reasoning. The total effect is one of convincing realism, suggested rather than boldly claimed.

#### D. The Letter

One of the most popular authenticating devices used by pseudo-memorialists of the period was the quoted letter, a technique dependent, however, on several factors. First, the reader had to allow the author of the memoirs an excellent gift of memory. (Verbatim recall in memoir-novels was, perhaps, not viewed as critically by Prévost's contemporaries as by the modern reader.) Secondly, the omniscient viewpoint of the author became an important factor. The memoir-novelist had to ensure that his author did not quote correspondence he had never seen; thus, when the letter belonged to a third person, the author-narrator had to discover some means of viewing the contents. In the M.H.Q., for example, Renoncour, although repelled by his own behaviour, picks Rosemont's pockets in order to read his letters.<sup>33</sup>

The advantages to be gained by including correspondence in memoirs such as the M.H.Q. are many. The reader can bypass the author and share the views of the letter writer, thus developing a closer intimacy with him. The letter can also be used as a tool to influence the reader's point of view, as segments quoted out of context can change the meaning of the letter and also the reader's opinion of the writer. An extra dimension is added to the M.H.Q., for example, when we are shown Manon's letters; we are conscious that she is never given the opportunity to address Renoncour or the reader in order to explain her point of view. But the quoted letter is

also a form of documentary proof providing the means for winning the reader's belief. Hasty words penned by Renoncour in a note to King James II aid the monarch in his successful flight to safety. Expressions of passionate love in letters between Selima and Renoncour are reproduced intact for the pleasure of the reader. (Remembering the love letters written in his past is part of Renoncour's cathartic healing.) Whatever Renoncour claims to be true can be supported by "objective" evidence contained in a letter.

Occasionally Renoncour does tell the reader how he is able to convey the exact terms of a letter. In these cases the good faith of the reader is undoubtedly rewarded. Renoncour, at the monastery where his father chose to retire, is denied visiting privileges. Instead he is given a letter from his father. The reader is allowed to discover its contents and Renoncour explains: *Il m'est aisé de la transcrire ici, puisque je la conserve encore.* (M.H.Q., p. 142) The explanation not only protects this particular letter but also the several others belonging to Rosemont that are reported verbatim in the M.H.Q. Such comments as *la voici, je n'y change rien* (M.H.Q., p. 302), or *je la transcris mot à mot* (M.H.Q., p. 275) are to be found frequently in the memoirs and although it would be an overstatement to consider them particularly important in winning belief, they nevertheless are meant to contribute to the overall effect. One final point to be raised concerning the use of letters in the M.H.Q. is Prévost's willingness to confront the problem

of Renoncour's verbatim recall of letters to which he no longer has access. Not only is the following example convincing, it represents a refreshing change from the more traditional approach:

*Il me présenta la lettre qui attacha effectivement toute mon attention. Elle n'a pu se conserver dans ma mémoire: mais j'en fus assez frappé pour me souvenir qu'après: l'aveu d'une vive passion et mille serments de constance, Madame de C . . . ne laissait pas de se reprocher la faiblesse qu'elle avait eue . . . (M.H.Q., p. 221)*

By admitting that his memory has failed him, Renoncour exposes himself as a very human and ordinary author. The reader would not expect the terms of most correspondence to be faithfully recalled from the past.<sup>34</sup> Thus letters that could not be reported verbatim become as authentic as those that are quoted and both helped to fulfill the necessary requirements for creating believable memoirs.

### E. Direct and Indirect Speech

The use of direct and indirect speech in memoir-novels varied greatly depending on the degree of concern shown by the novelist for matters of verisimilitude. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the multiple advantages or disadvantages of one particular mode of speech over another. However, if one examines the novelist's choice from the point of view of authenticity, indirect speech (used as frequently as possible) would appear to be the most convincing. It corresponds most closely to our own powers of recall and reflects as well the pattern of speech most commonly used when we relate a conversation from the past.<sup>35</sup> Clearly, the fact that in real life one does not remember long dialogues held with other people makes indirection a realistic choice.<sup>36</sup>

Prévost made ample use of dialogue in Manon Lescaut by alternating passages of indirect speech with brief conversations reported in the first person. Although we gain the impression that he used indirection more frequently in Tome VII than he did in the earlier tomes of the M.H.Q.,<sup>37</sup> examples of both modes of speech can be found in Tomes I through VI, along with explanatory statements which supposedly account for Renoncour's extraordinary powers of recall. When direct speech is quoted in the M.H.Q. some fundamental and preliminary precautions are usually observed. For example some effort is usually made to explain how Renoncour came to know the exact words spoken in

private between two individuals. In the case of the declaration of love made by Rosemont to Diana, Renoncour simply eavesdrops. Whether this manner of obtaining information was deemed respectable by the reader is immaterial at this stage; it is indicative of Prévost's awareness of the problems associated with an omniscient author. The frequent use of phrases such as *Ce discours fit quelque impression sur moi* (M.H.Q., p. 125) indicates that Prévost followed the conventional approach to passages reported in direct speech. At other times, however, a slightly more elaborate explanation is offered. The touching, final words said to Renoncour by his father leave a lasting impression on the son: *Il me fit appeler dans sa chambre, et me tint ce discours, qui fit trop d'impression sur mon âme pour qu'il en puisse jamais être effacé.* (M.H.Q., p. 19) Interest in the conversation taking place is often another reason given by Renoncour to explain his capacity for verbatim recall. When found at the commencement of a lengthy *histoire* such as the one told by the Marquis de Rosambert, the effect on the reader would be minimal. *Nous nous assîmes, et voici ce qu'il me dit; le sincère intérêt que j'y ai toujours pris ne m'a pas permis de l'oublier.* (M.H.Q., p. 30) Another approach was to shift the focus of interest away from Renoncour's reasons for remembering and onto his desire to please the reader by allowing a second narrator to tell his own story:

*Comme ce fut par lui-même que je me fis raconter cette histoire, je puis la mettre dans sa bouche, pour épargner au lecteur l'ennui d'un récit trop simple, et dénué d'action et de sentiments.*  
(M.H.Q., p. 335)

This is probably one of Prévost's most frank admissions in the M.H.Q. and touches upon a major problem facing the novelist. He must choose either the indirect mode of speech which conforms to real-life standards of expectations concerning the possibilities of recall or the direct mode which offers a more intimate and lively, if less believable, style of speech.

When Prévost does use indirection, it is often unobtrusively blended into the surrounding narration. However, he does occasionally admit to using approximations, at which time the reader is offered an example in summary. (This device, referred to as the *à peu près* by Stewart, was not used frequently by other memoir-novelists.)<sup>38</sup> The following example of indirect speech is based on the same philosophy of discourse as the one used in the quoted letter; it admits to an inability to recall the words verbatim. Rosemont declares his love for Diana; Renoncour, writing his memoirs years later, cannot remember what was said:

*J'aurais peine à rapporter son discours, quoique j'aie toujours eu soin, dans nos voyages, d'écrire le soir ce qui nous était arrivé d'intéressant pendant le jour. Jamais l'amour ne s'exprima avec plus de grâce et d'éloquence, ni d'une manière plus tendre et plus touchante. (M.H.Q., p. 153)*

The explanation implied for Renoncour's difficulty in remembering Rosemont's exact words, is the young lover's verbosity. In many circumstances, this excuse would seem quite probable. The additional information concerning the "nightly reports" written by Renoncour would also account for many direct quotations used throughout the M.H.Q.

## F. Proper Nouns and Identities

The number of different methods available to memoir-novelists for naming their characters would suggest that this aspect of the convention received careful attention. The very common practice of using the name of a celebrity had the obvious advantage of giving a sense of historical factuality to the memoirs and when the activities of Renoncour are shared with some historically real person, the reader has a feeling of confrontation with a known fact. However, as it was not always possible to offer names to the reader (a wish for anonymity was usually given as a reason), a number of devices were brought into play to suggest or hint at the real identity of the individual. This, indeed, is the approach taken in the M.H.Q. when the author requests that his name be withheld from the public and we have already examined in this respect the editor's letters, which not only explain the author's point of view but which, at the same time, provide authenticating witnesses who know the author by name. Renoncour gives information in the M.H.Q. about his ancestors and family background that is so precise that it all but exposes his real identity. Clearly Prévost wished to create the appearance of an authentic genealogy to substantiate the author's noble title. Additional items provide information pertaining to the possible identification of the author's real name. At the beginning of the memoirs, for example, the reader is told that Renoncour's grandfather,

who originally came from a *province voisine de la France* (M.H.Q., p. 13), profited from his loyal service to Louis XIV by acquiring land to settle in the territory which fell under French domination. At this time the title of Count was established and given to the male heir. Then, after a family disagreement, Renoncour's father (using the honorary title Marquis de . . .) left his home and settled across the border, in a town beginning with N. . . . Later in the memoirs, when the father retires to a monastery, we are told it is a Carthusian house, near N. . . . Without too much speculation it is possible for the reader to deduce that the ancestral home was owned by a count, and was located somewhere in Flanders or Artois;<sup>39</sup> the town situated close to a Carthusian monastery was probably Namur. When Renoncour, as a young man, leaves France to travel to Brussels, he makes the acquaintance of some Spanish-speaking officers: *Ils connaissaient mon nom. J'avais plus d'un parent qui tenaient un rang distingué dans les armées de leur maître.* (M.H.Q., p. 52) A further reference to the author's name is to be found when Renoncour is captured by the Turks; he is given the name Salem as it closely resembles the meaning of his French title. The Avant-Propos then reveals that the author in fact travelled under an assumed name during his tour of Spain, Portugal and England. Although this pseudonym complicates further the reader's attempts to identify the author, the public of Prévost's day would not have considered it unusual for a man of quality to travel incognito. The names of Renoncour's daughter, his son-in-law and several distant

relatives are all carefully withheld from the reader. While it is true that in one episode in which Renoncour is asked to visit a distant relative, an unusual number of initials and suspension points are used, no doubt to give an extra dimension of reality and intrigue to the memoirs (M.H.Q., pp. 334-335), but this is exceptional. In the second editor's letter the announced death of the author terminates any speculation concerning Renoncour's name; the reader is not enlightened and is not given any reason for further hope. Although the mystery surrounding Renoncour's family name may seem to be unnecessary, it must be remembered that establishing the real existence of the author was an important part of the convention at that time. Therefore Prévost's task, it would seem, was to give as much realistic background as possible to the author in order to suggest his place among the nobility of France. It would have been possible for Prévost simply to tell the reader all the aforementioned information without engaging him in a form of guessing game. However, this approach would have appealed far less to a reading public quite familiar with these practices and accustomed to such indirect challenges to its powers of deduction.<sup>40</sup>

The methods used by Prévost for naming characters (other than Renoncour) vary somewhat. For example, fictitious characters are not always named by initials. Some initials belong to historic personages and were probably easy to decipher by the eighteenth-century reader. Two ladies found in the company of the Duc d'Orléans (the Comtesse de P. and the Marquise de F.)

might well have been correctly identified as the Comtesse de Parabère and the Marquise de Flavacourt. When cryptonyms such as these are intermingled with initials depicting imaginary characters, it is difficult for the reader to sort out fact from fiction. Certainly we might legitimately expect that his efforts would be concentrated on the problem of identification and not on the question of authenticity.<sup>41</sup>

Fictitious names are also used frequently in the M.H.Q. for minor characters, and an assortment of languages are called into play to depict foreign titles. For instance, Renoncour states he will not use Spanish terms in his memoirs (*Je me sers des noms qui sont en usage en France pour ne pas hérissier ma narration de termes espagnols. M.H.Q., p. 131*). This, supposedly, is to appease the reader for the lack of authentic foreign names in the M.H.Q. Yet Prévost often combined names, employing, in some cases, those used by memoir-novelists of an earlier period, since a variation built around some existing name would be more convincing, possibly, than one based on pure invention. Prévost's Comtesse d'Orozuna is perhaps derived from the names Oropesa and Osuna, both used by Madame d'Aulnoy.<sup>42</sup> As well, there is a certain resemblance between the names given to the priests at the Escorial, and those belonging to Prévost's friends in Saint-Germain-des-Prés.<sup>43</sup>

Frequently in the M.H.Q., rather than disguise a name by initials or invent one, Prévost chose to have it withheld. This was done not only in the case of the author, but was used also

as a popular device in the case of minor characters. Such pleas as *Permettez-moi de vous cacher mon nom . . .* (M.H.Q., pp. 37, 192) were effective as a means of sidestepping problems of identification and also as a means of increasing the mystery and intrigue surrounding the event. The names of victims of pirates, of those involved in financial ruin or unhappy love affairs were usually not revealed, ostensibly to protect the good name of the family involved. In one particular instance, Renoncour refrains from naming a priest (who becomes romantically involved with a young woman) out of respect for the Catholic Church. This guarantees the truth of his account to the reader, who might legitimately suppose that if Renoncour wished in that way to protect the church's reputation, then surely the scandal took place.

A further advantage to be found in Prévost's use of names derives from the inclusion of false names for the purpose of creating suspense and for the development of the plot. A false name is assumed by the Prince dom Manuel . . . while trying to court Donna Clara. The Marquis de Rosambert assumes the name of Arsène when he retires to a Trappist monastery, a move which momentarily confuses Renoncour and forestalls their reunion. The most prominent example, perhaps, involves the young Turkish adolescent that Renoncour meets on board ship, called Memisces. He is introduced under this name and becomes a close friend of the young Rosemont. When it is finally revealed that the lad is a young woman named Nadine, and

furthermore that she is Renoncour's niece, the relationship once shared with Rosemont is clearly not permitted to continue. The lovers try to hide the fact that Rosemont has discovered Memisces' secret, a twist which adds considerably to the complications of Renoncour's life and consequently to the plot of the M.H.Q.

The fact that several methods are used in the M.H.Q. to suggest the real-life names of well-known figures in society makes the task of sorting fact from fiction much more difficult. The reader can never be sure in which cases the unnamed individual is real or fictitious; the initials to be found throughout the M.H.Q. might or might not represent a real person and the reader, both contemporary and eighteenth-century, would be none the wiser.

## G. Geographical and Topographical Details

Geographical and even topographical descriptions in memoir-novels had the dual purpose of satisfying the travel-minded reader's curiosity and of vouching indirectly for the authentic experience of the writer; such detailed information about foreign countries in particular was unlikely to provoke the reader to verification, thus allowing the novelist certain liberties that he could not afford to take in the case of descriptive material about France. The popularity of the travel genre meant that the reader was at once familiar with this form of writing and less likely to be critical of minor discrepancies or errors. In matters concerning reports of a cultural or geographical nature, the avid interest of the reader was, of course, a decided advantage for the memoir-novelist wishing to use this aspect of authentic representation to maintain his reader's belief.

In the M.H.Q., the amount of descriptive material given over to geographical considerations is unevenly dispersed throughout the six tomes which, by and large, represent in turn the various countries visited by Renoncour. Tome I, set mainly in France, provides little descriptive material of a geographical nature. Renoncour's first visit to Paris, for example, gives the reader only a vague notion of the city's layout or its places of interest. Regarding his private residence, Renoncour has only the following to say: *Le fond de mélancolie que je portais sans cesse me fit choisir ma demeure dans une rue écartée du faubourg Saint-Germain.* (M.H.Q., p. 29)

The greater degree of realism imparted by the geographical exactitude of Des Grieux's Paris provides a notable contrast, a difference quite possibly linked to a shift of interest on the part of Prévost.<sup>44</sup> The remaining events of Tome I take place in Brussels, in various English localities, and in Vienna, and are narrated with a definite focus on historical reality, even if the attention given to actual events (predominantly concerning wars) overrides any passing references that might be made to geographical locations. A new emphasis, however, is apparent in the second tome. The capture of Renoncour by the Turks and his long trek to Adrinople is written with an eye to the exotic appeal of foreign lands. Fairly precise details are frequently given which would undoubtedly have impressed a reading public largely ignorant of life in the Turkish Empire. The following description, for example, is clearly informative if not actually educational:

*Cette ville (Amasie) est la capitale de la province du même nom. Elle est grande, riche et fort peuplée. Sa situation me parut charmante: elle est au milieu d'une plaine de dix lieues de long et large de quatre, entourée d'une chaîne de montagnes, qui la défendent des vents du nord et du midi. La rivière de Cusalmach coule dans la plaine, et passe au travers de la ville, où elle procure mille commodités. (M.H.Q., p. 67)*

Renoncour's eventual return voyage to France takes him first to Italy, where he settles temporarily with his wife Selima. The account of his Italian sojourn is comparatively free of geographical descriptions and local color is depicted mainly through a series of adventures and histories involving the Italian nobility whose customs, manners and life-style are

indirectly related. One exception, however, is provided by the brief paragraph describing the home of Madame de Sanati:

*Cette dame avait une maison de campagne à huit ou neuf milles de Rome, du côté de Frascati..... La maison de Madame de Sanati est située près de la ville d'Aldobrandini, qu'on appelle Belvédère à cause de la beauté de sa vue. (M.H.Q., p. 93)*

The third and fourth tomes of the memoirs (dealing with Spain and Portugal) reveal Prévost's ever increasing interest in descriptive writing. Despite the opening sentence (*Je laisse aux géographes, et à ceux qui ne voyagent que par curiosité, le soin de donner au public la description des pays qu'ils ont parcourus. (M.H.Q., p. 119)*) Renoncour provides his reader with an interesting account of his travels from Bordeaux to Bayonne, on through Bidossa and Iron, Saint-Sebastien, Vittoria (in Castille), Burgos and finally Madrid.<sup>45</sup> The capital is revealed by Renoncour to be well supplied with promenades (*cours*), such as the *Prado nuevo, y el Prado viejo (M.H.Q., p. 125)*. The tiny river Mancanaris is also mentioned. Such details along with informative views concerning the culture and customs of the Spanish people are not uncommon in the third and fourth tomes, and their influence on the reader should not be underestimated. Indeed we need only consider the successful literary forgery of Mme. d'Aulnoy's Voyage d'Espagne to realize the potential of such travel literature for duping the public. Foulché-Delbosc, who edited the Voyage d'Espagne in 1926 revealed for the first time that Mme. d'Aulnoy probably never set foot in Spain.<sup>46</sup> Ironically, if Prévost did borrow from the Voyage d'Espagne (as well as from de Brunel), he would have done so under the

impression that Mme. d'Aulnoy's material was factual and based on first-hand observations.

Tome V of the M.H.Q. is, in this respect, unlike any of those preceding it; it is factual, precise and presumably based mainly on Prévost's own first-hand impressions and observations. Renoncour's visit to London and the journey through Southwestern England is dated from February 9, 1716 to approximately the end of June in the same year. Although oral sources are generally agreed to have furnished much of the material not personally experienced by Prévost, the travel literature of contemporary writers such as John Macky, Guy Miège and Daniel Defoe was available for Prévost's use.<sup>47</sup> Prévost arrived in London some time in November 1728 and left under mysterious circumstances late in 1730. A second visit, which allowed him to start publication of Le Pour et Contre, lasted until his second departure in the autumn of 1734. The fifth tome of the M.H.Q. was thus probably roughly put together in note form during his sojourn of 1728-30. Despite its large amount of precise and accurate descriptive material, there are also a number of chronological errors suggesting that Renoncour's "earlier" visit is modeled on that made by Prévost in 1728-30. For example, The Provoked Husband supposedly attended by Renoncour in 1715 did not appear in London until 1728. Prévost in his enthusiasm to discuss the English theatre and to convey his own critical views, forgot in this instance the exacting demands of chronology.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the time lapse, while

it caused some problems can also be seen as working in Prévost's favour; the period described is remote enough for the contemporary reader to have forgotten exact details and yet sufficiently recent for Prévost to be able to enlist his reader's acquired knowledge as a point of departure. The reader of the M.H.Q.'s fifth tome is given approximately 34 pages of information about London, the life and customs of its people, Tunbridge Wells and the society that frequented the spa. Included are Prévost's observations concerning local monuments (he gives the height of the monument to the Great Fire, for example, and comments on the commemorative plaque which blames the Papists), landmarks, parks, squares, shops, churches, streets and places of amusement such as bath-houses, dance halls, theatres and amphitheatres for boxing, wrestling and cudgel-playing. Quite apart from the informative value of this material the reaction of Renoncour/Prévost to English customs is of particular interest to the modern reader. For example, when describing the park and gardens surrounding Saint-James Palace, Prévost comments on the curious title given to M. de Saint-Guremont, "governor of ducks" at Saint-James, a paid office which appealed apparently to the sense of humour of King George. Prévost's version awards the humour of this situation to Saint-Guremont, who not only supposedly approached the King about the governorship, but also offered to pay 100 guineas for the privilege. (M.H.Q., p. 247) Prévost also remarked

on the strange custom practiced by Englishmen of distinction of allowing *la plus vile populace* (M.H.Q., p. 247) to mingle freely with them in the parks, squares and on Pall Mall. A similar reaction of surprise (and probably censure) is registered by Prévost when discussing the English theatre's famed actress, Mrs. Oldfield. Despite her open love affair with one of the Churchills, a relative to the Duke of Marlborough, and the fact that they had an illegitimate son (in fact Anne Oldfield had a second lover and a second child as well) the actress, Renoncour informs us, was *vue avec plaisir dans les meilleures compagnies de Londres. Les dames de la plus haute distinction se faisaient un honneur d'être en liaison avec elle: et j'ai vu plusieurs fois des duchesses et d'autres personnes du premier rang l'appeler dans leur loges après la comédie...* . . . (M.H.Q., p. 240) Clearly, the very open and liberal attitude of the English regarding who could be accepted at social gatherings of the genteel must have been a revelation to Prévost (and quite probably to his French reader). An anecdote involving the King (who frequented the masquerades at Haymarket and later Vauxhall) and a masked lady who addressed him with a toast to the health of the Pretender,<sup>49</sup> provides another example of Prévost's interest in recording not merely facts and figures, but more importantly, the personality of the English monarch and his people (M.H.Q., p. 246). We find, however, curious additions made by Prévost to the memoirs which do not enhance authenticity nor do they appear to be corroborated by any known facts. John James Heydigger,

the person responsible for organizing successful masquerades at Haymarket, a one-time director of the Opera, and an extremely ugly-looking individual, is accurately portrayed in the M.H.Q. However, in the memoirs he is given a brother, a *médecin du même nom, dont les remèdes ont fait tant de bruit à Paris.* (M.H.Q., p. 243) Robertson was unable to verify the existence of such a brother and one cannot help but wonder to what purpose this additional information was intended. Heydigger enjoyed a national reputation in England and surely did not need a brother whose remedies were famous in Paris to help him achieve some degree of notoriety.

Our list of facts from Tome V concerning not only London's celebrated nobility but also the city itself, could be continued at some length and we can only conclude that for the sake of giving an impression of reality to the memoirs, Prévost's section on London goes well beyond the conventional demands for geographical realism favoured by contemporaries. For example, Renoncour's first impressions of the boxing matches held at the amphitheatres are related in sufficient detail to include mention of one particular match between James Figg (pugilist and cudgel-player) and *un sergent irlandais, arrivé récemment de Gibraltar* (M.H.Q., p. 252). Such additional information is interesting because the match must, in fact, have taken place (although Robertson was unable to assign a precise date to the event). Prévost either saw the match, heard about it from a spectator or found a reference to the event in a source

not yet discovered by his modern commentators. In view of the long semi-exotic tales of adventure told only a few tomes earlier in the M.H.Q., it is surprising that Prévost expended such energies here in recording relatively minor occurrences in such detail.

The tour of Southwestern England described by Renoncour was quite likely undertaken by Prévost although there seem to be no records indicating the date or the length of it. Prévost was employed as tutor to Francis Eyles, son of Sir John Eyles. The family, of Wiltshire origin, also had relatives in Somerset and at some stage a visit was made to them by Francis Eyles. We know from Le Pour et Contre that Prévost started on such a journey with a copy of Camden and that in disgust he discarded the book, choosing instead to make his own notes and observations. In the absence of documentary proof, we can only assume that Renoncour's carefully recorded observations resemble, at least in part, the notes taken by Prévost and, as we might expect, once again we find chronological errors in Renoncour's material betraying the date of Prévost's observations. When discussing the country-seats he visited in 1716, Renoncour talks about *celle de Mylord Leyminton à Down Husband, proche de . . .* (M.H.Q., p. 264). The estate was Down Hurstbourne in Hampshire which belonged to the Wallop family. Only in 1720 was the title created and given to John Wallop, First Viscount Lymington.<sup>50</sup> Clearly Prévost was familiar with both the estate and the Viscount. Another chronological

error, involving the Bishop of Chichester, is of special interest because of what is revealed of Prévost's personal views. Renoncour reports dining with Edward Waddington, Bishop of Chichester (he became Bishop only in 1724), his wife (who died in 1728 before Prévost arrived in England), and their daughters (the Bishop died in 1731 without issue). The daughters *qui nous parurent d'une sagesse et d'une modestie dignes du rang épiscopal* (M.H.Q., p. 263) and the wife (whom Prévost obviously never met) help to build up Prévost's understandably exalted portrayal of the freedom and dignity of the English clergy. One can in this instance understand the reasoning behind Prévost's adjustment of the facts; his feelings of frustration with the French clergy overruled his tendency in this tome to be factual. Despite the number of years separating the real and the imaginary journey, the M.H.Q. is amply enriched as well with interesting stories about rural towns, English barrows, Roman castles, Wheatears (a name probably evolved from the typically "white-arsed" birds) and tin mines. Renoncour seems to observe the tiniest details and comments with well-deserved scepticism on some of the sights, for example, King Arthur's round table displayed in Winchester. To list, along with some critics, the great number of places and buildings that are not mentioned by Renoncour seems, however, an exercise in futility. Prévost was not an avid antiquarian, nor would one expect to find an appreciation of the picturesque nor a love for nature from a man of quality in

the early eighteenth century. Prévost's Tome V reflects the interests of its author in a number of subtle ways allowing the reader to enjoy England through the eyes of one of its most candid and eloquent French supporters.

Tome VI which concludes the memoirs is a somewhat confused array of adventures, involving chases, retreats to nunneries, vengeance and drama. There is no geographical interest in this tome which seeks, through a series of prolonged minor *histoires*, to draw the memoirs to a final close. The reader notes a tremendous shift of interest and only the quickly moving pace of the last pages helps to prevent a feeling of confusion. Renoncour's colourful descriptions of life in foreign countries are terminated; the facts, figures, and impressively real observations are replaced by a narrative style dependent almost entirely on plot and action.

#### H. Time: Calendar, Clock, and Chronology

References to hours and dates, as well as good chronological organization, contribute much to the reader's sense of reality in memoir-novels. While errors of this kind are easily discovered by the critical reader, there are positive aspects of time references which merit discussion. The later tomes of the M.H.Q. were supposedly written in diary form with Renoncour recording each evening the events of the same day. In these circumstances the problem of remembering twenty years after an event whether it took place on a Wednesday or Thursday or remembering whether Renoncour arrived for dinner at precisely six o'clock is on the whole a minor one in the M.H.Q. Prévost frequently notes the precise time: *le lendemain, qui était un jour de fête, Scoti vint m'avertir sur les huit heures du matin que le curieux était à ma porte* (M.H.Q., p. 29); *Je fus plus surpris que je ne le puis dire, lorsque j'appris le lendemain à mon réveil qu'il était parti sur les trois heures du matin pour se rendre à N . . . La Brie entra dans ma chambre à sept heures.* (M.H.Q., p. 27) Renoncour is also particularly aware of duration and frequently alludes to the number of days or weeks separating two events. Phrases such as *Je l'attendis trois semaines entières; Il me dit qu'on n'y avait été assuré de mon évasion que quatre jours après . . . Il ne raconta que peu de jours après . . . Je demeurai encore quelques jours dans cette ville . . .* (M.H.Q., p. 56) indicate an obvious appreciation of time and its interest for the author. The example just cited depicts Renoncour at a difficult juncture in his life; he has escaped from England, awaited impatiently the

arrival of his servant, and then decided to leave Cologne for more happy prospects in Vienna. Temporal precision reinforces the feeling of frustration and impatience so obviously felt by the young man of quality. A second example found in Tome V, adds to the reader's sense of witnessing history in the making. Renoncour, engaged in attempts to organize the escape of Mylady R . . . , has not been able to keep abreast of the local scene. *J'avais passé les huit premiers jours avec tant d'inquiétude que j'avais été capable de peu d'attention pour ce qui se faisait à Londres. Il y était arrivé de grands changements.* (M.H.Q., p. 240)

This example, in fact, also contributes to the chronological organization of the M.H.Q. and along with most of the "dates" gratuitously offered in the text, enhances the temporal realism of the novel. To achieve this temporal realism, Prévost, realizing full well that the historians' trade flourishes on specific dates and well-known verifiable events (a fare that is largely ignored by the traditional novelist), has strategically sprinkled his narrative with factual offerings. These historical tidbits serve him in two ways: they function on a practical level to punctuate and therefore delineate his plot structure with a real temporal focus and more generally, they reinforce and, in fact, support his claims for truth because his narrative becomes "historically accurate". An example of this can be seen in Prévost's shaping of Tome V with dates either given directly or implied through their association with historically prominent events.

Renoncour and Rosemont's arrival in England coincides with the rebel Scottish chiefs' sentencing, which establishes the temporal starting point of the English sojourn (Prévost does not include the actual date, February 9, 1716, probably because the notoriety of the event was sufficient evidence for his purpose). Once in London, Renoncour casually refers to his "first eight days", and a number of events, correctly sequenced, are included in his itinerary to authenticate this: the Pretender's departure from Scotland (the Diary of Dudley Ryder<sup>51</sup> indicates that rumours surrounding the Chevalier's flight from Montrose had been circulating in some London social circles as early as February 14th), Nithsdale's escape from prison, February 23rd, and the execution of Derwentwater and Kenmure, February 24th. Unfortunately Prévost added the dismissal of Nottingham and Aylsford, February 28th and 29th, which somewhat stretches a literal interpretation of his eight day reference.<sup>52</sup>

Later in Tome V, the Jacobite cause is again mentioned by Renoncour, this time serving as a temporal marker for his first appearance at court and his conversation with the King (M.H.Q., p. 241).<sup>53</sup> As well, on the day of this visit (March 6, 1716), the Duke of Argyle arrived at court with the written surrender of many rebel chiefs.<sup>54</sup> Renoncour also mentions that during the same period the city was preoccupied with the trial of the Earl of Oxford (M.H.Q., p. 241). In this case, Prévost was probably very precise as the trial, which was ongoing from

1715-1717, reached a particular highpoint when in late February 1716 new evidence was brought forward by the Earl of Stair (against Oxford).<sup>55</sup> This event is undoubtedly the cause of the city's renewed interest in the plight of Oxford, which Prévost inserted into the correct chronological slot of the M.H.Q.

Renoncour then departs London for a tour of the provinces, resulting in an absence of approximately two months (M.H.Q., p. 268), and upon his return, he reports that the political affairs in London had undergone much change. The debates concerning the repeal of the Triennial Act were currently taking place (ca. late April) and Renoncour witnessed the escape of Mackintosh from the Tower<sup>56</sup> on the eve of May 3rd. Thus his two month's absence fits almost exactly the period designated by Argyle's arrival in London (March 6) and Mackintosh's escape (May 3), revealing clearly that Prévost respected the demands of chronology. As well Renoncour's decision to return to France coincides with the English King's visit to his German holdings (M.H.Q., p. 269), an event announced in one of his speeches which was recorded in the London Gazette of June 24-20.<sup>57</sup> Finally, when Renoncour reveals *Nous fixâmes le jour de notre départ au 24 de juin*, he circumscribes the sojourn between February 9th and June 24th, a period of about three and one half months, which conveniently matches the pronouncement at the beginning of Tome V that Renoncour expected to remain in England for three to four months. Considering the multitude of events and activities that are woven into Tome V, the chronological arrangement of the

material seems to be of a fairly high standard. The passage of time (even without a critical confirmation of Renoncour's historical references) seems to blend well with the type of activities reported and the temporal precision in this case adds to the general impression of Renoncour's involvement in the social and political London scene.

The overall chronological arrangement of the M.H.Q. presents some discrepancies which serve as a reminder that fiction cannot be arbitrarily organized in a linear progression when the author is attempting a style of narrative based on recall. Perhaps the problem is even more difficult than usual in the M.H.Q. where we are given a first glimpse of the author after two tomes, and a second look after two more tomes when he has already written part of his life story. The idea of picking up the pen once again is a challenge to the organizational abilities of any memoir-novelist. Despite such difficulties, Prévost has nevertheless attempted to pinpoint particular stages in Renoncour's life by giving precise dates and at other times by revealing Renoncour's age. Although we are not told the year of Renoncour's birth (we are encouraged by the information given us to figure it out), the general chronology in the M.H.Q. can be briefly set out as follows. (The underlined numbers represent deductions based on specific references in the text to the duration of time.)

<u>AGE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENTS</u>
<u>Birth</u>	<u>1661</u>	
<u>17</u>	1678	Visit to grandfather ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 18).
<u>18</u>	1678	Julie dies, his father returns to the monastery.
<u>18-19</u>	<u>1679</u>	Loss of his inheritance and final vows are taken by the father.
<u>19</u>	1680	Arrives in Paris in 1680 ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 29).
<u>27</u>	1688	Arrives in The Hague <i>vers le mois d'avril de l'année 1688</i> ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 52) (As Renoncour goes directly from Paris to the Hague, clearly eight years have suddenly disappeared.)
<u>27</u>	1688	Renoncour arrives in Cologne <i>le jour de Noël de l'année 1688</i> ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 56).
<u>28</u>	<u>1689</u>	He fights in the Austrian army in 1689 and is taken prisoner.
<u>39</u>	1700	The number of years spent in Turkey are not mentioned. One can only deduce that approximately 10 years elapsed. When Renoncour arrives in Italy he meets Rosamberg who took his vows in 1700 ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 86). The reunion can be dated shortly after this time.
<u>39</u>	1700	Death of Selima. Concerning her death, Renoncour states, <i>Quatorze ans entiers passés dans la douleur n'ont pu m'accoutumer à ma perte, qui semble se renouveler tous les jours.</i> ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 96) Thus, at the time of writing this part of his memoirs Renoncour would be 53-54 and Selima's death would have taken place in 1699-1700. The <u>Avant-Propos</u> reveals that Renoncour had been happy for three years in the monastery (at the age of 53; <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 115) when he was then encouraged to leave and travel with the young Rosemont. They depart after the Treaty of Utrecht ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 117) and arrive in Spain (their first country) in 1715.

<u>AGE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENTS</u>
<u>53-54</u>	<u>1712-15</u>	The period during which the first two tomes were written.
<u>54</u>	1715	They are in Spain in September 1715 when Louis XIV dies. ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 135)
<u>54-55</u>	1715-16	Renoncour meets Selima's brother at the Hague and tells him of her death which had taken place 19 to 20 years earlier ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 214). Thus Selima's death, according to this information, occurred in 1697 (which is fairly close to the date of the death as calculated earlier by other information from the <u>M.H.Q.</u> ).
<u>54</u>	1716	They arrive in London February 9, 1716, and depart June 24, 1716. (At the beginning of Tome V the second editor's letter announces the death of the author. Before he describes his visit to England Renoncour states that he is now 60 years old ( <u>M.H.Q.</u> , p. 229) thus approximately six years separate the writing and the experiences in England.)
60	----	Renoncour claims to be 60 at the time he decides to retire once again to his monastery. Much has taken place since his departure from England, although the duration of six years which is implied does not seem to fit the short period suggested by the fast pace of the final few episodes.

This brief outline of the chronological arrangement of the M.H.Q. demonstrates Prévost's relative success in this aspect of novel-writing, especially when one considers that the work appeared in various forms between 1728 and 1731, a lengthy period that must to a certain extent correspond to the period of composition.

In the preceding eight sections we have, by means of examples that are reasonably typical, attempted to show how Prévost, while publishing anonymously, was at pains to devise a "persona" for his editor as distinct from the character of his narrator, not only to differentiate between the two individuals, but to reinforce the impression of Renoncour's "reality". Prévost's editor remains somewhat shadowy but forms an interesting filter between the colourful narrator and the reader. This distancing would seem useful to a novelist indulging, perhaps, in a literary version of *trompe l'oeil*. Furthermore there are instances in the text where Renoncour is essentially also an editor in that he is narrating, or relaying, another's tale. We have seen that this device may well serve to remove Renoncour from direct responsibility for relating the unlikely. Thus Renoncour is permitted to become somewhat avuncular in his relationship with the reader - an elderly member of a religious order with memoirs to relate, quoting from letters, describing places, giving exact times and dates, remembering titles and names - furnishing, in short, all of those elements that combine to create the image of a real person, held up as real, yet

shielded from direct view by the editor's hand. To treat these *délices* as merely conventional tricks is to underestimate Prévost; admittedly many of them are part of the stock-in-trade of many writers of the early eighteenth century. But Prévost combines them to authenticate both his narrator and his narrator's tales in ways that we are possibly only beginning to appreciate.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mylne (to mention just one critic) discusses the "humble place" reserved for the novel in the hierarchy of literary forms of the seventeenth century. See Mylne, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Stewart, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> May, Dilemme du roman, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> A review of the actual numbers of titles that bore the words Histoire and Mémoire as opposed to Roman, can be found in Georges May's Dilemme du roman, pp. 143-144. A complete list has also been compiled and is readily available in S. P. Jones, A List of French Prose Fiction from 1700-1750. (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1939), pp. 1-107.

<sup>5</sup> Georges May, "Contribution à la vie d'un roman: Manon Lescaut" Colloque Prévost, p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> May, Dilemme du roman, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> The actual number works out to 39. For a complete chart see May's Dilemme du roman, p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> Stewart, p. 307.

<sup>9</sup> Stewart, p. 307. In his Introduction Stewart sets apart the two levels of illusion, designating the "more literal illusion" as the one primarily relevant to the period 1700-1750. See also Stewart, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Mylne, pp. 3-18.

<sup>11</sup> On this particular point Mylne states: "Interspersed among these facts, it is common to find some assurances as to the authenticity of the whole work, plus possibly a pointed reminder that truth is stranger than fiction. Thus the novelists were apparently trying to evoke literal rather than imaginative belief." See Mylne, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> There seems to be some difference of opinion between Mylne and Stewart regarding the identity of Cleveland's editor. The title page names the translator as "auteur des mémoires d'un homme de qualité". Due to the fact that Prévost signed the second lettre de l'éditeur in the

M.H.Q., "D'Exiles", Mylne considers the auteur in Cleveland to be Prévost D'Exiles. Stewart refers to the Preface of Cleveland where the editor states "L'histoire de M. Cleveland m'est venue d'une bonne source: jé la tiens de son fils . . . Il avait lu mes Mémoires . . . Je veux vous faire connaître, me dit-il un jour en me les présentant, un homme qui avait le coeur fait à peu près comme le vôtre, et qui a fait le même usage que vous des aventures d'une vie fort malheureuse." Stewart considers that it is Renoncour, author of the forementioned Mémoires, that is designated as editor. See Mylne, p. 74 and Stewart, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> These additional details would encourage the reader to conclude that his peers had actually met with the author despite his desire to remain anonymous, thus substantiating the editor's claims.

<sup>14</sup> Tomes I to IV were published between 1728-1729. Tomes V and VI did not appear until 1731.

<sup>15</sup> Monty discusses the editor's contribution in the M.H.Q. to the reader's belief in the author. She sees a direct correlation between believing in the author and believing in the authenticity of his memoirs. The author's death exemplified Prévost's efforts to present a real individual (see Monty, p. 21).

<sup>16</sup> Stewart analyses various uses of footnotes and editorial touch ups. Translator's comments, corrections of grammar, intentional minor errors and reorganization of chronological difficulties were some of the devices favoured by memoir-novelists. See Stewart, pp. 73-83.

<sup>17</sup> The two footnotes probably date from the period of corrections made by Prévost between 1753-1756.

<sup>18</sup> I raise this point at this stage because later in the memoirs Renoncour's actions will seem to render him somewhat of a hypocrite. The first Lettre de l'éditeur expands on Renoncour's strength of character and his steadfastness in the face of future uncertainties and changing fortunes. The pact between author and reader is based on Renoncour's integrity. Although the personality of a scoundrel or the ever-changing nature of a man of adventure might suit the author of a novel in another literary period, in this case reliability and constancy are necessary personality attributes of Prévost's author. If the reader were confronted with an act on the part of the author that was drastically out of character, the very basis of the pact would be undermined. Although Renoncour is a fictitious character in his own right, his function as author seems to dominate his appeal to the reader as an interesting personality. Frequently the reader is only too happy to bypass Renoncour in order to concentrate more completely on the action of the narrative.

<sup>19</sup> Max Brun, "Contribution à la vie d'un roman: Manon Lescaut", Colloque Prévost, pp. 211-212.

<sup>20</sup> It is at this time that the man of quality assumes the name "Renoncour" and the young Marquis that of "Rosemont" in order to travel incognito.

<sup>21</sup> Renoncour instructs the young Rosemont in the following example which is typical of the many lessons taught. "Vous voilà bien instruit du péril. Veillez sur votre coeur, et souvenez-vous surtout de ne perdre jamais de vue l'honneur et la religion." (M.H.Q., p. 122)

<sup>22</sup> Immediately following the Avant-Propos is a passage which reconfirms the didactic role of the memoirs. The fact that Rosemont, now a Duke, gives his permission to Renoncour to record their adventures adds a touch of reality to the sequence of events previously outlined in the Avant-Propos concerning Renoncour's new responsibilities and the eventual publication of the memoirs.

C'est par suite des mêmes sentiments que dans l'élévation où il se trouve aujourd'hui par la mort du duc son père, il me permet d'écrire librement les aventures de notre voyage. Il consent même que pour le plaisir ou l'utilité du public, je raconte les fautes où l'ardeur de la jeunesse le fit tomber. (M.H.Q., p. 120)

<sup>23</sup> Many separate histoires are to be found in the text before Tome VII. However, although potentially capable of involving the reader to the same degree as occurs in Manon Lescaut, these minor histoires are not long enough to allow any appreciable development of plot or character.

<sup>24</sup> The involvement of the reader with the author/narrator is a factor considered by Stewart to be of prime importance. He considers that Prévost's best works are those based on the presence of an interlocutor. The author continually addresses the reader directly thus encouraging his participation in the action of the narrative. From the point of view of winning belief, the reader's involvement is essential. See Stewart, p. 158.

<sup>25</sup> A comparison of Tome VII with those preceding would present an interesting and possibly worthwhile study. Certain scholars have briefly touched on some of the differences to be found. For example, the use of indirect speech, the lack of interpolated stories, the brevity of the work, the use of an interlocutor, characterization, and the more balanced ratio between characterization and plot are some of the advantages awarded to Manon Lescaut. A few points of comparison may be found in the following: Monty, pp. 43-47, p. 63; Mylne, pp. 102-103; Stewart, p. 158; Sgard, pp. 227-232. Sgard, despite the attention he has given to a study of

Prévost's complete works, refrains from drawing comparisons between Tome I-VI of the M.H.Q. and Tome VII. Although there are many points of comparison available (thematic similarities for example) Sgard has preferred to compare Manon Lescaut with Cleveland.

26 Prévost's ability to foresee the cause of his own death is the subject of speculation by Robertson. She quotes a passage from the Pour et Contre (1736) in which Prévost expresses his fear of apoplexy; the very cause of death attributed to Prévost by his contemporaries. It is interesting to consider the following epitaph traditionally attributed to Prévost which states:

Ci-gît, qui, toujours énergique, / Intéressant et pathétique, /  
Mais toujours sombre et respirant la mort, / Semble, dans ses  
écrits, avoir prévu son sort.

See Abbé Prévost, Adventures of a Man of Quality, translated with an introduction by Mysie E.I. Robertson, (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1930) pp. 27-28.

27 Stewart suggests that some novelists, rather than burden their memoirs with too many protestations of truth, choose to "do no more than take the edge off the reader's imminent astonishment by warning him that he will have cause for it." See Stewart, p. 181.

28 Renoncour does not always show scepticism; in some cases he remains noncommittal. For instance while visiting his father at the monastery an incredible tale is told to him by one of the fathers. Not wishing to doubt the word of a priest Renoncour tells the reader: "Le père prieur me parut fort persuadé de la vérité de cette histoire. Je ne la contestai point." (M.H.Q., p. 49) A similar example can be found in Tome V when Renoncour travels to Winchester. The legendary Round-table is reputed to be authentic. Renoncour stresses these are the opinions of the local people, not his own (M.H.Q., p. 264).

29 The werewolf tale is discussed by most critics at some stage in their studies. Engel, to quote but one, uses this episode to ridicule the naivety that she presumes to be Prévost's concerning the inclusion of factual details with fiction. "Dans l'homme de Qualité, à quelques pages de distance, le héros rencontre le Régent Philippe d'Orleans, puis des loups-garous. Le Régent a existé et, par conséquent, il en est de même des loups-garous, estime Prévost." See C.E. Engel, Le Véritable Abbé Prévost, p. 238. The line of reasoning which Engel suggests Prévost followed is not particularly applicable to the example quoted. The number of pages separating the two episodes is considerable and although Renoncour did speak with the Regent he merely reported hearing strange stories about werewolves from another source. This is an important difference which certainly renders Prévost's supposed line of reasoning less questionable.

<sup>30</sup> Was the eighteenth-century reader conscious of these hints or suggestions? Possibly we cannot even assume that he was interested in the techniques employed to convince him, any more than the average novel reader of our own times is aware of being manipulated by the tricks of contemporary novelists. The techniques and motivation may be different, but the reader is, of course, still manipulated. One might cite W. Golding's Pincher Martin as a contemporary example of reader manipulation.

<sup>31</sup> The relative accuracy of Prévost's information is assessed by Engel, pp. 194-197.

<sup>32</sup> The ouvrage particulier referred to by Renoncour in Tome V of the M.H.Q. (1730) becomes a reality for Prévost. In 1735 the Pour et Contre (volume 6, pp. 242-243) announces Prévost's desire to publish some memoirs which will serve as a replacement for the type of guide book prepared by Camden. While travelling through Southern England Prévost consulted Camden and found the work to be incomplete. Although the memoirs mentioned in the Pour et Contre were never published, it would seem that Prévost had by then compiled most of the material.

An interesting similarity may be seen in both the M.H.Q. and the Pour et Contre concerning Prévost's gloomy view of the little time remaining to him. Renoncour's descriptive passages of churches, their tombs and monuments are intended to help furnish "un ouvrage particulier, si le peu de temps qui me reste à vivre me permet de l'entreprendre (M.H.Q., p. 263). The ouvrage Prévost referred to in the Pour et Contre is shadowed by a similar sense of uncertain future: "Mais comme rien n'est si incertain, que le tems auquel cette faveur du ciel m'est réservée, je puis d'avance détacher quelques morceaux de mon Ouvrage... . . (Pour et Contre, Volume 6, p. 243).

<sup>33</sup> The manner chosen for obtaining the letters might well have bothered the reader. Not that he would have been shocked by the act itself (eavesdropping and letter-snatching were regularly reported in memoir-novels of the period), rather he might have found the behaviour at odds with the noble character portrayal insisted upon time and time again by the editor and Renoncour himself. From the point of view of belief it would seem to be undesirable for the reader to suddenly discover midway through the memoirs that the author is unreliable.

<sup>34</sup> Although Renoncour does not always admit he cannot recall the letters verbatim, he does frequently summarize their contents for the benefit of the reader. Such is the case with the letter written by Nadine to Rosemont. Renoncour outlines the essential parts and even comments on her grammatical shortcomings. (M.H.Q., p. 246)

<sup>35</sup> See Stewart, pp. 109-110.

<sup>36</sup> See Mylne, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Both Mylne and Stewart raise this point in their discussion of indirection in the M.H.Q.

<sup>38</sup> See Stewart, p. 109.

<sup>39</sup> Prévost's own family history reveals that his ancestors settled in Artois as early as the fifteenth century. Although Renoncour is supposedly from this region, there is no reason to suggest that there is any substantial autobiographical content in the M.H.Q.

<sup>40</sup> The number of readers who beseeched Rousseau to make known the name of Julie in La Nouvelle Héloïse, suggests that even after 1730 the public remained highly interested in making actual identification.

<sup>41</sup> The case of a not so well hidden name involving Prévost and the Grand Duke of Florence resulted in a lettre de cachet being issued against Prévost. The names of not only the Grand Duke but also his brother Jean-Gaston de Médécis were barely disguised behind initials and titles; when the identity of these scandalous individuals portrayed in the M.H.Q. became obvious to all, Prévost had to resort quickly to more subtle means of naming the culprits. Sgard's Variantes (M.H.Q., p. 449) reveal the changes made by Prévost.

<sup>42</sup> J. Molino, "L'Espagne Romanesque de Prévost", Colloque Prévost, p. 73.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to speculate along these lines when one considers that Tome V (rich in factual information about England) and Tome VII, were both written in 1730-31, corresponding perhaps to a stage in Prévost's career that would eventually see an increased emphasis on historical imitation in his writing.

<sup>45</sup> This itinerary as well as many of the accompanying descriptions suggest that Prévost's source for the geographical and cultural material on Spain was Antoine de Brunel's Voyage d'Espagne curieux, historique et politique. Fait en l'année 1655. Although Mme. d'Aulnoy's Voyage d'Espagne was also available to Prévost, de Brunel's text shows a closer resemblance. See Molino, Colloque Prévost, pp. 71-72.

<sup>46</sup> Madame d'Aulnoy, "Relation du Voyage d'Espagne", edited by Foulché-Delbosc in Revue Hispanique, Vols. LXVII-LXVIII, (New York: n.p., 1926) p. 90.

<sup>47</sup> The tour of rural England which was quite probably undertaken by Prévost sometime between 1728 and 1730.

<sup>48</sup> Robertson has pointed out a few of Prévost's chronological errors but at the same time has highlighted some of the pitfalls he managed to avoid, indicating that Prévost did, in fact, pay heed to such details in the M.H.Q. (see Robertson, pp. 30-31).

<sup>49</sup> A similar account is to be found in Amusements of Old London which includes the King, a masked ball, and a joke played involving a musical salute to the Pretender and there is a fair chance that Prevost's anecdote was based on some version of the affair told to him during his first visit to England. See William Boulten, The Amusements of Old London, (London: J.C. Nimmo, 1901) pp. 102-104.

<sup>50</sup> The Complete Peerage, edited by H.A. Doubleday, O.H. White and Lord Howard de Walden, (London: 1945) vol. 8, p. 297.

<sup>51</sup> Dudley Ryder, The Diary of Dudley Ryder 1715-1716, edited by William Matthews (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1939) p. 181.

<sup>52</sup> When Prévost revised his text in 1756 the few chronological errors or discrepancies that he might have corrected remained untouched. One can but assume that after years of success and public acclaim as an author and translator, Prévost took little notice of minor chronological problems in his first novel, written over twenty-five years earlier.

<sup>53</sup> One should remember that Renoncour's first encounter with the Spanish monarch and his court also coincided with a special day, the feast day of Saint Francis.

<sup>54</sup> The Jacobites and the Union - Being a Narrative of the Movements of 1708, 1715, 1719 by Several Contemporary Hands. Edited by Charles Sanford Terry (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1922) p. 171.

<sup>55</sup> Dudley Ryder, p. 182.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 219-220. The escape reported to have been witnessed by Renoncour took place from Newgate and not the Tower.

<sup>57</sup> Robertson, p. 195.

## Chapter II

### Factual Adaptations

The following chapter has been divided into two parts, each dealing with a slightly different aspect of Prévost's use of borrowed material. Historic imitation touches upon the events taken from history (largely concerned with wars and conquests) which, although predominantly factual, have been interpreted or slightly altered to fit into the context of the memoirs. The material copied from journals which is discussed in the second part, reveals an unusual aspect of Prévost's technique; here certain passages have been taken directly from other sources and in many cases copied verbatim in the text. Both of these categories of "borrowed" materials combine to form a vital part of my thesis. They serve as a convention in our discussion of the various devices used to create an illusion of reality. However, due to their importance and relative size, it was easier to present these techniques separately. Their contribution to the reader's belief and to the authentic appearance of the memoirs must not be underestimated.

A. Historical Imitation

History played a substantial role in influencing the memoir-novel and indeed in providing the memorialist with an interesting and challenging tool for shaping the belief of his reader. Political events, current social issues of importance, wars, the activities of military leaders and statesmen, were all woven into the novel for purposes of authenticity. For some novelists, especially Prévost, merely using historical material in works of fiction was less satisfying than the more difficult challenge of actually imitating the method of the historian. Providing evidence to substantiate a particular point, referring to his sources, refuting the opinions of established scholars and historians and listing his own qualifications or credentials as a scholar were popular devices used by Prévost. The pose assumed by Cleveland's editor/historian is a perfect example of Prévost's determination to imitate the historian; he enumerates dubious points, substantiating them subsequently by citing historical sources, even inventing authors for authoritative documents that he has studied.<sup>1</sup> In other incidents, he alludes to his own scholarly works (such as his translations and histories) all the while admitting that early in his career he had indulged in works of fiction.<sup>2</sup> Prévost's success at historical imitation is attested to by the fact that his Voyages du Capitaine Robert Lade (1745) was "unmasked" only in 1936; it is significant too that of seven works of fiction published

between 1740-1745, two are not catalogued as novels by the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>3</sup> It is little wonder then that Prévost's eighteenth-century readers had difficulty in accurately assessing the proportions of truth and fiction in his various histories, voyages and translations. What is most surprising, perhaps, is the amount of effort that went into producing these literary forgeries and we may legitimately speculate whether Prévost wished finally to be regarded as an historian rather than as a writer of fiction or whether, in fact, he enjoyed the greater freedom associated with creating literary forgeries, duping both reader and critic alike.

The evidence suggests that Prévost, in the M.H.Q., was merely beginning his exploration of techniques dependent on historical material. The references, for the most part, are comprised of data pertaining to political figures and events. They are generally presented without preamble; are unobtrusive, and subtly woven into the fiction and, at the same time, are relatively accurate, suggesting that Prévost was not simply making casual use of events that were common knowledge. (Occasionally more obscure recent events are cited, widening, to the author's advantage, the gap in public knowledge, but for many of the incidents described the sources are predictable, if not actually known.) However, the numerous battles, political power struggles and current events are incorporated in the M.H.Q., to form a background structure for Renoncour's adventures, and unlike Prévost's later works which are often viewed as "real"

biographies or autobiographies, no historical documentation is offered as evidence to support Renoncour's actual existence. The only evidence we are given is the testimony of the editor, even though the M.H.Q. is completely devoted to the life of this fictitious "man of the cloth".

In order to better our understanding of Prévost's handling of historical material in the M.H.Q. therefore, we will consider events separately: the Conquest of 1688, the Austro-Turkish War of 1689 and the Jacobite Rebellion of 1716-17. The Conquest of 1688 is reported in Tome I which was written following Prévost's Les Aventures de Pomponius, Chevalier Romain, ou l'Histoire de notre tems. The Histoire de notre tems was published during Prévost's sojourn at Sées (1724-25) and not only was this his first major attempt at writing, it also allowed him to work in an area that was "une des grandes passions de sa vie: l'Histoire".<sup>4</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find Prévost, in 1728, including an historical event that not only served to give Renoncour, through his association with well known historical personages, a touch of authenticity, but also allowed Prévost to indulge in the interpretation of history from a personal point of view. Prévost by this time was starting to feel the restrictive confines of his religious life-style and was in revolt against the censure inflicted upon his opinions and freedom of speech. In the text Renoncour becomes an active participant in the silent invasion of England, serving as both a common soldier and also as a special

envoy for William of Orange. Surprisingly, the hero of the M.H.Q., although a Frenchman and a Catholic, is apparently not disturbed by the potential threat a glorious revolution posed to the power of a King who was both a fellow Catholic and a French ally. Instead Renoncour exhorts the Prince, supports his intentions to save England from religious tyranny and only criticizes the Prince's methods when it appears that the defeated monarch's life may be in danger. This interpretation of the Conquest of 1688 in the M.H.Q. is not at all reflected in the Mercure Galant, the Gazette de France, or the Nouveau Journal Universel (later the Gazette d'Amsterdam). Indeed, an examination of the relevant passages in these journals leads us to the conclusion that Prévost's version of the Conquest and his praise of William run counter to the usual French attitude of this time. One could speculate that this difference is attributable to the author's wish to strike a blow at the establishment he was already in the process of rejecting. Rapin's Histoire d'Angleterre (based in part on the impressions of Dr. Burnet who sailed with William's fleet) is relatively objective (in spite of a slight Huguenot bias) and contains descriptions of essentially the same series of events and manoeuvres as are found again in Renoncour's account. Although Rapin is considered by Sgard to be the prime source of historical information in Cleveland, the same cannot be said for the M.H.Q. For example, Renoncour's report of the Conquest does not reflect the same tone, carry the same bias,

nor even include some of the same statistics that are included in Rapin's history. Prévost often gives specific figures that are not found in the Histoire d'Angleterre, such as the exact number of Declarations that were distributed in England.<sup>5</sup> As well, there is a major discrepancy in the two accounts of William of Orange's reception by the English people in the Torbay and Exeter regions of the country. Prévost describes the Prince's successful landing and then his immediate acclaim by the majority of noblemen ready to give their "hearts and arms" to the Protestant cause (M.H.Q., p. 53). Rapin, on the other hand, describes at some length the Prince's discouragement and frustration at having received no support from the English army and, in fact, states that the entire campaign was on the brink of disaster when by the tenth day, no help had yet arrived.<sup>6</sup> Although most of the sources available to Prévost were impossible for me to obtain, at least three eighteenth-century journals that were consulted indicate William had to wait some time before receiving the support he had so counted on from the moment of landing at Torbay.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore interesting to note that Prévost altered the consensus of several leading contemporary sources and chose instead to portray the Prince as a "saviour" rather than as a conqueror. To balance this subjective outlook, Prévost also ensured that the Conquest episode included a number of well-known facts: the tempest which delayed William of Orange's fleet, the activities of the three principal figures who swore their

allegiance to the Prince, and the movements of the King (his aborted first escape and his trip to Rochester) are told with sufficient regard for accuracy that, for the reader, Renoncour's actual participation in the affair would seem very real. Thus, although Rapin was not Prévost's prime source, there is no doubt that he was consulted to some degree.<sup>8</sup>

One interesting factor regarding this historic event is the use Prévost made of the speculations regarding King James II's escape from prison. The King was led to Rochester and confined in his personal chambers until William could decide upon his eventual fate. When, after being lightly guarded by a few men, the King was able to quietly depart for France, rumours arose that William had secretly arranged for his father-in-law's safe escape. Renoncour is personally involved in this mysterious drama at Rochester when he is commissioned by the Prince to perform a special service, and writes to warn the King to flee while he is at Rochester. Renoncour, in turn, afraid of the consequences of his act of mercy, escapes to the continent.

Although the Conquest episode occupies only a few pages in the text, Prévost was able to obtain good mileage from it. As well as touching upon a fascinating aspect of William's strategy, the account of the Rochester intrigue, while directly involving his hero (and vicariously the reader), at the same time provided a convenient means of terminating the episode and arranging for Renoncour's future activities in other countries. This personalized "insider's" view of history, therefore, when used

in this instance in fiction, allowed Prévost to capture both the imaginative and literal belief of the reader.

The second historical battle in Tome I is also witnessed by Renoncour, who plays a considerably more humble role in the success of the conquering army. The Austro-Turkish war that ended (temporarily) in 1689 with the victory of the Imperial Army, is recorded in considerable detail in the text. The sources for this material are quite possibly the various journals that were available to Prévost, such as the Mercure Galant, Gazette de France and Nouveau Journal Universel.<sup>9</sup>

All reported the major skirmishes and gave figures for the number of men killed, wounded, or captured; included also were first-hand reports as recorded in the private correspondence of individual soldiers. Despite the basic similarities to be found in these journals, there are few exact duplications in the M.H.Q. pertaining to facts and figures that would suggest Prévost relied on any single source.

Renoncour arrives in Cologne on Christmas Eve in 1688 amidst celebrations of the festive season and in honour of the new appointment of Clément de Bavière as Archbishop Elector.<sup>10</sup> He notes the proclamation by Herman of Baden, on behalf of the Emperor,<sup>11</sup> declaring war against France: *la Diète de Ratisbonne avait déclaré la France et le cardinal de Furstemberg ennemis de l'Empereur* (M.H.Q., p. 56).<sup>12</sup> Not wishing to become directly involved in a struggle between France and Germany, Renoncour travels to

Vienna where he meets some influential noblemen who arrange for his entry into the army of Ludwig of Baden, the officer in charge of the Turkish campaign.<sup>13</sup> Renoncour's subsequent adventures and military achievements are described in the M.H.Q. with considerable precision; he reports, for example, the actual number of cannons captured, the exact time of their attack on Nyssa, and the number of enemy soldiers encountered.<sup>14</sup> He also reveals the military strategy of Ludwig of Baden by sharing with the reader the options that were left open to the German commander. References to the flight of the enemy, the lack of resistance at the taking of Nyssa and the later pillaging of Widin are found in similar detail in both the M.H.Q. and journalistic versions of the campaign. However, one interesting rumour that was circulated (only in the Gazette de France) concerning a plot against the life of the Margrave Ludwig was apparently overlooked by Prévost.<sup>15</sup> It is usually in situations like this that Prévost chose to intermix hearsay and complete fiction, drawing the reader more closely into the narrative.

Although it is possible to speculate upon the alterations evident in Prévost's account of the Conquest of 1688, the military campaign in Turkey does not reflect any obvious bias. The Austro-Turkish war as depicted in the memoirs provides no particular insight into the personality of the hero, or into the character of the German people. There is no inside story revealed by the hero, nor is there any dramatic appeal, sus-

pense or intrigue and, therefore, the episode seems to exist separately from others in the novel, serving mainly as a factual historic base for the fiction. A third and distinctly different approach can be seen in Prévost's handling of the Jacobite rebellion which is found in Tome V of the M.H.Q.

The material which comprises Prévost's fifth tome has already been touched upon from the point of view of its geographical realism and its chronological organization, and since Robertson's excellent critical edition provides a good assessment of the quantity and quality of Prévost's factual information, my own discussion of such historical considerations in this volume will be centred around Prévost's deviations from standard sources.

The first and most essential difference to be noted about Renoncour's political adventures of 1716 as opposed to those of 1688-89, is his lack of personal involvement or active participation in the later events. The author of the memoirs becomes an impersonal observer in a foreign city that is suffering from internal political strife. Unlike the brief accounts provided of earlier historical events, references to what were still fairly recent Jacobite affairs are here interspersed throughout the entire tome, and Prévost takes advantage of the proximity of such events by adding to his text exact references and precise details that he knew would be at least vaguely familiar, if not actually known by his reader.<sup>17</sup>

Renoncour's arrival in England, as mentioned earlier, coincides with the day of sentencing of the Jacobite rebels and their supporters. London was alive with political fervor and Renoncour soon becomes swept up in the emotional atmosphere that preceded the execution of two rebel lords. Significantly, Prévost's portrait of George I is that of a sympathetic monarch who, *fléchi par les larmes de leurs (les prisonniers) épouses, suspendit l'exécution pendant quelques jours, sous prétexte de tirer d'eux un détail plus étendu de leur crime, et des ressorts secrets de la conspiration;* (M.H.Q., p. 231). By most accounts the King was resolute in his determination to execute Lords Derwentwater and Kennure, and was neither moved by, nor interested in, the tears of their wives. Lady Derwentwater managed to gain access to the King on February 17, but her pleas and prayers were disdained and he did not receive her petition. Yet, determined to save her husband, she gained the support of enough Lords to raise a debate in the House on February 22, at which time it was decided to read her petition to the King. This he received on February 23, and by all accounts, was displeased.<sup>18</sup> The execution took place the following day. Thus, the delay was actually caused by the House debates, which were lengthy and very heated; the tears went unnoticed. The pleas of another wife, Lady Nithsdale, (according to a letter sent to her sister), were also brushed aside; although she approached the monarch on bended knees and clutched at his robes, she was rudely ignored and after being dragged some distance, was forcibly removed from the room.<sup>19</sup> Prévost's portrayal of Lady Nithsdale's encounter

with the King does not suggest the frustration and humiliation no doubt experienced by the wife; instead, in his portrayal, her exasperation was surpassed only by her determination and, according to Renoncour, she also persisted in her appeals to the other members of the court, all of whom refused their services. The account in the M.H.Q. of Nithsdale's escape from prison does not, apparently, correspond to any of the popular or published versions. Moreover, perhaps in order to give sole credit to the enterprising young wife, Prévost avoids mentioning two female accomplices.<sup>20</sup> He also barely mentions the guard without whose assistance the escape could not have been accomplished. Thus, Prévost has chosen to expand upon the historical event by portraying Lady Nithsdale as a romantic heroine, passionately in love and desperate to save her husband. Renoncour's supposed meeting with the tearful wife at the French Embassy and his willingness to share her grief are details which do not correspond to any historical account, but which do contribute to the dramatic impact of the story. An interesting coincidence is that Lady Nithsdale retired to La Flèche in 1717, the same year that Prévost is known to have been there. Although there is no evidence to prove that they met, it is quite possible that Prévost spoke then with Lady Nithsdale, and that she was responsible for shaping some of his ideas a decade later in the M.H.Q.<sup>21</sup>

Another example of the use made by Prévost of known facts is the romance between Mylady R. and Renoncour. The executed

Lord Derwentwater was reported in the text to have had a lover whose identity is given as Lady R.<sup>22</sup> It would seem that Prévost used Derwentwater's name and then invented a lover who becomes involved in a series of adventures; she implores Renoncour to help arrange her escape to France, she proposes a romantic involvement with the author, and she later becomes the well-meaning but interfering romantic who causes the death of Nadine's husband. Lady R. is one of the novel's more vivid and interesting characters, remaining, through her association with Derwentwater, nevertheless closely connected with the historical realities of the M.H.Q. Today one still seeks to verify her existence and we continue to ponder the degree of truth contained in Prévost's account.

Uncertainty as to where to divide fact from fiction in Prévost's memoir-novel is perhaps most clearly felt when we examine the case of Sir Roger Mostyn. Having spent nearly two weeks in London and having reported the execution of the rebel lords, Renoncour updates his memoirs by reviewing some recent developments: the Whigs and Tories were attacking each other over the support given by some lords to the Jacobite cause. As a result, Lords Nottingham, Finch and Guernsey, with the Earl of Aylesford and Sir Roger Mostyn, were dismissed from their duties.<sup>23</sup> From this historical struggle of the Peers as depicted by Prévost emerges the story of Sir Roger Mostyn, whose tender attachment to the actress Anne Oldfield led him to depart from London in great despair. We are told that Mostyn

was Captain of the Fourth Company of Scottish Guards, that he proposed marriage to Anne Oldfield, and that having been turned down (Anne preferred the attentions of Brigadier Churchill, brother of Marlborough), Sir Roger retired to his estates. Some of this information is supposedly communicated by Mostyn to Renoncour at a dinner party held at the home of the Duke of Devonshire (M.H.Q., p. 240). Robertson concludes that Prévost's information in this respect is inaccurate; in 1716 Mostyn was married to the daughter of the Duke of Nottingham and thus in no position to offer matrimony to Anne. Furthermore, in that same year Lord Dundonnel was Captain of the military company supposedly belonging to Mostyn.<sup>24</sup> As Robertson herself has pointed out, many such precise details given in the text for the year 1716 in fact took place in later years, years coinciding with Prévost's own visit to England. In contrast, however, I researched Anne's early years instead, hoping to find a possible link with the account in the M.H.Q., and discovered that in 1700 Anne Oldfield, Sir Roger Mostyn and George Farquhar were closely connected. Farquhar was in love with Anne and it appears that she became his mistress.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Farquhar's play, The Constant Couple or A Trip to the Jubilee, which centred around the story of three men who all had the same mistress, Lady Lurewell, was dedicated to Sir Roger in 1699. In the dedication, Farquhar attributed to Sir Roger, "the fire of youth, the sedateness of a Senator, the modern gaiety of a fine English gentleman, and the noble solidity of the ancient Briton."<sup>26</sup> If, within this triangle of

youth and passion, Mostyn fell in love with Oldfield, historical records do not, apparently, tell us.<sup>27</sup> In 1700 Mostyn was unmarried and could, no doubt, have been sufficiently moved to propose matrimony. The possibility exists too that in 1730 Prévost might have heard some of the rumours that were still circulating about the love affairs of the famed actress, renowned for both her passionate nature and upright character. Although her liaisons with Mainwaring and Churchill were known, even her contemporaries seem to have been unable to discover details of her other lovers and the reason Oldfield never married. What is of prime importance, however, is that Prévost's contemporaries found this episode of the M.H.Q. to be sufficiently convincing to use it as a point of reference for their own works. In 1749, for example, W.R. Chetwood, former prompter at Drury Lane, published A General History of the Stage, including, in a section dedicated to Mrs. Oldfield, the following comment: "You may read if you please, what a French Author wrote on this inimitable actress, as well as some Touches on our English drama."<sup>28</sup> The section contains an account taken from the M.H.Q. and is a near translation of Prévost's text (M.H.Q., pp. 240-241).<sup>29</sup> Can we assume that Chetwood's French Author was Prévost or was he referring to the author of the memoirs who met Mostyn? The interpretation of at least one modern biographer suggests that the author was the man who dined with Sir Roger;<sup>30</sup> in either case, the French Author's story was regarded as reliable. The fact that the

information about Mostyn's military career is incorrect does not seem to have bothered Chetwood or later scholars. Either Chetwood was willing to trust the account of the French Author without questioning his sources, or he knew that the affair reported in the M.H.Q. accurately reflected the London gossip of 1730.<sup>31</sup> For the modern reader interested in techniques of illusion, historical imitation and authenticity in the memoir-novel, this particular episode demonstrates that the reader's belief was sometimes easily won; history used as a tool to lend veracity to fiction could be effective to a degree surpassing what some authors could have possibly imagined.

Although nearly all of Prévost's Jacobite information reliably reflected the current news and opinions of London, one episode contains a noticeable error: Renoncour witnesses the escape of Brigadier Mackintosh from *la tour de Londres, avec un grand nombre d'autres rebelles* (M.H.Q., p. 268). Mackintosh escaped May 4, 1716 from Newgate and Prévost used this escape to full advantage, making Renoncour's eye-witness account a further proof of his presence in London. *J'ai dit que nous fûmes témoins de cet événement, parce qu'ayant été invités à souper par un de nos amis, qui demeurait près de Tower-Hill, nous vîmes le combat, des fenêtres de sa maison...* (M.H.Q., p. 269). Clearly Prévost wished to be precise in his version of the escape and we note that the M.H.Q. account resembles very closely in style and substance one written by the historian Lamberty, suggesting that Lamberty was a possible source.<sup>32</sup> Prévost, like other authors who

tampered with factual material in memoir-novels, occasionally made a careless and obvious error.

The remainder of Jacobite references in the text are of a more general nature, and once again indicate that Prévost was well informed even about the more obscure closing moments of the Scottish rebellion. One particular passage not discussed by Robertson indicates the fate of some of the rebel chiefs:

*En effet, on reçut, au bout de quelques jours, des avis certains que les comtes Marshall et de Southesk, le Marquis de Tullibardine, le vicomte de Kilsiek et trente autres chefs des rebelles avaient mis pied à terre sur les côtes de France. (M.H.Q., p. 269)*

As with all of the Jacobite material used in the M.H.Q., this newsworthy item is reported to the reader by someone who supposedly was there at the right time and who bore witness to the reaction of Englishmen to the internal unrest.

One consideration that should be made in connection with Prévost's use of precise historical material concerns the problem that occurs when the twentieth-century critic tries to assess the impact of such material on the reader of 1730. To what extent, for example, can we assume that such facts did indeed enhance the editor's claims to veracity? How many of Prévost's readers were in a position to detect in the text a careless use of facts or an erroneous interpretation of well-known events? Mylne, sensitive to the effect that "distance in time" has on the reader of fiction, assesses the problem in the following manner:

*In the majority of cases, the factual detail which, by its familiarity, might help the eighteenth-century reader to believe in the book has now lost its force and has acquired instead the remoteness of history. (This is a necessary consequence of systematic 'realism' which all too few writers and critics seem to remember.)*<sup>34</sup>

When Renoncour tells the exact number of enemy cannons captured, can we applaud Prévost's use of such minor details, assuming that it was for the sake of authenticity that such precision arose? One could discuss this, or similar examples, from many perspectives, but to do so would require an extensive examination of all aspects of Prévost's narrative techniques, an undertaking beyond the scope of my thesis.

We must conclude, I think, that the minor detail was instrumental in lending an air of authenticity to the memoirs, and as well, that the eighteenth-century reader for the most part was capable of responding to these details which he (even more than today's reader) accepted as true. If, on the other hand, we take the view that the reader of that period was often in no position to appreciate the relative accuracy of certain minor details, we can still propose that the mere presence of "trivia" had a positive effect on his unconscious response. This is not to say that other factors did not also affect the reader's response; in fact, the very use of the first person mode is an example. However, once again we return to the problem of distance in time. While today's critical reader is encouraged to examine the form, the internal logic, and the techniques that work within the narrative to give an illusion

of reality to the novel, it must be remembered that this modern approach is taken by readers who are scholars equipped to analyse Prévost's technique and not by the popular reader, the audience, we can assume, for whom Prévost created his novel. This is particularly evident when one considers the numerous external trappings that were deemed necessary by the conventions of that period, trappings that today are rather too obvious and can interfere with our appreciation of the work as a whole.

B. Borrowed Material from French Journals

The sixth volume of Le Pour et Contre contains not only Prévost's frank appraisal of the historic value of the M.H.Q., Cleveland and Le Doyen de Killerine, but also some comments on the nature of works written by other contemporary authors; authors who

*prennent ainsi plaisir à confondre, parce qu'écrivant pour plaire ils savent que la vérité seule ne plaît pas toujours, et qu'un récit de pure imagination ne sauroit satisfaire non plus les personnes de bons sens.*<sup>35</sup>

It would seem that Prévost's concept of a *mélange de fictions et de vérités*<sup>36</sup> involves basically a question of proportions, determining what degree of truth is required to satisfy the demands of a discriminating reader. Because he dealt mainly with history (which by its very nature is both factual and arbitrary) Prévost was able to alter events or at least interpret them to suit his particular purpose. This is not so much the case for those sections of the memoirs copied directly from newspapers or journals. Several passages, for example, were transposed almost verbatim from the Gazette de France and the Mercure Galant. For the most part the borrowed material consists of a few brief sentences describing social events such as funerals, celebrations, or the recent activities of foreign celebrities. Seldom does Renoncour become involved directly in the event. Although trying to identify such borrowed passages in Prévost's work can be a difficult, even futile task, such a study, if successful, can reveal interesting clues about the author and

his memoirs. We know that in 1735, for example, Prévost denounced writers who resorted to copying from other sources. Citing the wealth of original material from which to draw, Prévost, in fact, stated that he wished never to fall into *la nécessité de piller les autres, soit en m'appropriant le fruit de leur travail, soit en leur servant d'Echo, par de longs extraits de leurs Ouvrages.*<sup>37</sup> Obviously Prévost did not place journalistic sources in the same category, since direct newspaper accounts provided him an effective means for achieving authenticity, and in some cases one suspects that they actually shaped the direction of the rambling plot. Interestingly, nearly all of the newspaper sources identified so far date from 1729, just prior to Prévost's hasty departure from France. Tome IV, covering Renoncour's sojourn in Spain and Portugal, provides the majority of examples.

The departure of the man of quality from his monastic retreat takes place some time after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. His first noteworthy social appearance in Madrid is made at the funeral of a Carmelite nun, the illegitimate daughter of Cardinal Infant Don Fernand. Perhaps in order to ensure that Renoncour was in the right place at the right time, or perhaps also to give some chronological shape to this volume, Prévost sought out an event which was not only well attended in Madrid, but more importantly, was also carried in the French journals. Although Prévost's narrative is not an exact duplication of that recorded in the newspaper, the close

similarity leaves little doubt as to the connection between the two accounts.<sup>38</sup>

*Vers le commencement de septembre, nous eûmes la curiosité d'assister à un spectacle qui attira toute la cour et une partie du peuple de Madrid. Ce fut l'enterrement d'une religieuse carmélite qui était la fille naturelle du C.I.D.F. Elle s'appelait soeur Marianne de la croix D. . . . Elle était née à Bruxelles en 1641, et ayant été amenée à Madrid dès l'âge de cinq ans, elle avait été renfermée dans le monastère des Carmélites déchaussées de cette ville, où elle avait vécu avec beaucoup de piété jusqu'à l'âge de soixante-quinze ans. Tous les grands assistèrent à ses funérailles par ordre du roi; et le même jour, sa majesté donna la grandesse aux abbesses de ce monastère, qui est de fondation royale. (M.H.Q., p. 135)*

From the Gazette de France appeared the following announcement.

*De Madrid, le 9 Septembre 1715.*

*Le 3 de ce mois, Soeur Marianne de la Croix et d'Autriche, mourut au Monastère des Religieuses Carmélites Deschaussées de cette Ville, âgée de soixante et quinze ans. Elle estoit fille naturelle du Cardinal Infant Don Fernand, et elle estoit née à Bruxelles le 26 de Juillet 1641. Elle fut mise dans ce Monastère à l'âge de cinq ans, où elle prit l'habit, et elle a vescu tousjours avec une grand pieté. Tous les Grands assistèrent à ses funeraillles, par ordre du Roy; et le même jour, sa Majesté donna la Grandesse aux Abbesses de ce Royal Monastère.<sup>39</sup>*

There is nothing particularly significant about the few alterations made by Prévost; he did disguise (or possibly did not bother to give) Marianne's complete name, choosing instead to adopt the conventional practise of giving only initials.

Immediately following this borrowed passage from the Gazette is another announcement, this time reproduced in almost perfect word order.

*Le onzième du même mois, un courrier dépêché de Paris par le prince de Cellamare, ambassadeur d'Espagne à la cour de France, apporta au roi la nouvelle de la mort du roi très-chrétien, son grand-père. Dès le lendemain, on publia ordre d'en porter le grand deuil . . . (M.H.Q., p. 135)*

The Gazette contained the following:

*De Madrid, le 16 Septembre 1715.*

*Le 11 de ce mois, un Courier dépesché de Paris par le Prince de Cellamaré Ambassadeur d'Espagne à la Cour de France, apporta au Roy la nouvelle de la mort du Roy Très-Chrestien son grandpere, arrivée le 1er de ce mois, à huit heures et un quart du matin. Le 12, on publia ordre d'en porter le grand deuil . . .<sup>40</sup>*

Although the news about the King's death was instrumental in completing the sequence involving Renoncour's dream and his gift of foresight, it is not immediately apparent what other contribution this episode makes to the memoirs. Reasons for Prévost's quasi-plagiarism of this event from the Gazette on grounds other than convenience, are difficult to imagine. His own version would surely have sufficed.

A third consecutive reference from the Gazette introduces the first paragraph of Livre Septième (the sixth book closes with the announcement of Louis XIV's death). In this particular case, the borrowed material contributes to the narrative in that Prévost uses the King's attendance at mass as an opportunity for Renoncour to make the acquaintance of the monarch. It was a common practice for the King and his family to attend mass at the church of a particular saint on his feast day. Thus on the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4th), the King made his anticipated appearance. Although not copied verbatim, it is possible that Prévost's text again comes from the Gazette de France.

*J'appris que le jour de Saint François, le roi devait tenir chapelle dans l'église de ce saint, et qu'il y serait accompagné de tous les grands. Il faut y paraître, dis-je au marquis . . .*  
(M.H.Q., p. 137)

*De Madrid, le 7 Octobre 1715.*

*Le jour de Saint François, le Roy accompagné de tous les Grands,  
tint Chapelle dans l'Eglise de ce Saint.<sup>41</sup>*

It is not improbable that Prévost, wishing to provide a factual base for Renoncour's Spanish sojourn in 1715, sought his material from the Gazette and then organized his hero's activities around the major events reported. Searching through back issues of a newspaper in search of authenticating touch-ups for this tome of the M.H.Q. is a pursuit not commonly associated with the author of Tome VII.

A further example, also found in the fourth tome, illustrates the use Prévost made of journals in the organization of his novel. The event involves the taking of Majorca in the War of the Spanish Succession. Renoncour, some time around the beginning of October, encounters a young Frenchman, Brissant, who has recently arrived in Madrid. When asked to explain his presence in Spain, Brissant launches into the story of his departure from Paris, his corruption as a result of his association with the pirate Andredi and, finally, his unavoidable encounter with the fleet of the Chevalier d'Asfeld. Brissant's *histoire* which occupies just over four pages in the text, is largely taken from the French journals and it would appear that the various components of his adventure were worked together according to a chronological sequence. For example, Brissant claims that he left France approximately eight months before meeting Renoncour in the month of October. His departure

coincided with that of le marquis de Durazzo. Brissant explains:

*J'appris que le marquis de Durazzo, envoyé extraordinaire de la république de Gênes, avait reçu à Versailles son audience de congé et qu'il se préparait à partir; cette occasion me parut favorable. (M.H.Q., p. 156)*

The Gazette de France reported essentially the same thing.

*De Versailles, le 4 Janvier 1715*

*Le Marquis Durazzo Envoyé Extraordinaire de la Republique de Genes, eut audience de congé de Madame et de Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans, conduit par le Chavalier Sainclot, Introduceur des Ambassadeur.<sup>42</sup>*

If Brissant was in Madrid in late September-early October and left Paris in January (the date suggested in the Gazette), the reference to eight months would fit into this time period. Furthermore, Brissant indicates that, after the taking of Majorca (July 1715), he spent two to three months in Cadix before finally going to Madrid; again this would put him in the capital city in late September or early October. It is understandable that Prévost wished to include briefly some reference to the War of the Spanish Succession. What is interesting is that this material, which seems to have been transposed verbatim from the journals, has been handled by Prévost differently from the "facts and figures" he provided for the military campaigns used in Tome I. Clearly, at an early stage in the M.H.Q., he referred to various newspapers and historical chronicles, but later copied directly from his source. The following textual comparison demonstrates Prévost's dependency on the French journals.

Notre navigation fut courte et heureuse; mais nous étant avancés sans précaution vers Palma, nous tombâmes dans la flotte du chevalier d'Hasfeld, qui était parti de Barcelone pour aller soumettre cette ville au roi d'Espagne . . . Le chevalier Hasfeld avait dessein d'abord de faire sa descente sur une plage du côté de Palma, où les rebelles s'étaient retranchés; mais le vent étant devenu contraire, on tourna vers le nord. Le comte de Lescherenne, maréchal de camp, eut ordre d'aller reconnaître la côte et les hauteurs; . . . le débarquement commença à cinq heures du soir, et fut achevé à dix ou onze heures sans la moindre résistance. Nous marchâmes vers Alcudia . . . c'est une ville assez forte, à l'orient de l'île, environ à sept lieues de Palma. Le chevalier d'Hasfeld prit le devant, à la tête d'un détachement dont j'étais, pendant que le reste des troupes suivait en diligence . . . Il se trouva dans la place cinquante-deux pièces de canon, et quantité de munitions et de vivres. Nous prîmes de là le chemin de la capitale, qui ne fit pas plus de résistance. Milord Forbes et un officier allemand en sortirent pour traiter des conditions . . . On fit avancer l'artillerie, qui avait débarqué à la baie de Porras. Lorsqu'on eut tout disposé pour l'attaque, dom Rubi, colonel espagnol, qui commandait dans la place, offrit de capituler . . . Dès le soir, dom Rubi fit sortir un officier avec quelques articles de la capitulation qu'il prétendait obtenir . . . Je quittai le régiment de la marine lorsque je vis la guerre presque aussitôt finie que commencée. (M.H.Q., pp. 159-160)

The Gazette de France and the Mercure Galant together contained nearly all of the above information from the M.H.Q.

La flote chargée de vingt-quatre Bataillons sous les ordres du Chevalier d'Hasfelt Lieutenant General, partit de Barcelone le 10 Juin, et arriva le 14 à la veuë de l'Isle. On avait dessein de faire descente en une plage du coste de Palma, où les Rebelles estoient retranchez: mais le vent estant contraire, on tourna vers Nord . . .<sup>43</sup> on dépêche une Lance avec le comte de Lecherenne pour reconnaître ce Port.<sup>44</sup> Le débarquement commença à cinq heures du soir et fut achevé à dix heures avec beaucoup d'ordre, sans bruit et sans resistance . . .<sup>45</sup> elles marcherent le 17 vers Alcudia. Le Chevalier d'Asfeld prit les devants avec un détachement pendant que le reste des troupes débarquées suivoit avec toute la diligence possible.<sup>46</sup> L'on y a trouvé 22 petites pieces de canon de fonte, et 30 de fer, pour 20 jours de vivres et de poudre . . .<sup>47</sup> ils parurent avoir grande peur, et Milord Forbus en sortit avec un Colonel Allemand pour aller parlementer avec M. le Chevalier d'Asfeld.<sup>48</sup> Le Marquis de Ruby Commandant les troupes de l'Empereur . . .<sup>49</sup>

Renoncour's sojourn in Portugal represents a small portion of Tome IV. The main adventure centres around the sudden departure of the Prince Don Manuel from Lisbon. Having convinced Renoncour to sail with him to The Hague, the prince selects a few servants, a trusted friend, and then leaves Lisbon, supposedly to go hunting in the country. All of the particular details are given in the M.H.Q., with most of them probably copied from the Gazette de France.

*Le soir du troisième de novembre, nous fûmes avertis par dom Tellès que nous nous mettrions en mer le lendemain. Pour cacher mieux notre départ, le prince fit courir le bruit qu'il irait de grand matin à la chasse, et qu'il ne voulait être accompagné que de dom Tellès et de deux domestiques. Il sortit en effet de la ville en équipage de chasseur; et ayant pris le chemin de Belem, il y trouva une chaloupe qui l'attendait, et sur laquelle il se rendit à bord du vaisseau anglais. Nous y étions dès la pointe du jour. Le vent se trouva favorable, et l'on tenait aussitôt les voiles pour nous éloigner promptement. (M.H.Q., p. 196)*

The French journal's version is a near duplicate although not reported in the same word order as Prévost's text.<sup>50</sup>

*De Madrid, le 25 Novembre 1715*

*On écrit de Lisbonne du 11 de ce mois, que le Prince Don Manuel, frere du Roy, estoit sorti le 4, sous pretexte d'aller à la chasse vers Belem: qu'apres y avoir fait ses devotions, il s'estoit mis dans une chaloupe qu'il avoit fait preparer, et qu'il estoit allé s'embarquer sur un Vaisseau Anglois qui l'attendoit et qui partit aussi-tost, avec un vent favorable. Il n'avoit avec luy que Don Manuel Telles de Sylva, fils du Comte de Tarouca et deux domestiques.<sup>51</sup>*

By arranging for Renoncour to board a ship in Lisbon that sailed from Constantinople, Prévost was able to bring together his hero and the Turkish niece and nephew who play such a major role in the fifth and sixth tomes of the memoirs. During the sea voyage, the ship carrying Renoncour is nearly

attacked by pirates, not an unusual occurrence in the works of fiction of this period. It is quite likely, however, that the idea came to Prévost once again from an item in the Gazette de France of 5 December 1715 which states that *l'infant Don Manuel frère du Roy de Portugal, arriva icy par mer de Lisbonne le 27 du mois dernier ayant este poursuivi quelque temps par un Corsaire d'Alger.*<sup>52</sup> Further confirmation that this announcement may have been read by Prévost is suggested by the date indicated. The preceding Gazette entry is dated December 5; in the M.H.Q. Renoncour states: *Le lendemain de notre arrivée à La Haye, qui était si ma mémoire est fidèle, le cinquième jour de décembre . . .* (M.H.Q., p. 213). It is probable that Prévost confused the date given in the journal for Don Manuel's arrival (i.e. November 27) with the actual date that the news came from *La Haye* (i.e. December 5).

After his arrival at The Hague and subsequent reunion with his Turkish brother-in-law Amulem, Renoncour attends several social functions. One in particular, to which both men are invited, takes place at the home of *le marquis de Chateauneuf, ambassadeur de France* (M.H.Q., p. 214). Here again, a brief entry in the Gazette de France may have caught the attention of Prévost:

*De La Haye, le 12 Decembre 1715*

*Le soir du mesme jour, un Officier Turc envoyé par le Capitaine Bacha et qui est icy depuis quelque temps, alla rendre visite au Marquis de Chasteauneuf, Ambassadeur de France.*<sup>53</sup>

Not only does the news come from The Hague, but considering that Renoncour remained some two months in Holland (M.H.Q., p. 215), the social engagement quoted from the journal would fit into the time period of the novel. Later in the text another gala affair, the birth of Don Carlos, prince of Portugal, is reported, this time by *Le comte de Ribeira* (M.H.Q., p. 280). The French journals carried a description of the party and, although there is no close similarity in content between the Gazette<sup>54</sup> and Prévost's narrative, in this instance, it seems clear that Prévost methodically scanned such old newssheets to find actual social events that would fit into Renoncour's busy itinerary.

Quite apart from the passages that have so far been discussed which suggest that Prévost copied directly from some sources, there is good reason to believe that many of the Spanish noblemen mentioned in the M.H.Q. also came from the pages of the Gazette de France. The appointments of many of the more important members of the Spanish court were regularly announced in the French press. For example, although the governor of Madrid, Don Antonio de Salcedo, might well have been a known figure in a foreign capital city, the manner in which his name appears in the M.H.Q. points to the influence of a Gazette article; both accounts refer to him as *Antonio de Salcedo, frère de la Gouvernante du Prince*.<sup>55</sup> In March 1715, the Gazette announced an exchange of ambassadors between France and Spain

thus highlighting the importance of the Prince of Cellamare and the Duc de Saint-Aignon. At the same time, mention was made of the new position given to the Marquess of Ledesma.<sup>56</sup> The Duke of Montalto, a celebrity in his time, was frequently referred to in the Gazette as was the Marquess of Gromaldo. The promotion of Don Antonio de Valle, a rather minor figure in Spanish society, was reported in November 1715.<sup>57</sup> All of the aforementioned members of the Spanish aristocracy were befriended by Renoncour along with several other men of supposed distinction, whose authenticity, it would appear, cannot be verified either through journals or peerage lists. Here as elsewhere in the M.H.Q., Prévost has gathered together a fair number of celebrity witnesses able to vouch for Renoncour.

Fortunately for Prévost, the year 1715 provided not only single events of major importance such as the death of Louis XIV, but witnessed also the continuation of such large scale occurrences as the War of the Spanish Succession. By turning to the French journals of that year, Prévost was able to gather a very real picture of the political upheavals and the social life in Spain. In many respects his novel at this stage resembles a documented survey interlaced with imaginary adventures and romantic intrigues. The love affair between Donna Diana and the young Rosemont, which occupies most of the fourth tome, is carefully interwoven between passages of actual history copied from various sources. There is a

radical and obvious change between the two types of material and one often has the impression that the borrowed passages from the Gazette were somewhat indiscriminately scattered throughout the tome. Assessing their artistic effect is difficult, but by and large they contribute substantially to the structural or organizational harmony of the novel. The chief function throughout of these borrowed materials remains, of course, that of authentication, illustrating Prévost's bid to achieve a *mélange de fictions et de vérités*.

One final point should perhaps be raised regarding historical information given in the M.H.Q. that appears to be based on the absence, rather than the presence, of material from such published sources. In 1711, there appeared in France two translations of an Italian biography (one written by Dom Francesco) on the life of François Toussaint de Forbin, nephew of Cardinal Janson. In the M.H.Q., Prévost wrote the Histoire of a certain marquis de Rosambert, the assumed name of Forbin. A. Coimbra Martins<sup>58</sup> has compared the authentic biography written by Dom Francesco to the one in the text, and comments on Prévost's tendency to provide fictitious information about relatively unknown periods in the lives of real individuals. Martins has been able to show that the two years of Forbin's life covered by Prévost were the very years when little was recorded by the biographer Dom Francisco:

*Il faut bien reconnaître que cela donnait à l'anecdote avancée, dès le début, un semblant de vérité, indépendamment même de la vraisemblance de l'intrigue. Le récit était à la bonne place. Il n'était pas un supplément à la biographie d'un personnage connu: il en était l'élément manquant, ou une contrefaçon qui en tenait lieu et s'accordait bien, en apparence tout au moins, avec la partie connue de cette biographie qu'il parfaisait.<sup>59</sup>*

Never wishing to expose his hand, however, Prévost cleverly guides his reader into a position where acceptance of the "facts" becomes inevitable; immediately following the Histoire de Rosambert, Renoncour tells the reader that the rest of the marquess' own story is available in another published form and therefore will not be duplicated in the memoirs. (M.H.Q., p. 47) In other words, Renoncour is supposedly providing only that information that he has received "first hand", an approach akin to the classic technique of appealing to the reader's curiosity and interest by revealing the "never before published truth about . . ." The same tactic is used in the case of dom Manuel of Portugal, only here the unknown factor provides the real reason behind the sudden departure from Lisbon. Prévost would have the reader believe that Renoncour was told by the Prince of Portugal about his unhappy love affair with Donna Clara. Once she had committed suicide the prince could no longer endure his life in Portugal and decided to ease his sorrow in foreign lands. Although the journals, contemporary writers, historians and critics, friends of the prince and members of the household all discussed the behaviour of Dom Manuel there was no clear indication from any of these sources as to why the prince

left home. Prévost provided the answer which he interwove with the authentic announcements from the newspapers. The most interesting fact is that nothing "incorrect" could really be pointed out, nor could any false information really be proven. Prévost was thus able to preserve his novel's illusion of reality and at the same time create an area of interest for the reader that was purely fictional.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> L'Abbé Prévost, Le Philosophe anglais ou Histoire de Monsieur Cleveland, ed. Philip Stewart, Tome II of Oeuvres de Prévost, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The admission is freely given in the Pour et Contre. Prévost was asked by "l'Auteur de la Bibliothèque Beligique" to clarify any doubts that might exist (both then and in the future) about three of his works. Prévost immediately replied:

Mais qu'il se rassûre en apprenant de moi-même, que les Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité et leur suite, Cleveland et le Doyen de Killerine, dont je prépare la seconde Partie, sont autant de Livres inutiles pour l'Histoire, et dont tout le mérite est de former une lecture honnête et amusante. (Pour et Contre, VI, pp. 353-354)

Although one need not suspect Prévost of setting the stage for later literary forgeries by disarming the public, nevertheless his statement should be interpreted in the light of certain factors; for example, the admission was made in 1735 during a period thought by G. May to have seen an increase in the number of novels published and a momentary lessening of the critical attitude towards "fiction". A second significant point to consider is the speed with which Prévost produced new literary forgeries after making this admission: as early as 1740, two pseudo-histories had appeared and by 1741 three more were written (see Sgard, Prévost Romancier, pp. 611-612). One cannot help but feel that Prévost suited his words to the literary climate of the day and then engaged his efforts to create historical forgeries a few years later.

<sup>3</sup> May, Dilemme du Roman, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Sgard, Prévost Romancier, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> There were also no numerical references to the Declaration found in the three journals consulted (Gazette de France, Mercure Galant, and Nouveau Journal Universel). I am inclined to consider the existence of another source as inventing the "plus de quinze mille exemplaires" (M.H.Q., p. 53) is inconsistent with Prévost's practices throughout the M.H.Q.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Rapin, Histoire d'Angleterre par M. de Rapin Thoyras (La Haye: Rogissart, 1724-1727, 10 vol.) Vol. 10, pp. 130-131.

<sup>7</sup> The Gazette de France (du 27 November 1688, pp. 640-641) told of the retreat of the citizens in Torbay and later (du 4 Décembre 1688, pp. 651-653) reported the burning of William's Declaration in the city of Exeter. The Mercure Galant (Novembre 1688) covered the retreat of the citizens, the fear of the peasants and consequently, their complete loyalty to the King (pp. 321-327).

The Nouveau Journal Universel initially reported a favourable reception but soon published a brief retraction stating that the earlier information had been inaccurate. See Nouveau Journal Universel, (Amsterdam) 16 Décembre 1688, pp. 34-35. The retraction appears on p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> For example, one point in common is the number of troops attributed to William. Both accounts specify "de treize ou quatorze mille hommes" (M.H.Q., p. 53). See Rapin, Vol. 10, p. 121.

<sup>9</sup> For specific references see Gazette de France, Nouveau Journal, and Mercure Galant, ca. de 22 May - du 10 Décembre 1689.

<sup>10</sup> Relations between the Austrian Empire and France were already strained and the Christmas festivities did not slow down early preparations for war. Renoncour's reference to the enthusiasm and joy of the people is not dissimilar to the idea conveyed in one journal of concurrent "Fêtes de Noël" and "préparatifs de guerre". See Nouveau Journal Universel, 20 Janvier 1689, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Herman of Baden was, in fact, the Emperor's spokesman in this affair and gave his decision to the Diet of Ratisbon in February 1689.

<sup>12</sup> A similar phrase was found in the Gazette de France; "la France et ses adherans, entre autres le Cardinal de Furstemberg, sont declarez ennemis de l'Empire. See Gazette de France, du 5 Mars 1689, p. 101.

<sup>13</sup> Renoncour's original contact is made during an evening party held by the Count of Caprara, a leading statesman and a military man of renown. Count Vieneratsz (spelt Windischgraetz), also a prominent figure in Vienna, befriends Renoncour and eventually introduces him to his brother, Baron Rosech (the only one whose existence has not been verified). An episode involving Renoncour, the son of Windischgraetz, and a duel fought by the young German, also appears to be the only non-historical digression in Prévost's account of this military episode.

<sup>14</sup> Although sources for the report of 60 cannons, 10,000 Turkish soldiers at Jogodin, and 18,000-20,000 Imperial soldiers cannot all be traced, the figure of 40,000 enemy men at Nyssa does appear in both the Gazette de France and the Nouveau Journal Universel. The version in the former journal most closely resembles Prévost's: both mention the 40,000 men, but the Gazette allows 15,000 Imperial soldiers to Prévost's 18,000-20,000; both state the hour at which the battle commenced (see Gazette de France, du 22 Octobre 1689, p. 508; M.H.Q., p. 59).

<sup>15</sup> Ludwig of Baden was to have been the victim of a plot that demanded his delivery (dead or alive) to the camp of the enemy. See Gazette de France, du 12 Novembre 1689, p. 545.

<sup>16</sup> For purposes of easy reference, an appendix has been provided listing the principal figures mentioned in the M.H.Q. in connection with the Jacobite rebellion.

<sup>17</sup> It is quite probable that Prévost researched and gathered the Jacobite material while visiting England. Although he was interested in history before 1730 and would have been familiar with certain details pertaining to the uprising, the facts included in the M.H.Q. suggest a more in-depth knowledge. Prévost did not begin to learn English until 1728, therefore most of the published accounts of the Rebellion (such as those of Peter Rae and Robert Patten) were not likely to have been read by him before 1728. The Gazette de France and the Mercure Galant both were obviously available sources but neither dealt with the events in sufficient detail. Robertson, after examining amongst other possible sources the London journals available to Prévost, concludes that his sources for the Jacobite material were mostly oral. The testimony of witnesses, the gossip that circulated and the opinions of critics provided him with a vivid picture of life in London in 1715-1716. See Robertson, p. 142. It must also be remembered that Prévost, in writing Tome V, was not necessarily thinking in terms of a French reader in France.

<sup>18</sup> Dudley Ryder managed to gain access to the House during the sentencing and also witnessed the execution of the Lords. He was in constant communication with court lawyers, Whig supporters and House representatives. Ryder portrayed George I throughout the affair as steadfast and firm. The King's displeasure with Lady Derwentwater and her petition is mentioned by Dudley Ryder and Lady Cowper. See The Diary of Dudley Ryder 1715-1716, edited by William Matthews, (London: Methuen, 1939) p. 187; Diary of Mary Countess Cowper (London: John Murray, 1864) p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> The contents of the letter which later appeared in several historical works are quoted by Robertson, p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> See Robertson, p. 144.

<sup>21</sup> Engel suggests that Lady Nithsdale might be one of the oral sources mentioned by Robertson. In the M.H.Q., the wife fainted upon hearing the news of her husband's condemnation; also there is no information given in the text about the escape to France, two facts cited by Engel in forming her hypothesis: only Lady Nithsdale herself was in a position to know how she reacted to the terrible news (and thus she told Prévost); Lady Nithsdale

was not in a position to tell Prévost about her husband's escape to France as she had not accompanied him. In view of Prévost's tendency to dramatize other historical moments, it is not particularly surprising that he chose this heroic deed as one that he could expand on. His ability to create such scenes did not require first hand accounts to stimulate his imagination. Although Prévost may well have met Lady Nithsdale at La Flèche, the reasons cited by Engel are not particularly convincing; one need only remember the apparent difference between Lady Nithsdale's own version of her treatment by the King and that recorded in the M.H.Q. to realize that Prévost interpreted history to suit his own requirements for the memoirs. See Engel, Colloque Prévost, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Robertson was unable to verify any romantic intrigue in connection with Lord Derwentwater and, further, was unable to suggest any name corresponding to the initial used by Prévost. See Robertson, pp. 145-146.

<sup>23</sup> Except for the additional reference made to the dismissal of Lords Portmore and Windsor, and the Earl of Orkney (M.H.Q., p. 240), all the information about Nottingham and the others named is historically correct. See Robertson, pp. 150-151.

<sup>24</sup> Robertson, p. 151.

<sup>25</sup> One biographer of George Farquhar who examined Farquhar's correspondence, concluded that Anne was the Penelope of the playwright's love poems. Although it would appear she was his lover, she in fact did not lose both her head and her heart. The affair would have taken place approximately 1699-1700. See Willard Connely, Young George Farquhar, (London: Cassell and Co. 1949), pp. 113-117.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> Another romance that occupies a minor place in the M.H.Q. concerns a certain Baron Spalding, a Swedish nobleman who, while visiting England, fell in love with Miss Perry. Very little has been discovered about the Spalding affair and Robertson was able to contribute only the name of the Baron's uncle who was Résident in Paris. I found a possibly significant reference to a Baron John Spalding (Spaldincreutz), an Englishman who was ennobled in Sweden in 1678 (see Nobilities of Europe, p. 385). A young Lieutenant Spalding participated in the campaigns of the Swedish King Charles XII in January 27, 1708. If, indeed, a Baron Spalding (son or grandson of John Spalding) existed and met Prévost in 1730, once again history has hidden the fact. The entire romance might well be based on an actual event which has escaped detection for the present. Engel sees a certain similarity between the Spalding affair of the M.H.Q. and a romantic adventure described in Steele's The Conscious Lovers (1723). Perhaps this literary source might also have inspired Prévost (see Engel, Figures et aventures du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, pp. 194-196).

<sup>28</sup> W.R. Chetwood, A General History of the Stage (London: W. Owen, 1749), p. 203.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Gore-Browne, Gay was the Pit - The life and times of Anne Oldfield, Actress 1683-1730 (London: Max Reinhardt, 1957), pp. 144-145. In attempting to sort out the truth of Chetwood's references to the Mostyn/Oldfield affair, Gore-Browne has questioned whether the French author was not, in fact, Voltaire; but since the dates did not correspond, the biographer was unable to trace Chetwood's source. Gore-Browne, following the same logic as Robertson, thus questions the Mostyn connection because of his marriage with Nottingham's daughter. However, the dismissal of Mostyn from his appointment, and the fact that he was a strong Tory, are two matters not recognized by Gore-Browne, who apparently does not know what is to be distinguished as fact or fiction in the French Author's tale. Another scholar, Edward Robins, has repeated Prévost's account, expanding on the dinner scene and the dramatic separation of Mostyn from his beloved. Robins refers to Mostyn's hopes for an acceptance in the following glowing words:

Heroic measures were necessary unless he were to lose the dear charmer forever, and so away he went to the obdurate lady hoping to soften her heart by a proposal of marriage. They should wed at once, and the happy pair could pass their honeymoon on the estates to which an unkind Government had ordered the too talkative baronet.

See Edward Robins, Jr., Echoes of the Playhouse (N.Y. and London: G.P. Putnam, 1895), pp. 140-141.

<sup>31</sup> Anne died in 1730 and within a day of her burial no less than two authentic memoirs were ready for publication. The Daily Post, and the Daily Journal carried the promises of both authors (one of them William Egerton) to reveal a true portrait of the life and amours of the famed actress. One edition even claimed to have letters which pointed to an intrigue between Mrs. Oldfield and the late D. . . of B. . . , also "an epitaph and a full account of her amour with one Mr. F. . . , gent. formerly belonging to the receipt of H.M. Customs." The biographer from whom this information came concludes that, "Before the actress had been a month beneath the flagstones of the Abbey, so great an interest did the public feel in her lovelife that a fifth edition of these revelations was called for." (See Robert Gore-Browne, p. 14). Little wonder that the name of Anne Oldfield crept into the pages of the M.H.Q.; Prévost's visit in London took place at the height of this London gossip surrounding the recently deceased actress's rather secretive, private life.

<sup>32</sup> Robertson discusses Lamberty's account and that of the M.H.Q. There is a striking resemblance between the two. Lamberty's work appeared in 1731, barely in time for Prévost to have seen it in print. Robertson suggests that there may have been a third common source that both men used. See Robertson, pp. 193-194 for a textual comparison.

<sup>33</sup> The following was found in the Gazette de France and although this journal was not believed by Robertson to be a major source for Tome V, in this case the similarities are quite evident.

On adjouste qu'on avait receu avis que les Comtes Marshal, de Seaford et de Southesk, le Marquis de Tullibardine, le Vicomte de Kilsith et d'autres, jusqu'au nombre de trente persons de consideration, s'estoient embarquez dans les Isles de L'Oüest, pour se retirez aux païs estrangers.

(Gazette de France du 6 Juin, 1715, p. 274).

<sup>34</sup> Mylne, p. 81.

<sup>35</sup> Pour et Contre, Vol. VI, p. 353.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note that in 1965 Molino referred to the passage in the M.H.Q. describing the funeral of Soeur Marianne in the light of the popular tradition set by Mme. d'Aulnoy and de Brunel of mentioning in their works the illegitimate children of the Spanish royal family. Although Molino is probably correct in pointing out this practice, he seems to have neglected to mention the likely source of Prévost's material. See J. Molino, "L'Espagne Romanesque de Prévost", Colloque Prévost, pp. 71-74.

<sup>39</sup> Gazette de France du 28 Septembre 1715, p. 460. All the passages quoted from the Gazette in this thesis have been reproduced verbatim; omission of accents or agreements are in the original and have not been altered.

<sup>40</sup> Gazette de France du 5 Octobre 1715, p. 472.

<sup>41</sup> Gazette de France du 28 Octobre 1715, p. 508.

<sup>42</sup> Gazette de France du 5 Janvier 1715, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Gazette de France du 6 Juillet 1715, p. 324.

<sup>44</sup> Mercure Galant, July 1715, p. 141.

<sup>45</sup> Gazette de France du 6 Juillet 1715, p. 324.

46 Gazette de France du 6 Juillet 1715, p. 340.

47 Mercure Galant, July 1715, p. 155.

48 Mercure Galant, August 1715, p. 31.

49 Mercure Galant, July 1715, p. 157.

50 In his study on Prévost and Don Manuel, Martins, who is interested in the Prince's love affair, suggests a number of possible sources, amongst others, the Journal de Verdun and the Quintessence. However, he does not mention Prévost's use of the Gazette de France nor does he examine any of the material taken from the journal which provided a factual base for the romance. See A. Coïmbra Martins, "Prévost et le Prince du Portugal", Colloque Prévost, p. 66.

51 Gazette de France du 14 Decembre 1715, p. 593.

52 Gazette de France du 5 Decembre 1715, p. 597.

53 Gazette de France du 21 Decembre 1715, p. 611.

54 Gazette de France du 3 Mai 1715, p. 276.

55 Gazette de France du 28 Octobre 1715, p. 508. (See M.H.Q., p. 144)

56 Gazette de France du 16 Mars 1715, pp. 124-125.

57 Gazette de France du 16 Novembre, p. 544.

58 A. Coïmbra Martins, "L'Histoire du Marquis de Rosambert par L'abbé Prévost", Aix Annales, Vol. 34 (Marseilles: Université d'Aix-Marseille, 1961), pp. 53-86.

59 Ibid., p. 64.

The study of narrative techniques presented in the preceding chapters is related specifically to the literary period of the M.H.Q., when many authors disguised their fiction or at least attempted to authenticate it by basing much of it on historical realities. The specific devices used for appealing to the belief of the reader became part of a literary convention which today may seem somewhat quaint and even simplistic. Certainly to approach modern fiction from the narrow point of view of authenticity, or more especially of claims to veracity, would make little sense to most sophisticated readers; today one does not take into serious consideration the quantity or, for that matter, the quality of "truth" claimed by the author to be contained in his novel. Prévost's M.H.Q., on the other hand, lends itself well to this type of technical dissection as its very foundation is based on the necessity of being taken seriously. One particular advantage gained by focusing on this one aspect of Prévost's narrative style is that only after sifting through the various devices (both original and conventional) used by Prévost, can we emerge with a clear understanding of the structure of the M.H.Q.; the seemingly endless journey made by Renoncour through the various foreign capitals of Europe is very much dependent upon, first, Prévost's own geographical location at the time of writing and, secondly, the availability of resource material such as contemporary histories and journals. The unusual and clearly premeditated approach taken in Tome V to the political, social and geographical realities of England is directly connected to Prévost's

personal experiences and first hand observations. In fact, the account of Prévost/Renoncour's sojourn in England resembles a diary rearranged to fit into a different time period. In Tome II, the relative lack of details, facts, figures, or claims to veracity, can possibly be explained in terms of the remoteness of the Turkish Empire where the story takes place. Here an adventure unfolds that reflects all the dangers, passion and enchantment of an exotic romance vaguely reminiscent of those incorporated into the tales from the Arabian Nights. Although carried away by fantasies of travel in remote countries in this particular tome, Prévost later refrained from further attempts of this kind. It is interesting to note that Spain and Portugal, probably less foreign to the French reader than some other countries, are the two places that Prévost chose to represent by means of newspaper reports. One has the feeling that from the moment Renoncour arrived in Spain until he disembarked at The Hague, his every step was guided by articles and reports from old copies of the Gazette de France. The use of journals as a possible method for providing the reader with some measure of *vérité* is not found extensively elsewhere in the M.H.Q. Thus, it seems that Prévost's concern with authenticity or creating an illusion of reality fluctuated to some extent throughout the novel, and that each tome represents an experimental phase in his work.

In the discussion of Prévost's authenticating techniques, I have tried to keep in mind and attempted to assess what might

have been his requirements in the matter. In the end, one is led to believe that the reader of 1730 was relatively naive and unsophisticated. On the other hand, with so many writers all using more or less the same "tricks" it seems clear that most readers must have been aware of the game and willing to indulge the writer's anticipated promises of truth. Even the journals of the period seem to have been obsessed with taking note of only authentic works, and when they were the victims of a clever writer's hoax, they immediately published an erratum for the public.<sup>1</sup> Despite such an apparent need to expose fraudulent works, and despite the efforts made by authors themselves to bring the whole problem to the attention of the public, fiction was occasionally accepted as hard fact. In the case of Prévost's M.H.Q., at least three such instances can be cited.

The first and most far-reaching misuse of Prévost's material was made by Chetwood. The romance taken from the M.H.Q. about Sir Roger Mostyn and Anne Oldfield passed from Chetwood's supposed authoritative work into the Dictionary of National Biography. Only very recently has the matter been corrected.<sup>2</sup> A second example, using material about the Prince Dom Manuel, also indicates that Prévost was considered somewhat of an authority. The following is cited by Martins:<sup>3</sup>

*En 1937 l'éminent iconographe Ernesto Soares publia une notice bibliographique sur le prince Manuel-José (1697-1766), frère du roi Jean V du Portugal. On y lisait, parmi les références de documents authentiques et d'ouvrages excessivement savants, ce titre inattendu: Mémoires et aventures d'un Homme de Qualité qui*

*s'est retiré du monde. Quelle satisfaction en eût éprouvé l'abbé Prévost, qui justement se prétendait historien et moraliste, et non point romancier.*

A third case involves material from Tome V (in fact, it is surprising that other examples have not been uncovered from this same section of the memoirs). In a biography of George IV published in 1830, Lloyd described a scene at a masquerade ball attended by George I that is a near translation of an episode from the M.H.Q., and there is a fair chance that Lloyd, at the time of writing his Memoirs of George IV, thought he was borrowing this anecdote from a reliable source.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to imagine Prévost, author of several popular novels, being quoted as a source, referred to and listed in the bibliography of serious scholars. We can assume, if individual biographers have been led astray by Prévost's arsenal of devices and claims to veracity, that the average reader also fell under the same spell. If Georges May can refer to Mme. d'Aulnoy's travels through Spain,<sup>5</sup> when in fact there is now little doubt that she never left home, then it is not surprising that sorting the real from the imaginary in the fiction of the period was and still is a major problem. We can presume that through the accumulation of minor points, Prévost was able to convince some of his readers at least some of the time. Studying the possible methods used for winning his reader's belief in the M.H.Q. has revealed a side of Prévost's creativity that will continue to deserve careful consideration. In the end, one senses that his early narrative style reflects

the combined efforts of a young and inexperienced novelist, an ardent lover of history and a devoted student of current affairs. However, in Prévost's art of literary forgery in the first six tomes of the M.H.Q., there are glimpses of a maturing artist - one who would become the esteemed author of Manon Lescaut.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the Mercuré Galant, July 1715, pp. 245-246.

<sup>2</sup> Joanne Lafleur, a scholar at Berkeley, is in the process of completing a new biography on the life of Anne Oldfield. She is actively pursuing the original source of the Mostyn/Oldfield affair and will be the first biographer to trace the romance to Prévost. She also is responsible for recently informing Edward Langhans, co-editor of the Biographical Dictionary of Actors, 1660-1800, of the misuse of Prévost's fiction in connection with the Mostyn/Oldfield romance.

<sup>3</sup> A. Coïmbra Martins, "Prévost et le Prince du Portugal", Colloque Prévost, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> See Robertson, p. 160.

<sup>5</sup> Georges May, "L'Histoire a-t-elle engendré le roman", p. 170.

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APPENDIX

- Argyll Argile (Prévost's spelling)  
John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll and 1st Duke of Greenwich  
(1678-1743) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. ix.  
M.H.Q., p. 241.
- Atholl Athol  
John Murray, 2nd Marquess and 1st Duke of Atholl  
(1660-1724) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 255.  
M.H.Q., p. 241.
- Aylesford Ailesfort  
Heneage Finch, 1st Earl of Aylesford  
(1647-1719) Ref: DNB, Vol. 7, p. 12.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.
- Buckingham  
John Sheffield, 3rd Earl of Mulgrave and 1st Duke of Buckingham  
and Normandy (1648-1721) Ref: DNB, Vol. 8, p. 13.  
M.H.Q., p. 241.
- Cholmondeley Cholmdley  
George Cholmondeley, Earl Cholmondeley (Succeeded to title  
January 18, 1724/5) (c1666-1733) Ref: DNB, Vol. 4, p. 271.  
M.H.Q., p. 269.
- Derwentwater  
James Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater  
(1689-1716) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 256.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.
- Devonshire Dewonshire  
William Cavendish, 2nd Duke of Devonshire  
(c1673-1729) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 4, p. 344.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.
- Finch  
Daniel Finch, Lord (Styled 1701-30)  
(1689-1769) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 12:2, pp. 786, 787  
M.H.Q., p. 240.
- Forster  
Thomas Forster, M.P.  
(1675-1738) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 257.  
M.H.Q., p. 269.

Guernsey

Heneage Finch, Lord Guernsey  
(1687-1757) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 5, p. 365.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.

Kenmure Kilmur

William Gordon, 6th Viscount Kenmure  
( -1716) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 7, p. 119.  
M.H.Q., p. 232.

Kilsyth Kilsiek

William Livingston, 3rd Viscount Kilsyth  
(1650-1733) Ref: The Scots Peerage, Vol. 5, pp. 192-4.  
M.H.Q., p. 269.

Mackintosh Mackinstot

William Mackintosh of Borlum (Brigadier)  
(1662-1743) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 260.  
M.H.Q., pp. 268-269.

Marischal Marshal

George Keith, 10th Earl Marischal  
(1694-1778) Ref: DNB, Vol. 10, p. 1209.  
M.H.Q., pp. 241, 268, 269.

Mostyn Mostings

Roger Mostyn, (Sir)  
(1675-1739) Ref: DNB, Vol. 13, p. 1088.  
M.H.Q., pp. 240-241.

Nairn

William Murray, 2nd Baron Nairn (Son of Marquess of Atholl)  
(1664-1726) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 9, pp. 445-446.  
M.H.Q., p. 238.

Nithsdale Nithisdale

William Maxwell, 5th Earl of Nithsdale  
(1676-1744) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 261.  
M.H.Q., pp. 231-232.

Nottingham

Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of Nottingham and 6th Earl of Winchilsea  
(1647-1730) Ref: DNB, Vol. 7, pp. 3-4.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.

Orkney

George Hamilton, Earl of Orkney  
(1666-1737) Ref: DNB, Vol. 8, p. 1040.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.

Ormonde Ormond

James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde  
(1665-1745) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. x.  
M.H.Q., p. 268.

Oxford

Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford  
(1661-1724) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 261.  
M.H.Q., p. 241.

Portmore

Sir David Colyear, 1st Earl of Portmore  
(c1656-1730) Ref: The Scots Peerage, Vol. 7, pp. 91-3.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.

Pretender, The

James Francis Edward Stewart, Chevalier de St. George  
(1688-1766) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 258.  
M.H.Q., pp. 231, 232, 241, 246, 268.

Southesk

James Carnegie, 5th Earl of Southesk  
(1692-1740) Ref: The Scots Peerage, Vol. 8, pp. 73-74.  
M.H.Q., pp. 241, 268, 269.

Tullibardine

William Murray, Marquess of Tullibardine  
(1689-1746) Ref: DNB, Vol. 13, p. 1305.  
M.H.Q., p. 269.

Widdrington Widrington

William Widdrington, 4th Baron Widdrington  
(1678-1743) Ref: The Jacobites and the Union, p. 263.  
M.H.Q., p. 238.

Windsor

Other Windsor, 2nd Earl of Plymouth and Lord Windsor  
(1679-1725) Ref: The Complete Peerage, Vol. 12, part 2, p. 800.  
M.H.Q., p. 240.

Wintoun Winton

George Seton, 5th Earl of Wintoun  
(1678-1749) Ref: The Scots Peerage, Vol. 8, pp. 602-605.  
M.H.Q., p. 238.