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*Voltaire's Disciple:  
Jean-François  
de La Harpe*

CHRISTOPHER TODD

MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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VOLUME 7

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Voltaire's Disciple:  
Jean-François de La Harpe

FRONTISPIECE



J.F. DE LA HARPE

*De l'Académie Française &c. &c.*

Attaqué par la calomnie,  
Du combat il fut vainqueur.

Et fut captivé par son cœur,  
Ceux qu'il vainquit par son génie.

From the portrait by Joseph Ducreux

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VOLTAIRE'S DISCIPLE:  
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## FOREWORD

I should like to express here my thanks to Professor O. R. Taylor of Queen Mary College, London, without whose help and advice this study would not have been possible, and to Professor W. H. Barber of Birkbeck College, who steered it through to publication. I am grateful to Maîtres Georges Baratte, Pierre Champenois, Pierre Champetier de Ribes, Albert Crémery, Léon Dufour, Robert Gaullier, Jacques Lacourte, Denis Laurent, François Laverne, Jacques Mahot de La Querantonais, and René Vallée for permission to consult the minutes of acts belonging to their offices. I wish to acknowledge the assistance given me by the archivists and librarians of many institutions and only regret not being able to name them all here. I also thank my wife for her patience and understanding.

C.T.



## ABBREVIATIONS

- A.N. Archives nationales.
- Aulard 1* François Alphonse Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le directoire*, 5 vols (1898–1902).
- Aulard 2* François Alphonse Aulard, *Paris sous le consulat*, 4 vols (1903–9).
- Barbier-Billard* Antoine Alexandre Barbier, *Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes*, troisième édition, revue . . . par Olivier Barbier, René et Paul Billard, 4 vols (1872–9).
- Bengesco* Georges Bengesco, *Voltaire: bibliographie de ses œuvres*, 4 vols (1882–90).
- Best.* *Voltaire correspondence*, edited by Theodore Besterman, 107 vols (Genève, 1953–65).
- Bibl. hist. Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris.
- B.M. British Museum.
- B.N. Bibliothèque nationale.
- Brenner* Clarence D. Brenner, *A Bibliographical list of plays in the French language, 1700–89* (Berkeley, 1947).
- BV.* Библиотека вольтера. каталог книг, edited by M. P. Alekseev and others (Moscow, 1961).
- Cat.* *Catalogue des livres de feu m. J. F. de La Harpe, membre de l'Académie française, et de l'Institut national de France; dont la vente se fera le lundi 1 er messidor an XI (20 juin 1803), et jours suivants* (1803).
- Correspondance littéraire* *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister, etc.*, revue . . . par Maurice Tourneux, 16 vols (1877–82).
- Correspondance secrète* [François Métra] *Correspondance secrète, politique et littéraire, ou mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des cours, des sociétés et de la littérature en France, depuis la mort de Louis XV*, 18 vols (Londres, 1787–90).
- Diderot* *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, revues sur les éditions originales . . . par J. Assézat et M. Tourneux, 20 vols (1875).
- Espion anglais* [Mathieu François Pidanset de Mairobert] *Espion anglais, ou correspondance secrète entre milord All'Eye et milord All'Ear*, 10 vols (Londres, 1783).

- Jovicevich 1* Alexandre Jovicevich, *Correspondance inédite de Jean-François de La Harpe* (1965).
- Jovicevich 2* Alexander Jovicevich, 'Thirteen additional letters of La Harpe', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 67 (1969), 211–28.
- J. Paris* *Journal de Paris ou Poste du Soir*, 87 vols (1777–1811).
- J. Pol.* *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*, edited from 1774 to 1776 by S. N. H. Linguet, and from 1776 to 1778 by J. F. de La Harpe, 14 vols (Bruxelles; Paris, 1774–8).
- Lancaster 1* Henry Carrington Lancaster, *French tragedy in the time of Louis XV and Voltaire, 1715–1774*, 2 vols (Baltimore, 1950).
- Lancaster 2* Henry Carrington Lancaster, *French tragedy in the reign of Louis XVI and the early years of the French Revolution, 1774–1792* (Baltimore, 1953).
- Lewis* *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence*, edited by Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis (New Haven, 1937– ).
- Longchamp-Wagnière* Sébastien G. Longchamp and Jean-Louis Wagnière, *Mémoires sur Voltaire*, edited by A. J. Q. Beuchot, 2 vols (1826).
- Lycée* J. F. Laharpe, *Lycée ou cours de littérature ancienne et moderne*, including *La Philosophie du dix-huitième siècle*, 19 vols (1799–1805).
- Marmontel* *Œuvres complètes de Marmontel*, nouvelle édition, précédée de son éloge par l'abbé Morellet, 19 vols (1818–20).
- Mélanges* J. F. de La Harpe, *Mélanges littéraires, ou Epîtres et Pièces philosophiques* (1765).
- Mémoires secrets* Louis Petit de Bachaumont [from 1771: Mathieu François Pidanset de Mairobert and Mouffe d'Angerville], *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république de lettres en France depuis 1762 jusqu'à nos jours*, 36 vols (Londres, 1771–89).
- Mémorial* *Mémorial, ou Recueil historique, politique et littéraire*, edited by La Harpe, Bourlet de Vauxcelles and Fontanes (1797).
- Merc* *Mercure de France*, 998 vols (1724–91). *Mercure français, politique, historique et littéraire*, 36 vols (1791–9). *Mercure de France, journal politique, littéraire et dramatique*, 10 vols (1779–1800). *Mercure de France, littéraire et politique*, 76 vols (1800–20).
- Moland* *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, edited by Louis Moland, 52 vols (1877–85).

- Montesquieu* *Montesquieu. Œuvres complètes*, préface de Georges Vedel... présentation et notes de Daniel Oster (1964).
- Pissot* *Œuvres de m. de La Harpe, de l'Académie française. Nouvellement recueillies*, published by Noël Jacques Pissot, 6 vols (1778).
- Quérard 1* Joseph Marie Quérard, *La France littéraire, ou dictionnaire bibliographique*, 12 vols (1827-64).
- Quérard 2* Joseph Marie Quérard, *Les Supercheries littéraires dévoilées . . .*, troisième édition, revue et augmentée, 7 vols (1869-79).
- Registre des Assemblées* Registre des Assemblées générales des fondateurs du Lycée, du 31 octobre 1790 au 9 floréal an x (Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris: MS. 919).
- Registre du comité* Registre des délibérations et arrêtés du comité d'administration du Lycée, du 6 germinal an II au 14 novembre 1816 (Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris: MS. 920).
- Registres* *Les Registres de l'Académie française, 1672-1793*, 3 vols (1895).
- Rousseau* *Œuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, nouvelle édition classée par ordre de matières et ornée de 90 gravures, 37 vols (1788-93).
- Suard 1* 'Correspondance littéraire de Suard avec le margrave de Bayreuth, fragments inédits publiés et annotés par Gabriel Bonno', *University of California Publications in Modern Philology*, 18 (1934), 141-234.
- Thomas* 'Correspondance inédite entre Thomas et Barthe (1759-85), publiée par M. Henriot', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 24 (1917), 113-32, 487-511; 25 (1918), 132-54, 455-79; 26 (1919), 124-49, 603-28; 27 (1920), 256-81, 587-606, 28 (1921), 271-8; 33 (1926), 608-18.
- Todd 1* Christopher Todd, 'La Harpe quarrels with the actors: unpublished correspondence', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 53 (1967), 223-337.
- Todd 2* Christopher Todd, 'Two lost plays by La Harpe: *Gustave Wasa* and *Les Brames*', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 62 (1968), 151-272.
- Verdière* *Œuvres de La Harpe de l'Académie française, accompagnées d'une notice sur sa vie et sur ses ouvrages*, edited and published by H. Verdière, 16 vols (1820-1).
- Yverdon* *Œuvres de mr. de La H\*\*\*., revues et corrigées par l'auteur*, 3 vols (Yverdon, 1777).



## INTRODUCTION

Although events in La Harpe's life led him to become a friend of the Catholic revival during which Chateaubriand, to name only one, was pleased to have his support,<sup>1</sup> he is rightly best remembered as a disciple of Voltaire who rose to eminence as a critic through his wholehearted acceptance of the latter's ideas.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, everything in the man and in his work is deeply marked by the influence of the patriarch. While he considered Voltaire to be the supreme example of man's failure to find a truly universal genius in the arts,<sup>3</sup> he too attempted to follow the latter's example of diversity: 'La littérature, telle que je l'ai conçue, comprend tout ce que les Anciens attribuaient au grammairien, au rhéteur, au *philosophe*, et n'exclut que les sciences physiques, les sciences exactes et les arts et métiers'.<sup>4</sup> He sought fame, not only as a critic, but as a playwright, poet, orator, translator and pamphleteer.

Of his varied work it is his criticism and his theatre that have attracted most attention in the past. As early as 1805, A. A. Barbier published an article on various bibliographical errors in the final section of the *Lycée ou cours de littérature*, — the *Histoire de la Philosophie du dix-huitième siècle*.<sup>5</sup> The whole of the *Lycée* was first analysed in some detail by M. J. Chénier in a report drawn up for the Institut de France in 1810.<sup>6</sup> He concentrated on the scope of the work, pointing out its gaps and the limits of La Harpe's erudition. The same interest in the general structure of the *Lycée* characterizes two further studies on the work by P. C. F. Daunou<sup>7</sup> and B. Jullien.<sup>8</sup> Various German scholars have written shortish dissertations on special aspects of La Harpe's criticism, such as his views on seventeenth-century French literature,<sup>9</sup> German literature,<sup>10</sup> and his critical theories and æsthetics.<sup>11</sup> In the field of stylistics, Emile Malakis has sought to prove that La Harpe's *Eloge de Racine* contains the earliest example in French literary criticism of the figurative use of the term *couleur locale*.<sup>12</sup> The first major thesis on La Harpe's criticism in general was written by an American scholar, Dr G. M. Sproull, who examined thoroughly the question of whether La Harpe was the first critic to draw up a proper history of literature.<sup>13</sup> Another American, Dr A. D. Bonneville, has shown La Harpe as a judge of his contemporaries, concentrating on those figures that have stood the test of time.<sup>14</sup> These are the only two fully developed studies yet written on what is undoubtedly the most important part of La Harpe's work.

Short but valuable studies of La Harpe's tragedies are given by Professor H. C. Lancaster in his monumental works on the history of French tragedy in the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> He includes useful summaries of plots together with

views by La Harpe's contemporaries. A fairly short but complete review of La Harpe's *dramas* as well as of his tragedies is provided by Walter Gasch.<sup>16</sup> La Harpe's views on dramatic theory are dealt with, together with those of other eighteenth-century critics, by J. H. Davis.<sup>17</sup> The hellenist and friend of La Harpe, J. B. Gail, drew up an interesting comparison of La Harpe's *Philoctète* and the Greek original,<sup>18</sup> and Alexis Pitou has in a subtle study of the various changes in the text of *Mélanie*<sup>19</sup> shown the hidden meaning behind many of these changes. We ourselves have attempted to reconstruct the plot of one play by La Harpe that was thought lost — *Gustave*, and have published this reconstruction together with the text of another of his previously unprinted tragedies — *Les Brames*.<sup>20</sup>

La Harpe's work in other genres has not received such full treatment. Apart from general comments in superficial studies of La Harpe, either written just after his death or to accompany various editions of his work, we know of no attempt to appraise systematically his value as an orator, translator or pamphleteer. His political and religious views have been largely ignored.<sup>21</sup> His poetry has been dealt with somewhat summarily by Emile Faguet, who sees La Harpe as in some ways a precursor of the early Romantics.<sup>22</sup> Recently, more attention has been given to his correspondence. Two major collections of letters have appeared, that published by Dr A. Jovicevich in 1965,<sup>23</sup> and that published by myself in 1967.<sup>24</sup> However, many letters remain unpublished.<sup>25</sup>

La Harpe's life has also been the subject of somewhat fragmentary treatment. Historians have concentrated on the more scandalous aspects such as his imprisonment in 1760<sup>26</sup> or his behaviour under the Revolution.<sup>27</sup> The only serious biography of La Harpe dates from 1820,<sup>28</sup> and posterity's picture of him has been coloured to a considerable extent by the harsh views of contemporary scandal-sheets. Many of La Harpe's contemporaries believed implicitly Chamfort's judgement of him: 'C'est un homme qui se sert de ses défauts pour cacher ses vices'.<sup>29</sup>

The aim of the present study is to give a less partial picture of the man and to produce for the first time a complete survey of the life and works of one of the most important literary figures of the second half of the eighteenth century.

**PART 1**  
**THE LIFE**





## CHAPTER I

# THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Like much else in La Harpe's life, even his origins were for his contemporaries a subject of controversy. More interested in possible scandal than in fact, they took delight in reproducing various ill-founded tales. Bachaumont proclaimed La Harpe to be the son of a 'porteur d'eau et d'une ravaudeuse';<sup>1</sup> according to Métra and G. Imbert, he owed his existence to the 'accouplement clandestin d'une cuisinière et d'un soldat invalide . . . On assure même que lorsque [La Harpe] vit le jour, sa mère était si pauvre que pressée par les douleurs de l'enfantement, elle le mit au monde au milieu de la rue dont il porte le nom'.<sup>2</sup> It was this last version which enjoyed most success among the salacious-minded literary public of the time. It was adopted by Sabatier de Castres,<sup>3</sup> and later used by Royou in the *Année littéraire*.<sup>4</sup> La Harpe's reply to Royou,<sup>5</sup> in which he claimed to be a member of the notable Swiss family from Rolle on the lake of Geneva, was simply not believed by his contemporaries.

Yet, we now know beyond any doubt that he was born on 20 November 1739, the son of 'Jean-François de la Harpe, ancien capitaine d'artillerie, et de Marie-Louise Devienne, demeurants rue Saint-Victor'.<sup>6</sup> La Harpe's father was indeed a member of the Swiss family of that name and was the son of one Isaac Loys Delharpe.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, beyond this link, little is known about him. The Conseil de Rolle granted his mother, Claudine Bouquet, a proof of consanguinity on 30 July 1704, following the death of her husband. When he became the godfather of another member of the family on 16 February 1720, he was referred to as being a 'lieutenant en France'. His last recorded connexion with the Pays de Vaud dates from 10 August 1726 when he paid off part of an annuity bond of 3,000 florins which he had introduced in Rolle on 16 September 1724. He appears to have married Marie-Louise Devienne about 1730 as before the destruction of records during the Commune of 1871 there existed the death certificate of a daughter who died on 3 November 1741 at the age of ten.<sup>8</sup>

Equally little is known about the military career of the writer's father, although the son was to insist that he had been a 'chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Louis'.<sup>9</sup> In any case, whatever his background, by 1739 he was reduced to living humbly. The boy had as godparents a spinster and a 'loueur de carrosses'.<sup>10</sup> It has been suggested that this poverty was due to the couple's having a multitude of children.<sup>11</sup> Be that as it may, only one sister of the writer, Thérèse, seems to have survived.<sup>12</sup>

The family was to remain united only for the first nine and a half years of La Harpe's life. The father died on 6 May 1749, plunging his wife and children from poverty into complete destitution.<sup>13</sup> The young boy was taken in and cared for for six months by the Sœurs de la Charité of the Parish of Saint-André-des-Arts.<sup>14</sup> Then, in October or November 1749, the parish priest, Father Claude Léger, presented him to the headmaster of the Collège d'Harcourt, Gilles-Thomas Asselin, who was so impressed by him that he gave him a scholarship.<sup>15</sup>

Asselin's faith in the boy was soon to be justified. The latter took his studies seriously and plunged wholeheartedly into an education based almost entirely on the study of the Classical languages.<sup>16</sup> At first, he found it so difficult to master the subtleties of grammar that many years later he could still remember the almost physical pain caused by his inability to understand it.<sup>17</sup> Yet, the fruits of his hard work began to be seen when he entered his first *concours général*.<sup>18</sup> On 6 August 1753, he was awarded two honourable mentions, one for translation into Latin, and one for Latin verse.<sup>19</sup> Although he won no prizes in 1754, on 4 August 1755 he received an honourable mention for Latin verse and the first prize for translation from Latin into French.<sup>20</sup> His first year in *rhétorique* ended with his receiving the first prize of the University from the hands of Maupeou on 7 August 1756. For the same session, he carried off two first prizes, one for *amplification* in Latin and one for translation from Latin into French, a second prize for Latin verse, and an honourable mention for *amplification* in French.<sup>21</sup> On 12 August 1757, when La Harpe was a *vétéran* in his second year in *rhétorique*, Maupeou again handed him the first prize for the University. He also received from the hands of the Rector, Le Bel, two first prizes for *amplification*, one for Latin and one for French, and a second prize for Latin verse.<sup>22</sup>

To modern eyes, these competitions appear a little sterile, but La Harpe himself was always deeply aware of the debt that he owed to his education and, in particular, to the exercises that he practised in these competitions. Whereas Voltaire, for instance, dismissed *amplification* as the art of being longwinded,<sup>23</sup> La Harpe remained convinced that it taught the rudiments of oratory.<sup>24</sup> In the same way, it was only through composing Latin verse that one learned to appreciate fully the beauties of Virgil and Horace.<sup>25</sup> Above all, he was grateful to his school for showing him these beauties. By introducing him to the Classical languages — to Latin rather more than to Greek — his masters had given him 'des inépuisables jouissances préparées pour le reste de la vie',<sup>26</sup> without which it was impossible to succeed in any intellectual activity.<sup>27</sup> This education had taught him the fundamental principles of good taste and of 'la saine littérature'.<sup>28</sup>

This earnest pupil, nevertheless, also enjoyed the pleasures of other boys of his age. He joined his school-fellows in jumping over the ditch that surrounded the courtyard.<sup>29</sup> As mischievous as any other schoolboy, he took delight in

forbidden and rumbustious escapades. He slid down the handrail of the banisters.<sup>30</sup> When there was snow on the ground, he threw snowballs at passers-by.<sup>31</sup>

These moments of boisterous recreation brought relief from the rather solemn atmosphere of school life. The routine was Spartan, if not as rigorous as in earlier times. The pupils rose at six in the morning on weekdays, and at seven on Sundays. Their day was filled with classes and study sessions, and what little time remained was largely taken up with prayers both in the morning and at night, and by mass following the morning classes. On Wednesdays, the afternoon was free, but after morning mass the pupils had religious instruction. They had greater freedom on Sundays and feast days, but as well as mass in the morning they then also had to attend vespers in the afternoon.<sup>32</sup> It is not surprising that the future *philosophe* was to say that being at school at this time was akin to living in a monastery,<sup>33</sup> nor is it surprising that the young man should have wished to taste the delights of the city that lay just beyond the school's walls.

This desire was heightened by the fact that most of La Harpe's school-fellows came from rich families. Following the death of his mother in the Hôtel-Dieu on 16 February 1756,<sup>34</sup> he kept few links with his own past.<sup>35</sup> He preferred to start cultivating those valuable social connexions that could replace the background of a well-provided family. His closest school-friend, for instance, was a noted social climber, the Marquis de Pezay. Together, they discovered the joys and tribulations of adolescence,<sup>36</sup> and, if Pezay's own ruthless ambition led finally to a certain coolness between the young men,<sup>37</sup> the lesson of this ambition was not lost on La Harpe. He too came to compare the rigours of study unfavourably with the joys of social success. He adopted the manners of mondain society and he then took on its way of thinking. He was to become a *philosophe* more out of respect for fashion than through deep conviction. He merely followed the example of many of his companions who took to this new creed as a symbol of their emancipation:

A peine hors des classes, toutes ces leçons, un peu sévères pour la légèreté de cet âge, se confondant bientôt, dans l'opinion et dans le discours, avec toute cette discipline de collège, qu'on ne traitait plus que de pédantisme dès qu'on n'y était plus assujéti, tout cela ne paraissait plus qu'une routine d'école qu'on oubliait bientôt comme le latin . . . Trois ou quatre sophismes usés, trois ou quatre plaisanteries triviales, mais qui étaient des nouveautés pour la jeunesse, leur semblaient des lumières d'homme, faites pour remplacer la crédulité de l'enfance, comme la liberté du monde pour remplacer la ferule.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps through the influence of Asselin, who had been a friend of Voltaire's,<sup>39</sup> La Harpe cultivated an admiration for the latter even before leaving school. This admiration soon developed into a form of 'ivresse impétueuse' which

nothing could moderate.<sup>40</sup> While still in *rhétorique*, he learned by heart Voltaire's *Épître à Uranie* and took as a motto its scepticism and call to hedonism:

Laissez donc là tous les systèmes,  
Sources d'erreurs et de débats;  
Et, choisissant l'Amour pour maître  
Jouissez au lieu de connaître.<sup>41</sup>

Armed with this philosophy, he entered society during his last year at school from 1757 to 1758, when he was free to go into town whenever he pleased.<sup>42</sup> Although he was extremely small in stature,<sup>43</sup> his face was well-formed and attractive.<sup>44</sup> From the outset, he showed considerable charm.<sup>45</sup> Seeing much promise in the young man, the poet Dorat took an interest in him and introduced him to many of the more important literary figures of the time.<sup>46</sup> It was not long before he knew influential personalities in this close-knit society,<sup>47</sup> Duclos,<sup>48</sup> d'Alembert,<sup>49</sup> Thomas,<sup>50</sup> Saint-Lambert.<sup>51</sup> Along with Chamfort, he was to become a protégé of the Marquis de Ximènes.<sup>52</sup>

In his choice of friends and protectors, he again showed his desire to enter the Voltairian fold. Apart from having a certain affection for Helvétius,<sup>53</sup> to whom he was introduced by Saint-Lambert,<sup>54</sup> he avoided the society of other atheists such as d'Holbach,<sup>55</sup> although he was introduced to Diderot as early as September or October 1757.<sup>56</sup> He had been spending the summer holidays in the country, where a friend of Diderot's had entrusted La Harpe with a letter for him. La Harpe was, above all, struck by Diderot's 'jeu d'énergumène'.<sup>57</sup> For four hours, the latter performed while the youth calmly watched him. Although he continued to see Diderot fairly frequently for some time, he was to claim — perhaps a little too vehemently for it to be thoroughly credible — that he had always found the man ridiculous.<sup>58</sup> What is certain is that La Harpe found it difficult to like a man who always held the floor in every conversation.<sup>59</sup>

On the whole, he was to prefer the company of those more ready to flatter a 'jeune tête, folle de poésie et de vanité'.<sup>60</sup> For this reason, he avoided those circles that went in for political discussion and favoured those where, under the influence of women, the main interest was literary gossip. He became a frequent guest at the house of Pezay's sister, Mme. de Cassini,<sup>61</sup> whose gatherings were renowned for their love of petty intrigue.<sup>62</sup> He came to know Mme. Du Deffand<sup>63</sup> and Mme. Geoffrin.<sup>64</sup> Through d'Alembert, he was to have access to the *salon* of Mlle. de Lespinasse.<sup>65</sup> He was admitted to the societies of Mme. d'Houdetot<sup>66</sup> and of the Maréchale de Luxembourg.<sup>67</sup> He dined frequently at the home of Mme. de Marchais.<sup>68</sup> Until the quarrel over the rival merits of Gluck and Piccini that divided Parisian society in 1777, his closest friends were to be found in the circles ruled over by Mme. Suard and Mme. Saurin.<sup>69</sup>

He further identified himself as a Voltairian by quarrelling with Voltaire's enemies. Although he made much of remaining on speaking terms with a noted

anti-Voltairian, La Beaumelle,<sup>70</sup> he was to claim that he had fallen out with Fréron as early as 1757. He had met Fréron some time before when he had brought him an ode which he wanted to see published in the *Année littéraire*.<sup>71</sup> Fréron had politely shown him the door, and La Harpe had thrown his poem on the fire and thought no more about it. His enmity for Fréron began at a dinner-party given by Dorat for La Harpe, Colardeau, Dudoyer de Gastels and Fréron.<sup>72</sup> When, at the dinner-table, the conversation came on to the subject of Corneille, and La Harpe felt that Fréron was attacking Voltaire, the young man could not hold his tongue, nor hide his disapproval. This, according to La Harpe, deeply wounded Fréron. He came to see in the harsh criticism of reviews by Fréron the expression of a personal grudge. Yet, after La Harpe's somewhat stormy departure from the dinner table, Fréron and his friends merely wondered 'quelle était cette *bamboche* . . . qui parlait au lieu d'écouter, qui avait le ton si affirmatif, [qui] régénait depuis deux heures, et se pavanait à table en Empereur de Rhétorique'.<sup>73</sup> The schoolboy already showed some of the intolerance in questions of taste that was to be the mark of the man.

After leaving school, La Harpe moved on to the Sorbonne to study law,<sup>74</sup> but, having discovered the delights of society, he found this irksome and boring.<sup>75</sup> He was more interested in literature and the prizes that it offered. He quite possibly collaborated in a defence of the *philosophes* against Fréron and others with an anonymous brochure which appeared in January 1758, entitled *L'Aléthophile*.<sup>76</sup> In October 1759, he published his first verse, some *héroïdes*, along with an essay on this then fashionable form of heroic poetry in the manner of Pope.<sup>77</sup> The poems were well received and compared favourably to similar productions by Colardeau.<sup>78</sup> La Harpe was beginning to make some headway on the Parisian scene.

In 1760, however, this activity was interrupted when he was accused of writing satirical and even scabrous verse against his former teachers at the Collège d'Harcourt.<sup>79</sup> It was even said that he had attacked his benefactor, the headmaster.<sup>80</sup> On 29 February 1760, the lieutenant général de police, de Sartine, wrote to a police inspector, P. J. de La Villegaudin, sending him the lines which had been handed to him by Asselin.<sup>81</sup> The police already knew that the lines were in the handwriting of Jean-Baptiste de Lafitte, the sixteen-year-old son of a surgeon living in the rue Serpente and a pupil in *philosophie* at the Collège de Beauvais.<sup>82</sup> The boy was to maintain that he had merely copied the lines from a manuscript given him by La Harpe. In his reply to Sartine on 1 March, La Villegaudin reported that he had spent the whole of the previous day looking for La Harpe without success.<sup>83</sup> Was the latter avoiding him?<sup>84</sup> At any rate, he soon realized that the police were on his tail. On 9 March, he wrote to Lafitte's father in a tone of outraged innocence, demanding the chance to justify himself, giving vent to veiled threats, but also asking that the letter should be for his eyes alone.<sup>85</sup> Monsieur Lafitte sent it on to La Villegaudin.

At ten in the morning on Sunday 16 March La Harpe was arrested and interrogated by the police. He maintained that he was innocent to the bitter end, only admitting that he had heard two of the stanzas recited at the Café de Dubuisson, better known as the *Caveau*,<sup>86</sup> and that about fifteen days before he had talked with Lafitte ‘chez la demoiselle Fleuri, demeurant vis-à-vis le collège d’Harcourt’. In spite of his protests, he was led off to the tiny prison reserved for minor offenders, the Fort-L’Evêque.

Lafitte was not arrested and interrogated until 2.30 in the afternoon of the next day. He stated that La Harpe had given him the verse to copy about three weeks before in the Luxembourg gardens<sup>87</sup> and had at that time admitted to being the author. La Harpe, according to Lafitte, had wanted copies of the poem to be distributed in the courtyard of the Collège d’Harcourt. However, when asked to produce the original in La Harpe’s handwriting, he replied that he had burned it ‘chez Monsieur de Casaubon, ancien écolier du Collège d’Harcourt et y demeurant, en présence dudit Casaubon’. He also claimed to have shown it to a certain Simon.

Sitting alone in his prison, La Harpe became the prey of despair.<sup>88</sup> He wrote to a patroness, the Marquise Rebé du Bourg, on 27 March, begging her to intercede on his behalf with Sartine.<sup>89</sup> His letter had no immediate effect. Meanwhile, the elder Lafitte had gone to see Sartine on the day after his son’s arrest with a letter of recommendation from an Avocat au Parlement, Lherminier,<sup>90</sup> and on 30 March the boy was freed. Still in prison, La Harpe wrote to Sartine on 1 April, insisting that evidence be brought against him:

Le seul visiblement coupable et intéressé à se disculper a été dispensé (chose étrange) de prouver ce qu’il avançait; et à voir de quelle manière on le traite, on dirait qu’il ne s’est délivré du péril qu’en se rendant l’organe de mes ennemis.<sup>91</sup>

Again Sartine was unmoved, and La Harpe remained where he was. On 19 April, a Commissaire au Châtelet, Laumonier, wrote to the minister of justice, the Comte de Saint-Florentin, on La Harpe’s behalf.<sup>92</sup> Saint-Florentin’s reply on 21 April was the sinister permission that ‘le st. de La Harpe soit puni seulement par la prison, et qu’il reste dans celle où il est’. He stayed there until 18 May.<sup>93</sup>

At this distance in time it is difficult to judge the extent of La Harpe’s guilt, although he did later admit to writing at least some of the verse:

Il est bien vrai qu’à l’âge de dix-neuf ans, je fis très imprudemment quelques couplets contre des particuliers du collège d’Harcourt et que quelques-uns de mes camarades les recueillirent et y en ajoutèrent d’autres. Mais, dans ces couplets, il n’est nullement question d’aucun homme envers qui j’eusse le moindre devoir à remplir.<sup>94</sup>

Boissy d’Anglas, perhaps over-anxious to defend La Harpe, will go so far as to say that:

cette plaisanterie était l'ouvrage de plusieurs jeunes gens, et m. de La Harpe fut le seul puni, parce qu'il était pauvre, sans appui, sans état, sans protecteurs, et parce qu'il eut le courage de garder à ses compagnons le secret le plus inviolable.<sup>95</sup>

We have seen that he was not entirely without friends, but he was certainly dealt with by the police in an arbitrary and summary fashion. He was put in prison before the interrogation of the chief witness and was not given the opportunity of confronting him. To judge from extant documents, Casaubon, who was said to have seen the original manuscript being destroyed, was never formally questioned on this extremely important point. As a school-fellow of La Harpe's, his evidence would have been capital. The evidence of the only other person supposed to have seen the verse written in La Harpe's hand, Simon, amounts to little more than a police report in the third person, where it is admitted that Simon hardly knew La Harpe.<sup>96</sup>

The only evidence, therefore, really worthy of study is the verse itself, which must be reproduced in its entirety:<sup>97</sup>

Toi dont fut inspiré Rousseau,  
O noir et terrible génie,  
Viens, et sur le plus vil troupeau  
Verse le fiel et l'infamie.

Il faut que par toi je commence,  
Louvel,<sup>98</sup> le plus sot des docteurs,  
Tu sais bien être en récompense  
Le plus effronté des voleurs.

Crains pourtant la haine publique,  
Elle a déjà flétri ton nom;  
Elle rendra ta fin tragique  
Par le gibet ou le bâton.

Toi Douët, hideux sodomite,  
Ne crains point d'aller en enfer;  
Dieu sait qu'en ta rage maudite  
Tu voudras foutre Lucifer.

Quel est ce Cyclope tout neuf?  
C'est toi, Vauleg[e]lard<sup>99</sup> qui m'appelle;  
Ta tête et tes yeux sont d'un bœuf,  
Et tu n'as pas plus de cervelle.

Et toi lourd et pesant Gardin<sup>100</sup>  
Qui pour prier Dieu fais mes veilles,  
De peur d'écorder mes oreilles,  
Songe à le prier en latin.

Alais<sup>101</sup> escroc à bénéfice,  
Le plus dégoûtant des coquins,  
Aux femmes de tes paroissiens  
Vas-tu donner la chaude pisse?

Dagoumer,<sup>102</sup> bête à large panse,  
 Qui brailles et bois en tout temps,  
 Bois, mon ami, l'on te dispense  
 D'avoir un instant de bon sens.  
 Toi, Mortlieux, âne à tonsure,  
 Qui fais le petit érudit,  
 Au lieu de laver ta figure  
 Songe à décrasser ton esprit.  
 De Luedelberg, chantre si doux,  
 A toi, scholastique pécore,  
 Tes maîtresses sont à six sols  
 Et tes vers valent moins encore.  
 Quoi! ma liste est si tôt finie!  
 Viens, Renard, viens goûter du plat;  
 Demeure sot toute ta vie,  
 Tu n'as pas l'espoir d'être fat.

It is not possible to identify all those mentioned, but apart from Louvel, Allais and Dagomer, none seems to have had much dealings with La Harpe. Only Dagomer figures on the list of his teachers that he drew up in his defence:<sup>103</sup> 'MM. l'Hermitte, en sixième; Brenet<sup>104</sup> en cinquième; Chéron, en quatrième; Dagomer, en troisième; Viel,<sup>105</sup> en seconde; Wallée, en rhétorique, Basset, en philosophie'.

In his self-justification, La Harpe is surely worthier of belief than some of his commentators have liked to make out. That he was mixed up in the composition of this verse is beyond doubt, but that he was not alone would appear more than probable. The verse, obscene and written in a style that would be easy to imitate,<sup>106</sup> strikes one immediately as a silly prank, certainly not reason enough to send a twenty-year-old to prison for over two months, nor to brand him for the rest of his life as having been ungrateful to those who had succoured him.

His youth ended on this rather sour note. Having risen from poverty to the rather sheltered life of the lionized brilliant pupil whose early promise as a man of letters had begun to open many a door, he was reminded by his imprisonment that he had only just set out on the road to fortune, and that many a pitfall awaited the unwary. His ambition for recognition and glory became, through this harsh treatment, all the more entrenched and seemed to override all other feelings and thoughts. He already saw himself as a genius whom the envious wished to destroy:

Tu vois ma jeunesse incertaine  
 Livrée aux plus affreux combats;  
 Tu vois les pièges de la haine  
 Se multiplier sous mes pas,  
 Et l'Envie au regard farouche,  
 Qui contre moi s'armant toujours,  
 Veut du souffle impur de sa bouche  
 Sécher la fleur de mes beaux jours.<sup>107</sup>



## CHAPTER II

### LITERARY DÉBUT

Although embittered, La Harpe was by no means crushed. Towards the end of 1760, he published his *Homme de lettres, épître à M.\*\*\**,<sup>1</sup> in which he once more raised his head, proclaimed his belief in his talent and dedicated his work to Voltaire, thus showing, in case there should be any doubt, to which literary camp he henceforth belonged. This allegiance, however, did not as yet procure him any proper source of income, and he seems to have been plagued by continuous poverty.<sup>2</sup> According to his enemies, he was supported by Dorat and earned a meagre living by lending his pen to anonymous libels.<sup>3</sup> In 1761, he was accused of being the author of two unsigned attacks on Fréron. On learning from Dorat that Fréron believed him to be the author of *La Wasprie ou l'ami Wasp*,<sup>4</sup> La Harpe wrote to Fréron and to the real author of this brochure, P. D. Ecouchard Le Brun,<sup>5</sup> denying any connexion with the work, demanding equity in all criticism and, while not agreeing with Fréron's views, recognizing his qualities.<sup>6</sup> This offended Le Brun.<sup>7</sup> He could not understand why, when he had defended La Harpe against Fréron, the former should now praise the latter, especially as La Harpe had been accused by no less an authority than Voltaire<sup>8</sup> of having written some *Anecdotes sur Fréron*.<sup>9</sup> It was neither the first nor the last time that La Harpe was to disclaim the authorship of anonymous work. He had to fight to clear his name from such charges, and it was not without suffering much personal abuse.<sup>10</sup> For the rest of his life he bore the scars of wounds inflicted by so early an entry into literary polemics.

These controversies did not make him neglect more serious literary pursuits. He published some more *héroïdes*<sup>11</sup> and composed some odes,<sup>12</sup> one of which, *Le Philosophe des Alpes*, had an honourable mention from the Académie française in 1762. Yet, it was with his first tragedy, *Le Comte de Warwick*,<sup>13</sup> that he at last really tasted true success. The work had been meticulously composed. Aware of the difficulty of getting a play staged in Paris, he worked on *Warwick* for over two years, polishing it 'avec soin et avec défiance'.<sup>14</sup> It was rehearsed at the Comédie française in August 1763 and originally promised for the beginning of September.<sup>15</sup> On 30 August, La Harpe was invited to dinner by A. L. Thomas, along with Delille and Sélis. He read them his play. They were impressed, and, although he thought that the fifth act rather lacked substance, Thomas saw the work as heralding the arrival of a 'beau talent, une âme forte, un cœur éloquent et sensible'.<sup>16</sup>

The play was performed on 7 November 1763, and was an immediate success. It was repeated sixteen times, an honour which equalled, in the words of Grimm, 'le plus haut degré de gloire auquel un poète puisse prétendre'.<sup>17</sup> The last performance had been scheduled for 10 December, but so great was public acclaim that the play was repeated on 28 of the month.<sup>18</sup> By the express command of Louis XV, it was performed at court, and the young author presented to the king.<sup>19</sup> With this success, La Harpe's place in Parisian society was secure. It is true that stories about his origins and his imprisonment now began to circulate even more widely as his success brought him fame,<sup>20</sup> but he himself had little time to listen to idle chatter. His financial position was improved,<sup>21</sup> and, apart from friendship with Lekain who had played Warwick, the play brought him an asset which he had strived to attain ever since leaving school — association with Voltaire. Although the work was dedicated in name to the Prince de Condé, La Harpe sent the manuscript to Voltaire, and once again insisted that the latter was his spiritual leader:

Quoique éloigné du centre de notre littérature, vous en êtes toujours l'âme et l'honneur. Tous ceux qui font quelques pas dans cette carrière, où vous avez tant de fois triomphé, vous offrent en tribut les essais de leur jeunesse. En soumettant cet ouvrage à vos lumières, je ne fais que suivre la foule; et si je puis m'en distinguer, ce n'est que par la sensibilité particulière qui m'a toujours attaché à vos écrits, et dont j'ai osé déjà vous donner des témoignages.<sup>22</sup>

The play was well received, and Voltaire now began to correspond with his new disciple, praising his 'bons principes' and his 'esprit juste et vrai'.<sup>23</sup> In June 1764, La Harpe appears to have paid a fleeting visit to Ferney in the company of the Marquis de Ximènes.<sup>24</sup> He was to return there for longer periods in the following years.

However, as this new relationship developed, so La Harpe grew away from some of his former friends. He finally broke off close relations with Diderot in February or March 1764, when he discovered that the latter talked about *Warwick* without having read it.<sup>25</sup> He was now on only distant terms with Pezay and had already quarrelled with his first benefactor, Dorat. Since being seen with Madame Fréron at a performance of Voltaire's *Ecossaise* in 1760, Dorat had, in La Harpe's view, taken on the 'ton et pour ainsi dire la livrée' of the Fréron family.<sup>26</sup> Their friendship finally ended when it was rumoured<sup>27</sup> that Dorat had written the harsh review of *Warwick* that appeared in the *Année littéraire* in December 1763.<sup>28</sup> They were to become bitter enemies when La Harpe wrote an epigram against Dorat which circulated widely in Paris in 1767.<sup>29</sup> For the casual observer, this change in loyalties seemed typical of a heartless social climber, ready to abandon all those who no longer served his purpose,<sup>30</sup> but the allegiance to rival camps made such a break inevitable.

Now assured of Voltairian support, La Harpe tried to repeat his theatrical success with a play on a classical subject, *Timoléon*.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, Lekain —

who had a major rôle — sprained his knee, and the play was held up after its opening performance on 1 August 1764.<sup>32</sup> After a number of changes had been made in acts four and five, the play was given a further three performances in December 1764, but without arousing a great deal of interest.<sup>33</sup> In spite of the rather mixed reception of the play on the stage, its author printed it, and in the preface and other notes defended himself against the various attacks that had been made on his good name.

Indeed, another event in his life had just become a source of even more gossip. On 22 November 1764, he married Marie-Marthe Monmayeux, the daughter of a café proprietor in the rue de Condé.<sup>34</sup> The girl was only twenty, and La Harpe only just twenty-five. All the scandal-sheets insisted that this was a forced marriage, and that he had had to be coerced by one of the girl's brothers.<sup>35</sup> Certainly, the failure of *Timoléon* had not left him in a good financial position for marriage, but, whatever the reasons for this union, Mademoiselle Monmayeux was not lacking in charm or accomplishments.<sup>36</sup> She was to leave a lasting impression on Voltaire. Boissy d'Anglas found her 'douée de beaucoup d'esprit et d'une sorte d'amabilité qui n'était pas sans agrément'.<sup>37</sup> Yet, married life for the La Harpes was not to be a particularly happy one, and one could detect a brittle hardening in the sensitivity of the young woman as the years went by. Nevertheless, she was to provide the writer with useful companionship in the social round of Parisian life, and remained his wife for nearly twenty-nine years.

As we have seen, marriage had not protected La Harpe from gossip. In December 1764, he was again accused of being the author of anonymous verse — some lines written against a decree on financial legislation and its sponsor, Laverdy.<sup>38</sup> As before, La Harpe seemed the best person to blame and he was even threatened with imprisonment.<sup>39</sup> It was with this threat still hanging over his head that he brought out his *Mélanges littéraires*, a collection of verse and miscellaneous prose pieces.<sup>40</sup> It aroused particular interest through the remarks on Lucan,<sup>41</sup> where, as in his earlier essay on the *héroïdes*, he showed already that he was a stickler for correctness, and that he possessed a highly developed incisive critical sense.

At the beginning of June 1765, La Harpe left for Ferney without his wife, in order to work on a new play on a national subject, *Pharamond*.<sup>42</sup> He found the subject difficult and, to Voltaire's dismay, he worked slowly.<sup>43</sup> In Ferney, there were other distractions to occupy his mind. He wrote verse<sup>44</sup> and played the parts of Zamore in *Alzire* and Genghis Khan in *L'Orphelin de la Chine*.<sup>45</sup>

He returned to Paris on 6 or 7 August<sup>46</sup> and learned that he had won a prize of two hundred *écus* from the Académie de Rouen<sup>47</sup> for a poem on *La Délivrance de Salerne et la Fondation du Royaume des Deux-Siciles*.<sup>48</sup> His new play was performed at the Comédie française on 14 August. It was presented anonymously, but soon seen to be by La Harpe.<sup>49</sup> It was only performed twice. The

first act had been listened to in silence, some fine lines in the second had been applauded, but apart from a slight renewal of interest in the fourth act, the rest of the play struck the public as interminably long and dull.<sup>50</sup> The early promise that had been seen in the author of *Warwick* appeared to have come to nothing. Piron's prophecy that 'ce jeune homme n'a que cette pièce dans le ventre' seemed to be justified.<sup>51</sup>

He was not, however, going to abandon the stage easily. On 17 December 1765, he read another play on a national subject, *Gustave*,<sup>52</sup> at the house of the Elie de Beaumonts.<sup>53</sup> The Comédie française staged it on 3 March 1766. It was to be the play's only performance. The first three acts were received enthusiastically, but interest died during the remainder. The author himself condemned the work.<sup>54</sup> His success with *Warwick* had opened wide the doors of the Comédie française and made it too easy for him to have plays produced there. The three unfortunate works that followed *Warwick* were conceived in haste 'et devaient se sentir de cette précipitation qui est l'abus de la facilité, et la suite d'une confiance téméraire'.<sup>55</sup>

It was as a respite from the theatre, and turning to what he considered to be 'des travaux moins difficiles et moins dangereux',<sup>56</sup> that he won six hundred *livres* from the Académie française on 26 July 1766<sup>57</sup> for a poem called *Le Poète*,<sup>58</sup> thus beginning the long list of successes that he was to have in its competitions. The young rhetorician was safely back with the intellectual exercises learned so faithfully at school. It was a haven from his first disappointments in the outer world.

This outer world now seemed particularly unfriendly to a young man whose financial situation was worse than ever. Apart from his prize money and the scanty remuneration from his plays,<sup>59</sup> La Harpe's only regular source of income at this time was the annuity of a hundred and fifty *livres* settled on his wife at the time of their marriage.<sup>60</sup> It was to protect his protégé from the rigours of poverty that Voltaire invited him to come and stay in Ferney while working on yet another play.<sup>61</sup> For nearly a year, the latter was to live peacefully in Ferney, working quietly 'loin de toute cabale'.<sup>62</sup>

Before going there, however, he first left Paris in July 1766 to go and stay with the Florian family at Hornoy between Beauvais and Abbeville.<sup>63</sup> He spent the rest of the summer there, before he and his wife set out for Ferney, where they arrived on 4 November 1766.<sup>64</sup>

Work on the new play was not easy, even though he slaved at it for ten hours a day.<sup>65</sup> During the first three months of his stay, Voltaire still expected him to be setting out for Paris with the new play ready just after Easter 1767.<sup>66</sup> No play appeared,<sup>67</sup> and in June 1767 he shelved his first subject when it was only half written<sup>68</sup> and began on another, *Les Barmécides*.<sup>69</sup> Even then, he made slow progress,<sup>70</sup> although he talked about his work with enthusiasm.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, he did not neglect other genres. While refusing Panckoucke's offer of

support for a translation of Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita* in February 1767,<sup>72</sup> he continued to enter for Academic competitions. Towards the end of December 1766, he learned that he had won a prize from the Académie française<sup>73</sup> for having successfully dealt with the rather laboured theme of *Des Malheurs de la Guerre et des Avantages de la Paix*.<sup>74</sup> Under Voltaire's guidance,<sup>75</sup> he composed a *philosophe's* reply to Barthe's *Lettre de l'Abbé de Rancé*.<sup>76</sup> In the summer of 1767 — with help from Voltaire who revealed to d'Alembert his identifying motto<sup>77</sup> — the young man carried off the annual prize for oratory at the Académie française with an *Eloge de Charles V*.<sup>78</sup> Voltaire was already beginning to talk of him as a suitable future member of that august body.<sup>79</sup>

There were, however, disappointments. La Harpe sent two works to the Académie de Marseille and, although he won the poetry prize with an *héroïde* entitled *Servilie à Brutus après la mort de César*,<sup>80</sup> his prose piece, *Combien le génie des grands écrivains influe sur l'esprit de leur siècle*,<sup>81</sup> was beaten by a work from Chamfort, who was still ostensibly a friend.<sup>82</sup>

Social life in Ferney for La Harpe and his wife revolved around short excursions, to visit, for instance, the French resident in Geneva, P. M. Hennin,<sup>83</sup> meeting various visitors to Ferney, such as a distant cousin of La Harpe's,<sup>84</sup> playing chess<sup>85</sup> and acting in Voltaire's plays. The couple earned considerable praise from Voltaire as actors. Although small, La Harpe was elegant and graceful and he could recite well. Voltaire exaggerated when he said of him that he was the best actor then living; that in some respects he outclassed Lekain,<sup>86</sup> but certainly he was at home in rôles from Voltaire's theatre.<sup>87</sup> As for Madame de La Harpe, Voltaire's praise for her knew no bounds:

Nous avons trouvé dans Mme. de La Harpe un talent bien singulier. Il ne lui a fallu que deux ou trois répétitions pour acquérir ce que Mlle. Clairon a longtemps cherché. Sa déclamation pleine de tendresse et de force est soutenue par la figure la plus noble et la plus théâtrale, par de beaux yeux noirs qui disent tout ce qu'ils veulent dire, par un geste naturel, par la démarche la plus libre, et par les attitudes les plus tragiques.<sup>88</sup>

He especially admired her as Obéide in *Les Scythes*<sup>89</sup> and based his stage instructions on her reactions to the rôle.<sup>90</sup>

Now safely installed as Voltaire's spiritual heir, La Harpe treated his mentor with familiarity. During his visit to Ferney in 1765 he had already tricked Voltaire into expressing admiration for some verse by Lefranc de Pompignan,<sup>91</sup> he now changed some lines in *Adélaïde du Guesclin* and in *Les Scythes* and, what is more, won Voltaire's approval.<sup>92</sup> It appears that he did not take criticism from Voltaire with such good humour.<sup>93</sup>

La Harpe's stay in Ferney also provided him with the opportunity for mild flirtation. While Madame de La Harpe was impressing Voltaire with her ability as an actress and with her outstanding integrity both as a woman and as a wife,<sup>94</sup> her husband became enamoured of a certain Madame Rilliet, who had

been separated from her husband and given shelter by Voltaire.<sup>95</sup> La Harpe sent her amorous notes to which she replied graciously.<sup>96</sup> His vanity was not confined to literature alone. Innocent enough, this incident reflects well his general weakness for gallantry, which must have exasperated his wife.

La Harpe left Ferney for Paris towards the end of October 1767.<sup>97</sup> It is difficult to say why he returned there at this time,<sup>98</sup> although he seems to have been very busy.<sup>99</sup> With the seal of approval from Voltaire, he was now a fully-fledged *philosophe*, and spent a great deal of time seeing d'Alembert, the go-between for all the various factions.<sup>100</sup> It has been suggested that through Voltaire's help, La Harpe began working as the private secretary of one of the finance administrators, Boutin, by January 1768, but it was a position that he was not to keep for very long.<sup>101</sup>

He returned to Ferney at the beginning of February after three months in Paris,<sup>102</sup> but he did not have a very welcome reception. During his absence, Voltaire had learned that someone had stolen some manuscripts from him, and he strongly suspected La Harpe of being the culprit. By the end of the month, the latter was back in Paris in disgrace.<sup>103</sup> He was accused of having stolen and distributed in Paris various works which Voltaire did not want published, notably the second canto of *La Guerre de Genève*,<sup>104</sup> which appeared there at the beginning of December 1767.<sup>105</sup> There is no doubt that La Harpe gave copies of the poem to d'Alembert, Rochefort, Dupuits, and an unidentified lady at the beginning of November;<sup>106</sup> it was Dupuits who informed Voltaire.<sup>107</sup>

However, when La Harpe returned to Ferney in February, he tried at first to make Voltaire believe that the poem had already been circulating in Paris before his arrival there, and that he had only distributed the poem himself 'parce qu'il en courait des copies infidèles'.<sup>108</sup> Voltaire then asked him how he came into possession of a perfect copy, especially as Dupuits had said that he had seen him leaving the library in Ferney with some papers.<sup>109</sup> For some time, La Harpe talked vaguely of having got a perfect copy from a friend whom he named — only after a week's hesitation — as the sculptor, Jean-Denis Antoine. Voltaire sent Damilaville to see Antoine and check on La Harpe's statement.<sup>110</sup> Antoine was furious and replied that on the contrary La Harpe had corrected his copy.

1 March seems to have been a day of crisis for Voltaire. He wrote letters throughout the day, gradually getting rid of his anger in words:

[La Harpe] ne m'a jamais parlé de cette affaire qu'en baissant les yeux, et son visage prenait un air de pâleur qui n'est pas celui de l'innocence. Son procès est instruit. Il s'en faut beaucoup que je l'aie condamné rigoureusement, je suis trop partisan de la proportion entre les délits et les peines, et je sais qu'il faut pardonner.<sup>111</sup>

The young man had particularly hurt Voltaire by refusing to confess correctly. Instead of admitting his crime to Voltaire's face, he merely sent him a note from his room.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, Voltaire did not think that he was alone in his

guilt. On 3 March, he sent the Dupuits and Madame Denis packing as well.<sup>113</sup> He was convinced that his niece was an accomplice if not the main inspiration behind the affair.<sup>114</sup>

By now, news of the matter had reached Paris, and an anonymous public accusation against La Harpe was published in the *Gazette d'Utrecht* on 18 March. Madame de La Harpe wrote to Voltaire, imploring him to speak out in her husband's defence.<sup>115</sup> Voltaire then wrote an open letter on 31 March for publication in various papers, and this seemed to clear La Harpe completely.<sup>116</sup> In his private letters, however, Voltaire continued to complain about him and felt that he deserved the trouble that he had brought upon himself 'par son infidélité et par cet orgueil mêlé d'impolitesse et de dureté qu'on lui reproche avec tant de raison'.<sup>117</sup>

La Harpe's own public reply to the *Gazette d'Utrecht* certainly made him sound impenitent and was, in any case, unconvincing, as he attempted to refute the imputation made against him with mere scorn.<sup>118</sup> Elsewhere, he tried to pass the affair off as an indiscretion rather than a serious fault.<sup>119</sup> In private, however, he was a little ashamed of what he had done, and d'Alembert, for one, never missed the chance of lecturing him on the subject.<sup>120</sup> La Harpe's greatest worry seems to have been the possible permanent loss of Voltaire's goodwill. During the following weeks, he was most anxious to have news of Voltaire,<sup>121</sup> and his solitary existence with a man whom La Harpe personally disliked, Father Adam.<sup>122</sup>

## CHAPTER III

# ADULTHOOD

La Harpe's anxiety over the matter of the manuscripts was not to endure. Voltaire was not going to abandon to destitution a young man so obviously in need of help, and whose talents could be so useful to his cause. By the end of May their quarrel was over,<sup>1</sup> and La Harpe was again writing to Voltaire for advice.<sup>2</sup> Again thanks to Voltaire, his financial situation had been improved with a state gratuity 'sur le fonds destiné aux gens de lettres',<sup>3</sup> and within a few months of returning to Paris he started his first regular job as an editor on the *Mercur de France*.<sup>4</sup> Apart from bringing in a steady income,<sup>5</sup> this meant that henceforth he was to be a key figure in the Voltairian cause.

Indeed, his work as a journalist rapidly made him an important figure on the Parisian scene. Soon, young men arriving in Paris or setting out on their literary careers sought his advice.<sup>6</sup> One such beginner was Saint-Ange, who managed to get an audience with La Harpe through Chabanon in 1771.<sup>7</sup> Somewhat intimidated by 'la morgue et la raideur' of the now-established critic,<sup>8</sup> he was overjoyed when his verse pleased La Harpe,<sup>9</sup> and the latter acquired a faithful disciple ready to defend him and his good name in times of stress.<sup>10</sup>

At times, La Harpe certainly needed defending. Journalism was — more than ever before — at the centre of literary polemics. His enemies were delighted when one of those whom he had criticized,<sup>11</sup> Blin de Sainmore, retaliated physically. Waiting until he was on his way to a bright gathering, 'bien poudré et paré de son habit de velours noir, sa veste dorée et ses manchettes de filet brodé', Blin de Sainmore attacked him and rolled him in the gutter.<sup>12</sup> For many — especially those whom he had criticized — his belief in his own powers badly needed to be thus disturbed. Many found him distinctly unpleasant, and according to these: 'C'était alors un petit personnage rogue et arrogant, qui, jusque dans la rue, se donnait des airs de monseigneur échappé d'un ministère, parce qu'il sortait du *Mercur*, singe manqué de Voltaire'.<sup>13</sup>

In society, too, even the impartial observer was struck by La Harpe's pride and, above all, by his desire for popularity, especially among women.<sup>14</sup> His enemies insisted on his shallowness and love of intrigue:

rempli de confiance et d'orgueil, [il] parlait avec assurance, écoutait avec distraction; il avait la tête vive et le cœur froid. Ses idées, souvent brillantes, manquaient presque toujours de justesse et de solidité; n'ayant nulle sensibilité, aucune élévation dans l'âme, également incapable de réfléchir



et de méditer, il ne regardait l'héroïsme, en tout genre, que comme l'effet d'un calcul intéressé, ou comme le fruit d'une folie plus faite pour exciter la pitié d'un *philosophe*, que pour mériter son admiration. Quoiqu'il eût un amour-propre excessif, sa société n'était pas dépourvue d'agréments; il avait une souplesse extrême, et savait prendre sans peine mille formes différentes. Sans principes, et sans caractère, il changeait facilement d'opinion; son excessive légèreté le préservait de l'entêtement qu'inspire ordinairement l'orgueil. Inconséquent autant qu'indiscret, ces défauts donnaient souvent à ses discours et à sa conduite une apparence piquante de franchise et d'originalité. Enfin, on pouvait prendre en lui, pour de la gaieté, une certaine malignité naturelle qui ne se manifestait jamais que sous les traits de la plaisanterie.<sup>15</sup>

This picture must, however, be compared with the views of La Harpe's friends. Madame Suard, for instance, always kept affectionate memories of the man. While expressing her dislike for Chamfort, she was to say:

M. de La Harpe, au contraire, sentait et aimait le mérite, même de ceux qui surpassaient ses talents, pourvu que les hommes qui avaient cet avantage ne fussent pas injustes envers lui. Malgré l'amour-propre qu'on lui reprochait et dont son injuste sévérité lui laissait quelquefois trahir les mouvements, je n'ai point connu d'auteur plus docile à la critique. Il écoutait tous les bons juges et réformait ou corrigeait tout ce qu'on désapprouvait.<sup>16</sup>

Garat, too, was struck by the contrast between La Harpe's gentleness in society and his severity as a critic.<sup>17</sup>

Among his friends, he found a haven from the polemics of journalism and soon built up a routine that was to remain basically unaltered for nearly ten years. Often, sometimes as much as three times a week, after the end of the evening performances at the theatre or the opera, he would have dinner at the house of Monsieur and Madame Saurin, where he would read his verse and allow it to be criticized.<sup>18</sup> Twice a week, he would call on Monsieur and Madame Suard,<sup>19</sup> and gossip had it that for the mistress of the house he was more than a friend.<sup>20</sup> Close acquaintances were Marin,<sup>21</sup> Rouillé de l'Etang,<sup>22</sup> Schomberg<sup>23</sup> and the Elie de Beaumonts<sup>24</sup> to name only a few. He was proud to know Turgot as well as Necker.<sup>25</sup> He was a friend of the noted barrister, Target.<sup>26</sup> He was to owe a great deal in these years to the devotion of Condorcet.<sup>27</sup> He knew Voisenon,<sup>28</sup> and he renewed acquaintance with a man who appears to have been a fellow protégé of Father Léger and who was to be a faithful companion in later years, the Abbé Bourlet de Vauxcelles.<sup>29</sup>

Along with the Abbé Delille and Condorcet, La Harpe dined with Turgot's secretary, Jean Devaines, on Tuesday evenings.<sup>30</sup> On the first Sunday of every month, he used to join his friends at the house of the Abbé Morellet.<sup>31</sup> It was not long before he was admitted to the highest society. In the company of Boufflers, Delille, Rulhière, Saint-Lambert, Chamfort, Marmontel, Raynal and others he would call on the future French Ambassador in Turkey, Choiseul-Gouffier.<sup>32</sup> He was a frequent guest of the Duc de Choiseul<sup>33</sup> and of the Duchesse

de Grammont.<sup>34</sup> On occasions, he met the Prince de Conti in the home of the Comtesse de Boufflers in the Temple.<sup>35</sup> At any glittering reunion, he was almost certain to be present. Carrying on with his love for acting, he took part in a great deal of amateur dramatics, either at the house of Madame de Cassini in the presence of the Prince de Condé,<sup>36</sup> or at that of the Demoiselles Verrières, who were renowned for their private stage.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the social round in Paris was accompanied by frequent excursions to the countryside, to see Watelet in his Moulin-Joli, Saint-Lambert in Eaubonne, or the Neckers at Saint-Ouen.<sup>38</sup> There, while Mlle. Clairon recited passages from famous tragedies over the dinner-table, La Harpe and Marmontel would read accompanying rôles.<sup>39</sup> Visiting the Maréchale de Luxembourg at L'Isle-Adam, La Harpe would walk with her as she held his arm.<sup>40</sup> Observing a habit that he had developed while still at school,<sup>41</sup> he made a point of spending at least part of every summer in the country.<sup>42</sup> Admittedly, this contact with nature was often reduced to the pleasures of a 'bal de village' or a fête in the grounds of some fine country house,<sup>43</sup> but in his old age he still remembered, for instance, the impression made on him in his youth by the countryside around Yerres, near Corbeil.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, however interesting or brilliant this social round might be, he could not afford to neglect financial questions, the more so as he no longer enjoyed the advantages of living at Ferney. He began again to take part in literary competitions, but, at first, met with failure. His first entry, *Le Philosophe ou sur les Avantages de la Philosophie*,<sup>45</sup> was only given an honourable mention from the Académie française in 1768, although it appears that this was due to his bragging about winning the prize before it was officially announced.<sup>46</sup> D'Alembert, among others, wanted the prize to be held over until the following year,<sup>47</sup> but to the anger of, notably, Chamfort,<sup>48</sup> the *philosophes* were beaten and the rival faction in the academy got the prize awarded to the young Abbé de Langeac. Said to be highly confident of winning,<sup>49</sup> he fared even less well with an *Eloge de Henri IV*<sup>50</sup> which he then sent to the Académie de La Rochelle. The prize was given to Gaillard, and La Harpe got nothing, although the academy was sorry that it had not provided for an *accessit*, which would certainly have been given to him.<sup>51</sup>

The following year was for La Harpe largely a time of preparation. In April, he began a translation of Suetonius,<sup>52</sup> but was quick to shelve it.<sup>53</sup> In May and June, he went to stay in various country houses and in Meudon<sup>54</sup> and worked on his first *drame*, *Mélanie*.<sup>55</sup> In September, he accompanied a troupe of actors led by d'Argental to Ris-Orangis and, among other parts, played Cézène in Voltaire's *Les Guèbres*.<sup>56</sup> Apart from beginning an abortive *Eloge de Molière* for the Académie française,<sup>57</sup> he entered only one competition that year. In June, he won a gold amarant from the Académie des Jeux Floraux in Toulouse for a poem called *Le Portrait du Sage*.<sup>58</sup>

Towards the end of 1769, La Harpe finished *Mélanie*, but the subject, in which a young novice hangs herself rather than take her vows, was hardly one to please the authorities. The only way round was to get the play known in society, and so its author started giving readings during February and March 1770.<sup>69</sup> These enjoyed an immense success, and, for six weeks, the work was the 'engouement de Paris'.<sup>60</sup> La Harpe read *Mélanie* so often that in the end he knew it by heart.<sup>61</sup> When it was read at the house of the Duchesse de Grammont in the middle of February, one of those present was the Duc de Choiseul, who was to gratify the author with a present of 3,000 *livres* when the latter complained that he could not get his play printed.<sup>62</sup> With such ministerial protection, he could now risk publishing the work, and, according to Grimm, received 4,000 *livres* from the edition in under a fortnight.<sup>63</sup>

Choiseul's patronage did not stop with the play. He suggested that La Harpe return to his translation of Suetonius, and promised him government support.<sup>64</sup> The work was finished by June.<sup>65</sup> La Harpe's many activities, however, did not give him time to take up Panckoucke's offer of employment on preparation, under Marmontel, of the supplement to the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>66</sup> In any case, at heart, he was more interested in works of imagination which could be used to pave the way to the Académie française.<sup>67</sup> Inspired by the success of *Mélanie*, he wrote another *drame*, *Barneveldt*,<sup>68</sup> which he had finished by the end of the year. He read it in the *salon* of Mlle. de Lespinasse on 12 December 1770.<sup>69</sup> By the end of January 1771, he had begun work on a so-called translation from Sophocles — *Philoctète*<sup>70</sup> —, although he soon went back to *Les Barmécides* and had practically finished the latter by September.<sup>71</sup>

His academic ambitions were, nevertheless, to receive a number of setbacks. Already in October 1770, following the death of Moncrif, he was fairly confident of election, since he had powerful allies in Thomas, d'Alembert and Duclos.<sup>72</sup> These hopes were, however, soon dashed, as once again he was accused of being the author of some anonymous verse, some mysterious lines against the Maréchal de Richelieu which had begun to circulate in Paris.<sup>73</sup> La Harpe was said to have written them to please d'Alembert, and, not for the first time, the Academy was split in two.<sup>74</sup> Séguier and the Maréchal de Richelieu said publicly that if ever La Harpe were elected, they would resign.<sup>75</sup> By 12 December, it was obvious that he must abandon all hope.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, he was again the cause of discord in the Academy only a few months later. In August 1771, he carried off both the poetry prize and the prize for oratory with a poem called *Des Talents dans leur rapport avec la société et le bonheur*<sup>77</sup> and with an *Eloge de Fénelon*.<sup>78</sup> His triumph with the latter work, however, soon turned sour. Objecting to his interpretation of Fénelon as a kind of early *philosophe*, the clergy demanded that the work be suppressed, and on 21 September La Harpe's work and that of the runner-up, the Abbé Maury, were both banned.<sup>79</sup> Not only were all the unsold copies of the *Eloge de Fénelon*

withdrawn, but La Harpe himself had to submit to interrogation and revision of the text by three theologians from the Sorbonne. At first, he spoke of refusing to comply,<sup>80</sup> but his better judgement soon made him realize that enough harm had already been done.<sup>81</sup> The ill-wind between the two rival factions in the Academy had become even more fiercely inflamed<sup>82</sup> and there was now even less hope of getting him elected to a vacant seat.<sup>83</sup>

His final misfortune in 1771 was illness. The three weeks that he had to spend in bed, not only left him feeling rather weak, but delayed his completion of *Les Barmécides*.<sup>84</sup> This he nevertheless managed to finish by the middle of February 1772.<sup>85</sup> His social life was to be particularly active in the following months, and he wrote much of his lighter verse at this time.<sup>86</sup> The year was marked by a momentary reconciliation with Dorat, brought about by Madame de Cassini, who made the enemies embrace.<sup>87</sup>

His desire to participate in the joys of Parisian life meant, however, that his financial situation was as precarious as ever. In the middle of 1772, he had the added expense of moving house,<sup>88</sup> and the frivolities of society and gallant verse did not supplement an income that was adequate only for a man of moderate taste. It was perhaps in order to make some more money that he agreed to work for a *Galerie universelle*, containing portraits of various famous men, accompanied by short biographical notes.<sup>89</sup> It was probably for the same reason that he published an *Eloge de Racine* that had been intended for a competition organized by the Académie de Marseille.<sup>90</sup> He also took on some more hack work in the autumn of the following year, when d'Alembert entrusted him and Lacombe<sup>91</sup> with the manuscript of letters from Madame de Sévigné to the président Moulceau.<sup>92</sup> As before, Voltaire was also there to try and help. Although his efforts came to nothing, when Frederick the Great's correspondent in Paris, Thieriot, died in October 1772, Voltaire proposed La Harpe as his successor.<sup>93</sup> As late as December 1773, we find Voltaire appealing to d'Argental for financial help for La Harpe.<sup>94</sup>

His financial situation was not helped by his failure to get *Les Barmécides* performed. When he presented it to the Comédie française on 26 February 1773, the list of plays waiting to be performed was already long.<sup>95</sup> Seeing that there was little chance of having the work staged in the immediate future, he began another series of readings, although he attempted to limit these to circles of friends or people of influence.<sup>96</sup> On 20 January 1773, he read four acts of the tragedy to Thomas.<sup>97</sup> In the middle of the same month, he read three acts at the house of the Maréchale de Luxembourg and he read the whole work there on 28 February.<sup>98</sup> By June, he was reading it to personages such as Madame du Barry.<sup>99</sup>

The year was, however, to hold promise of better things to come. At the beginning of August, he learned that he had won a further prize from the Académie française with an *Ode sur la Navigation*.<sup>100</sup> His enemies had wanted

the prize to be withheld, but the Voltairians in the Academy now enjoyed greater influence than before and had their way.<sup>101</sup> With this support, La Harpe's position as the *dauphin* of literature now seemed once more assured. The *Mercure de France* had become a depository of praise for him from both the great and small;<sup>102</sup> even his unsuccessful rival for the poetry prize that year, André-Murville, dedicated his work to the victor.<sup>103</sup>

Then, at last, Voltaire succeeded in getting material help for his disciple. Through Andrei Shuvalov, chamberlain to Catherine the Great, he obtained for La Harpe the post of correspondent in Paris for the heir to the Russian throne, Paul.<sup>104</sup> La Harpe had started to send letters by the end of February 1774, and this new appointment brought with it a very welcome increase in income.<sup>105</sup>

It was, indeed, a time for optimism. On 10 May 1774, Louis XV died and with the new reign the whole of France found fresh hope. Turgot was expected to solve her financial problems. Louis XVI was young and his queen beautiful and attentive to the arts. La Harpe was among the many to celebrate. He praised the new king's liberality;<sup>106</sup> he worshipped the queen's beauty and grace.<sup>107</sup> From now on, he was admitted to court.

In his literary activities, he was not quite so fortunate. He sent to the Académie de Marseille an *Eloge de La Fontaine*<sup>108</sup> which his friends were convinced was bound to win the prize. It was probably in order to help La Harpe that Shuvalov added 2,000 *livres* to the prize money.<sup>109</sup> To the former's dismay, it all went to Chamfort. He also failed to win the poetry prize at the Académie française with a poem entitled *Conseils à un jeune poète*.<sup>110</sup> However, his friends in the Academy were now powerful enough to have the prize withheld until the following year.<sup>111</sup> With such allies on his side, these disappointments were now minor setbacks rather than failures of importance.

In the same way, his inability to get *Les Barmécides* produced did not stop him writing plays. He had begun the year by helping to correct Voltaire's *Sophonisbe*,<sup>112</sup> but he was soon working on a new production of his own, *Les Brame*s.<sup>113</sup> Escaping from the bustle of town life, he was probably working on this when he spent the summer of 1774 in a cottage in the grounds of the château de Montgeron on the edge of the forest of Sénart.<sup>114</sup> By the end of the year, he had written enough of the play to read it to d'Alembert and Condorcet.<sup>115</sup> His new post as literary correspondent of Paul of Russia then led him to begin a play on a Russian theme — *Menzicoff ou les Exilés*.<sup>116</sup> This work was ready by March 1775.<sup>117</sup> On 14 March he read it at the house of the Neckers,<sup>118</sup> and on 22 he read it to the queen.<sup>119</sup> It was on her command that he sent it to the Comédie française on 1 July for inclusion in the list of plays for the season at Fontainebleau that autumn.<sup>120</sup> It was performed there on 10 November, but was not given a run in Paris, both because of the long list of plays still waiting to be performed and because the Russian ambassador feared that it would displease Catherine and her *entourage* in Saint Petersburg.<sup>121</sup>

However frustrating this might be, La Harpe was by now in an even better financial situation. Thanks to his favour at court, at the beginning of March 1775 he was given a royal pension of 1,000 *livres* which was to last until the end of January 1779.<sup>122</sup> In addition, on 6 April 1775, he signed a contract with Panckoucke to edit and revise the Abbé Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*.<sup>123</sup> He was to be paid 20,000 *livres* for this work.<sup>124</sup>

1775 was also to be a year of crowning glory at the Académie française. He won the prize for oratory with an *Eloge de Catinat*,<sup>125</sup> and thus earned the eternal enmity of his unsuccessful rival, the Comte de Guibert.<sup>126</sup> For the poetry contest, he shortened his *Conseils à un jeune poète*<sup>127</sup> and, with the never-failing help of d'Alembert,<sup>128</sup> won the first prize. In addition, he won the honourable mention with an *Épître au Tasse*.<sup>129</sup> He was beside himself for joy:

A toutes les proclamations réitérées du prix de vers, du prix de poésie, de l'*accessit*, des prix d'éloquence et de poésie remportés chacun pour la quatrième fois, et remportés deux fois ensemble; ce qui est sans exemple, le nom de l'auteur a été suivi des plus grands applaudissements; c'était une mauvaise journée pour mes ennemis, et notre ami commun de Ferney m'écrivit: *Fréron en mourra de rage, s'il ne meurt d'indigestion au cabaret*.<sup>130</sup>

The doors of the Academy now seemed wide open.

However, the *philosophes* and their protégé were not going to win so easily. In the August issue of the *Mercur*, La Harpe had reviewed Voltaire's *Diatribes à l'auteur des Ephémérides* and the question of the 'guerre des farines'.<sup>131</sup> On the demand of the clergy, both Voltaire's brochure and La Harpe's article were suppressed, first by a Conseil d'Etat on 19 August,<sup>132</sup> and then by the Parlement de Paris on 7 September.<sup>133</sup> Voltaire was furious that Turgot should not have used his influence to deflect this blow,<sup>134</sup> and a blow it was, as even the King was heard to say: 'ce n'est pas le moyen d'entrer à l'Académie'.<sup>135</sup>

La Harpe himself soon had other things to think about. On 23 December 1775, his father-in-law died and, apart from treating a bad cold at the beginning of February 1776,<sup>136</sup> when he fell a victim to the epidemic that was sweeping Paris,<sup>137</sup> La Harpe spent the next two or three months dealing with his wife's inheritance.<sup>138</sup>

While he was dealing with this matter, his friends still endeavoured to have him elected to the Académie française. They even approached personalities such as Malesherbes, hoping that they would intercede on La Harpe's behalf and win the consent of the King,<sup>139</sup> who was said to be still ill-disposed towards him following the suppression of his article.<sup>140</sup> Although these moves failed to get him elected to replace the Duc de Saint-Aignan, the man who was successful at that election, Colardeau, died before he could take his seat. A new election had to be held, and on 13 May 1776, with twenty-four members present, Jean-François de La Harpe became one of the *immortels*, by being elected to seat number thirty-six.<sup>141</sup> The King approved the choice two days later.<sup>142</sup>

La Harpe's reception took place on 20 June. Led in by Suard and the Abbé Arnaud, he gave the usual address in which he praised his predecessors, Voltaire and the masters of literature and society.<sup>143</sup> However, what the public wanted to hear was Marmontel's reply, and this was interpreted as an attack on La Harpe's overweening pride.<sup>144</sup> Having described the altogether gentler nature of Colardeau, Marmontel pointed out that La Harpe had been less reticent about his ambition and his hopes;<sup>145</sup> that in his work as a critic, one could have wished for more moderation.<sup>146</sup> Yet, the truth is that La Harpe's enemies read into this speech an intention that was not there, and when there was general applause at these remarks, La Harpe and Marmontel were equally embarrassed.<sup>147</sup> Marmontel had tried to be just and, if he touched on certain faults in La Harpe which no one could hide, it was to show that the Academy had not made its choice blindly.<sup>148</sup> These faults had won the new member so many enemies and made him the object of so much unjust criticism that his very real qualities were in danger of going unnoticed.<sup>149</sup> The Academy had not failed to appreciate his talents as a playwright,<sup>150</sup> as an orator and, above all, as a sincere defender of good taste, whose criticism was severe, but free from personal abuse.<sup>151</sup> If his reception was not a complete triumph, La Harpe had at least satisfied one of his dearest ambitions, and it must have been with pride in his heart that he accompanied Marmontel to Versailles on 23 of the month and presented his speech to the King and the Queen.<sup>152</sup>

The disturbances at his reception were due, not only to public dislike of the man, but also to the widely-held view that his election was a victory for the intrigues of the *philosophes* and not the result of real merit. The opposition was quick to react. Many were the attacks and epigrams against La Harpe at this time.<sup>153</sup> Among those to disapprove of his election was Linguet who did not mince his words when discussing the reception in the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* of which he had been editor and author since its foundation in 1774. He wondered why the really great writers never belonged to the institution and then explained this phenomenon by saying that they could not bow to the system:

C'est de la complaisance, c'est un noviciat qui les prépare à l'initiation. C'est la promesse d'un dévouement aveugle, le courage de se tenir fermement attachés aux *Maîtres* qui ont fait de cette partie du *Louvre*, une école où se prodigue leur doctrine, la soumission sans réserve aux Saints *Pierres* qui disposent de ce petit paradis.<sup>154</sup>

In other words, one was elected, not on one's worth, but according to one's allegiance to certain *salons*. These home truths were not appreciated by the authorities; Linguet was dismissed.<sup>155</sup>

The owner of the paper, Panckoucke, then offered the post of editor and author of the literary section to the indirect cause of Linguet's disgrace, La Harpe himself. The latter could not resist such a tempting offer<sup>156</sup> and, beginning

with the issue of 5 August 1776, the paper was his work.<sup>157</sup> When this was discovered, the public outcry against him was widespread. He was accused of growing rich on the 'dépouilles de M. Linguet'.<sup>158</sup> He went completely out of favour at court where Marie-Antoinette preached Linguet's cause.<sup>159</sup> The whole affair was seen as a plot to rob the latter of his job. Panckoucke was said to have wanted to get rid of him after quarrelling with him during a trip to Switzerland.<sup>160</sup> The paper lost money, and Panckoucke was reported to be regretting that he had taken on La Harpe whom he now wanted to replace by Marmontel and Suard.<sup>161</sup>

La Harpe's friends came to his support. There were contributions from d'Alembert<sup>162</sup> and Condorcet.<sup>163</sup> Voltaire himself regularly sent articles.<sup>164</sup> However, this did not stop the attacks. Condorcet wrote to Voltaire on La Harpe's behalf asking him for an open letter in the latter's defence.<sup>165</sup> Voltaire's reply<sup>166</sup> was hardly satisfactory as it also praised Chamfort, whose rivalry with La Harpe had by now destroyed their former friendship.<sup>167</sup> Where La Harpe's work for the *Mercur*e had been sporadic in nature and had led him to only occasional quarrels with his enemies, he now faced a never ending succession of squabbles. Probably indulging in overt wishful-thinking, the scandal-mongers liked to make out that he had his ears boxed by Rutledge;<sup>168</sup> that Dorat had drubbed him with a stick.<sup>169</sup> In the thick of such polemics, it was not long before he was drawn into an argument which was going to split the literary world in two — the quarrel over the rival merits of Gluck and Piccini.

While even the opponents of Gluck agreed that he had improved on his predecessors in the dramatic settings of his operas, they insisted that he was wrong to have replaced the rich songs of Italian opera with simple melodies which to them seemed more declamatory than musical.<sup>170</sup> La Harpe had privately expressed his disappointment with Gluck's *Alceste* as early as May 1776,<sup>171</sup> but was careful, at first, not to commit himself in public. In December 1776, he published the views of Gluck's critics without actually associating himself with them.<sup>172</sup> However, on 5 March 1777, when reviewing Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, he plunged into the quarrel on the side of Marmontel and the Piccinists and declared his faith in the Italian tradition.<sup>173</sup> Three days later, there came an anonymous reply in the new daily *Journal de Paris*.<sup>174</sup> It was to be the first of many similar letters, accusing La Harpe of ignorance on the subject. Three weeks later, battle was joined by Suard and the Abbé Arnaud who attacked him in the same paper, signing their letters the *Anonyme de Vaugirard*.<sup>175</sup>

In the meantime, La Harpe had other preoccupations. The Académie française now took much of his time, and the assiduous new member only missed two of the remaining thrice-weekly meetings of 1776.<sup>176</sup> The following year, he missed in all only nine meetings.<sup>177</sup> On 12 August 1776, he presented to the Academy his version of Luis de Camões' *Os Lusíadas*<sup>178</sup> and, at the prize-giving on 25 of



the month, he read the two prize-winning entries by Gruet and André-Murville.<sup>179</sup> When Joseph of Austria visited the Academy on 17 May 1777,<sup>180</sup> he read his translation of the first canto of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.<sup>181</sup> He read the same passage again at the prize-giving on 25 August 1777.<sup>182</sup>

Although in 1777 much of his time was taken up with journalism, he did manage to move house,<sup>183</sup> and spent most of September in the country with Marmontel and Grétry.<sup>184</sup> He was also preparing two different editions of his collected works and in this displayed considerable skill as a financial manipulator. As early as May 1775, he had started negotiations with J. F. Lex, the founder of the Société littéraire et typographique in Yverdon, whose unbusiness-like enthusiasm rather horrified his associates.<sup>185</sup> La Harpe sent him the corrected manuscripts of all his works at the beginning of February 1776,<sup>186</sup> and, having agreed with La Harpe not to publish his translation of Suetonius, Lex decided to bring out some of the works separately. In February 1776, he printed an edition of *Warwick*<sup>187</sup> and in June, at the same time as the edition published in Paris by Nyon, the translation of *Os Lusíadas*.<sup>188</sup> Lex's edition of this work sold well. However, La Harpe was not satisfied with the prospects of the collected works, although three volumes in octavo were ready by the beginning of November 1776.<sup>189</sup> Lex had to stop production at that time on learning from Paris that the author had arranged with the Parisian publisher, Pissot, to bring out an enlarged edition in six volumes octavo.<sup>190</sup> Whatever La Harpe's reasons for dissatisfaction with Lex, when it came to money, his aesthetics were replaced by hard sense. As Lex's friends had warned him: 'On dit assez haut à Paris que plusieurs gens de lettres sont passablement Juifs et Arabes'.<sup>191</sup>

In the months to come, La Harpe was to have more troubling preoccupations than mere sharp business practice, as 1778 was going to be for him — as for other Voltairians — a year of violent upheaval. On 10 February, Voltaire arrived in Paris — an event which, in La Harpe's view, was to be of significance for the whole of France.<sup>192</sup> On the following day, along with a deputation from the Académie française<sup>193</sup> and many other prominent figures in Parisian society, La Harpe went to visit him. Physically, he found him just as he had last seen him ten years before.<sup>194</sup> However, the adulation of the town, various visits and other crowded events soon tired Voltaire. On 25 February, he had a haemorrhage in the lung. The following day, the Academy learned of his illness and appointed Marmontel and La Harpe to go and enquire about his condition.<sup>195</sup> They reported back on 28, saying that Voltaire had been too ill to see them. A fresh deputation, made up of Saint-Lambert and La Harpe, was then sent on 2 March; it was agreed that this deputation should go regularly and report on Voltaire's health at every meeting.<sup>196</sup>

La Harpe was to be a constant caller until Voltaire's death.<sup>197</sup> Having already read his translation of the *Pharsalia*, he was said to have further tired the old man when he read him *Les Barmécides* on 1 March.<sup>198</sup> He was present when

Diderot called on Voltaire<sup>199</sup> and witnessed the latter's crying out for a confessor.<sup>200</sup> He even composed verse to ladies visiting the sick man in his bedroom.<sup>201</sup> When Voltaire was a little better and could once more venture out, he talked with him when he went to the Academy and attended his triumph at the Comédie française.<sup>202</sup> After a respite in April, Voltaire became ill again and, after taking an overdose of opium, became weaker from day to day. It was soon evident that he was dying. La Harpe remained faithfully in attendance up to the very end.<sup>203</sup>

At the same time, La Harpe did not neglect other interests. He was proof-reading his collected works<sup>204</sup> and carrying on an argument with the Comédie française. *Les Barmécides* — which he had read on 25 January at the house of Madame Le Coulteulx de Molay, the wife of a rich banker<sup>205</sup> — had now reached the top of the waiting-list at the theatre. It would have been performed in May, had Voltaire's *Irène* not been given pride of place to honour the old man's visit. To his dismay, La Harpe now saw that *Les Barmécides* would be performed in the middle of summer with Paris half-empty. He tried to arrange a postponement, but to no avail.<sup>206</sup>

The tragedy was staged on 11 July, during a heat-wave. It was not a great success, although it did manage to last for eleven performances.<sup>207</sup> The quarrel over Gluck and Piccini, rather than the merits or faults of the play, seemed to decide the attitude of the audience which was divided into two rival cliques.<sup>208</sup> Shuvalov, who was said to have given financial support to the production, was seen to be the most enthusiastic spectator.<sup>209</sup> Part of the failure of the play was attributed to the success of two satires, both called *La Complainte des Barmécides* — one a poem and the other a pantomime farce. The poem was first printed in the *Journal de Paris* on 17 July 1778<sup>210</sup> and was soon attributed to the actor, Boutet de Monvel,<sup>211</sup> who was supposed to be angry with La Harpe over a review by the latter of his *Amant Bourru*.<sup>212</sup> It was, however, then claimed by a certain Maurine,<sup>213</sup> and La Harpe publicly defended Monvel against the charge.<sup>214</sup> The play — by Arnould<sup>215</sup> — was staged at the Ambigu comique from 29 July to 7 November, where it was often performed as many as three times a day. The climax of this work consisted of the ceremonial burying of a harp — a pun that delighted the less subtly-minded members of café society.<sup>216</sup> To add force to the derision of the audience, there was even a craze for coloured rock with whistles on the end called 'des cannes à la Barmécide'.<sup>217</sup>

The success of this mockery owed much to the general unpopularity of La Harpe at this time. In June 1778, Panckouckè bought the privilege of the *Mercure de France* and combined the paper with the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*. La Harpe continued as literary editor and author<sup>218</sup> and it was in this capacity that he now committed one of the greatest of his sins or, at least, showed a lack of tact that was to bring out the whole of Paris against him. After the death of Voltaire, the police had imposed silence on the whole periodical

press, lest comments and literary post-mortems should lead to bitter arguments. It was La Harpe who broke this silence. In the second issue of the new *Mercure*, he strongly criticized the weakness in style and plot of Voltaire's *Zulime*, saying that it was a feeble imitation of an already imperfect play, *Bajazet*: 'C'est donc une terrible entreprise que de refaire une pièce de Racine, même quand Racine n'a pas très bien fait!'<sup>219</sup> The critic had got the better of the man. What he said was true enough, but it was misplaced coming so soon after Voltaire's death, and coming from a man who obviously owed Voltaire so much.

On 9 July, the Marquis de Villevieille replied ironically in an open letter addressed to Panckoucke and printed in the *Journal de Paris*:

Votre rédacteur, monsieur, n'a pas sans doute les mêmes raisons de regretter ce grand homme, il n'a pas été reçu avec la même bonté dans le château de Ferney, il n'y a point passé des années entières: M. de Voltaire lui est indifférent, et il ne doit rien à sa mémoire; mais du moins personne n'est dispensé d'être juste et votre rédacteur ne l'a point été.<sup>220</sup>

The shot went home, and for the first time after many a literary squabble, La Harpe was really hurt.<sup>221</sup> He replied publicly in the *Mercure* and the *Journal de Paris*.<sup>222</sup> He could not believe that his antagonist was a man whom he had met at Ferney, who had been a friend for over ten years, and with whom he had dined at the house of Madame de Villette two days after the publication of the fatal article.<sup>223</sup> He admitted that he had been imprudent, if not unjust, and denied any personal reason for attacking Voltaire.<sup>224</sup> Then, however, he made matters worse by comparing himself to Racine's noble and upright Hippolyte.<sup>225</sup>

Admirers of Voltaire, who had been the firmest of La Harpe's defenders in the past, already shocked by his having gone to the Opera on the day Voltaire died,<sup>226</sup> now joined in the chorus of detractors. Despite his protests of innocence, he was accused of having attacked Voltaire out of spite, because the latter had left him out of his will and had not appreciated *Les Barmécides* or his translation of Lucan;<sup>227</sup> because Voltaire was annoyed with him and others for having meddled with the manuscript of *Irène*.<sup>228</sup> The imagination of the scandal-mongers could find no end to the possibilities for such stories.

La Harpe now felt alone in Paris and was convinced that no man had had to suffer so much persecution from his enemies.<sup>229</sup> It was rumoured that his marriage was breaking up and that he was thinking of leaving the country.<sup>230</sup> Yet, such was his nature, he could not suffer these attacks in silence. When the *Journal de Paris* published a review of *Les Barmécides* which contained a parody of La Harpe's ill-fated article on *Zulime*, with the words 'c'est une terrible entreprise que de refaire une pièce de Corneille, surtout quand Corneille a très bien fait',<sup>231</sup> he wrote a rude letter to the editors of the paper, in which he said that the name of one of them, d'Ussieux, was only known 'au carcan'.<sup>232</sup> He only escaped criminal proceedings for libel and possible exclusion from the

Académie française by apologizing and insisting that his secretary had misread *carcan* for *caveau*.<sup>233</sup>

Moreover, his unpopularity was beginning to be reflected in the sales of the *Mercur*. As the time for renewing subscriptions drew near, it became obvious that many intended to stop taking the paper.<sup>234</sup> By 15 October, Panckoucke was already thinking of replacing La Harpe as main editor.<sup>235</sup> On 16, the latter brought matters to a head by writing to the *Courrier de l'Europe*<sup>236</sup> and complaining about an attack on him in that paper.<sup>237</sup> A more measured man would have let things be. His few remaining friends were in despair:

C'est une sottise inexcusable, mais il ne veut consulter personne, et s'il écrit une seule ligne contre ses ennemis, il est perdu sans ressource. Le déchaînement du public est tel, qu'il n'est plus permis à La Harpe d'avoir raison . . . on le bafouera, on lui crachera au visage, on le chassera de l'Académie et de Paris, s'il ne renonce pas absolument au pugilat qui lui a si mal réussi. Je ne lui connais plus à présent qu'un seul ennemi, c'est le public en corps qui se réunit en ce seul point, et qui ne veut ni écouter ses apologies ni lire ses ouvrages.<sup>238</sup>

At the beginning of November, he lost the editorship of the *Mercur*, was reduced to writing theatre reviews and occasional signed articles<sup>239</sup> and had his salary cut from 6,000 to 3,000 *livres*.<sup>240</sup> With Voltaire's support, he had risen to a position of authority, but the events following the death of his master had revealed that he could not yet stand alone.

## CHAPTER IV

# MATURITY

It was now essential for La Harpe to find his way back into the circle of Voltaire's admirers. Encouraged by continuing friendship and moral support from d'Alembert,<sup>1</sup> in September 1778, he asked Madame Vestris to give d'Argental a one-act play in Voltaire's honour, *Les Muses rivales*.<sup>2</sup> This d'Argental then sent to the Comédie française.<sup>3</sup> The writer showed wisdom in presenting his play in this round about way. Performed in February 1779, it was a minor success,<sup>4</sup> which the uncovering of the identity of the author in no way diminished.<sup>5</sup> La Harpe was back in the fold.

It was as if to destroy further any lingering doubts as to his fidelity to the Voltairian cause that in the summer of 1779 he took part in what was obviously a plot arranged by the Voltairians in the Academy to ensure that the competition for a poem in praise of their hero should be won by one of their number. There were sixty entries when the contest closed.<sup>6</sup> A dithyramb with an inscription from Ovid — *Nec quisquam Ajacem possit superare, nisi Ajax* —, read by La Harpe at one of the deliberating meetings,<sup>7</sup> had been chosen to be crowned, when, on 12 August, the Academy received a letter from d'Argental, written the previous day and in which it was stated that the author of the dithyramb wished to decline the prize as he did not care to reveal his identity.<sup>8</sup> Marmontel, Delille and a few other academicians who were not initiated into the secret, nevertheless suspected that the whole matter was a plot and insisted that the prize-money be adjudged to the winner of the honourable mention, André-Murville.<sup>9</sup> This was agreed unanimously.<sup>10</sup>

It was not long before La Harpe's name was associated with the mysterious dithyramb, although at first it was suggested that he had written the verse for Shuvalov, so that the latter could then claim the honour of the prize.<sup>11</sup> Shuvalov, however, then denied any connexion with the work,<sup>12</sup> and by the time of the crowning on 25 August all Paris knew that La Harpe was its real author.<sup>13</sup> This did not stop him reading the two prize-winning entries at the ceremony,<sup>14</sup> although his enemies found another line of attack, by suggesting that the whole poem had been lifted out of another entry by Guérineau de Saint-Peravi.<sup>15</sup> These attacks mattered little, and even the scandal provoked by the spectacle of an Academician entering a contest of which he was himself a judge had little effect on him. Within the Academy, the *philosophes* were all-powerful, and La Harpe had praised his master to the satisfaction of his friends.

Yet, despite his general return to favour in Voltairian circles, the polemics of 1778 and the music quarrel meant that henceforth he saw less of the Suard family,<sup>16</sup> had lost friends such as the Abbé Arnaud and now had to cultivate new ones. As always, he looked for them in the same rather fashionable sections of society. He continued to be a habitual member of the gatherings organized by the various branches of the La Live family, although he does not appear to have ever had any close connexion with Madame d'Épinay, and was on rather cool terms with Madame d'Houdetot, following a quarrel in 1777, when she accused him of publishing some of her verse without her permission.<sup>17</sup> He now chose to visit her sister-in-law, Madame de La Briche, in her château du Marais near Arpajon.<sup>18</sup> He knew other members of the family, such as the financier Joseph de La Borde<sup>19</sup> and the Marquis de Montesquiou-Fezensac.<sup>20</sup> He remained the friend of important noblemen such as the Comte de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem.<sup>21</sup> As before, both younger and older men of letters were pleased to be in his company. Through Madame de La Briche and her inseparable companion, Madame Damas d'Anligny,<sup>22</sup> he became a close friend of Florian, for whom he considered himself to be a kind of father-figure.<sup>23</sup> Even before the Revolution, he was on intimate terms with a man of whom he was going to see a great deal in his old age — Fontanes.<sup>24</sup> He was again on speaking terms — if not fully reconciled — with Dorat a short time before the latter's death, when he returned to him unopened some compromising manuscripts that had been stolen by a faithless secretary.<sup>25</sup> For a time, La Harpe was on good terms with Rivarol,<sup>26</sup> but this friendship did not last very long.<sup>27</sup> Other friends and acquaintances of note in these years were Tressan,<sup>28</sup> Sedaine,<sup>29</sup> Beaumarchais,<sup>30</sup> Boissy d'Anglas,<sup>31</sup> Ducis,<sup>32</sup> Parny,<sup>33</sup> and — continuing his links with the Comédie française following the death of Lekain — Madame Vestris.<sup>34</sup>

As vain as ever when it came to dealing with the fair sex, he shocked and delighted Parisian society in 1782, when he formed a liaison with a lady of easy virtue, a dancer called Cléophile, who was perhaps better known as the former mistress of the Comte d'Aranda.<sup>35</sup> Her beauty was not what it had been in former times. As a result of a venereal disease, she had lost part of her palate and talked through her nose.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, La Harpe was proud to be seen with her, walked with her in the streets, accompanied her to the theatre, and even had her sit among the guests of honour at the Académie française.<sup>37</sup>

He had by this time ended a stormy relationship with Madame de Genlis, which began in March 1779<sup>38</sup> and which soon developed, for La Harpe at least, into a passion in the grand manner.<sup>39</sup> If we can believe Madame de Genlis, whose own vanity was not slight, she was above all struck by the fatuity of the man and soon managed to cool his ardour.<sup>40</sup> They remained close friends, and La Harpe was a frequent visitor — first in her rooms at the Palais-Royal, and later at the couvent des Dames de Bellechasse — along with other men of letters such as Gaillard, Rulhière and the Abbé Bourlet de Vauxcelles.<sup>41</sup> He

accompanied her to Bercy<sup>42</sup> and dedicated verse to her.<sup>43</sup> As a devoted friend, he wrote flattering articles on her works.<sup>44</sup>

It was this last activity that was to be the indirect cause of the end of their friendship. Accustomed to complimentary articles from La Harpe, she expected him to review *Adèle et Théodore* when it appeared at the beginning of 1782.<sup>45</sup> He, however, soon showed himself to be unwilling to review a work which stirred up considerable controversy through its religious tone, and because it contained five or six satirical portraits of well-known personalities<sup>46</sup> such as Madame de Montessan, the Comtesse de Boufflers and other ladies of fashion.<sup>47</sup> He handed the review over to the Abbé Rémy and promised Madame de Genlis that she would be equally satisfied with the result.<sup>48</sup> The article was highly critical,<sup>49</sup> and she was furious. She saw the whole affair as a concerted attack by the *philosophes* and maintained that the real author was none other than d'Alembert.<sup>50</sup> Although she continued to see La Harpe, they were no longer friends. He was soon disgusted by the open way in which she solicited the Academy's *prix d'utilité*.<sup>51</sup> In 1784, she published a bitter attack on him in her *Veillées du Château*.<sup>52</sup>

His wish to avoid unnecessary controversy by not reviewing *Adèle et Théodore* reflected a general desire for a quieter existence that he had developed after his experiences in 1778. He had grown tired of the never-ending war between the *philosophes* and their opponents and especially of the polemics of journalism.<sup>53</sup> Already writing fewer articles than in previous years, he finally abandoned his position as a regular contributor to the *Mercur*e at the beginning of September 1779.<sup>54</sup> This was to give him greater freedom of movement, and in both 1779 and 1780 he left Paris at Easter as well as during the summer vacation.<sup>55</sup> He also journeyed further afield. In late September or early October 1779, he left for Lyons, where he was to stay for over two months.<sup>56</sup> The reasons for this journey are not altogether clear, although it was in part to cure himself of his unhappy passion for Madame de Genlis.<sup>57</sup> Rumour had it that it was in connexion with a projected publication of a life of — or rather a collection of anecdotes against — Linguet, organized by Panckoucke, under the patronage of d'Argental, Choiseul and Madame de Boufflers.<sup>58</sup>

In 1781, he again travelled quite far. At the end of June, he went away for six weeks when he accompanied Shuvalov to Montbéliard and stayed with the Duke of Würtemberg, Karl Eugen.<sup>59</sup> By this time, he had achieved the quieter life that he desired. He was a protagonist in fewer quarrels. He had almost begun to have a reputation for gentleness.<sup>60</sup> He appears to have been back in favour at court, for, if we can believe Madame Campan, it was he who was chosen to compose the compliments read by the *Dames de la Halle* when they went to Versailles after the birth of the Dauphin.<sup>61</sup>

Yet, despite his new mellowness, he could still fight to defend his interests. At the beginning of 1781, he had a quarrel with Panckoucke over some letters

which he had handed over for inclusion in the first posthumous edition of Voltaire's works.<sup>62</sup> La Harpe claimed that he had merely lent the letters in expectation of three copies of the works.<sup>63</sup> This Panckoucke denied, and he accused him of showing a lack of tact.<sup>64</sup>

These changes in La Harpe's habits were accompanied by parallel changes in his literary activities. Freed from the daily demands of journalism, he returned to editing the *Abrégé de l'histoire générale des voyages* which had not progressed very far since he signed the contract for it in 1775.<sup>65</sup> On 20 January 1780, he read part of an *Eloge de Voltaire* on which he had been working for some months. He managed to work in praise for the financial policies of Necker, and for this was widely applauded.<sup>66</sup> The next three months were probably taken up with proof-reading. Within the space of nineteen days, at the end of March and the beginning of April, he brought out his *Eloge de Voltaire*,<sup>67</sup> the first volumes of the *Abrégé de l'histoire générale des voyages*<sup>68</sup> and an oriental tale in four cantos called *Tangu et Félimé*.<sup>69</sup>

At the same time, he returned to work on his version of Sophocles' *Philoctète*. He had completed it by 21 May 1780, when he wrote to the Comédie française and asked for a reading.<sup>70</sup> He read the work at the house of Madame du Deffand on 7 July.<sup>71</sup> On 25 August, he read the first two acts at the prize-giving of the Académie française, and they were well received.<sup>72</sup> However, as the result of an argument with Molé who considered the rôle of Pyrrhus to be unworthy of his *emploi*,<sup>73</sup> and because in any case La Harpe preferred to wait for the completion of a new theatre with a seated and thus more attentive audience,<sup>74</sup> the play was not performed immediately, and in 1781 he published it<sup>75</sup> together with *Menzicoff*.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, while it is true that he again failed to get *Philoctète* staged later that year,<sup>77</sup> this and another five plays by him were performed during the next six years. The Comédie française was now beginning to clear its back-log of waiting plays, and writers could expect reasonably early performances for their works. Although La Harpe continued to write verse, and in 1781 even started on large-scale poem in praise of women,<sup>78</sup> he now returned to the theatre with joy. On 13 August 1781, he sent to the actors *Les Brame*,<sup>79</sup> which, according to some, had by now been thoroughly re-written since its initial conception in 1774.<sup>80</sup> It reached the top of the waiting list within six weeks.<sup>81</sup> However, on 24 September, the author was told that Brizard — on whom he was counting for an important rôle in the play — was not available, and he therefore sent a new work, *Jeanne de Naples*.<sup>82</sup> He read it to the actors on 1 October,<sup>83</sup> and they prepared for a lavish production, in which the costume of the queen alone was said to have cost 1,500 *livres*.<sup>84</sup>

This production was, however, to run into trouble. For a start, La Harpe was not satisfied with one of the actors, Grammont de Roselly, and wanted to have him replaced.<sup>85</sup> On 27 November, Larive, who had an important part in the play,



cut his hand during rehearsals.<sup>86</sup> In addition, the subject of the tragedy in which a queen is seen to be an accomplice to murder was disapproved of by various authorities.<sup>87</sup> On 10 December, permission to stage the work was withdrawn,<sup>88</sup> and it was only after two visits to Versailles that its author managed to get this ban lifted.<sup>89</sup> Even after the first performance on 12 December, the troubles were not over. The fifth performance, promised for 26 December, had to be held back until 3 January 1782, because of the illness of Madame Vestris.<sup>90</sup> Then the actors announced their intention of performing the work on the slack days of the week, and in disgust La Harpe withdrew it on 15 January.<sup>91</sup> This was to be the cause of the first of several serious quarrels between him and the Comédie française.<sup>92</sup>

At the same time, he was among the first to appreciate the importance of various changes made during this period within this institution. On 9 April 1782, the new Théâtre du Faubourg Saint-Germain was finally opened, and for the first time the whole of the audience was seated. This reform was welcomed by La Harpe, who for a long time had been among the fiercest critics of the old theatre and its noisy groundlings.<sup>93</sup> He could now once more seriously consider having *Philoctète* performed and readings of the play were again arranged in June 1782.<sup>94</sup> To celebrate the opening of the new theatre, he wrote a one-act comedy entitled *Molière à la nouvelle salle*<sup>95</sup> and sent it to the actors anonymously. Apparently, he had been asked to produce this work by the governing body of the Comédie française,<sup>96</sup> and he was slightly irritated when it was not chosen for the inauguration.<sup>97</sup> At least, he was satisfied with the play's fair reception when it was performed four days later on 12 April.<sup>98</sup>

In May 1782, his assiduousness as correspondent for the Russian Crown Prince was rewarded when Paul and his wife arrived in Paris. The day they arrived, the Russian ambassador invited La Harpe to meet them, and he talked with Paul for an hour.<sup>99</sup> He was to call on the Prince practically every day.<sup>100</sup> Together with d'Alembert, he was invited to dinner.<sup>101</sup> His marks of attention to the Prince during the latter's visit were to be rewarded by the gift of a diamond-studded snuff-box valued at 6,000 *livres*.<sup>102</sup> On 27 May, Paul and his wife went to the Académie française, and there La Harpe read a poem composed in their honour,<sup>103</sup> and an *épître* on descriptive poetry, written during his stay in Lyons in 1779.<sup>104</sup> The assembly was amused by the somewhat comic repetition of the word *Petrowitz* in the poem addressed to Paul, and La Harpe later cut this out when he printed the work. It was embarrassed by his attack on German poetry in the *épître*, since Paul's wife was a princess of Württemberg.<sup>105</sup> Nor was he thoroughly successful in his other attempts to please his patron. He wanted to have a performance of *Warwick* put on in Paul's honour,<sup>106</sup> but it was given on 24 June, five days after Paul's departure, and his hopes of having a fresh run for *Jeanne de Naples*<sup>107</sup> — due to begin on 8 June<sup>108</sup> — were dashed, when the play was stopped by a new ban by the authorities who still thought that the work was open to dangerous interpretation.<sup>109</sup>

Yet, despite these difficulties, he was by now a man of considerable influence. He was an important member of the Académie française, and it was said to be because of this that Suard, acting as censor, refused to allow a parody of *Jeanne de Naples*, called *Jeannette*, to be performed at the Comédie italienne.<sup>110</sup> La Harpe's friends failed to stop the staging of Cailhava's *Les Journalistes anglais*<sup>111</sup> — a play in which he was very prominently attacked — but the censor who had allowed this performance, de Sancy, then found himself in trouble with the authorities.<sup>112</sup>

Within the Académie française, La Harpe continued to be active, although in January 1782, he annoyed d'Alembert and other colleagues by siding with Buffon and voting for Bailly rather than Condorcet, when the latter was successfully elected by only one vote.<sup>113</sup> La Harpe was no longer a close friend of Condorcet and, in any case, he felt that the latter's talents were better suited to the Académie des Sciences.<sup>114</sup> In both 1781 and 1782, La Harpe was elected for three-monthly terms as an officer of the Académie française.<sup>115</sup> As chancellor in 1781, he annoyed Garat, who had won the first prize for oratory, by putting greater feeling into his reading of Lacretelle's *Eloge de Montausier* that had won the *accessit*.<sup>116</sup> As director in 1782, he gave a speech at the prize-giving on the purpose of the institution as a 'barrière contre le mauvais goût'.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, in this and following years, he came to be regarded more and more as one of the Academy's most ardent purists, whose main interest in the Academy was a defence of the French language and fine style.<sup>118</sup> It was as a purist that he later opposed the awarding of a prize to Roucher,<sup>119</sup> and, although he was to claim that he had helped Sedaine to become a member in 1786,<sup>120</sup> it was widely known that the latter had been unsuccessful in previous years largely because of La Harpe<sup>121</sup> who considered his style to be unworthy of that of an Academician.<sup>122</sup> Those who wanted to become members of this body soon knew how important it was to have him on their side.<sup>123</sup>

For some, his power within this institution seemed an unhealthy one. When Pierre Chabrit committed suicide in 1785 after failing to win a prize at the Académie française, he was said to have lost it because of the influence of La Harpe.<sup>124</sup> This influence did not, however, destroy in the latter a sometimes almost pathological feeling of persecution. When a former friend, the Abbé Maury, presented himself for election to the Academy on 16 December 1784, La Harpe — although unwell — dragged himself out of bed and went and voted for Maury's unsuccessful rival, Target.<sup>125</sup> He was convinced that Maury had encouraged Shuvalov to write a satire against him during the Russian's stay in Paris. To settle the matter, the new secretary of the Academy, Marmontel, invited Maury and La Harpe to dinner, along with Thomas and Gaillard, who were to act as judges. Point by point, Maury disproved La Harpe's accusation, and the latter was forced to make a somewhat ungracious show of apologizing.<sup>126</sup> At the age of forty-five, he could still behave with quite childish peevishness.

Moreover, after the relative calm and freedom from argument in the early 1780s, in the following years he quarrelled more and more frequently with the actors, even if at first he still showed himself to be reluctant to do so. In May 1783, *Jeanne de Naples* had three more performances, and again the production could scarcely be said to have gone off smoothly. The second performance was held up by the illness of an actor and, although a fourth performance had been promised, it had to be called off because of the pregnancy of an actress.<sup>127</sup> In June, *Philoctète* was finally staged, even if held back for a week through illness. Performed, the play had as much success as when it was printed.<sup>128</sup> It was to be the first work since *Warwick* to win a regular place in the repertory of the Comédie française. However, the first run took place during a heat-wave,<sup>129</sup> with the result that the takings fell away sharply.<sup>130</sup> The actors were thus able to claim the work as their property. The author did not complain at the time, but he was to remember this as merely one of many examples of ill-treatment received from them.<sup>131</sup>

He may have preferred to say nothing because he was working on another play. He spent most of the autumn of 1783 preparing *Les Brames* for the Comédie française. He had wanted the play to be included in the programme for Fontainebleau and was furious to learn that the actors had placed Marmon-  
tel's *Numitor*<sup>132</sup> before it on the waiting-list.<sup>133</sup> He realized that his chances of seeing his tragedy performed at Fontainebleau were extremely slight, especially since he had already allowed Ducis' *Macbeth*<sup>134</sup> to take precedence over his own work.<sup>135</sup> His hopes were raised when he was told that because of the illness of Larive, *Macbeth* could not be included,<sup>136</sup> but they faded again when it became obvious that Brizard, who had an important rôle in his own play, was not in the best of health either.<sup>137</sup> *Les Brames* was not ready before the end of the court's stay in Fontainebleau and the first performance was finally given on 4 December at Versailles. It was performed in Paris on 15, and was not a success. The takings at the second performance on 17 December came to less than half those at the first.<sup>138</sup> A third performance had been promised for Monday 22 December, but, seeing that the play was in danger of becoming the property of the actors, La Harpe withdrew it on 18.<sup>139</sup> He attributed this failure to Brizard's illness and resultant weakness.<sup>140</sup>

Another reason for discontent, in his opinion, was the influence on public opinion of daily and twice-weekly papers such as the *Journal de Paris* and the *Petites Affiches*. Earlier in the year, he had had an argument with the *Journal de Paris* over its review of *Philoctète*<sup>141</sup> and, along with Ducis, Marmontel and others, he now sent a petition to the Maréchal de Duras on 22 December 1783, in which he demanded that the *Journal de Paris* and the *Petites Affiches* be forbidden to bring out reviews until the public should have time to go and see each new work for itself.<sup>142</sup> The *Journal de Paris* did not take long to reply; with a satire in which La Harpe was likened to a king elephant, it nipped this project

in the bud.<sup>143</sup> Although by now a writer of importance, he was not the master of the literary world.<sup>144</sup>

At this time, he had yet another play on the waiting-list, a new tragedy called *Coriolan*.<sup>145</sup> With the recovery of Larive, it was now possible to go ahead with Ducis' *Macbeth* on 12 January 1784, but La Harpe, who wanted his play to be performed in the middle of February,<sup>146</sup> soon realized that — since at the Comédie française it was customary for a comedy to follow a tragedy — *Coriolan* was not likely to be staged before the spring recess.<sup>147</sup> When the Comédie française decided to organize a benefit performance on behalf of the poor, suffering from the particularly long hard winter, and asked if any author were willing to allow his work to be used for this purpose, La Harpe grasped at the opportunity of thus jumping the queue. Beaumarchais, too, had wanted to do the same for his *Mariage de Figaro*, but by the time he contacted the actors, La Harpe had already agreed to abandon his rights for the charity performance, and preparations for *Coriolan* were under way.<sup>148</sup> This first performance on 3 March 1784 saw the whole of fashionable Paris at the theatre. The musicians had their benches removed, and there were members of the audience standing in the wings and even at the back of the stage.<sup>149</sup> The author was even forced to appear on the stage at the end of the performance, something that he had not done since the performance of his first play in 1763.<sup>150</sup> The success of *Coriolan* continued in the following performances,<sup>151</sup> and the writer was fêted as a model of charity.<sup>152</sup>

However, his generosity had its limits when it came to dealing with the actors. When they refused to pay his royalties on some of the performances, on the grounds that they were covered by a rule that excluded payment for performances taking place during the last week before and the first week after the spring recess,<sup>153</sup> he went to see the celebrated lawyer, Gerbier, who had mediated in many quarrels between the actors and the authors. He induced him to write a stern letter to the Comédie française.<sup>154</sup> This letter had the desired effect, but from now on, relations between La Harpe and the actors were always strained.

These difficulties, however, were nothing when compared to a more general misfortune that had begun to afflict him. He was now troubled by the ill-health that was to remain with him for the rest of his life. His health appears to have first broken down during the latter part of 1782.<sup>155</sup> In 1783, he tried to escape from the dangers of an unhealthy summer in Paris, by staying with the La Borde family at La Ferté-Vidame,<sup>156</sup> but in spite of all his precautions he was in bed there with a fever for three weeks.<sup>157</sup> The following year, together with most of fashionable society, he tried the cures extolled by the exponents of animal magnetism, but a week at the baths of Mesmer's disciple, Deslon, was enough to convince him that the whole thing was a hoax.<sup>158</sup> For the last three months of 1784, he was kept at home with a skin complaint<sup>159</sup> which scandal was quick to

attribute to syphilis,<sup>160</sup> especially when he turned up at Target's reception to the Academy in March 1785, his face covered with pustules.<sup>161</sup> Although he was able to lead a slightly more active life in 1785, he still did not feel very sure of his health.<sup>162</sup> It was a hard blow for a man who was known to be fond of the pleasures of life, especially of those of the table.<sup>163</sup>

His illness also restricted his activities as a member of the Académie française. He was again elected director in the spring of 1783,<sup>164</sup> but was not active during his term of office.<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, in February 1784, he was chosen to compose the Academy's condolences to the Marquis de Chastellux on the death of his brother<sup>166</sup> and, on 15 June 1784, he celebrated the visit of the King of Sweden, by reading the second canto of his poem on women, *Les Talents des Femmes*.<sup>167</sup> When he came to the passage on Madame Vigée Le Brun, he turned to where she was sitting in the audience, and everyone, including the Duc de Chartres and the King of Sweden, rose to look at her.<sup>168</sup> However, not all the poem was so well received. To begin with, the audience was surprised to find La Harpe reciting praise for Madame de Genlis, now that everyone knew them to be sworn enemies.<sup>169</sup> Then, the listeners were slightly embarrassed by the political implications of some of the lines. Probably in order to please his patron, Paul of Russia, La Harpe had included praise of Catherine and of her policies. He showed how Russia ruled the Baltic and at the same time how she crushed the Turks, those 'tyrans dégénérés'.<sup>170</sup> It was felt that it was hardly tactful to read such lines before a rival northern monarch, or even before another prominent person present, the Marquis de Choiseul-Gouffier, the newly-appointed French ambassador in Turkey.<sup>171</sup> Throughout his career, La Harpe seems to have remained blissfully unaware of the dangers of giving offence.

His blind vanity, however, never seriously impeded his undoubted skill at intrigue. His deviousness emerges in all its strength in his last dealings before the Revolution with the now hostile Comédie française. In the autumn of 1785, the actors were reported to have placed a ban on his work<sup>172</sup> and, in March 1786, they were to refuse his request for a fresh run for *Jeanne de Naples*.<sup>173</sup> However, with the complicity of Molé,<sup>174</sup> he had, in the late summer of 1785, managed to present anonymously to the actors a new play, called *Virginie*,<sup>175</sup> which they started preparing for the season at Fontainebleau. He was particularly anxious to remain anonymous because of the personal animosity of Mademoiselle Raucourt, whom he wanted to see in one of the major rôles. According to La Harpe, she had sworn not to take part in any of his works, as she had been slighted in her desire for a rôle in one of his earlier plays,<sup>176</sup> but others said that her refusal was to honour a promise to the Prince de Hénin.<sup>177</sup> One can imagine, therefore, the author's anger when he saw his name attached to *Virginie* on the list of plays being prepared for Fontainebleau, published in the *Mercure de France* on 12 November 1785.<sup>178</sup> He replied with a public denial in the *Journal de Paris* and showed, incidentally, that when it came to defending his interests, he

could be a blatant liar. He wrote: 'La vérité m'oblige de déclarer que je ne suis point l'auteur de *Virginie*'.<sup>179</sup>

As it happened, the play was finally not staged at Fontainebleau,<sup>180</sup> but the actors went ahead with preparations for staging it in Paris, where it was performed on 11 July 1786. It was then only a fair success, and the public was quick to name La Harpe as the author. One wit caused uproar in the audience, by shouting 'J'ai reconnu un vers de *Pharamond*'.<sup>181</sup> In society, too, La Harpe was forced to admit that he was the author when challenged, notably, by Sedaine and Madame de Staël.<sup>182</sup>

In any case, this was to be the last play that he ever wrote, and from now on most of his time was to be taken up by his lectures at the newly-established Lycée. This institution arose out of the ruins of the Musée in the Palais-Royal run by Pilatre de Rozier, and which went into decline following the latter's death in a ballooning accident at Boulogne on 15 June 1785.<sup>183</sup> In July, the shareholders were each asked to contribute twelve *livres* and the founders twenty-four,<sup>184</sup> but it was not enough to save the establishment from liquidation. However, through a connexion with the Orleanist masonic lodge of the Neuf Sœurs,<sup>185</sup> it had powerful friends. Among its founders, for instance, there was the famous admiral, the Comte d'Estaing.<sup>186</sup> It had been under the protection of the Comte de Provence,<sup>187</sup> and it was he who finally agreed to pay off all the outstanding debts.<sup>188</sup> The institution also enjoyed the patronage of the Comte d'Artois.<sup>189</sup> Armed with this support, the Marquis de Montesquiou-Fezensac, the Duc de Villequier, the Comte de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem, the Duc de Luynes, the Comte d'Averny and General J. E. M. de Chabillant provided new funds and rented a large building on the corner of the rue de Valois.<sup>190</sup> They called their foundation the *Lycée* in memory of the Athenian academy of further learning, an idea that was not particularly new,<sup>191</sup> and published a programme on 13 December 1785, which was then widely distributed.<sup>192</sup> This new academy of learning was frankly intended for the fashionable rather than the erudite. While providing classes in scientific matters, its main purpose was seen to be that of preserving good taste. Thus, the most important class of all was that dealing with literature.<sup>193</sup> La Harpe was a known defender of good taste in the Académie française, he had called publicly for the setting-up of a 'lycée pour les assemblées de la littérature',<sup>194</sup> and was an associate of a similar institution in the provinces, the Musée de Bordeaux.<sup>195</sup> He was therefore the obvious choice for the teacher of this subject. In addition, although he himself was not a freemason,<sup>196</sup> his appointment undoubtedly had the support of his many close friends among the freemasons to whom the Lycée, as we have seen, owed much.

The court and the town flocked to the new establishment. Ladies abandoned their *salons*. By the time of the opening on 13 January 1786, there were already well over six hundred subscribers.<sup>197</sup> La Harpe prepared his lectures carefully. The public was so pleased with his opening speech that he was made to repeat

it.<sup>198</sup> During the first session, he dealt with classical literature,<sup>199</sup> and, although this can now be seen to be the weakest and most superficial part of his literature course, it was presented with polish. The elegance of his style, his good looks and his fine voice won the hearts of the women and the admiration of the men-about-town,<sup>200</sup> even if the contents of his lectures did not necessarily educate them. They appreciated the way in which he managed to present a complete picture of an author in a single lesson.<sup>201</sup> He began to taste the joys of real authority, although, to some, this was unbearable:

Le bouffi, vermeil et suffisant La Harpe, promu à la charge de grand homme par substitution . . . Que de fatuité chez ce petit grand homme! En sortant de son cours, il promenait son front cramoisi et ses joues luisantes, recueillant avec une bénignité superbe les applaudissements de son auditoire.<sup>202</sup>

His enemies might still criticize, but the little man had triumphed, and even in the throes of the Revolution many contemporaries were to remember how, in these years at the end of the Ancien Régime, he had become the symbol of good taste, and how his voice had charmed these ‘nombreuses et brillantes assemblées’.<sup>203</sup>

## CHAPTER V

# THE REVOLUTION

For the next four years, La Harpe's life was to be regulated by his twice-weekly lectures at the Lycée.<sup>1</sup> The sessions ran from the beginning of December to 1 September, with a fifteen days' break at Christmas and at Easter, with a further eight days at Whitsun.<sup>2</sup> Having set himself a high standard in his lectures, he soon found that their preparation left him little time for other interests.<sup>3</sup> On one occasion, he was so tired that he fell asleep at the Lycée while waiting to deliver a lecture that he had prepared late the previous night.<sup>4</sup>

While others were already caught up in political discussion, at first he continued to lecture purely on literature and questions of good taste. From December 1786 to September 1787, he dealt with the authors of the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> In December 1787, he lectured on *La Henriade*<sup>6</sup> and on 23 January 1788 he began his long analysis of Voltaire's theatre.<sup>7</sup> However, he could not ignore the movement for change that was sweeping France. He had grown to prominence as a *philosophe*. As such, his work had reflected the *philosophe's* spirit of reform and had brought him more than one encounter with the authorities. His hopes that the reign of Louis XVI would bring reform had been soon destroyed. In 1784, he had been horrified to learn of the plight of La Tude in the Bastille, and was to claim that he had then started to collect material 'pour servir à une histoire des iniquités ministérielles'.<sup>8</sup> In his eyes, although the government was more tolerant than during the previous reign,<sup>9</sup> its ministers still showed a lack of concern for the real problems confronting France,<sup>10</sup> and the Court still behaved with thoughtlessness and in a way that shocked the common people.<sup>11</sup> As a friend and declared admirer of Necker, La Harpe was one of those to welcome his return to power,<sup>12</sup> and it was probably through his friendship for Necker that he was not slow to express his disapproval of Necker's declared enemy, Mirabeau.<sup>13</sup>

The Lycée itself was quickly associated with political discussion, and, because of various utterances made in his lectures by Condorcet, the authorities even envisaged making the institution submit to censorship.<sup>14</sup> Gradually, in his own lectures, La Harpe began to echo the spirit of the times. At the opening of the second session of the Lycée on 4 December 1786, for instance, he won the displeasure of the clergy by discussing the work of the Church fathers on purely aesthetic grounds.<sup>15</sup> This approach horrified the Archbishop of Paris, Juigné, who went to Versailles to see the secretary of state, Breteuil, and demanded that



the Lycée be suppressed.<sup>16</sup> Luckily, it had powerful protectors and it continued to be a centre for the expression of liberal sentiment. When it became fully evident that important changes were afoot, La Harpe made sure that his lectures were in tune with them: 'J'observais la marche de l'esprit public, et je ne voulais pas que la faculté de parler tous les jours devant trois ou quatre cents personnes fût infructueuse'.<sup>17</sup>

While his colleagues sought to show that the Lycée was a school for patriotism,<sup>18</sup> his lessons became finally those of a 'littérateur citoyen'.<sup>19</sup> He began discussing the philosophers of the eighteenth century. In December 1788, during the meeting of the Notables in Versailles, he started the fourth session of the Lycée with five lectures on Montesquieu and the question of *pouvoirs intermédiaires*. While dealing with Montesquieu, he echoed Voltaire's defence of the beheaded Lally, and the latter's son, Lally Tollendal, embraced La Harpe to the clapping of the audience. The next day, he had to read the passage again at the house of Madame de Montessan.<sup>20</sup> All these lectures were enthusiastically received, and he only refused the appeals to publish them there and then because he was already thinking of bringing out the whole of his literature course as one work.<sup>21</sup>

His concern with contemporary problems was such that he showed great interest in the calling of the Etats-Généraux. In December 1788, he signed a petition enquiring as to how Paris was going to be represented at this assembly.<sup>22</sup> He saw that now the moment for change had arrived: 'le gouffre de la banqueroute fut ouvert à tous les yeux; on en vit l'horrible profondeur, les Etats-Généraux furent appelés pour le combler; et dès ce moment la Révolution commençait dans toutes les têtes'.<sup>23</sup> The individual had to push aside his personal preoccupations and show himself to be ready for a 'vie publique et sociale'.<sup>24</sup> As a good citizen, La Harpe contributed to payment of the national debt<sup>25</sup> and, on 5 August 1789, when the Revolution had just begun, and Paris was organized into a provisional Commune, he was elected to represent the District de l'Abbaye-Saint-Germain-des-Prés.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, throughout this period, within La Harpe there had been a struggle between the *philosophe* and the man of taste, and in the closing years of the Ancien Régime he appeared to cling fervently to the joys of society as he knew it. As before, he still slipped out of Paris in the summer and visited noblemen in their fine country houses. He was the guest of Malesherbes at Bâville in 1786.<sup>27</sup> In 1787, he stayed with the Montesquiou-Fezensac family at Maupertuis, near Coulommiers.<sup>28</sup> Nor did he break with other habits. Still as vain as ever in the presence of women, he became a rival of Flins des Oliviers for the love and admiration of Chateaubriand's sister, the Comtesse de Farcy. Chateaubriand himself found him rather comic: 'Il arrivait avec trois gros volumes de ses œuvres sous ses petits bras, tout étonné que sa gloire ne triomphât pas des cœurs les plus rebelles'.<sup>29</sup> His fame and position of authority as the successor to

Voltaire, where even men such as Talleyrand sought his advice,<sup>30</sup> merely accentuated his arrogance:

Le verbe haut, la mine animée, il tonnait contre les abus, faisant faire une omelette chez les ministres où il ne trouvait pas le dîner bon, mangeant avec ses doigts, traînant dans ses plats ses manchettes, disant des grossièretés philosophiques aux plus grands seigneurs qui raffolaient de ses insolences.<sup>31</sup>

He was perhaps the more tempted as he could now enjoy society to the full; at last he had an income to fit his tastes. Apart from a pension of 3,000 *livres* on the *Mercur*<sup>32</sup> and another 3,000 for his lectures at the Lycée,<sup>33</sup> he was given at the beginning of 1787 a pension of between 600 and 800 *livres* by the new Duc d'Orléans.<sup>34</sup> Thanks to Calonne, he had been granted a further state pension of 3,000 *livres* for his 'travaux littéraires' on 21 August 1786,<sup>35</sup> and, on 9 March 1787, Joseph de La Borde — a man who enjoyed playing the rôle of Mæcenas — settled an annuity of 1,500 *livres* on him.<sup>36</sup> He was now even rich enough to give money to charity.<sup>37</sup>

If his habits changed in any way at the time of the Revolution, it was not because of civic fervour or through any conscious decision, but because of recurring ill-health. As he approached the age of fifty, he already felt the beginnings of old age.<sup>38</sup> He began to accept less readily invitations to dinner<sup>39</sup> and was a little jealous of those who had found a quiet domesticity that was unknown to him.<sup>40</sup> He was not an active member of the Commune and resigned after barely six weeks in the middle of September 1789.<sup>41</sup> He later insisted that he had done so because he had been bored by the proceedings,<sup>42</sup> but at the time his excuse was that he badly needed a rest after four years of continuous work at the Lycée.<sup>43</sup> Henceforth, he was to serve the Revolution, not as an active worker, but as an intellectual commenting on it from the sidelines.

The opportunity to do this came when he signed a contract with Panckoucke in the morning of 30 November 1789, under the terms of which he agreed, together with Marmontel and Chamfort, to supply most of the material for the *Mercur de France*.<sup>44</sup> He was back in his natural habitat, or, in the words of Sainte-Beuve, he returned to 'ces querelles de journaux qu'il maudissait et qui étaient sa vie'.<sup>45</sup> He took up the battles where they had been left off in 1778. However, no writer could now not afford to introduce into his discussion references to the ideas of the time. Book reviews became apologias of civic principles, and, because of this, journalism was frequently a highly dangerous occupation. It was through displaying what some have called a remarkable talent for opportunism,<sup>46</sup> that La Harpe was to remain in this post up to the spring of 1794.<sup>47</sup>

In the first years of the Revolution, however, his main interests were not directly linked with the more general cause of the Revolution, although inspired by it. The spirit of change influenced, for instance, his relations with the Comédie française which had deteriorated over the years. He had not been an active

member of Beaumarchais' reforming Bureau de législation dramatique<sup>48</sup> and had even been wary of antagonizing the actors,<sup>49</sup> but with the Revolution he and other authors, who had complained of being ill-treated by the Comédie française, saw a chance for righting matters. In 1789, the theatre was divided through the quarrel over Chénier's *Charles IX*<sup>50</sup> and in March 1790 it lost its municipal subsidy. Soon, friends of La Harpe such as Madame Vestris and Talma<sup>51</sup> were thinking of leaving to start up a new troupe in the Palais-Royal.<sup>52</sup> The institution was no longer as formidable as in the past. La Harpe went to see Sedaine and, at a meeting at the latter's house, joined several other authors in drawing up a list of complaints against the actors.<sup>53</sup>

For a start, the exclusive privilege enjoyed previously by the Comédie française had placed the authors at a disadvantage, reducing the possible market for their work. Then, they were particularly annoyed by certain habits that had crept into the Comédie française during the previous thirty years. There was, for one thing, the steady raising of the *règles* or minimum limit for takings below which a play automatically became the property of the actors. La Harpe had more than once been a victim of this rule. This minimum limit was calculated on the straight takings at the door, and these had been reduced by the increasing popularity of subscriptions for boxes. These subscriptions assured the actors a steady income and made them less dependent on the success of an individual play. This security had led to various abuses, such as longer and longer holidays and shorter and shorter appearances by leading actors. On top of all this the authors had been those to suffer most from various quarrels in the Comédie française.

Seeking a remedy to these ills, La Harpe led a deputation of authors to the bar of the Assemblée nationale on 24 August 1790 and read an address and petition demanding a new law to govern contracts between authors and actors.<sup>54</sup> Since there no longer existed any exclusive privilege, he and his fellow authors demanded the right to negotiate with any theatre manager who respected the rules of his municipality, which would in turn be responsible for the observance of these rules. Under the proposed reforms, no troupe of actors would be able to perform a play without the author's formal consent in writing or until he had been dead for five years. Even then, his work would not automatically become public property, if he had signed a deed of transfer with a particular troupe.

To those used to copyright, these demands now seem reasonable enough, but reform was not to be easily won. The actors quickly replied.<sup>55</sup> Molé, Dazincourt and Fleury sent a report to the Comité de Constitution in which they quite blatantly insisted on their existing rights.<sup>56</sup> Another deputation of writers under Parisau, who thought La Harpe's aims went too far, if not in substance at least in manner, presented a petition to the Assemblée nationale on 9 October.<sup>57</sup> A report was prepared for the Comité de Constitution by Mirabeau, who was known to be favourable to the authors' demands.<sup>58</sup> It was discussed and approved

by the Assemblée nationale on 13 January 1791,<sup>59</sup> but not ratified until 19 July.<sup>60</sup> Even then, the fight was not over. Realizing that they had not achieved their aims permanently, the authors formed an association under Framéry and Sedaine on 25 March 1791.<sup>61</sup> The laws of 1791 were rescinded on 30 August 1792, along with much else that preserved individual rights to property,<sup>62</sup> and the authors were again forced to publish pamphlets and to petition the legislature.<sup>63</sup> There was no new permanent law in their favour until 1 September 1793.<sup>64</sup>

La Harpe's other crusade in these years was a defence of the now increasingly obsolete Académie française. As far as his ill-health and his teaching at the Lycée would permit, he had remained an active member of the institution, both in the last years of the Ancien Régime and in the first years of the Revolution. Yet he himself reflected the Academy's growing sterility. At Florian's reception in May 1788, for instance, he read his *épître* on descriptive poetry, which he had already read in 1781.<sup>65</sup> Even before the Revolution, many saw the Academy as completely irrelevant and even criminally escapist in nature. In April 1789, a widely-distributed anonymous brochure, called *Séance extraordinaire et secrète de l'Académie française* and attributed to Rivarol,<sup>66</sup> made fun of the Academy and argued that while France was interested in the reforms promised by the Etats-Généraux, the Academicians were lost in their own preoccupations. La Harpe was shown as only caring about the propagation of good taste.<sup>67</sup> What is true is that during all the troubles of July 1789 most of his time was still taken up with sifting the entries to the Academy's competitions.<sup>68</sup>

La Harpe saw no incongruity in these activities and always maintained that the Academy had made a notable contribution to the 'progrès de l'esprit public'.<sup>69</sup> He demonstrated that an Academician could be a good and useful citizen in March 1790 when he and Marmontel were chosen to represent the Academy on a committee appointed by the municipality to find a successor for the Abbé de L'Epée at the Etablissement des Sourds et Muets.<sup>70</sup> This did not, however, stop the Academies in general from coming under attack, and the question of their very existence became a matter for widespread discussion when Palissot wrote to the *Chronique de Paris* and accused them of being 'aristocraties littéraires'.<sup>71</sup> Their subsidies were due for review in the Assemblée nationale, but when the matter was raised there on 16 August 1790, the debate was adjourned until the usefulness of the Académie française should have been proved to the satisfaction of the legislature.<sup>72</sup> It was with the greatest difficulty that the subsidy was maintained on 20 of the month,<sup>73</sup> and La Harpe and his fellow academicians were forced to draw up a report which sought to show the usefulness of their institution.<sup>74</sup>

This was now threatened in the Assemblée nationale by a formidable opponent, Mirabeau, who had the help of a renegade academician, Chamfort. The Academy turned to Talleyrand for its defence.<sup>75</sup> Immediate discussion in the legislature was stopped by Mirabeau's death on 2 April 1791, but in May,<sup>76</sup>

Chamfort published the speech that he had prepared for Mirabeau, and it was widely distributed.<sup>77</sup> At the Academy's prize-giving on 25 August, the room was practically empty, and, as La Harpe was forced to admit, 'les Académiciens ont été obligés de faire les frais de la séance'.<sup>78</sup> He read the speech with which he had opened the second session of the Lycée in 1786,<sup>79</sup> and which still struck his audience as being more suited to that institution.<sup>80</sup> He frankly failed to understand that attitudes were changing, and that the Academy, which had been in the fore of the fight for reform, was now left far behind.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, he too had changed his position in at least one matter. In 1789, his admiration for Necker had led him to express his dislike of Mirabeau, but in 1790 he actively sought the latter's friendship, possibly in order to win powerful support for his proposed reforms in the theatre. Three days before reading his petition on the subject at the *Assemblée nationale*, he published praise of Mirabeau in the *Mercure de France*.<sup>82</sup> Henceforth, the two men met regularly, La Harpe insisting that he shared Mirabeau's political outlook.<sup>83</sup> Much has been made of the fact that La Harpe further identified himself with the latter and his policies, by becoming a Jacobin towards the end of 1790.<sup>84</sup> To many, the name of *Jacobin* is synonymous with the *Montagne* and the Terror, but this is to confuse the popular society deriving its power from the masses that the club was to become with the earlier association of constitutional monarchists that founded it.<sup>85</sup> Marat and Robespierre were only to come to power by the progressive withdrawal or expulsion from the society of the moderate elements that had been its guiding lights. During the time that La Harpe was a member — at the end of 1790 and during the first months of 1791 — it was still principally interested in somewhat abstract questions of constitutional reform and counted among its members many aristocrats. La Harpe himself was introduced by the Duc de Villars.<sup>86</sup> During his term of membership, La Harpe only spoke once, and then it was to further the cause of liberty in the theatre and to seek support for the projected reforms that he had put forward at the bar of the *Assemblée nationale*.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, he showed his support for the society in his journalism and praised its defence of the constitution.<sup>88</sup> If he stopped going to the meetings, it was because of his continuing ill-health. He withdrew later because he began to sense changes in the society and its growing love of demagogy.<sup>89</sup>

La Harpe remained a moderate and was suspicious of much that the Revolution had created. He was still an active Voltairian, and in 1791 he was again given the chance of showing his adherence to Voltaire's cause. When opposition to the plan to move Voltaire's remains to the Panthéon became fairly outspoken, La Harpe rose in its defence and publicly reiterated his belief in Voltaire as a supreme leader for progress through his initial freeing of men's minds.<sup>90</sup> When the ceremony took place on 11 July 1791, the weather threatened to dampen it. It was held back until the afternoon. In pouring rain, the procession

and the other proceedings lasted from 2 to 9.30 p.m.<sup>91</sup> In the procession, immediately behind the hearse, there walked Voltaire's niece and Madame de Villette. Holding the latter's hand there came La Harpe himself, who thus 'payait aux mânes de Voltaire son tribut public de reconnaissance filiale'.<sup>92</sup> To celebrate the event, the Théâtre de la République gave five performances of La Harpe's *Les Muses rivales*, and to suit the circumstances the author now altered the ending and added a speech on Voltaire as the father of freedom.<sup>93</sup>

He then also had fresh successes with some of his other plays. *Mélanie* was finally performed in public for the first time on 7 December 1791, and was seen to stand out from the mass of other anti-monastic dramas of the time.<sup>94</sup> At this time also the public was above all interested in the rights of citizens, and the theatre turned to Rome where the name of citizen was the proudest one could bear. A whole succession of plays with characters such as Caius Gracchus and Lucretius were widely applauded. When La Harpe finally admitted that he was the author of *Virginie*<sup>95</sup> — which was revived on 9 May 1792 — he was acclaimed as a good citizen who had had the right ideas even before the Revolution had begun.<sup>96</sup>

During the whole of this period, he continued his lectures on literature. He ended his summary of the philosophy of the eighteenth century before moving on to other prose genres of the time during the fifth session of the Lycée.<sup>97</sup> This session began on 14 December 1789 and ran without interruption — except for public holidays — through to 1 August 1790.<sup>98</sup> His activities as a journalist, however, left him with less time for his lectures and, in March 1790, he called on Boisjolin to replace him occasionally.<sup>99</sup> On these occasions, the latter did little more than read from La Harpe's notes.<sup>100</sup>

In addition, by this time, because of the Revolution and the growth of political clubs, interest in the Lycée had died away. It did not have the success it had had in previous years, and, when the session ended in August 1790, its financial difficulties were clearly serious.<sup>101</sup> When it was finally wound up on 14 December 1790, La Harpe for one was owed 1,200 *livres*.<sup>102</sup> The Lycée was saved by its friends who on 31 October 1790 had decided to raise a capital of 30,000 *livres* by selling a hundred shares of 300 *livres* each.<sup>103</sup> A deputation was sent to see La Harpe on 1 December 1790 in order to make sure of his support.<sup>104</sup> He agreed to buy one of the shares, and on 19 December was one of those to sign the act of association which set up the new Lycée.<sup>105</sup> On 21 December, he became a member of the new administration, by becoming one of the two members of a committee for literature,<sup>106</sup> although he appears to have left most of the work to his colleague, L. P. Béranger, and to have limited his efforts to publicizing the aims of the Lycée in the Académie française.<sup>107</sup> He turned up on 2 January 1791 and helped the other members of the governing board to plan the opening.<sup>108</sup> This took place on 10 January 1791. La Harpe read the introduction with which he had presented his literature course in 1786.<sup>109</sup>

Although attempting to preserve the Lycée as a sanctuary for the arts and good taste, the new directors did try to capture greater support by showing an interest in civic pursuits. Already in 1789, the former administration had set up a law course under Delacroix.<sup>110</sup> In December 1790, all members of the *Assemblée nationale* were given free entry to the Lycée.<sup>111</sup> As a result, the institution did seem to gather new strength, but it did not regain its pre-revolutionary splendour. La Harpe was not satisfied with the finances of the new organization and said so. On 21 February 1791, he sold his share to one of the directors, the banker Théodore Jauge.<sup>112</sup> He seems to have stopped teaching there altogether at Easter, and was only paid 600 *livres* for the session.<sup>113</sup>

His dissatisfaction may be explained by the fact that his financial situation was now by no means as healthy as it had been just before the Revolution. It is true that he got further support from La Borde who settled another annuity for 1,520 *livres* on him on 19 January 1791,<sup>114</sup> but all his state pensions were now suspended<sup>115</sup> and he received no more money on them after 1791.<sup>116</sup> He felt that he could make more money by giving classes in his new second-storey flat at n° 2, rue du Hasard (rue Thérèse), where he and his wife had moved sometime during 1791.<sup>117</sup> He therefore resigned from the Lycée in October 1791<sup>118</sup> and on 12 November he wrote to the papers, announcing his intention of starting a private course for a hundred people.<sup>119</sup> It is not certain how many of these lessons he actually gave, as he was now general editor of the *Mercure* — a post that he was to keep for seven months<sup>120</sup> — and in January 1792 he was particularly troubled by illness.<sup>121</sup>

A further misfortune was the loss of his position as literary correspondent to Paul of Russia at the end of 1791.<sup>122</sup> We can only presume that the prince found fault with his radical views. Luckily, Panckoucke now helped him, by agreeing to publish his literature course.<sup>123</sup> On 12 March 1792, he settled an annuity of 3,600 *livres* on La Harpe and on his wife,<sup>124</sup> although this was later reduced to 1,800 *livres* on 18 June,<sup>125</sup> because, La Harpe said, Panckoucke was not in a position to pay more.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, this, together with the two annuities from La Borde and the salary from the *Mercure*, removed the threat of immediate poverty, and, probably not altogether satisfied with his attempts at resolving his financial problems with a private literature course, in the autumn of 1792 La Harpe agreed to return to the Lycée. On 12 October, it was decided to ask him to give thirty lessons, for each of which he was to receive a fee of 40 *livres*.<sup>127</sup> On 31 October, it was announced that he had accepted,<sup>128</sup> and he received an advance payment of 600 *livres* on 26 November.<sup>129</sup> The news of his return caused an increase in the number of subscribers, and it was hoped that at last La Harpe and the Lycée were about to rediscover the glory of former times.<sup>130</sup>

Yet, it was now that society as La Harpe knew it began to crumble about him, as the real republican and popular Revolution came into being. Whereas in 1791,

power had been in the hands of those who were ready to control the aspirations of the workers with repressive laws such as the Loi Le Chapelier, and for the sake of order to countenance the shooting of demonstrators on the Champ de Mars, this power now moved further and further to the left. The flight of the king had snuffed out all hope of a constitutional monarchy. The declaration of war on Austria was soon going to turn against its instigators, the Brissotins. A Republic, drawing its inspiration from the masses, and not from Voltairian enlightenment, came inevitably into being. After 10 August 1792, La Harpe and all he stood for were out of date. Bemused by events around him, he was heard to say in comic and helpless fashion that 'il était affreux d'outrager ainsi un roi constitutionnel, à la barbe des loix'.<sup>131</sup> Many of his friends, noblemen such as the Comte Montmorin de Saint-Hérem, were to die in the September massacres. There was no place now for those who had gaily talked of the evils of the Ancien Régime in circles where their effects had never been really felt.

At first, admittedly, these changes were lost in the wave of national enthusiasm following Brunswick's manifesto and the victory of Valmy. La Harpe himself was caught up in this spirit.<sup>132</sup> The enemy, which had threatened to engulf the Nation, had been pushed back. He wanted to produce a 'cri d'indignation et un chant guerrier, adressé à nos braves défenseurs'<sup>133</sup> and in September 1792 he began his *Hymne à la Liberté*,<sup>134</sup> which is remarkable for its bloodthirstiness:

Le fer, amis, le fer! il presse le carnage:  
C'est l'arme du Français, c'est l'arme du courage,  
L'arme de la victoire, et l'arbitre du sort.  
Le fer! . . . il boit le sang; le sang nourrit la rage,  
Et la rage donne la mort.<sup>135</sup>

Among these lines of military fervour, however, one can detect the poet's own feeling of inadequacy and his fear lest he be thought less patriotic than the soldier:

Si ma main étrangère aux fatigues de Mars  
Est trop faible déjà pour le fardeau des armes;  
Du moins pour mon pays brûlant d'un saint amour,  
Du moins je veux qu'on dise un jour,  
Que chantant les vengeurs de la France insultée,  
J'eus l'âme et la voix de Tyrtée.<sup>136</sup>

From now on, La Harpe, possibly aware that he no longer served a truly useful purpose in society, was willing to bow before the dictates of its new masters.

It is difficult to be a hero when lacking the natural character of a hero, and it is equally difficult to know when to be silent and be fully prudent when one is not accustomed to practising such wisdom. Even before the Revolution, La Harpe had got into trouble more than once through a lack of self-restraint. For three years now, he had constantly declared his political point of view and the habit was too strong to break. Betraying his past, he now joined in the



chorus against the deposed king,<sup>137</sup> as he sought to show his complete fidelity to the Republic:

On sait assez combien l'ancien régime était odieux et oppressif: on ne sait pas assez combien il était absurde et ridicule; c'est aussi ce que je tâche de faire, toutes les fois que j'en trouve l'occasion, soit au Lycée, soit ailleurs. Si j'étais chargé de quelque partie de l'instruction publique, je voudrais, au bout de quelques temps, mettre les élèves au point de ne plus parler de la royauté que comme on parle depuis longtemps des sorciers et des possédés<sup>138</sup>

In the middle of the Terror, he set out to celebrate the 'trionphe général et solennel remporté sur la superstition'.<sup>139</sup> He was seen to approve of all the most farcical comments and suggestions. He quoted as a 'grande vérité et un excellent avis', Cubières' nonsensical claim that 'c'est de la messe que sont nés tous nos malheurs . . . c'est de la comédie que naissent tous nos plaisirs'.<sup>140</sup> He believed that the plan to remove all the royal coats of arms from the books in the Bibliothèque nationale was truly republican and worth the cost.<sup>141</sup>

Yet, for all his deviousness and his recreant praise for the new institutions, he could not mask his inner distaste for what was happening. Remove from the articles that he wrote at this time the introductory phrases of approval for the Commune or the Comité de Sûreté générale, through which he attempted to protect himself, and one still finds an underlying trust in the supremacy of the educated.<sup>142</sup> He could not really feel at home in Paris in the mob rule following the troubles of May 1793 and was to claim that in private, at least, while visiting Madame de Villette, he had expressed his fears of the *Montagne* to two members of the Convention, Isnard and Launay d'Angers.<sup>143</sup> In La Harpe, a respect for the rules in literature found a corollary in political matters in an undying respect for order.<sup>144</sup> This comparison with literature, indeed, probably brings one nearest to La Harpe's real attitude at this time. He was probably only vaguely aware of the real suffering that was going on about him. Already in 1763, when he first made his mark on the Parisian scene, Grimm had written: 'Je meurs de peur que m. de La Harpe ne reste toute sa vie froid et sage'.<sup>145</sup> The latter's love for rules was greater than his feeling for reality. He could only teach and not experience, and was a pedant even in life. Through all this period when men were forced to show their mettle, his dearest worry still remained the preservation of good taste.<sup>146</sup>

At this time, however, his private life underwent an important change. He broke away from his past by divorcing his wife on 29 March 1793.<sup>147</sup> It has been suggested that this was for 'incompatibilité d'humeur',<sup>148</sup> and although there is now no means of proving this, La Harpe's earlier behaviour makes this seem most likely. Marie-Marthe Monmayeux now went to live in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, only returning to Paris on 2 July 1793 to give a power of attorney to her lawyer for the partition of the community.<sup>149</sup> This was drawn up by La Harpe and the lawyer on 6 July.<sup>150</sup> During April and May 1793, La Harpe paid his

ex-wife a pension, but then replaced it with the interest on two of his annuities, on the understanding that this should revert to him were she to die first. He only kept back the interest on the annuity settled on him by La Borde in 1787. He then continued to live alone in his flat in the rue du Hasard (rue Thérèse) and ate his meals with a Polish couple called Minut, who lived in the same house.<sup>151</sup>

In public, he maintained his reputation as a good republican by publishing *Virginie*<sup>152</sup> and taking care to make changes in the third act which brought the play more in line with current thought.<sup>153</sup> It was again staged with success at the Théâtre de la République on 15 and 22 August 1793, and at the first of these performances — which was being given free to celebrate the anniversary of the Republic — the public called insistently for the author who came on to the stage and recited his *Hymne à la liberté*.<sup>154</sup> At the same theatre on 31 December 1793, massed choirs sang to the tune of the *Marseillaise* lines that La Harpe had composed on the recapture of Toulon:<sup>155</sup>

Triomphe, Liberté; donne partout des lois!  
Ton sort est désormais de vaincre tous les rois!<sup>156</sup>

And yet, protest as he might his fidelity to republican principles, he remained strangely suspect in the eyes of the new authorities. David suggested that he should become a member of the Jury national des arts, but this was rejected by the Comité d’Instruction publique on 15 November 1793.<sup>157</sup> His name remained indelibly linked with those of pre-revolutionary society. He had had pensions from Marie-Antoinette and from Calonne. He had two annuities from one of the former *fermiers généraux*, La Borde, who was arrested along with his colleagues in November 1793.<sup>158</sup> He was on close terms with the Duchesse de Grammont, who was arrested on 14 September 1793,<sup>159</sup> and with Madame de Damas, who was imprisoned on 23 November.<sup>160</sup> In addition, he had been an active member of the now-defunct Académie française. In 1792, possibly because of ill-health, he had abandoned the institution. Although elected chancellor on 30 June 1792,<sup>161</sup> he did not turn up once at the Academy during his term of office. In July 1792, while defending the Academy in a general way, he said that its dissolution was by now a matter of indifference to him.<sup>162</sup> He remained conspicuously absent from its meetings throughout the remaining months of 1792 and the first months of 1793. However, when it became obvious that the institution was once again under serious attack, he remembered just how important a place it had had in his life, and how he had fought for it in earlier years. In July and August 1793, he only missed four meetings and, along with Morellet, Ducis and Bréquigny, he was present at the final meeting on 5 August.<sup>163</sup> Together with the other academies, the Académie française was then suppressed on 8 August, showing, in the words of the Abbé Grégoire, ‘tous les symptômes de la décrépitude’.<sup>164</sup> On 23 December, La Harpe was one of the ex-academicians who presented a petition to the Convention, asking that the

Academy's former subsidy be redistributed among those of its members who lived off literature alone.<sup>165</sup> Such interests and connexions were not likely to endear him to the authorities. Then, these associations apart, he was above all to be regarded warily as a member of the highly suspect Lycée.

Following the fall of the monarchy, this institution, like much else that dated from before the Revolution, became an object for close scrutiny by the new government. While acquiescing in the Lycée's request for financial help, by granting it 10,000 *livres* on 19 November 1792, the minister of the Interior, Roland, warned it that he and his fellow ministers were not pleased with its record and had been shocked by what they had heard in some of the lectures.<sup>166</sup> The only immediate reaction to this, on the part of the Lycée's administrators, was to ask the teachers to show more republican spirit in their speeches at the opening of the new session on 3 December 1792.<sup>167</sup> La Harpe once more read the introduction to the literature course which he had first given in 1786, but showed his republican spirit by reading some of his translation of the *Pharsalia* and his *Hymne à la liberté*.<sup>168</sup> The administrators were so pleased with this last work and its suitably patriotic appeal that they subscribed to have it printed at once.<sup>169</sup>

La Harpe originally planned only to teach up to April 1793, when he was to be replaced by Sélis.<sup>170</sup> In March, however, he expressed his wish to continue. Since Sélis could only give one lesson a week, he wondered if he could not fill the other of the two weekly classes normally devoted to literature. The administrators, on the other hand, wanted him to prepare some lessons on foreign literature which they considered to be noticeably missing from his course. When he pleaded that he did not have enough time to prepare such lessons, they decided to stick to their original plan and left him out of the programme for the second half of the session.<sup>171</sup> This was, however, to underrate his popularity with his audience. Sélis then fell ill,<sup>172</sup> and a group of women subscribers drew up a petition demanding La Harpe's reinstatement.<sup>173</sup> After a vote, the administrators acquiesced, and it was agreed that La Harpe should continue to give one lesson a week up to the end of July.<sup>174</sup> At the opening of the second half of the session on 8 April 1793, he read part of his translation of the *Pharsalia*, the epilogue *Aux mânes de Lucain*, and two passages from his poem on women.<sup>175</sup> He had an audience that listened faithfully to lines that had all been heard before.

Such activities, however, struck the authorities as more and more irrelevant to the needs of Republican France. Roland's warning in November 1792 had no lasting effect. Once again, the Lycée's finances fell into a sorry state. On 14 June 1793, a committee was appointed to try and get further financial help from the government.<sup>176</sup> It had to report failure on 10 September.<sup>177</sup> The government was not going to give money to an institution that counted among its founders so many important personages of the Ancien Régime. One of the committee

members, the chemist Lavoisier, was himself a former *fermier général*. On 4 November 1793, it was decided to set up another committee to arrange for the complete 'régénération' of the Lycée, and the purging of this establishment had begun.<sup>178</sup> This committee met seven times throughout November and progressively eliminated from the list of founders and subscribers all those suspected of not having the true republican spirit. It gave its report at a general meeting of the Lycée on 2 December 1793.<sup>179</sup> This foundation was now to be called the *Lycée républicain* and in the building the 'signes insultants de la féodalité' were to be replaced by the statue of Liberty and the busts of Brutus, Marat and Le Peletier.

For the opening on 11 December 1793 (21 frimaire an II), members of all the important revolutionary governing bodies and committees were invited to come and hear La Harpe read some passages of poetry, Garat a speech on history, and Cadet Gassicourt an ode entitled *Le Lycée républicain*.<sup>180</sup> For this occasion, the teachers had to wear the famous *bonnet rouge*. So, on the appointed day, La Harpe placed on top of his head the dreaded symbol of the *sans-culottes* and listened in silence while a certain Varlet read a poem in honour of Marat.<sup>181</sup> It was a time for prudence. However, the room was hot, and in the end La Harpe could not resist removing the *bonnet rouge*, while saying audibly: 'Ce bonnet qu'on dit fait pour les têtes républicaines, ferait bouillir la mienne'.<sup>182</sup>

His friend, Boissy d'Anglas, was to maintain that it was this action that finally set in motion the suspicions that led to La Harpe's imprisonment by the authorities three months later.<sup>183</sup> The latter himself claimed<sup>184</sup> that this was for having dared, in an article in June 1793, to suggest that it was time for the war to come to an end.<sup>185</sup> In fact, it is difficult to point to a precise reason for his arrest, but like so many others at this time, he was probably imprisoned merely as being thought suspicious. By this time, it hardly needed a reasoned motive for such a fate. The Terror created an atmosphere of hysteria, in which every man became obsessed with fear of his neighbour. The intellectual was naturally suspect, and Palissot, for instance, had difficulty in getting a *certificat de civisme* because he had dared to make fun of Rousseau in *Les Philosophes*.<sup>186</sup> Where a reason for imprisonment was given, it was often seen to have no possible relationship with the truth. Danton — a convinced revolutionary if ever there was one — was accused in the official decree against him of having 'tenté de relever le trône en France'.<sup>187</sup>

A warrant for La Harpe's arrest was issued by the police on 16 March 1794 (26 ventôse an II) on orders from the Comité de Sûreté Générale,<sup>188</sup> and by 18 March (28 ventôse) he was in the Luxembourg.<sup>189</sup> He was, however, still in very poor health and was soon moved from the over-crowded Luxembourg — which housed at that time nearly six hundred and fifty prisoners<sup>190</sup> — to a *maison de santé*, known as *Montprin* and run by a certain Desnos at n<sup>o</sup>. 1466, rue Notre-Dame des Champs, where there were then only ten inmates.<sup>191</sup> A

warrant for his transfer was issued on 14 April 1794 (24 germinal an II),<sup>192</sup> and he was moved immediately.<sup>193</sup> On 1 June (13 prairial), the civil committee of his section drew up a favourable report on him for the Comité de Sûreté Générale.<sup>194</sup> Admitting that he was highly educated, ‘mais brusque, orgueilleux, égoïste’, and accusing him of a certain reluctance to be active in his section, they were on the whole pleased with his record as a citizen. Indeed, for the first two and a half months of his imprisonment at least, he himself continued to make out that he was a staunch republican,<sup>195</sup> confident that the authorities would see that they had made a mistake and that he would soon be released.

In later years, he was to claim that, before being imprisoned, he had won the personal animosity of Robespierre by not concealing his distaste for the man nor his contempt for his writings,<sup>196</sup> and that it was he whom Robespierre designated in his report for the Fête de l’Être suprême on 8 June 1794 (20 prairial an II) as having been almost republican in 1789, but royalist in 1793.<sup>197</sup> The truth is that La Harpe claimed a heroism that he had never shown. On 29 May (10 prairial), he wrote from his prison a letter that was meant, if not for Robespierre’s eyes, at least for those of someone in authority, and in which — while pleading for his release — he expressed not only his approval of Robespierre, but of all he stood for.<sup>198</sup>

This letter had no effect, and as his term of imprisonment dragged on, so his financial resources grew thinner and thinner. Since the imprisonment of La Borde in November 1793, La Harpe had not been paid the interest on his annuity.<sup>199</sup> He was still expected to support himself in prison, although not able to work. Friends, notably the hellenist, J. B. Gail, contributed to his keep,<sup>200</sup> but it was scarcely enough. He withdrew into himself and began to consider carefully the very meaning of his life. For the first time in adulthood, he was out of the whirl of society and forced to contemplate its values. A whole generation was on trial. He became aware of the shallow and devious nature of his previous existence. His preoccupation with money, with success with women and fame in literature, the spoils of wit and false gallantry, the booty of intrigue, these brought no spiritual comfort. While he had talked about the niceties of literature and the theoretical aims of a cultured world, in the real world men had suffered, and he was coming into contact directly and intimately with this suffering. In the Luxembourg, he had met the ill-fated son of the famous Buffon,<sup>201</sup> and now his room was next to that of an old man of eighty-eight.<sup>202</sup> In the same prison, there was another old man whose mind was so decayed with age that he was a complete imbecile. This man was accused of conspiracy.<sup>203</sup>

Among La Harpe’s companions in prison there were Christians of varying degrees, but who all had found in their faith a fund of spiritual comfort. Like a Roman finally struck by the cruelty and the frivolity of his pagan city, La Harpe was impressed by the moral steadfastness and the power of the persecuted faith.<sup>204</sup> He began to seek the company of the Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, Regnault

de Bellecise, of the Bishop of Montauban, Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, and of the widow of Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre. Before the Revolution, all three had paid more respect to the court than to God, but now found in their prison a reserve of strength in the religion that they had somewhat neglected.<sup>205</sup> They gave La Harpe a Bible and a copy of *De l'imitation de Jésus-Christ*, and he read them carefully as he sat alone in his room. When he came to the words in the latter work which ran, 'Me voici, mon fils, je viens à vous parce que vous m'avez invoqué', he was filled with a sudden feeling of intolerable anguish and joy:

Je n'en lus pas davantage, l'impression subite que j'éprouvai est au-dessus de toute expression, et il ne m'est pas plus possible de la rendre que de l'oublier. Je tombai la face contre terre, baigné de larmes, étouffé de sanglots, jetant des cris et des paroles entrecoupées: je sentais mon cœur soulagé et dilaté, mais en même temps prêt à se fendre. Assailli d'une foule d'idées et de sentiments, je pleurai assez longtemps, sans qu'il me reste d'ailleurs d'autre souvenir de cette situation, si ce n'est que c'est sans aucune comparaison ce que mon cœur a jamais senti de plus violent et de plus délicieux, et ces mots, *Me voici, mon fils*, ne cessaient de retentir dans mon âme et d'en ébranler puissamment toutes les facultés.<sup>206</sup>

For the first time, he stood face to face with his destiny and, again for the first time, he really experienced dread and awe. No longer could he avoid responsibility for what was going on. He and all those who had talked of Liberty and Man so as to shine in the safe society under Louis XVI or to hide from the realities of the Revolution had unleashed the demon that had brought them all to the door of death.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE CHRISTIAN FIGHT

His companions in prison now welcomed him into their rooms, and, under the guidance of Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre,<sup>1</sup> he started to translate the psalms.<sup>2</sup> As the Terror dragged on, La Harpe and his friends remained where they were, living, perhaps not under immediate threat of death, but with uncertainty as to their future. The fall of Robespierre on 27 July (9 thermidor) was, however, to bring almost immediate freedom. The warrant for La Harpe's release was issued by the Comité de Sûreté Générale on 1 August (14 thermidor),<sup>3</sup> and on the following day he returned to his flat in the rue du Hasard.<sup>4</sup> At first, still troubled by ill-health,<sup>5</sup> he wanted to live rather quietly. He did not return to journalism.<sup>6</sup> His finances were in a sorry state and he could not afford to live in grand style.

Yet, life held new promise for him. He found that he was considered to be one of the heroes of *Thermidor*. *Virginie* was performed again at the Théâtre de la République on 12 August (25 thermidor), and it was now seen as a protest against the tyranny of Robespierre and Saint-Just.<sup>7</sup> When it was withdrawn after the second performance, because of the illness of Vanhove the elder, the public clamoured for the play to be brought back. It was suggested in some quarters that there was a plot to silence one of France's most distinguished men of letters.<sup>8</sup> Vanhove was ill for nearly four months,<sup>9</sup> but when *Virginie* was finally performed again on 29 December 1794 (9 nivôse an III), it once again attracted enthusiastic audiences.<sup>10</sup>

For his part, La Harpe was still anxious to show that he was a good patriot. For the Fête des Victoires, designed to celebrate the expulsion of the enemy from French territory, and held on the Champ de Mars on 21 October 1794 (30 vendémiaire an III),<sup>11</sup> he wrote a *Chant des Triomphes*,<sup>12</sup> which was set to music by Le Sueur. As before, he proclaimed the rights of Liberty, but now echoed the changing times, by expressing himself in gentler terms:

Que la Sagesse, protectrice  
De la paisible Égalité,  
Soit la seule dominatrice  
Des enfants de la Liberté.<sup>13</sup>

La Harpe had returned to eminence. It was even suggested that he should be the new head of the Bibliothèque nationale,<sup>14</sup> but, by then, he had agreed to go back to teaching at the Lycée. This establishment was still in financial straits.

In August 1794, it owed 17,282 *livres* 12 *sols*,<sup>15</sup> and La Harpe and several other teachers had not yet been paid for the previous session. Once more, the founders turned to the government for help. The latter still insisted on keeping a close control on the Lycée and other similar organizations,<sup>16</sup> but voted it the sum of 20,000 *livres* to help it out of its difficulties.<sup>17</sup> The question of paying the teachers was raised on 15 November (25 brumaire), but although the help from the government was now pending, the Lycée's debts still came to 11,203 *livres* 18 *sols* 4 *deniers*, and the matter was adjourned.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Garat was appointed to go and ask La Harpe to edit the programme for the following session.<sup>19</sup> He announced on 28 November (8 frimaire) that not only had the latter been unwilling to edit the programme, but that he was not satisfied with the salary attached to his teaching post.<sup>20</sup> Under the reorganization of the Lycée in 1793, the teachers were no longer paid a fixed yearly income but 25 *livres* for each hour of teaching.<sup>21</sup> La Harpe had been arrested after only having given a relatively small number of lessons and was among those to suffer most from the new ruling. However, it was now decided that those teachers who were seen to be in financial need would be entitled to a special bonus.<sup>22</sup> Gohier and Saint-Martin were appointed to take La Harpe 600 *livres* for the previous session and to inform him of the new decision.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, La Harpe's financial situation was now slightly better. Marie-Marthe Monmayeux died on 10 November 1794 (20 brumaire an III),<sup>24</sup> and the interest on the two annuities awarded to her after her divorce in 1793 now reverted to her former husband. On 3 January 1795 (14 nivôse an III), the latter was one of those awarded 3,000 *livres* by the Convention nationale,<sup>25</sup> and, in addition, his teaching at the Lycée during the session was to bring in another 3,000 *livres*.<sup>26</sup> With this improvement in his financial situation, and as the memory of prison died away, he seemed to return to some of his former pleasures. A man changes his opinion more easily than his character or his habits. La Harpe returned to the social round. He visited Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre at her country house, Champlatreux, at Saintry, near Corbeil.<sup>27</sup> He went to dine at Livry with a friend of long standing, Madame de Damas.<sup>28</sup> In Paris or at Clichy, he started calling on the young Madame Récamier for whom he had a paternal affection. He had been a frequent guest in her mother's box at the theatre and, as the young woman now rose to fame in the fashionable world, he looked on approvingly,<sup>29</sup> while, for the rest of the world, he kept his tyrannical tongue. Almost with joy, he plunged back into the quarrels of the Parisian scene, even if it was now as an enemy of the *philosophes* with whom he had been for so long associated.

He did not, however, open hostilities at once. At the Lycée on 31 December 1794 (11 nivôse an III), he gave a speech against Robespierre and the Terror.<sup>30</sup> It was a safe enough theme, and the speech was applauded by even the most radically minded.<sup>31</sup> In his course at the Lycée this session he combined the study of classical oratory with the question of Revolutionary language<sup>32</sup> and managed



to introduce more and more digressions on the horrors of the past. His lessons were well attended and well received. His political digressions were faithfully reproduced in the newspapers.<sup>33</sup> It looked as though he was going to be once again a faithful servant for new masters, and he was soon given another platform on which to speak. On 8 January 1795 (19 nivôse an III), he was appointed teacher of literature at the short-lived Ecoles normales in the Sorbonne.<sup>34</sup> He began teaching there on 23 January (4 pluviôse).<sup>35</sup> Again his subject was classical oratory, and again he brought in the question of Revolutionary language.<sup>36</sup>

It was only then that it became apparent to all that La Harpe was no friend of the new régime. As irascible a Catholic as he had been a *philosophe*, and sounding sometimes more like a preacher than a lecturer,<sup>37</sup> he first condemned the structure of the Convention and complained about the anarchy of some of its members in a lesson at the Ecoles normales on 12 February 1795 (24 pluviôse an III).<sup>38</sup> Henceforth, he was to be identified as a man of the political right, and it was as such that he took a more active part in politics than ever before.

He was urged to political activity by the fact that *Thermidor* brought no peace to the Parisian scene. In the poverty stricken city, riots were frequent. La Harpe was only one of many who saw in this situation a danger that power might once more fall into the hands of men of the extreme left.<sup>39</sup> It was with the help of the army and of right-wing deputies that the Convention quelled the troubles of April and May 1795, but it was quick to disavow this alliance. Like many tarnished by association with the rule of Robespierre, most deputies were men of the centre who feared equally both the left and the right. On 1 May, M. J. Chénier was the sponsor of a decree to silence right-wing journalists, and La Harpe replied immediately with a brochure in which he defended the liberty of the press at all times.<sup>40</sup> When *Virginie* was performed again at the Théâtre de la République on 10 May, the audience considered Chénier to be the symbol of tyranny under attack, and had several passages repeated.<sup>41</sup>

This reaction from the audience was only one of many signs that the Convention was growing increasingly unpopular in Paris. During the Revolution, political discussion in the capital had nearly always originated in the Sections, and a number of these Sections had now fallen into the hands of right-wing reactionaries, who continuously criticized the Convention, especially when the latter started to prepare for constitutional reform. After *Thermidor*, it had soon become obvious that government could no longer be carried on under the constitution of 1793, and in December 1794 the Convention had set up a committee which now put forward its proposals for reform. To avoid tyranny from the mob and the ever present danger of a dominant faction in the government, the committee advocated the division of legislative power between two chambers, *Les Cinq Cents* and *Les Anciens*, of which a fifth of the members were to be renewed annually, not by direct suffrage, but through an electoral college.

These proposals could only meet with approval from the right. The latter was, however, less happy with the plan to entrust executive power to a governing committee of five members, the Directoire. It was horrified when P. C. L. Baudin presented a report on 18 August (1 fructidor) in which he proposed that in the forthcoming elections two thirds of the future deputies should be chosen from among those already in the Convention, in which the centre of power would thus stay. Its fury knew no bounds when this report was adopted by the Convention on 22 August (5 fructidor).<sup>42</sup> This was followed by another report by Baudin on the organization of the forthcoming elections, which was adopted by the Convention on the 30th (13 fructidor).<sup>43</sup>

At first, continuing ill-health forced La Harpe to spend much of his time in the country, and he could only watch the moves in the Convention from afar.<sup>44</sup> On returning to Paris towards the end of August, however, he plunged into politics. He published two pamphlets,<sup>45</sup> one of which brought a public reply from Baudin. The latter made much of the fact that he had seen a leader of right-wing discontent in the Sections, Richer-Sérizy, leaving La Harpe's flat.<sup>46</sup> La Harpe replied that the latter, who had been in the Luxembourg with him, had merely called to pay his respects,<sup>47</sup> but their two names remained linked. That they had views in common can be seen from La Harpe's own part in the affairs of his Section, La Butte-des-Moulins.

By this time, the danger of public disorder had grown great, and, as in earlier troubles, the government brought the army within striking distance of Paris. In the face of this move, the Section Le Peletier — of which Richer-Sérizy was a member — passed a resolution on 6 September (20 fructidor) seeking to guarantee individual liberty, respect for people's homes, and freedom of the press.<sup>48</sup> The next day, the government clamped down with a law forbidding communication between Paris and the rest of France and the army in particular.<sup>49</sup> On 9 September (23 fructidor), La Harpe led a deputation to the Section Le Peletier from La Butte-des-Moulins and delivered a speech in favour of the former's act of guarantee.<sup>50</sup> He was at this time also preparing a similar bill of rights of his own.<sup>51</sup> On 10 September (24 fructidor), as he had already expressed publicly his doubts as to whether the army could be forced to act against the people,<sup>52</sup> he was appointed by his Section to go and fraternize with the soldiers. He was only stopped from doing this by the news that the army had broken camp.<sup>53</sup>

La Harpe's Section was now in the fore of the struggle with the government. In the plebiscite for the new constitution, like all but one of the other Sections, La Butte-des-Moulins accepted the constitution itself, but refused to acknowledge the decrees that ensured a safe return for members of the Convention.<sup>54</sup> On 7 September (21 fructidor), it decided not to admit into its ranks men who had taken part in the Terror,<sup>55</sup> and on 16 (30 fructidor), as an alternative to the Convention's plans for the elections, it prepared an address demanding proportional representation in the voting, reflecting the geographical and

and numerical importance of Paris and the Parisians.<sup>56</sup> At a meeting on 24 September (2 vendémiaire an IV), it drew up a list of complaints.<sup>57</sup> It expressed its disapproval of the purge from public office of the relatives of *émigrés* and non-juring priests, a measure which had been proposed in the Convention on 6 September (20 fructidor an III)<sup>58</sup> and approved on 21 (5<sup>e</sup> jour complémentaire).<sup>59</sup> It viewed with dismay the refusal by the Convention on 22 September (6<sup>e</sup> jour complémentaire) to consider a petition from the Section Le Peletier demanding the reimprisonment of partisans of the Terror and the lifting of the ban on permanent assemblies in the Sections.<sup>60</sup> Finally, it denounced as untrue the claim by the Convention on 23 September (1 vendémiaire an IV)<sup>61</sup> that the decrees on the manner of electing the legislative bodies had been accepted by the majority of the people.

It is difficult to say to what extent this intransigence in La Butte-des-Moulins was due to the influence of La Harpe, but he certainly continued to support actively the ideas that were expressed there. When a deputation from the Section des Amis de la Patrie came to the general assembly of La Butte-des-Moulins and defended the Convention's proposed purge of the relatives of priests and *émigrés*, the following day he rose and warned his fellow citizens against such a move.<sup>62</sup> He also seized the opportunity to speak out against the freeing of men implicated in the Terror. On 28 September (6 vendémiaire), he again attacked the Convention, accused it of basing its power on a constitution that had not yet come into force and once more defended the decisions of the general assemblies in the Sections.<sup>63</sup>

By 27 September (5 vendémiaire), rumour had it that his name was to be included in a list of those to be proscribed,<sup>64</sup> and he appears to have started making preparations for going into hiding.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, this prudence was countered by even greater activity in his Section. On or around 1 October (9 vendémiaire), there was a change of power in both the Section Le Peletier and La Butte-des-Moulins, as the real moderates took fright. In La Butte-des-Moulins, La Harpe was appointed secretary.<sup>66</sup>

The Section Le Peletier now passed a resolution calling on the other Sections to send their electors to a meeting in the old Théâtre français. This rather farcical event lasted the whole of 3 October (11 vendémiaire). Although at least thirty Sections had promised their support, less than twenty turned up.<sup>67</sup> By 1 p.m. there were only between sixty and eighty people present, and, when the meeting was adjourned for a time between 3.30 and 5 p.m., the electors of only fifteen Sections had arrived.<sup>68</sup> No committee was ever properly formed, and most of the day was spent waiting for more support. The numbers slowly dwindled until the last person left about 11 p.m., an hour before the government forces arrived to take over the building. The one decision taken was, however, important. The meeting guaranteed support for the Section Le Peletier's call for arms. La Harpe was sent to this meeting by his Section, but, or so he later insisted,<sup>69</sup> he saw

immediately that the meeting was a hoax and left when the call for arms was approved. He claimed that he was back at the general assembly of his Section by 7 p.m., where, despite the uproar that reigned there,<sup>70</sup> he called on the two thousand odd members present to disavow this intention to take up arms.<sup>71</sup> Despite this, by the end of the day, eight Sections, including La Butte-des-Moulins, were in open rebellion against the Government.<sup>72</sup>

The army now moved in from Les Sablons. The first clash was a moral victory for the Sections. Menou, leading troops against the Section Le Peletier, could not bring his men to fire on fellow-citizens. Another more ruthless commander was found in Bonaparte. La Harpe was to make out that he spent the morning of 5 October (13 vendémiaire) preparing, along with some other citizens, a call for disarmament for the printers.<sup>73</sup> Be that as it may, it was already too late. La Butte-des-Moulins took arms at 6 a.m., and within the hour had surrounded the Palais-Royal with an armed force of two hundred men.<sup>74</sup>

In the ensuing confusion, La Harpe somehow managed to disappear. He slipped away to a prepared hide-out in the home of the book-loving notary, A. M. H. Boulard, in whose large house at n° 28, rue Saint-André-des-Arts there was room enough for Boulard's books and a fugitive.<sup>75</sup> He was to remain hidden there for a year and to find in Boulard a friend who would stand by him until his death and defend his reputation long after.<sup>76</sup> La Harpe had good reason to go into hiding. The government immediately set up military courts, and on 6 October (14 vendémiaire) the Comité de Sûreté générale issued a warrant for La Harpe to be brought in for questioning.<sup>77</sup> On 15 October (23 vendémiaire), he was named in the Convention as one of those on whom the Royalists counted in their plots to overthrow the Republic.<sup>78</sup>

However, there was still confusion, and it was not until 27 December (6 nivôse) that the Directoire finally issued a warrant for his arrest, accusing him and others of being 'tous prévenus de conspiration contre la sûreté intérieure et extérieure de l'Etat'.<sup>79</sup> On 7 January 1796 (17 nivôse an IV), La Harpe's neighbour, Madame Minut, and a treasury official called Méat were arrested on a warrant from the Directoire and accused of holding 'des assemblées de Conspirateurs, et d'être en relation avec le cn Laharpe'.<sup>80</sup> They had probably helped him to move his personal effects to Boulard's house. They were interrogated on 9 January (19 nivôse) and Méat was then released.<sup>81</sup> The preliminary investigations against Madame Minut continued for a little while, but would appear to have led to no definite conclusion, and she too was soon released under supervision.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, these proceedings were carried out without any real conviction. Nearly all those responsible for *Vendémiaire* had somehow managed to escape arrest. There was only one execution. The Directoire soon had other things to worry about. La Harpe therefore remained where he was without being unduly bothered, but his financial situation quickly deteriorated. He could no longer

teach at the Lycée, and even if he received the interest of his annuities — and this is far from certain — the government, now faced by bankruptcy, insisted that this interest be paid in worthless *assignats*. La Harpe was reduced to selling some of his books<sup>83</sup> and relying on the charity of others.<sup>84</sup>

This time of reclusion was not lost for him, although he was not in the best of health. He worked on a commentary on revolutionary language<sup>85</sup> and on the first three volumes of the *Lycée ou cours de littérature*.<sup>86</sup> Again Panckoucke was to come to his help. Although the former no longer had any interest in the Lycée, having sold the rights to his son-in-law, Henri Agasse,<sup>87</sup> he now signed an agreement with La Harpe on 6 June 1796 (18 prairial an IV) for a commentary on the theatre of Racine.<sup>88</sup> He promised him 6,000 *livres en numéraire métallique* and gave him an advance of 900 *livres* to tide him over.<sup>89</sup>

La Harpe's political activities had placed him in a difficult situation, but not for long. While admitting that he had perhaps been guilty of certain errors of judgement, he never doubted the almost divine right of his cause.<sup>90</sup> By the spring of 1796, he felt that it was safe to get in touch with the authorities through the good offices of the under-director of the War office, Abancour, and tried to get the warrant against him revoked.<sup>91</sup> During April, May and June, the police examined the case and presented a report to the Directoire on 9 July (21 messidor). The Directoire refused to discuss the matter and sent it back without dealing with it.<sup>92</sup> By now, however, La Harpe had a powerful ally in M. J. Chénier. Chénier, who had no reason to be particularly attached to La Harpe, nevertheless admired him as a writer.<sup>93</sup> With Chénier's support, Abancour wrote to the Minister of Police on 15 July (27 messidor),<sup>94</sup> enclosing a copy of a letter in which La Harpe justified his own actions.<sup>95</sup>

Although these moves did not bring the latter immediate freedom, there was now hope that liberation was not far off. Already on 8 September (22 fructidor), the founders of the Lycée were sure that he would soon be cleared and decided to ask him to give two lessons every *décade* during the forthcoming session.<sup>96</sup> Montesquiou-Fezensac visited him and tried to get him to agree to this, but he remained cautious. On 12 October (21 vendémiaire an V), Saint-Martin renewed the offer and managed to persuade him to promise to give a definite reply within a week.<sup>97</sup> Perignan and Saint-Martin were then sent to see him again, and on 14 October (23 vendémiaire) they reported that he was willing to take up his lessons again, once the warrant against him was revoked.<sup>98</sup>

His case was now in the hands of the departmental Grand Jury. It came up before this body at the beginning of November, but took a little time to be dealt with. On 6 November (16 brumaire), the president of the Jury, Landry, wrote to the Minister of Justice for more information on La Harpe.<sup>99</sup> This was sent on 9 November (19 brumaire) and the Jury then examined the case carefully.<sup>100</sup> By 18 November (28 brumaire), it had decided in his favour;<sup>101</sup> he could return to public life.

His reappearance at the Lycée was a triumph. At the opening in the evening of 1 December 1796 (11 frimaire an V), he gave a reworked version of his *Discours sur l'Etat des Lettres*,<sup>102</sup> in which he rose against 'les barbares du dix-huitième siècle, qui se sont nommés *Philosophes*!'<sup>103</sup> and condemned without quarter all those who failed to recognize God.<sup>104</sup> The experience of *Vendémiaire* had not taught him restraint. In place of the guilty anger of *Thermidor*, there was now the intolerance of the Royalist Catholic revival that was to colour French politics for many a year to come. He spoke violently for an hour and a half, with the sweat running off his face and onto his paper, and looking up to heaven for divine inspiration.<sup>105</sup> Intolerance was to be met with intolerance. Republicans accused him of hypocrisy, of madness, of having sold himself to the enemy.<sup>106</sup> The Royalists proclaimed his continuing greatness.<sup>107</sup>

Feelings were now running high, as the elections of March and April 1797 drew near. La Harpe was seen to be anxious to enter the Corps législatif. Already in December 1796, however, his friends feared that his dogmatic attitude to faith would be held against him<sup>108</sup> and, by March 1797, it was obvious that he would be unable to find an electoral body willing to nominate him.<sup>109</sup> Ever since his speech at the opening of the Lycée, he had not ceased in his lectures to pour out violent criticism of the *philosophes*, of those who had contributed in varying degrees to the 'ruine de la religion, de la morale et des lois'.<sup>110</sup> At the end of February 1797, he had made his chances of election even more remote, by bringing out a defence of non-juring priests, *Du Fanatisme dans la langue révolutionnaire*.<sup>111</sup> This publication unleashed an unprecedented wave of attacks from all those who remembered his behaviour in earlier days. They felt that a real Christian would protest his faith a little less. Røederer had immense success with *Les SI—Épître à . . .*, which was obviously inspired by Voltaire's attacks on Lefranc de Pompignan, and which consisted of a list of allusions to La Harpe's past.<sup>112</sup> Lalande likened him to Newton in his dotage.<sup>113</sup> The *Journal de Paris* gave the signal for a whole host of epigrams and short articles against him, whose very number would make them difficult to catalogue. Undaunted, ever sure of himself, La Harpe brought out a second and a third edition of his work within two months,<sup>114</sup> and then printed an attack on Helvétius that he had delivered in the Lycée.<sup>115</sup>

With the tone thus once again set for polemics, he now returned to journalism. Together with Fontanes and Bourlet de Vauxcelles, he founded *Le Mémorial, ou recueil historique politique et littéraire*.<sup>116</sup> There was no pretence as to its intended function; it was to harry the government and remind it that it was answerable to the people.<sup>117</sup> The first issue of this daily paper appeared on 20 May 1797 (1 prairial an V), and La Harpe was quickly involved in more quarrels. Within four days, he had begun an argument with the *Décade philosophique*,<sup>118</sup> to be followed in June and July by further quarrels with the *Journal de Paris*.<sup>119</sup> However, all this was incidental to the main purpose of his articles at this time.

The elections in the spring of 1797 had brought a horde of right-wing sympathizers into the legislative bodies, but the Directoire only replaced one of its members and remained basically unchanged. In his articles, La Harpe never missed the chance of criticizing it: 'On commence à sentir tout ce qu'il y a d'étrange dans le silence accoutumé du directoire, qui daigne rarement descendre jusqu'à rendre aux législateurs ce qu'il leur doit'.<sup>120</sup> In July, he was to come into direct opposition with the known anti-clerical member of the Directoire, La Révellière-Lépeaux.<sup>121</sup> In August, he became once more the champion of the non-juring priests.<sup>122</sup>

Journalism apart, this was a time of unparalleled activity for La Harpe. The continual devaluation of the *assignats* meant that his annuities were now practically worthless and he was forced to work hard for a living. Besides teaching three times in every *décade* at the Lycée Républicain,<sup>123</sup> in the middle of January he started a course of lectures on Racine's theatre at the new Lycée des Etrangers in the former Hôtel de Marbeuf<sup>124</sup> and, from the middle of May, he gave lessons on seventeenth-century literature at the Cercle de l'Harmonie which was opened in what had been the rooms of the Duchesse d'Orléans in the Palais-Royal.<sup>125</sup>

In society, he had returned to the brilliance of former years, a brilliance that seemed all the more enhanced by the years of repression that now seemed to be past. Fashionable society under the Directoire, like La Harpe, seemed to have shaken off its radical leanings and to have sought refuge in the traditional values of the nobility. As a figurehead for this new feeling, he was associated with all the various factions known as the *Clichyens*.<sup>126</sup> He was proud to be a friend of a leader of the right-wing in the legislature, Pastoret.<sup>127</sup> His finances were now in better shape. His lessons at the Lycée Républicain alone brought him 2,000 *livres*.<sup>128</sup> In August, with Migneret he sued the publisher J. N. Barba for 1,125 *livres* for a pirated edition of *Du Fanatisme* and was successful.<sup>129</sup> In July, with various other authors — and as a sequel to earlier copyright campaigns — he started proceedings against the theatre manager, Tolozé, who had performed plays without permission.<sup>130</sup> It looked as though his efforts were to bring in their proper rewards.

He had been moving about Paris after leaving Boulard's house. In May 1797, he was living in the rue Neuve du Luxembourg (rue Cambon),<sup>131</sup> but by July he had taken up residence at n° 913, rue de l'Université, near the rue des Saints-Pères.<sup>132</sup> He was anxious to settle down. Encouraged by Jacques Récamier, who was fond of match-making,<sup>133</sup> La Harpe, now aged fifty-seven, let himself be drawn into marriage with a girl of twenty-three, Louise Catherine Victoire de Hatte de Longuerue.<sup>134</sup> Her mother had brought her to Paris from the family home in Rebais, near Coulommiers, but in spite of the girl's undoubted beauty, it was not easy to find her a husband. Although eminently respectable,<sup>135</sup> the family's fortunes were modest. Overjoyed at the idea of having so celebrated a

son-in-law as La Harpe, the girl's mother did all she could to make him believe that her daughter was keen to marry him, and, as vain as ever, who was he to doubt her.<sup>136</sup>

Under the terms of the wedding contract, signed in the Récamiers' house in the afternoon of 28 July 1797 (10 thermidor an V), and passed before La Harpe's friend, Boulard,<sup>137</sup> the bride brought a dowry of 6,000 *livres* and an annual income of 600 *livres*. In return, she was assured of an income of 12,000 *livres* following La Harpe's death. They were married on 9 August (22 thermidor).<sup>138</sup> The marriage lasted three weeks. Unable to conceal her repugnance for living with a much older man whom she did not love and who was not in the best of health, she then left him.<sup>139</sup> Never had he been so humiliated, but he had to accept the situation as best he could and, while not approving, offered no resistance to her demands for a divorce,<sup>140</sup> which was finally granted on 9 July 1798 (21 messidor an VI).<sup>141</sup>

In any case, La Harpe did not have long to reflect on his misfortune, as it was soon overshadowed by other worries. As we have seen, he had been among those to lead the unending attacks in the press on the Directoire and its policies. Together with Michaud in *La Quotidienne*, Fiévée in *La Gazette de France*, and Richer-Sérizy in the *Accusateur public*, to name but a few, he and the right-wing in general had returned to the polemics that had been only momentarily checked after *Vendémiaire*. With the strong, if divided, royalist movement in the legislative bodies firmly supported by the right-wing journalists, the executive felt itself to be in danger. To counteract this, Barras and Reubell schemed as best they could. They managed to win La Révellière-Lépeaux to their cause. Somehow Carnot was kept uninformed, and the fifth member of the Directoire, Barthélemy, was too timid to offer any real resistance to their plans. Above all, they had the support of the army. To restore a safe economy at home, the legislature continually called for peace abroad. This was not well received by the warring generals.

In July 1797, the Directoire, in the face of opposition from the legislature, appointed as Minister of War the diehard republican Lazare Hoche, who then marched on Paris. He was only held back by the Conseil des Cinq-Cents' managing to point out in time that this was unconstitutional and that he was too young for the job of minister. Throughout August, the legislative bodies wasted time complaining and arguing, while Barras with the help of Bonaparte quietly prepared a *coup d'état*. At 3 a.m. on 4 September (18 fructidor), an armed force of thirty thousand men surrounded the legislature while it sat, thus making the majority ineffective. Barras, Reubell and La Révellière-Lépeaux then got the minority which was favourable to their aims to ratify the putsch and, on 5 September (19 fructidor), decreed the deportation of a hundred and sixty-five citizens. Among those to be deported were two members of the Directoire, Carnot and Barthélemy, sixty-three deputies, and the 'propriétaires-entrepreneurs,



les directeurs, auteurs, rédacteurs et collaborateurs' of forty-two papers, of which *Le Mémorial* came first on the list.<sup>142</sup>

Somehow La Harpe managed to avoid arrest and deportation to French Guiana. He left Paris in a hurry and is said to have first headed for the Jura mountains in the company of Richer-Sérizy, and to have found shelter for three weeks in a farm at La Borde Damenicol, between Dôle and Saint-Aubin-du-Jura.<sup>143</sup> Be that as it may, Richer-Sérizy eventually reached Bâle, where he was arrested at the beginning of November,<sup>144</sup> while La Harpe found safety nearer Paris. Thanks to Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre, by the end of October, if not before,<sup>145</sup> he was in a secure hide-out in the home of two spinsters called Bézard in the rue de la Déguide (rue du 14 Juillet) in Corbeil.<sup>146</sup> He was to stay there for over two years.

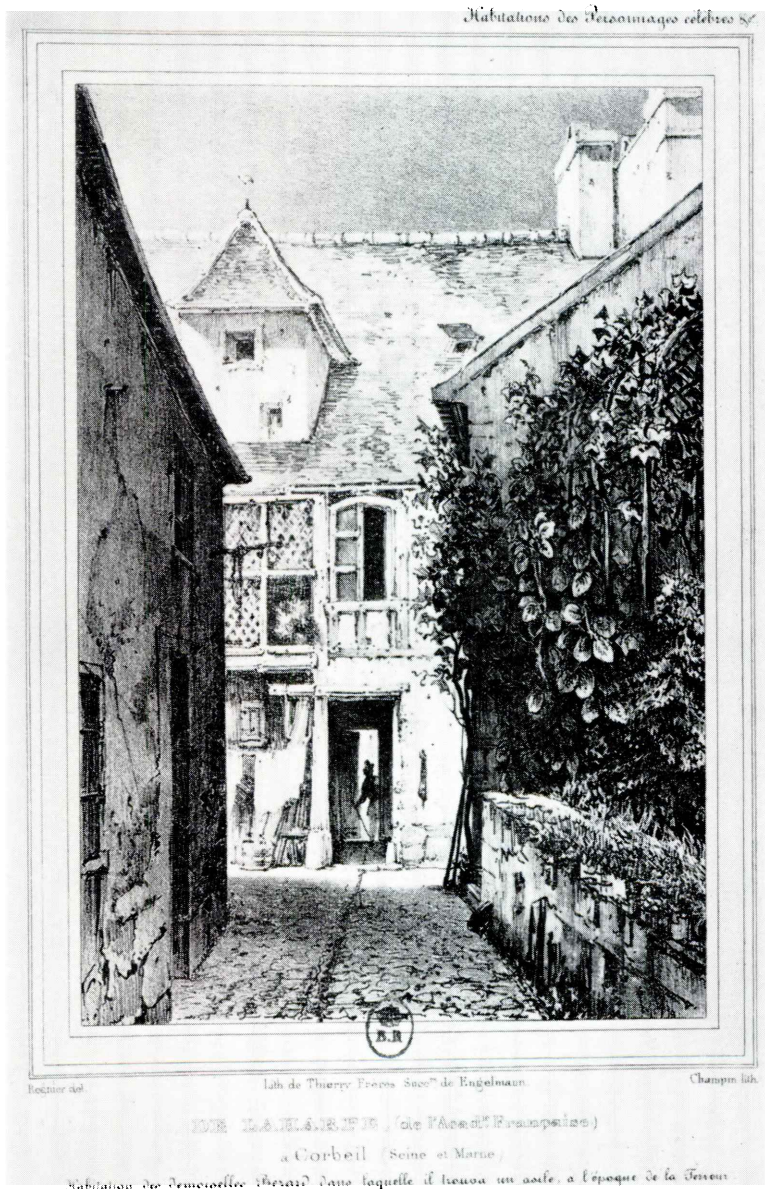
## CHAPTER VII

### THE LAST YEARS

Although he was accompanied by a faithful servant called Dupuis, who, together with his wife and children, shared his exile,<sup>1</sup> La Harpe was by now penniless and once more forced to rely on the charity of his friends.<sup>2</sup> To help him, they persuaded Migneret to bring out his Psalter,<sup>3</sup> and he undoubtedly received further help from the publisher of the *Lycée*, Agasse<sup>4</sup>. He spent much of his time at Corbeil revising this work, making sure that it tallied with his views following his conversion. Agasse had to keep asking him to be more prudent, but La Harpe insisted on his right to express himself as he wished.<sup>5</sup> He had never been an easy character to deal with and, despite adversity, he was still as conscious as ever of what he considered to be his duty to criticize as he thought fit. The first eight volumes of the *Lycée* appeared in May 1799.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, he had moved on to work on the *Histoire de la Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*,<sup>7</sup> on which he had begun a course of lectures at the Lycée Républicain, interrupted by his having to hide.<sup>8</sup> He possibly also worked at this time on an *Apologie de la religion*<sup>9</sup> which he had begun while still in Paris, but which was to remain unfinished at his death.

The polemics around these writings did not disturb the quiet existence that he led in his retreat. He returned to poetry. He translated the first eight cantos of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*<sup>10</sup> and worked on a religious epic centred around Louis XVI and the Revolution.<sup>11</sup> Except for the occasional visit from Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre and from friends such as Madame Récamier,<sup>12</sup> his whole life revolved around a steady routine of work. It was now essential to keep quiet and wait, while the Directoire struggled with the difficulties of war abroad and of continuing *chouannerie* at home.

The end of this régime was soon in sight. In June 1799, there was a brief moment of alliance between the legislature and part of the executive, when Barras and Siéyès — who had replaced Reubell — joined forces with the Conseils to get rid of the other three members of the Directoire. But anarchy continued, and the executive was seen to be increasingly ineffective and corrupt. The far left was flourishing again and gaining power. Siéyès realized that France needed autocratic control. He turned to the army and, after some difficulty and disappointment, found a man of force in the newly-returned Bonaparte. On 9 November (18 brumaire), while the other members of the Directoire were still



La Harpe's house at Corbeil

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Madame Récamier visiting La Harpe during his last illness  
*Reproduced by kind permission of the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds*

asleep, Siéyès and Roger-Ducos summoned the Conseil des Anciens and, convincing them that there was a danger of a left-wing uprising, got them to agree to meet with the Conseil des Cinq-Cents on the next day at Saint-Cloud under the protection of Bonaparte. The other three members of the Directoire were silenced by bribery and confinement. The régime had come to an end. The next day, Napoléon Bonaparte, with the help of his brother Lucien, overthrew the Conseils with a show of force, and the right-wing triumphed: 'Tout se rangea presque de soi-même devant celui qui seul réunissait la volonté, le pouvoir et le talent de gouverner; et la France commença dès ce moment à rentrer dans le rang des nations civilisées'.<sup>13</sup>

One of the first acts of the Consulate was to allow the return to Paris under supervision of all those who had been deported or forced into exile by the *coup d'état* of 1797.<sup>14</sup> Fontanes did not even wait for the decree and was knocked down by a horse while out walking in Paris on 17 November (26 brumaire).<sup>15</sup> La Harpe, on the other hand, was more cautious<sup>16</sup> and did not return to Paris until 16 January 1800 (26 nivôse an VIII).<sup>17</sup> Through Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre, he then found a flat belonging to one of the canons of Notre-Dame, J. P. Sincholle d'Espinasse,<sup>18</sup> in the shadow of the cathedral at n° 31, Cloître Notre-Dame (n° 4, rue Massillon) and lived 'up dirty stairs, through dirty passages . . . in a dark small den'.<sup>19</sup> His lodgings were humble, but at least he was back in his beloved Paris with its promise of the joys of society. He was now seen again at the most important functions. On 25 February (6 ventôse), in the presence of Bonaparte and all the finest society in Paris, he recited part of his translation of Tasso at a ball given by the Foreign Minister.<sup>20</sup>

His ill-health, however, never allowed him to return fully to the social round of earlier years. Even before his return, the Lycée Républicain had been making plans to have him back as a teacher,<sup>21</sup> but when he was approached, he replied that, although willing to come and read part of his translation of Tasso, he intended to return to the country as soon as he could, on account of his poor health and his poverty.<sup>22</sup> In spite of this plea, he stayed on in Paris and, even though the Lycée continued to try and convince him to come and teach there,<sup>23</sup> possibly in order to please his royalist friends, he started a private course of lectures in the latter part of February at the home of the financier, Despreaux, in the Hôtel de Bonneuil in the rue de Provence.<sup>24</sup> This lasted for about three months. Once more, La Harpe spoke to a brilliant gathering, with Madame Récamier setting the tone by sitting by his side as he talked.<sup>25</sup> While dealing with the theatre of Voltaire, he interspersed his lectures with readings from his *Jérusalem délivrée*.<sup>26</sup>

As the year went on, he began to withdraw from society. He was given a triumphant welcome when he visited the Lycée Républicain in April, but once more declined the offers to reinstate him as a teacher there.<sup>27</sup> He lived quietly in his flat,<sup>28</sup> working on the Commentary on Racine's theatre<sup>29</sup> and on the three

volumes of the *Lycée* that were to come out in August.<sup>30</sup> There, he received visits from his friends, notably from his two collaborators on *Le Mémorial*, Fontanes and Bourlet de Vauxcelles. The latter, a gentle soul who shared La Harpe's admiration for Fontanes, became at this time an almost inseparable companion. His very docility off-set La Harpe's increasingly inflexible aggressiveness.<sup>31</sup>

Fontanes now resuscitated the *Mercure* which had slowly fallen into decrepitude following the death of Panckoucke.<sup>32</sup> La Harpe was invited to become a collaborator and his name appeared on the prospectus.<sup>33</sup> Finally, however, he withdrew, as he was tired of the polemics of journalism and was not sure whether his health would allow him to contribute regularly.<sup>34</sup> For the time being, he only sent verse.<sup>35</sup> He was less and less inclined to be caught up in new ventures. In the same way, he refused<sup>36</sup> to join Suard, Morellet and other former Academicians who formed a private Académie française on 26 June 1800 (7 messidor an VIII).<sup>37</sup> He was only too happy when he could escape from Paris and was invited to spend part of the summer at the Récamiers' country-house at Clichy-la-Garenne.<sup>38</sup>

However, his lack of money — especially the cost of his moving back to Paris and into his new flat — would not let him become an absolute recluse. It was in order to make a little money<sup>39</sup> that he now agreed to go back to the Lycée Républicain and gave a lesson on the sixth day of every *décade* for the first four months of the new session.<sup>40</sup> At the opening on 22 November (1 frimaire), he gave a speech to celebrate his return.<sup>41</sup> He praised Bonaparte, condemned the *philosophes*, and attributed the happy outcome of past troubles to Divine Providence. He then led up to an introduction to reading a passage from his translation from Tasso who had by this time replaced Lucan as his main stand-by for such occasions. He compared him favourably to Homer, while pointing out that certain passages should not be read in front of children. This somewhat ingenuous introduction to the poem bored the audience which became restless.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, his authority as a survivor from the glittering age of Voltaire assured him an enthusiastic following when he started his course on 6 December.<sup>43</sup> He could still triumph. At the beginning of November, he had been made an honorary associate of the Athénée de Lyon.<sup>44</sup> He was even admired, albeit grudgingly, by his political opponents. He completed his controversial course on the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century and, by the end of January, he had dealt with d'Alembert, Fontenelle and Buffon. Even the radically-minded agreed that he had dealt with them fairly.<sup>45</sup> He stopped teaching in the first week of April 1801.<sup>46</sup>

It was probably also in order to stave off the effects of poverty that he decided, perhaps reluctantly, to prepare for publication the letters that he had composed as Paul of Russia's correspondent in Paris. He had begun work, correcting the drafts, by the summer of 1800,<sup>47</sup> and the first four volumes appeared in the spring of 1801.<sup>48</sup> The publication unleashed a horde of attacks that were to



plague La Harpe right up to his death. Whether he foresaw just how many there would be is hard to say, but they hurt him deeply. There was a certain naïveté in his nature, coupled with his belief in himself, that probably prevented him from realizing the danger of thus unearthing old, by no means gentle, criticism of still living contemporaries. By now, all he wanted was peace, but he could not escape easily from the polemics of a lifetime.

As before, the first reactions came in the *Journal de Paris*. Feeling himself to be unjustly attacked in a satire by Joseph Despaze, La Harpe wrote him an indignant note. Past experience had not taught him to be prudent when annoyed. On 18 May 1801 (28 floréal an IX), Despaze took his revenge by publishing in the *Journal de Paris* a long list of La Harpe's sins as an ardent revolutionary.<sup>49</sup> It was the signal for all those still faithful to the ideas of the *philosophes* to follow suit. The papers jibed at him throughout the summer, referring to more and more supposed crimes in his past. At the end of May, Colnet published a *Correspondance turque* to mimic the *Correspondance russe*.<sup>50</sup> It was a collection of all possible kinds of anecdotes on La Harpe, drawn from the scandal-sheets of the preceding forty years and designed to show that 'M. Laharpe n'a jamais loué qu'un seul littérateur' — himself.<sup>51</sup> In June, Colnet also published a collection of epigrams, of which nearly all were directed against La Harpe.<sup>52</sup> In the same month, Chénier joined battle with *Les Nouveaux Saints*, in which he called La Harpe the 'grand Perrin Dandin de la Littérature', who went around repeating: 'J'ai dit du mal de tous, car j'aime la justice'.<sup>53</sup> Once again, it would be difficult to catalogue all the attacks on *capucin* and *révérend père* La Harpe that appeared at this time. As late as February 1802, Palissot was to have success with his *Etrennes à M. de La Harpe, à l'occasion de sa brillante rentrée dans le sein de la Philosophie*<sup>54</sup> which consisted of a selection of works written by the latter when he was still faithful to the *philosophes*.<sup>55</sup>

Harrowing as all this must have been, he had other troubles to preoccupy him. In May 1801, his already frail health broke down completely. He had chronic indigestion<sup>56</sup> and was beginning to be plagued by constant sciatica and general rheumatism. Struggling with his illness, he prepared three more volumes of the *Lycée* for publication in July.<sup>57</sup> It was illness,<sup>58</sup> as well as a plea from Chateaubriand,<sup>59</sup> that stopped him from bringing out a reply to Morellet's *Observations critiques sur le roman intitulé 'Atala'*.<sup>60</sup> In July, he again left Paris.<sup>61</sup> We can only presume that it was to go and stay once more with the Récamiers at Clichy.<sup>62</sup>

From now on, his illness and his lack of money were to dictate every thought and action. The *Lycée* sold well, but its author did not share in its success. He had sold the rights to Panckoucke in 1792, when he had agreed to take an annuity from him.<sup>63</sup> This, as we have seen, brought in an annual income of a mere 1,800 *livres*.<sup>64</sup> Agasse did offer now to add 600 *livres* to this, but he was unable to do so at once.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the La Borde family was in financial difficulties as well,

and La Harpe was not its only creditor. He had been counting on 1,200 *livres* due on the interest of the two annuities settled on him by the late Joseph de La Borde and had expected to be paid at the beginning of October 1801. This was not to be.<sup>66</sup>

Luckily, the Lycée Républicain was still there to help him out of immediate poverty. At the beginning of November 1801, he agreed to prepare a speech for the opening on 22 (1 frimaire).<sup>67</sup> He wanted to introduce some lectures on lighter forms of verse in the eighteenth century. He again agreed to teach on the sixth day of every *décade* during the first four months of the session. In the middle of November, however, he had to write and tell the Lycée that, because of his ill-health, he was unable to prepare his speech for the opening and planned instead to read a chapter on Montesquieu from his *Histoire de la Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*.<sup>68</sup> It struck his audience as being more elegant than profound.<sup>69</sup> His political opponents were quick to criticize the lectures that he gave during December and January on the paradoxes of Fontenelle, La Motte and Trublet and on the odes of Lefranc de Pompignan.<sup>70</sup>

For a little time, his health seemed to be slightly better. He returned to the social round and, gingerly, to the delights of the table. He was lionized by the young Catholic Royalists and was a frequent guest at the dinners given by Madame Récamier. Once a week, he gave a reception in his flat for at least twenty people.<sup>71</sup> In February 1802, Bonaparte's sister, Elisa Bacciocchi, asked, or rather commanded, Madame Récamier to invite her to dinner so that she could be introduced to La Harpe.<sup>72</sup> The evening was somewhat spoilt by the news of the arrest of Madame Récamier's father. Jean Bernard was postmaster general and was accused of allowing royalist mail to circulate. Following the royalist attempt on Bonaparte's life on 24 December 1800 (3 nivôse an IX), the latter had started to clamp down on both the republican left and the royalist right. In February 1802, La Harpe's friend, Madame de Damas, who had given refuge to two of the plotters, was sent to join her husband in exile.<sup>73</sup> Simultaneously, La Harpe himself became a victim of these moves.

On 25 February 1802 (6 ventôse an X), he was ordered out of Paris within twenty-four hours.<sup>74</sup> The order came so suddenly that his audience at the Lycée was assembled before it was realized that he would not be giving his class.<sup>75</sup> Those members of the Lycée's administration who were present had only just time enough to give him an advance of 600 francs to help him on his way.<sup>76</sup> At 6 a.m. on the next day, he set out for Châtillon-sur-Loing.<sup>77</sup> He could not understand why he, who had expressed publicly his admiration for Bonaparte, should be treated in this way.<sup>78</sup> He saw himself as a victim of the *philosophes*;<sup>79</sup> his departure was certainly interpreted as a blow for the Royalists.<sup>80</sup> Madame de Genlis was to say that he was exiled because the weekly meetings that he held in his flat came to be regarded by the government as seditious,<sup>81</sup> a statement which tallies with the reason given in an official note published only a few days



after he was exiled. This accused him of nurturing 'chez lui le caquetage de quelques coteries'.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, a more specific reason for his falling foul of the authorities was that they believed — wrongly as it turned out — that he intended to attack Bonaparte in his poem on the Revolution, *Le Triomphe de la Religion*,<sup>83</sup> by showing the latter's part in the events of *Vendémiaire*.<sup>84</sup> In any case, La Harpe was not treated harshly, but merely removed from Paris where his activities in 1795 and 1797 had shown that his presence could be dangerous. On 28 March (7 germinal), he was allowed to return to his former refuge in Corbeil.<sup>85</sup>

There, he was no longer a journalist in flight but an object of pilgrimage for much of the literary world. Ballanche and Beuchot both went to Corbeil to try and persuade him to take charge of editions of Voltaire's selected works.<sup>86</sup> His main disappointment was not to be in Paris for the first Easter following the ratification of the Concordat.<sup>87</sup> It was to mark this that he wrote to the Comédie française on 6 May and withdrew *Mélanie*,<sup>88</sup> about which he had felt unhappy for some time.<sup>89</sup> Not having set foot in a theatre since his conversion in 1794,<sup>90</sup> he had lost touch with copyright regulations and, when the play was given a fresh run at the end of 1801, at first he had felt unable to do anything about it.<sup>91</sup> Even now, his withdrawal of the play was criticized in the press,<sup>92</sup> and, despite complaints by La Harpe's agent, the actors kept the work in their repertoire.<sup>93</sup>

The productions of La Harpe's youth were still there to mock him in his old age. During his stay in Corbeil, he corrected the text of *Mélanie*<sup>94</sup> and revised panegyrics such as the *Eloge de Fénelon*, initially written to please the *philosophes* of the Académie française.<sup>95</sup> Much of his *Triomphe de la Religion* dates from this time,<sup>96</sup> despite the fact that work was becoming more and more difficult. He was still very short of money and kept pestering the lawyer of the La Borde family for the interest due to him on his annuities.<sup>97</sup> His poor health<sup>98</sup> deteriorated rapidly, as he was far from proper medical care.<sup>99</sup> The Préfet de Police, Dubois, began to take an interest in his case and persuaded Fouché to go and see Bonaparte, who then agreed that La Harpe should be allowed to return to Paris.<sup>100</sup> He arrived there on 28 July and immediately entrusted himself to the care of his doctor.<sup>101</sup> He spent most of his time on a couch. He no longer went out. His rheumatism effectively paralysed him.<sup>102</sup>

His illness cost him a great deal of money, and, as we have seen, his funds were already low. Once again his friends rallied round. In August, they organized a benefit performance of *Philoctète* in a private house.<sup>103</sup> On 1 December (10 frimaire), Migneret bought La Harpe's rights on all his works printed and unprinted, except for the *Lycée* which belonged to Agasse, and the Commentary on Racine which was the property of Madame Panckoucke.<sup>104</sup> For this sale he was promised 2,400 *livres*, of which he received 200 *livres* at once, and was to get further monthly payments of 200 *livres* beginning on 22 December.<sup>105</sup> On 13 January 1803 (23 nivôse an XI), Agasse finally settled on him an annuity of 600 francs<sup>106</sup> which he had promised as a supplement for the latter's earnings on

the *Lycée*.<sup>107</sup> It was also, undoubtedly, to help him that the editors of the *Mercur* had agreed in October 1802 to publish part of his lectures in their paper.<sup>108</sup>

In his sedentary existence, La Harpe still managed to do a fair amount of work. He continued with his *Triomphe de la Religion*, which all the Royalists were now awaiting eagerly,<sup>109</sup> and began preparing an 'édition épurée' of his works, from which he planned to expunge all that was liable to offend the 'respect dû à la religion'.<sup>110</sup> If he could not go out, at least he could receive visits from his friends. Fashionable ladies met in his room. Maria Edgeworth was taken there by Madame Récamier in December 1802 and found there Lady Elisabeth Foster and the Russian Princess Dolgorouki.<sup>111</sup> Fontanes and other writers went to see him daily. Chateaubriand discussed his *Génie du Christianisme* with him.<sup>112</sup> He found him working on his religious epic and willing to recite it:

Oubliant qu'il était malade, coiffé d'un bonnet blanc, vêtu d'un spencer ouaté, il déclamait à tue-tête; puis, laissant échapper son cahier; il disait d'une voix qu'on entendait à peine: "Je n'en puis plus: je sens une griffe de fer dans le côté". Et si, malheureusement, une servante venait à passer, il reprenait sa voix de Stentor et mugissait: "Allez-vous-en! Fermez la porte!" Je lui disais un jour: "Vous vivrez pour l'avantage de la Religion. — Ah! oui, me répondit-il, ce serait bien à Dieu; mais il ne le veut pas, et je mourrai ces jours-ci". Retombant dans son fauteuil et enfonçant son bonnet sur ses oreilles, il exiait son orgueil par sa résignation et son humilité.<sup>113</sup>

This routine did not, however, last long. The illness got worse. In January 1803, it appears that his friends had him transported to some baths founded by Nicolas Albert on the corner of the quai d'Orsay (quai Anatole France) and the rue de Bellechasse, but the rigours of this establishment were too much for him and he was home within a few days.<sup>114</sup> Paris was ravaged by an epidemic of influenza which he was in no state to resist. He fell seriously ill on or about 16 January.<sup>115</sup> In the morning of the 24th, feeling that his last hour had come, he sent for the parish priest and received the last sacrament.<sup>116</sup> The crisis passed, but he continued to get weaker. Society flocked to his door.<sup>117</sup> The Institut de France, which was slowly returning to the former order of Academies, feeling perhaps that it had been unjust to him by refusing to admit him earlier, now elected him on 25 January to the Language and Literature class.<sup>118</sup> It was little more than a mark of respect. By 1 February, it was obvious that complications had set in and that he was failing. At 1 p.m. on 2 February (13 pluviôse), he dictated his will to Boulard, but was even too weak to sign it.<sup>119</sup> The same day, he again received the last sacrament. He now prepared himself to meet his Maker, abjured his past sins, sought forgiveness. He again sent for Boulard and at noon on 3 February (14 pluviôse) dictated a codicil which was a rather stilted retraction of all that he had said in his writings while still a *philosophe*, coupled with a declaration of faith that was not without its measure of self-satisfaction: 'J'exhorte tous mes compatriotes à entretenir des sentiments de paix et de concorde, demandant pardon à ceux qui ont cru

avoir à se plaindre de moi, comme je pardonne bien sincèrement à ceux dont j'ai eu à me plaindre'.<sup>120</sup>

By 5 February (16 pluviôse) all hope of saving him had gone; it was merely a question of waiting for the final crisis.<sup>121</sup> Fontanes went to see him on 10 February (21 pluviôse) and found him listening to the prayers for the dying. Even so, he was still alert. He turned to Fontanes and murmured: 'Mon ami, . . . je remercie le ciel de m'avoir laissé l'esprit assez libre pour sentir combien cela est consolant et beau'.<sup>122</sup> But the death throes were not far off. Nursed to the end by Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre — who had now become the Marquise de Talaru — he struggled through the night,<sup>123</sup> but at 7.10 a.m. on Friday 11 February 1803 (22 pluviôse an XI) he was dead.<sup>124</sup>

He was laid out where he had died. On the morning of Sunday 13 February (24 pluviôse), a funeral service was held for him at Notre-Dame and afterwards friends and a deputation from the Institute came to pay their respects at his flat.<sup>125</sup> At 1 p.m. they all set off for the Cimetière de la Barrière de Vaugirard.<sup>126</sup> Snow was falling and a bitter wind lifted the trappings and bared the coffin-lid. Fontanes gave the funeral oration for his friend and mentor, hoping that death would bring peace from the bickerings that had plagued La Harpe to the end.<sup>127</sup> It was not to be. If his critics could no longer annoy the man, they could, even before his body was in the ground, still attack his reputation. His conversion had had too much political significance for his death to pass without a great deal of comment. The priests and the Catholic right were highly pleased by the manner in which a former deist had died sanctified by the Church.<sup>128</sup> Those who doubted the sincerity of the conversion of a man who had still kept his appetite for good living, his harsh tongue for all that he disagreed with and his belief in himself while asking God for forgiveness, could not allow him to die in peace. They accused him of following the Catholic revival in the same spirit as earlier he had faithfully subscribed to the glory of the *philosophes*. They felt that he changed his opinions as easily as a less subtle man changes his coat and that all he was really interested in was being at the centre of controversy on which he thrived.<sup>129</sup>

The polemics over La Harpe were to continue for many a year. Too many remembered his harsh criticism and only a few had courage enough to defend his memory as a man. Indeed, even when the politics which coloured the judgements of his contemporaries have gone, the task of defending La Harpe is not an easy one. It is true that, in spite of his reputation as a severe critic and his undoubted irascibility, especially in old age, he was not a vicious man and inspired great devotion in his friends.<sup>130</sup> Yet, he had lived all his life with the habits of intrigue. He was ambitious and, above all, vain. He lacked the quality of questioning introspection that is the mark of the truly human man. Throughout his life, he believed himself to be sincere, but did not ever really probe his beliefs very deeply. It is the blindness of his trust in what he advocated that accounts to a certain extent for his dogmatism both as a *philosophe* and as a

Christian. He believed firmly in his conversion, but he could not sense that it was incomplete. He followed all the rules of his religion, but did not realize that rules only serve to explain and are not the essence of a belief. All his life he had turned to rules rather than to human experience and in the end the rules let him down. The critic had greater stature than the man. At the only moment of true terror in his life he had seen the shallow nature of his existence. Never again was he really put to the test. He fell back into the preoccupations of the man-about-town. On 29 December 1838, his remains were transferred to the Cimetière du Père Lachaise.<sup>131</sup> When they opened the coffin, 'il n'existait presque plus rien de ses cendres chétives'.<sup>132</sup>

PART 2  
THE WORKS



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LITERARY THEORIST AND CRITIC

Well into the nineteenth century, La Harpe was remembered as an 'homme de lettres peu aimable, mais aussi trop hai'.<sup>1</sup> This reputation was a legacy left by the many battles of his stormy career as a journalist and critic. By the time that La Harpe arrived on the literary scene, Voltaire was already securely placed as the supreme arbiter of the then accepted good taste. Many of the basic quarrels which decided this taste were over. The differences between the partisans of the Ancients and of the Moderns, between those of poetry and of prose, and other determining squabbles were memories. With the death of Crébillon in 1762, there disappeared the last real threat to Voltaire's hegemony. It was now a time for petty disputes between those who defended the firmly-established Voltairian tradition and those who favoured albeit timid trends that this tradition unwittingly encouraged. As the years went by, literary questions took on political over-tones, and polemics were characterized by personal abuse. In these struggles, La Harpe was seen as a critic of almost obsessive severity, whose 'méchante humeur'<sup>2</sup> made it his second nature to attack.<sup>3</sup>

He certainly entered these fights willingly. Before he was even twenty, ambitious and anxious to win favour with Voltaire, he consciously set out to be the defender of the Voltairian tradition. A brilliant pupil, well-versed in his lessons, he threw himself into the struggle with something of the intolerance of the schoolboy who will not accept any ideas that differ from those of his masters. In his very first known piece of criticism, the *Essai sur l'Héroïde*, he attacked Ovid with a tone of authority that irritated Fréron, who replied scathingly that: 'Les écoliers, à peine sortis du Collège, décident d'un ton de connaisseur sur le mérite de nos grands hommes, les apprécient, pèsent pour ainsi dire leur poids, leur valeur, d'une main soumise encore à la férule'.<sup>4</sup> Sixteen years later, Dorat still insisted that La Harpe had 'précieusement conservé le ton' of his schooling.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, it was from his teachers that the latter had learned that the secret of good taste lay in the study of certain prescribed authors to whom one should always turn for reference — writers such as Virgil and Horace, from among the Ancients, and Racine, Molière and La Fontaine, from more recent times.<sup>6</sup> In this temple of good taste, he saw Voltaire as the living representative of Boileau and Racine,<sup>7</sup> as the true inheritor of the 'grand siècle'.<sup>8</sup> He himself was anxious to be in the ranks of the 'juges éclairés qui vivent sans cesse avec Racine et

M. de Voltaire'.<sup>9</sup> He was proud to be a defender of Boileau. Like Voltaire, while fond of Horace,<sup>10</sup> he preferred Boileau as a law-giver.<sup>11</sup> His essentially academic approach never allowed him to question — as Voltaire sometimes did<sup>12</sup> — the desirability of the dependence of the eighteenth century on the seventeenth.

Nevertheless, his judgements always reflected the views of Voltaire where these views differed from the strict tradition of Boileau. In his *Eloge de La Fontaine*, he furthered the rehabilitation of the fabulist begun by Voltaire.<sup>13</sup> By writing a preface in 1773 for a new edition of letters by Madame de Sévigné,<sup>14</sup> he helped to strengthen another vogue encouraged by the patriarch.<sup>15</sup> Above all, he joined the latter in defending Quinault<sup>16</sup> and Tasso.<sup>17</sup>

This almost slavish adoption of a firmly anchored tradition diminished somewhat the spontaneity of La Harpe's critical approach. Yet Voltaire's dogma was essentially that of a practical artist, and this immediacy was still felt in the work of his pupil. As opposed to Marmontel, he never drew up a formal treatise on good taste, but felt that his literary views should be woven into his judgements on individual writers.<sup>18</sup> He saw his rôle as a critic as a double one, in which he had both to examine the theories of art as well as then to study the application of these theories in a given writer.<sup>19</sup> He was wary of summary judgements, feeling, like Voltaire, that the critic can compare, but must not condemn out of hand.<sup>20</sup> Often, when dealing with great writers, the critic can only express his preferences and can give no judgement.<sup>21</sup> Again, influenced through Voltaire by the Abbé Dubos,<sup>22</sup> he claimed that the critic must combine pleasure and justice,<sup>23</sup> and it is for pleasure that the true critic will prefer to teach with fine examples, rather than to condemn bad ones.<sup>24</sup> It is for justice too that he must give lengthy and truly illustrative quotations from the work under discussion.<sup>25</sup> Although one should consider the man,<sup>26</sup> it is the text itself that must be the basis of all criticism,<sup>27</sup> and in his appreciation of a text, the critic must look for signs of beauty rather than faults. If beauty outweighs the faults, then the text is immediately worthy of praise. A writer can be said to be mediocre only when beauty is rare in his work and heavily outweighed by ugliness.<sup>28</sup> In the same way, a writer must be judged only on his most outstanding work, written at the height of his career.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the critic has the right to be severe;<sup>30</sup> he must not be afraid to judge even the finest works, as this is the only way to discover the principles of literature, which are the essence of the art.<sup>31</sup>

La Harpe therefore shares Voltaire's approach, midway between strict reason and intuition.<sup>32</sup> However, while insisting that in the theatre, for instance, dramatic probability was the basis of all rules and more important than a blind respect for rules in themselves,<sup>33</sup> in a general fashion, La Harpe showed a greater respect for the rules than Voltaire. Having the essentially practical and spontaneous attitude of the great artist, the latter oscillated between respect for the common sense inherent in rules<sup>34</sup> and distaste for the curbing effect that these



rules can have on great talent.<sup>35</sup> Reacting perhaps against Diderot,<sup>36</sup> La Harpe claimed that those who do not follow the classical rules are taking the easy way out.<sup>37</sup> He could not agree with Marmontel and others who suggested that it was possible to succeed in spite of the rules.<sup>38</sup> The fact that some writers have succeeded in this way in no way invalidates the necessity for the rules.<sup>39</sup> One's own preferences are not in themselves rules.<sup>40</sup> The classical rules are not based on a blind acceptance of authority,<sup>41</sup> but on human experience and good sense.<sup>42</sup>

La Harpe believed, like Voltaire, that while one should take into account variations in taste, man does not change basically, and it is possible to see why great writers have succeeded in the past by following the rules of experience, either consciously or instinctively. Admittedly, the rules were originally formulated by studying already existent examples of fine writing,<sup>43</sup> but this again stresses the natural origin of rules. In their simplest form, rules are a method of helping us to appreciate the workings of the mind of a great writer,<sup>44</sup> who owes as much to them as he does to his individual talent.<sup>45</sup> The rules do not curb genius, but guide it.<sup>46</sup> While they do not supplant talent,<sup>47</sup> they define the limits and possibilities of an art.<sup>48</sup> He was quick to stress that inspiration is not enough;<sup>49</sup> to reply to those who, while not yet putting the Romantic's lyrical overflow of powerful feeling into practice, were already supporting it in their theories.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, for ever a Voltairian rather than a strict rationalist, he disapproved of a too general application of the rules.<sup>51</sup> He considered too methodical an approach to the arts of the imagination to be disastrous.<sup>52</sup> It is possible for a work of art to surpass what can be explained by reference to the rules, and this is where the value of individual criticism comes in.<sup>53</sup> Like Voltaire,<sup>54</sup> he believed that one should be careful to sift those rules that are for all time from those that suit the circumstances in which the work was written.<sup>55</sup> Although he tended to gloss over the importance of the intimate knowledge and tact gained by practising an art when dealing with music,<sup>56</sup> in general, he admitted that this personal experience was invaluable and that good artists were often the best critics.<sup>57</sup>

This liberal approach, however, did not allow the classically-minded La Harpe to separate his discussion on taste and rules from fairly dogmatic pronouncements on questions such as beauty, genius, and the purpose of art in general. All fell within the domain of good taste. True to one tradition of the seventeenth century, he felt that the first purpose of art was to please.<sup>58</sup> While he stressed the natural alliance between morality and the arts, which exists to varying degrees in different genres,<sup>59</sup> he was convinced that morality in art was only useful if pleasing.<sup>60</sup> Here, he remained very much in the Voltairian tradition and stood out against Diderot and others who extolled direct moralizing.<sup>61</sup> In the name of decency, he condemned pernicious literature,<sup>62</sup> but called for moderation and fairness in didacticism.<sup>63</sup> He insisted that one should first reach the heart before instructing the mind.<sup>64</sup> He shifted his position slightly after his conversion in

1794, when he allowed greater importance to religious content,<sup>65</sup> but his opinion remained basically the same. Direct moralizing is only permitted if it fits in naturally and does not destroy the illusion of art. He approved of it in *Alzire*,<sup>66</sup> but found that in his old age Voltaire tended to rely too much on general experience and not enough on the particular needs of a given situation.<sup>67</sup> This approach is cold and uninspiring. For the same reasons, La Harpe often found allegory unsatisfactory<sup>68</sup> and he positively condemned a so-called morality that is divorced from human nature and which refuses to portray human weakness.<sup>69</sup>

The same traditional outlook on art led him to stress the importance of imagination which he saw as the basis of all art, and which he defined as the power to make us see objects as if they were present.<sup>70</sup> Within the limits of decency and good taste, it must bring us as close to nature as is possible.<sup>71</sup> However, this imitation of nature has its limitations. He was not ready to accept the direct imitation of life as advocated by Diderot.<sup>72</sup> Not everything in nature is suitable for art, which must always please. One must choose and, above all, embellish.<sup>73</sup> Although he wished to minimise the presence of the artist when it threatened illusion as in the theatre, he maintained that part of the pleasure that we get from art is admiration for the artist who, while not destroying the illusion of art, impresses us with his skill at overcoming so many difficulties.<sup>74</sup> It is this combination of portraying and beautifying nature that makes for art.

However, when it comes to discussing what makes for beauty in art and from what source it comes, he was, as usual, wary of giving precise definitions.<sup>75</sup> He did insist, admittedly, that there is a fixed ideal of beauty suitable for civilized man and which, being more than the mere description of nature, is attained through carefully following the rules.<sup>76</sup> Like the rules, the idea of this beauty is the fruit of experience and does not change.<sup>77</sup> Yet, he never specified what this ideal beauty was. In a way, but only to a certain extent, he saw it as a just moderation which thoroughly satisfied the mind, without overloading it.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, although firmly anchored in nature, beauty has something sublime and transcendental which makes it stand out from other qualities.<sup>79</sup> Inevitably, La Harpe always preferred the *grands genres*.<sup>80</sup>

In addition, all such discussion was still closely linked to the overriding preoccupations with good taste. Neither beauty nor genius could be conceived of as existing outside the limits already prescribed.<sup>81</sup> Like Voltaire, however,<sup>82</sup> he did believe that genius could go beyond good taste,<sup>83</sup> emphasizing that it is not linked to education, although helped by it. Beaumarchais, for instance, was in his view a man of great talent but little taste.<sup>84</sup> It is possible for genius to appear in one work by an otherwise dull mind.<sup>85</sup> It is certainly not superior intelligence or brilliance.<sup>86</sup> In one sense, genius is the power of invention, but he found this definition unclear and on the whole unsatisfactory.<sup>87</sup> In general, he saw originality in literature as extremely limited. Most ideas have been formulated long ago, and what invention there is is to be found in the way these ideas

are used.<sup>88</sup> True genius can even give interest to the sometimes necessary repetition of ideas in a single passage.<sup>89</sup>

Originally, the term *genius* was neutral and needed qualifying with an adjective. La Harpe was not pleased with the habit of using the term to signify an independent entity, or even a man endowed with mysterious gifts. He was extremely harsh on those who bandied the word about as an excuse for a lack of all other qualities.<sup>90</sup> 'Les rimeurs sont nombreux, et le poète est rare'.<sup>91</sup> It is in this context that he particularly condemned the growing love for laying all at the door of so-called sensibility.<sup>92</sup> It was only to conform to accepted usage that he reluctantly agreed to use the word *genius* in a general way at all.<sup>93</sup>

In its simplest form, he saw genius as a superior form of talent or natural gift for any human activity,<sup>94</sup> but in the arts it seemed to be the power to see and express the deepest of human fears and aspirations.<sup>95</sup> However, just as one may have a talent for any one human activity and not for any other, so, in the arts, genius can be defined to a certain extent with reference to a particular genre.<sup>96</sup> It is for this reason that he defended even the most minor of art forms, providing that it pleased polite society.<sup>97</sup> Every genre has its place,<sup>98</sup> and, in common with most classical critics, La Harpe continually stressed the dangers of mixing genres.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, the close association that he envisaged between genius and genre made him relate the severity of his criticism to what he considered to be the importance of the genre.<sup>100</sup> He reserved his greatest admiration for the writer who had succeeded in the more important genres such as tragedy or epic poetry.<sup>101</sup> It is through appreciating the difficulties involved in a form of art that the critic can get a proper idea of the value of a particular work in that art form.<sup>102</sup> The function of the writer is to overcome difficulties, and the more awesome the difficulties and the more successfully they are overcome, the greater is his genius.<sup>103</sup> To this extent, there are degrees of genius.

No less than genius, La Harpe found taste itself a difficult thing to define. He was careful to distinguish between individual preferences and the judgements of what he considered to be accepted good taste.<sup>104</sup> The initial pleasure that one derives from a work is not always a good guide,<sup>105</sup> although it is the first step to an appreciation of good taste.<sup>106</sup> Many other factors, apart from the value of the work in itself, influence the impression that it makes when it appears and do not allow for careful study. Although he insisted that good taste was the prerogative of polite society and condemned the English for having adopted the taste of the multitude,<sup>107</sup> even the educated public is not always a good judge. He felt that literary squabbles were useful in forming taste,<sup>108</sup> but admitted that everyone was anxious to follow fashion.<sup>109</sup> Nothing illustrated this better than the French love of exaggerated praise and disapproval.<sup>110</sup> Very few people are capable of discerning good taste,<sup>111</sup> and it is almost impossible to do so without the help of the rules.

There is, it is true, a certain perennial and natural instinct for good taste,<sup>112</sup> and, following Voltaire,<sup>113</sup> La Harpe defined this feeling as an intuitive knowledge of beauty and truth.<sup>114</sup> It is a delicate, subtle sense,<sup>115</sup> not necessarily based on intelligence.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, while far from explaining a work in relation to its time and to the biography of its author in the manner of later critics, he nevertheless continually stressed the dependence of art on society, a dependence which altered the application, if not the meaning, of taste.<sup>117</sup> In comparing works of art from different nations and civilizations, the critic must remember that: 'se rapprochant par les premiers principes de l'art et par des beautés qui sont communes à l'un et à l'autre, [ils] s'éloignent par des différences essentielles dans les accessoires et les moyens'.<sup>118</sup> If he did not consider it to be his purpose to analyse the links between a work of art and its background, he did at least feel that the critic should always refer to them as a means of clarifying his criticism,<sup>119</sup> thus affirming his interest in literary history and its inherent comparisons. He even called the study of the relationship between art and its time the ultimate cause or 'philosophie de la critique'.<sup>120</sup> His disenchantment with the French Revolution was to owe as much to his distaste at the breakdown of good taste as to his horror at the events around him.<sup>121</sup> Developing Voltaire's nostalgia for certain ages of glory,<sup>122</sup> he contrasted the Revolutionary period with the age of Pericles to Alexander,<sup>123</sup> the Roman republic,<sup>124</sup> and the time of Louis XIV.<sup>125</sup> Corruption in society brings corruption in the arts.<sup>126</sup>

At the same time, corruption can work the other way round.<sup>127</sup> Favourable conditions in society do not necessarily preserve good taste.<sup>128</sup> Corruption inevitably follows perfection.<sup>129</sup> He saw the main cause of decadence in the eighteenth century to be an increasing self-satisfaction<sup>130</sup> which blinded writers to the value of the models of perfection of the preceding century<sup>131</sup> and led them into trying to improve on what was already perfect. The greatest minds in the eighteenth century were more interested in science.<sup>132</sup> He raged against what he called French frivolity<sup>133</sup> and gave as a cause of decline a surfeit of pleasure and idleness.<sup>134</sup>

The fact is that La Harpe — as we have just seen — followed Voltaire<sup>135</sup> in limiting the effects of society on art to modifications in its external trappings and not in the essence of its form. Eternal good taste rules out any real idea of true relativity in criticism. Just as good taste is formed by studying good writers, so good writers go beyond the limitations of their time<sup>136</sup> and are to be referred to as models of perfection that time has consecrated. In Racine, for instance, La Harpe wanted his contemporaries to see:

ce tact délicat, ces vues justes et fines, ce discernement si sûr, ce sentiment des convenances, ce goût enfin, cultivé par les leçons de Port-Royal, nourri par le commerce assidu des Anciens, fortifié par les conseils de Boileau; ce goût, qualité rare et précieuse, qui peut-être est au génie ce que la raison est à l'instinct; s'il est vrai que l'instinct soit le mobile de nos actions et que la

raison en soit le guide; ce goût qui attache aux productions vraiment belles le sceau d'une admiration éclairée et durable.<sup>137</sup>

A century later, Racine's taste still remained a model for every cultivated man, as La Harpe remained true to the Voltairian idea of progress in the arts. As they deal with human nature which does not change, progress in the imaginative arts is extremely limited, where it is extensive in the sciences. In the arts, perfection was already reached in the earliest times.<sup>138</sup> What progress there is, is linked to the improvement and refinement of society, but rather than any idea of a steady development of the arts, La Harpe shared Voltaire's view of a cycle in which an age of glory is followed inevitably by one of corruption.<sup>139</sup> The ages of glory come about once a certain purity and correct usage in language have been attained.<sup>140</sup> It is then the job of native genius to free its art from the servile imitation of foreign literature and to provide models on which to found good taste.<sup>141</sup> It is as much the hallmark of La Harpe's criticism as of that of Voltaire to turn instinctively for reference to the national heritage of the French seventeenth century.

In similar vein, he was faithful to Voltaire's attitude to the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which he regarded primarily as a quarrel between individual preferences.<sup>142</sup> French literature has an undying debt to that of Greece and Rome.<sup>143</sup> Those who have really profited from the Ancients — the greatest of the Moderns — have not been among those who pretend to despise them.<sup>144</sup> While dismissing any blind acceptance of the authority of either the Ancients or the Moderns,<sup>145</sup> La Harpe made out that the Ancients do have a right to our respect, like all those who have stood the test of time.<sup>146</sup> Yet, like Voltaire, he did find that the Moderns have equalled and even improved on the Ancients in certain fields of literature. While the Ancients remain superior in forensic oratory,<sup>147</sup> history<sup>148</sup> and epic poetry,<sup>149</sup> Bossuet perfected panegyrics and La Fontaine is master in the art of composing fables.<sup>150</sup> Progress has been most marked in the theatre. Molière left ancient comedy far behind and Corneille and Racine invented a form of tragedy that may be less heroic, but which is infinitely deeper in its effect on the emotions.<sup>151</sup> If modern writers have succeeded in a language which is less naturally pleasing to the ear, this is yet another sign of their superiority in overcoming difficulty.<sup>152</sup>

No discussion of La Harpe's critical approach would be complete without a study of his views on questions of style. With his interest in form rather than originality, style was at the centre of his preoccupations, and his views on style define perhaps more clearly and closely than anything else the limits of what he considered to be good taste. They show particularly well his fidelity to Voltaire. Style must not be regarded, he maintained, as a separate entity, but as an integral part of good taste.<sup>153</sup> Once good taste is established, any writer not capable of writing well, within its limits, is by necessity mediocre.<sup>154</sup> Throughout his life, he led an unending war against those who used an inflated style, farfetched

imagery, and who again attributed these and other faults to the so-called heat of inspiration.<sup>155</sup> The style must suit the genre<sup>156</sup> and, above all, the situation and the nature of the passage itself.<sup>157</sup>

Three ingredients make up good style:<sup>158</sup> care over the construction and balance of the sentence with a well-prepared transition from one idea to another,<sup>159</sup> care over the choice of expressions and care over harmony, which has to be cultivated in French.<sup>160</sup> La Harpe, like Voltaire, wanted elegance in form, thought and sound. Although he admitted that a truly great style was the product of genius<sup>161</sup> which could, through pleasing the ear, reach the soul and the imagination, that some beauties came about by chance,<sup>162</sup> he still insisted that the basis of elegance could be studied.<sup>163</sup> Although a good writer may, for a variety of reasons, be wrong in what he says,<sup>164</sup> he has carefully thought out his manner of saying things. Bad style is invariably a sign of a lack of true thought and feeling.<sup>165</sup> Sententious utterances are not always signs of thought.<sup>166</sup> To begin with, the writer should study the limitations and possibilities of the language. Before using a figure of speech, he should understand its purpose.<sup>167</sup> As literary French is based on the polite language of society perfected under Louis XIV, the writer can only use about a third of the natural idiom and must expunge from his work vulgar expressions and vulgar ideas.<sup>168</sup> La Harpe frowned on neologisms,<sup>169</sup> false brilliance and conceits,<sup>170</sup> as on anything which endangered his preconceived ideal of elegance.

The art of good style is to bring about variety within these limitations. It is particularly important to use the right word in the right place.<sup>171</sup> He was against an excessive use of adjectives.<sup>172</sup> Imagery is only preferable to the proper term when it adds variety and pleasure to the text.<sup>173</sup> Too much imagery destroys variety and pleasure and merely appears monotonous and affected.<sup>174</sup> Allegory is particularly difficult to use because of this danger.<sup>175</sup> Beauty of style does not come from the images themselves, but from the choice and use made of them.<sup>176</sup> They must always be strictly related to feelings and ideas, or else they will appear unnatural.<sup>177</sup>

Good style is elegant, interesting, sustained, full of harmony, and with just the right amount of imagery and figures of speech.<sup>178</sup> Often, it is based on a happy use of the commonest terms.<sup>179</sup> Its outstanding quality is its concision in which every element has its purpose.<sup>180</sup> It is this necessary economy which makes a sustained or sublime style so difficult. Grandeur must be expressed with the right amount of simplicity.<sup>181</sup>

Clarity is the greatest quality in style, whatever the genre.<sup>182</sup> The writer must remember that he has to be read,<sup>183</sup> and he must not confuse the imagination of the reader.<sup>184</sup> This is why all true imagery moves from the moral to the concrete world<sup>185</sup> and is closely linked to the idea expressed.<sup>186</sup> La Harpe condemned the abuse of abstract terms.<sup>187</sup> Elegance and variety add charm, but do not hinder clarity.<sup>188</sup> The writer has succeeded in his task when the reader is led naturally

to pleasure, when the style is so limpid that the art and the effort of the artist are not seen, but are appreciated.<sup>189</sup> Such a style appears effortless, but is the result of much careful preparation.

If La Harpe showed so thorough a belief in the principles of Voltaire, the latter was not slow to return the compliment. Whatever the patriarch really thought of his disciple, he certainly believed him to be useful for the defence of the Voltairian cause as a ‘champion du bon goût’.<sup>190</sup> Near the beginning of their relationship, Voltaire proudly announced to his friends that the young man showed great promise.<sup>191</sup> He praised him for his love of simplicity.<sup>192</sup> Soon, he was referring to him as ‘son jeune favori’,<sup>193</sup> ‘mon petit La Harpe’,<sup>194</sup> and writing to him as ‘mon cher successeur’.<sup>195</sup> Both in his correspondence and elsewhere, Voltaire became lavish in his praise for the latter’s talents — notably his style — and for his strict good taste.<sup>196</sup> La Harpe’s visits to Ferney were merely to complete his thorough education in purism. Voltaire was quick to associate himself with the irascible nature of the young man, who was ‘né pour combattre’<sup>197</sup> and guilty like himself of preferring Racine to Corneille:<sup>198</sup> ‘Il semble que les épines que j’ai trouvées toujours dans ma carrière piquent à présent La Harpe’.<sup>199</sup>

The quarrel over the stolen manuscripts in the spring of 1768 did not dampen Voltaire’s enthusiasm for his protégé for any length of time and he was pleased when the young man started work on the *Mercur*. He then wrote to Lacombe: ‘Je crois que vous ne pourriez avoir un meilleur second’,<sup>200</sup> and began keeping copies of the paper — something that he had not done since 1762.<sup>201</sup> From 1771 to 1772 and 1774 to 1776, he kept a special collection of La Harpe’s articles.<sup>202</sup> He took a strong paternal interest in the paper<sup>203</sup> and proclaimed that he did not know of a ‘dépôt plus convenable’ for his own declarations.<sup>204</sup> He never failed to encourage La Harpe:

Vous donnez quelquefois dans le *Mercur* des leçons qui étaient bien nécessaires à notre siècle de barbouilleurs. Continuez, vous rendez un vrai service à la nation.<sup>205</sup>

Vous réussirez toujours à la pointe de l’épée . . . Vous seul corrigerez un peuple inconstant et frivole, qui ne sait presque jamais ce qu’il veut ni ce qu’il pense.<sup>206</sup>

The same interest was to be shown in the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*. When La Harpe took it over, not only was Voltaire a contributor, but he claimed to read it to the exclusion of all other papers.<sup>207</sup>

This support from Voltaire was to give his disciple the necessary strength to raise his articles from mere reviews to general discussions on questions of taste, prompted more or less directly by a new publication. He occasionally inserted longer articles on topics of literature such as lyric poetry<sup>208</sup> or religious and forensic oratory.<sup>209</sup> With the encouragement of Panckoucke, who wanted the literary side of the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* to form a ‘Cours de

littérature française',<sup>210</sup> he was able to develop his talent for criticism of a less ephemeral nature. His task was:

de résumer dans l'occasion tout ce qui regardait les ouvrages et la personne des écrivains connus, de rassembler tous les traits qui peuvent les caractériser, et de présenter au lecteur, le plus souvent qu'on le pourra, des résultats de cette espèce, aussi intéressants qu'instructifs.<sup>211</sup>

Even in his theatre reviews, he was to show 'tout ce qui pouvait marquer les progrès ou la corruption de l'art'.<sup>212</sup> At times, therefore, he moved from the discussion of a new or revived work by a given writer to a general review of his other productions, as in the case of Guymond de La Touche<sup>213</sup> and Belloy.<sup>214</sup> Following Voltaire's *Lettre à l'Académie française*<sup>215</sup> in July 1776, La Harpe began a long article on Shakespeare<sup>216</sup> which started appearing in the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* in December 1777 and which was still unfinished when the paper ceased publication in June 1778.<sup>217</sup> Once more writing for the *Mercure*, in October 1778, he gave a long article on J. J. Rousseau, following the latter's death.<sup>218</sup>

However, the support from Voltaire also limited his freedom in his journalism. While the patriarch was alive, La Harpe was sure of his protection and could issue indictments, but was prudent enough not to judge his benefactor: 'On sent qu'il ne nous conviendrait point de prononcer un jugement sur un ouvrage de M. de Voltaire. Il est trop au-dessus de nos éloges et de nos critiques, et personne ne reprochera au disciple de ne point juger son maître'.<sup>219</sup> We have already analysed the furor that arose when La Harpe was the first to break the silence following Voltaire's death with an attack on *Zulime*. His mistake was to believe that he had stature enough as a critic to ignore all but the dictates of his literary creed:

J'ai oublié l'homme qui est mort, pour ne plus voir que l'homme qui ne mourra point. Je ne l'ai plus vu que dans l'éloignement de la postérité, et comme si les siècles eussent déjà passé sur sa tombe. J'ai même affecté, peu de jours après celui qui a été le dernier des siens, d'écarter de son nom ces formules frivoles de politesse trop au-dessous des hommes supérieurs qui appartiennent à tous les âges et à toutes les nations. J'ai dit Voltaire, comme j'aurais dit Corneille.<sup>220</sup>

Whether he wished to admit it or not, he had grown to eminence as the hatchet-man of the Voltairian party. The *Mercure de France* and the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* had become as much the mouthpieces of a sect as the *Année littéraire* or the *Ephémérides du Citoyen*. In a little over a year, La Harpe was to be forced to abandon journalism, and when he returned to it ten years later the interests of the Revolution limited the literary content of his articles.

With the authority of Voltaire behind him, it is not surprising that he should have adopted a dictatorial tone in his articles. He saw journalism as a mission only to be carried out by 'un homme de lettres très distingué par son esprit et



ses talents'.<sup>221</sup> His censure, he felt, had to be severe: 'Les étrangers croiraient que nous retombons dans la barbarie si les gens de lettres n'élevaient pas la voix de temps en temps pour venger le bon goût et l'honneur de la nation'.<sup>222</sup> He saw as his prime duty the necessity to show 'les travers à la mode, les défauts dominants qui caractérisent telle ou telle époque'.<sup>223</sup> While he followed Voltaire's policy of despising 'ces dénominations grossières' frequently used in literary squabbles,<sup>224</sup> he equally condemned 'ce trafic d'éloges constamment donnés à ce qui est mauvais par des juges qui ne peuvent pas louer ce qui est bon'.<sup>225</sup>

It was this Draconian approach that gave him his reputation for 'un génie naturellement malfaisant'.<sup>226</sup> His contemporaries accused him of resorting frequently both to servile praise and personal abuse. Dorat called him a 'fougueux petit Gazetier', a '*Matamor littéraire*'.<sup>227</sup> Linguet referred to his articles as 'des satires cruelles et injustes'<sup>228</sup> and accused him of turning the *Mercur* into 'un entrepôt de diffamations'.<sup>229</sup> La Harpe's claim in 1775 that he was one of those who talked the least about their own work 'avec toutes les facilités possibles d'en parler beaucoup'<sup>230</sup> should certainly be examined closely. Even his friends were to maintain that the contrary was true;<sup>231</sup> that, moreover, he spoilt his articles by showing too often his irritation with his opponents.<sup>232</sup>

He was certainly not slow to defend his own work when it came under serious attack. In February 1771, he tried to brush aside the critics who had all too easily found mistakes in his translation of Suetonius.<sup>233</sup> He was forced to speak again on the subject in August of the same year.<sup>234</sup> In October 1775, he defended his having won both prizes at the Académie française against complaints by Linguet.<sup>235</sup> It was not, however, until he started work on the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* that he actually started reviewing his own work. He then displayed a remarkable coyness: 'L'auteur, ayant à parler ici de son propre ouvrage, ne peut que rendre compte au public de son travail . . . &c'.<sup>236</sup> Even then, such reviews remained few and far between.<sup>237</sup>

Most personal references were to continue to be answers to personal attacks both on his works and his good name.<sup>238</sup> If, in these apologias, he displayed a certain naïveté and could show in his articles generally an immoderate harshness, he at least refrained from indulging in allusions that might affect the honour or good name of his adversaries. His imprisonment in 1760 and his obscure origins were still being referred to in the *Année littéraire* as signs of his immoral character as late as 1789.<sup>239</sup> In attacking him, his enemies adopted a tone that he himself reserved for his satirical verse. It was not that he believed irony to be an unnecessary arm for the critic,<sup>240</sup> but he always related such irony to criticism of the text under discussion. He complained bitterly that no one really understood his purpose:

Mais si par hasard un homme de lettres vient à s'imaginer qu'il peut être de quelque utilité, que même il peut y avoir quelque gloire, à dire la vérité au public avec courage et avec mesure, quel déchaînement de la part de

tous ceux qui peuvent craindre la vérité! Passe pour la satire, dit-on de toute part; elle amuse tout le monde. Mais de la critique! Comment la supporter? Comment pardonner à celui qui a raison, et qui ne dit point d'injures?<sup>241</sup>

He claimed that he never printed a line 'contre le témoignage de sa conscience, ni contre la vérité'.<sup>242</sup>

His enemies had certainly no such scruples. They seized every opportunity to bring up the list of La Harpe's more unfortunate productions such as *Pharamond* and *Gustave*,<sup>243</sup> so as to impress on him and on the public 'quelques soupçons de sa médiocrité':<sup>244</sup> 'Choisissons les ouvrages fameux, au moins par leur disgrâce, de ce poète putatif, qui de prix en prix, et de chute en chute, est tombé dans l'Académie'.<sup>245</sup> Linguet, for instance, had no compunction over calling him 'le petit homme le plus orgueilleux . . . , le poète le plus faible, l'orateur le plus sec, le despote le plus impérieux, le journaliste le plus amer, qui ait jamais affligé notre parnasse'.<sup>246</sup> Above all, La Harpe's opponents never failed to stress the debt that he owed to Voltaire and the latter's followers, and Clément, for one, referred to him as the 'petit Dom Quichotte de la secte philosophique'.<sup>247</sup>

Indeed, it was his very fidelity to the *philosophes* and the undoubted advantages that this gave him that made his criticism basically suspect both to the uncommitted and the *dévots*. Self-interest was seen to lurk behind his self-righteousness. Even if he did not necessarily write those articles in the *Mercure* which praised his work, referring, for instance, to *Warwick* as a masterpiece whose 'beautés ne sont fondées sur aucun prestige',<sup>248</sup> such articles were probably seen by him before publication and were too obviously written to please him. A typical example of this mutual compliance is the presentation of his translation of Suetonius by Lacombe who was both proprietor of the *Mercure* and La Harpe's publisher.<sup>249</sup>

In general fashion also, the latter's polemics always seemed to be directed from Ferney. As if by command, he censured Sabatier de Castres<sup>250</sup> and Rigoley de Juvigny.<sup>251</sup> His article on Shakespeare was given the seal of approval by Voltaire.<sup>252</sup> A good example of La Harpe's embracing Voltaire's cause is his treatment of J. M. B. Clément. When the latter first arrived in Paris, he was full of praise for Voltaire and through Voltaire became a friend of La Harpe.<sup>253</sup> However, this friendship only lasted as long as Clément's admiration for Voltaire. The former's initiation into Parisian life soon disenchanted him and, in Voltaire's eyes, he was soon classed as a 'folliculaire'.<sup>254</sup> His many subsequent attacks on the patriarch earned him the nickname from the latter of *inclément*.<sup>255</sup>

Towards the end of 1770,<sup>256</sup> Clément brought out a brochure with the title of *Observations critiques*,<sup>257</sup> in which attacks on Delille and Saint-Lambert were backed up with notes which were critical of Voltaire himself. Saint-Lambert replied by going to see the lieutenant de police, Sartine, and, at Saint-Lambert's

request, La Harpe wrote to Malesherbes for documents to be used against Clément.<sup>258</sup> Clément's brochure was momentarily suppressed and, to Voltaire's delight,<sup>259</sup> its author was imprisoned for a few days in Fort-l'Évêque.

An attack on Saint-Lambert at this time was a direct threat to Voltairian interests. A letter from Voltaire expressing praise of Saint-Lambert's *Les Saisons* had been published by La Harpe in the *Mercure* in April 1769<sup>260</sup> and, in May of that year, the poem had been reviewed favourably by another of Voltaire's protégés, Chamfort.<sup>261</sup> Yet, in spite of the concerted actions of the Voltairian clan, the ban on Clément's brochure was soon lifted. It was now up to La Harpe to refute it in no uncertain terms in the *Mercure* of March 1771.<sup>262</sup>

His main line of approach when dealing with Clément was to accuse him of misusing the name of good taste.<sup>263</sup> He saw him as the opposite of what a critic should be. His critical approach was correct in theory, but he showed himself to be narrow-minded, and his criticism tended to be taken up with quibbling over minor points.<sup>264</sup> He ignored the real use to be made of the example of great writers: 'pour M. Clément un passage d'Horace ou de Boileau vaut mieux que toutes les raisons possibles'.<sup>265</sup> Above all, Clément was guilty of being swamped by personal jealousy and therefore blind to the essence of good criticism: admiration for great talent.<sup>266</sup>

Much of what La Harpe said was seen to be justified when Clément brought out a reply to Voltaire's *Epître à Boileau*.<sup>267</sup> La Harpe then accused him of giving definitive judgements where only personal preferences were called for.<sup>268</sup> The patriarch suitably thanked his defender.<sup>269</sup> In the same year, Clément brought out some *Nouvelles Observations critiques*<sup>270</sup> in which La Harpe was mishandled as much as his friends. It was with a fair amount of reason that La Harpe replied: 'J'avais discuté ses premières observations avec toute l'honnêteté qui convient à un homme de lettres et tous les égards qu'on peut mettre dans la dispute'.<sup>271</sup> It was with such haughty disdain that he was to continue to treat his adversary, with occasional outbursts of exasperation against this leading member of the 'manœuvres de la littérature, qui joignent à l'ignorance et au mauvais goût cet esprit de parti qui ne se nourrit que de préjugés, et ne s'occupe qu'à flatter les ennemis du génie et des grands écrivains'.<sup>272</sup>

This feud was to last for over thirty years. Although we are told that after the Revolution they embraced each other in public,<sup>273</sup> Clément still continued to be harsh in his reviews of La Harpe's work,<sup>274</sup> and it is doubtful that any real reconciliation was ever possible.

In the same vein, those who most frequently felt the bite of La Harpe's pen were those who owed allegiance to an older enemy of Voltaire, Elie Fréron. It was when discussing Fréron and the *Année littéraire* that La Harpe could be at his most scathing:

Il y a trop loin du ton de ces feuilles au style d'un homme de lettres, trop loin du métier que fait cet homme aux beaux arts que je cultive. Nous

n'avons aucun langage qui nous soit commun, et nous ne pouvons jamais ni nous parler, ni nous entendre.<sup>275</sup>

Fréron's protégé, Nicolas Gilbert, came in for equal disdain. Discussing his *Poète malheureux*, the Voltairian affected to see some promise in the young author, despite the disorder in his ideas and 'la foule des incorrections',<sup>276</sup> but feared that the hostility to himself that Gilbert had shown in his preface probably excluded any chance of the latter's taking any notice of his advice on questions of taste.<sup>277</sup>

He welcomed *Le Dix-huitième Siècle* in a similar way:

Qu'il nourrisse sa raison et son âme de meilleurs aliments; qu'il essaie quelque ouvrage qui puisse prouver qu'il a des droits à la gloire. Cela vaudra mieux que d'attaquer avec des armes impuissantes celle des hommes de génie, que l'on respecte toujours, lorsqu'on est fait pour leur ressembler.<sup>278</sup>

The advice was not taken, and Gilbert's arms were powerful enough to make all Paris memorize the lines against La Harpe from *Mon Apologie*.<sup>279</sup> The latter's all too serious tone left him unguarded.

The same pedantry abounds in his reactions to another of Fréron's collaborators on the *Année littéraire*, Sautreau de Marsy, who placed short hostile comments in the *Almanach des Muses* in general reviews of each year's new publications. La Harpe saw these comments as travesties of what an article should be: 'une notice doit donner une idée succincte du plan et de l'exécution d'un ouvrage'.<sup>280</sup>

We have already attempted to show that it was probably Dorat's association with Fréron that caused La Harpe to fall out with his once close friend.<sup>281</sup> In his articles, the former accused Dorat of negligent writing,<sup>282</sup> combined with a lack of originality.<sup>283</sup> His greatest crime, in the eyes of the purist, was his persistent love of *persiflage* or bantering.<sup>284</sup> During their momentary truce in 1772, they had a friendly exchange of letters<sup>285</sup> which La Harpe extolled as an example for other journalists to follow:

Vous pensez sans doute comme moi qu'un commerce pareil entre les gens de l'art, une discussion de bonne foi, renfermée dans les bornes de la modération et de la politesse, où les écrivains seraient les juges et les apologistes les uns des autres, honorerait les lettres autant qu'elles sont avilées par les scandales périodiques de ceux qui déchirent les grands talents pour avoir des lecteurs, et louent les auteurs médiocres pour avoir un parti.<sup>286</sup>

This was not, however, to remain the tone of later exchanges. By January 1774, La Harpe was again accusing Dorat of indulging in a 'langage décousu, néologique, vague et burlesque'.<sup>287</sup> Things reached a head when La Harpe gave a harsh review of Dorat's *Le Malheureux imaginaire* after its performance at the Comédie française on 7 December 1776.<sup>288</sup> When the play was printed, its

author inserted a general attack in the preface against 'ces détracteurs à gages qui mentent à eux-mêmes dans l'éloge ou dans la satire'.<sup>289</sup> He made clear whom he thus designated by joining the battle that was raging between La Harpe and the younger Fréron<sup>290</sup> with a letter to the *Année littéraire* on the theme of 'qu'il est risible ce petit homme'.<sup>291</sup> La Harpe returned to the attack with a review of the printed version of the play,<sup>292</sup> followed soon afterwards with a discussion of Dorat's prospectus for the *Journal des Dames*.<sup>293</sup> Typical of the tone that he adopted at this time to attack Dorat is that to be found in his treatment of the latter's *Le Faux Ibrahim*:

Quoiqu'on ait rarement envie d'être sérieux avec M. Dorat, c'est ici l'occasion de l'être un moment, parce qu'il est impossible de relever et de confondre par un exemple plus frappant, l'erreur aujourd'hui la plus commune et la plus contagieuse dans ceux qui composent et dans ceux qui jugent. Ils pensent ou feignent de penser que cette manière d'écrire est celle qui prouve de l'imagination. Point du tout; c'est celle qui en prouve l'absence totale.<sup>294</sup>

Dorat was guilty of the supreme crime of an over-loaded style. As opposed to the fiery prose of the ex-musketeer, we have here the cold disdain of the purist. It is this and not true slander that really characterizes La Harpe's journalism.

The same approach underlies his clashes with his most formidable enemy, Linguet. As far as ideas were concerned, he accused Linguet of sharing with J. J. Rousseau an inability to distinguish the good from the bad.<sup>295</sup> He was quick to associate Linguet with Fréron,<sup>296</sup> and in matters of literature, he complained that the former did not possess the first principles of criticism.<sup>297</sup> He alleged that he displayed general ignorance allied to an overweening belief in himself.<sup>298</sup> As in the case of Dorat, La Harpe lashed out against Linguet's style, especially his excessive use of metaphors.<sup>299</sup> All in all, however, Linguet remained far too elusive for him. As Diderot remarked, the pages that La Harpe wrote against Linguet were 'fort solides et encore plus dédaigneuses; mais c'est bouillir du lait à Linguet que de lui prêter le collet'.<sup>300</sup>

Indeed, the suppleness of Linguet's mind contrasted sharply with the rigidity of La Harpe's essentially dogmatic approach to criticism, which was allied to a certain ingenuousness. It would appear that he quite genuinely did not realize that in his harsh pronouncements he was above all serving the interests of a party. All he saw were the interests of good taste which coincided with the interests of Voltaire. This dictatorial attitude prepared him for a position of authority as a critic in later years, but in Voltaire's time his efforts were all too often used up in quarrels of only minor interest. Moreover, he lacked his master's fund of wit and all too often we can detect below his apparent disdain, his irritation with his enemies.

His other criticism was limited in nature during Voltaire's lifetime. Apart from his *Eloge de La Fontaine* and his *Eloge de Racine*, other true examples of

his criticism were restricted to prefaces such as the *Discours préliminaire* to his translation of Suetonius, his *Essai sur les trois tragiques grecs* — originally written as a preface for *Philoctète*<sup>301</sup> — and his refutation of Mercier's *Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique* which he placed at the head of the *drame Barneveldt*.

Nevertheless, he had already begun in 1774 another important critical work — his *Correspondance littéraire* with Paul of Russia and Andrei Shuvalov. Although it was not published until just before and after La Harpe's death, it covers the years 1774 to 1791 and forms an almost parallel commentary to much of his journalism. This work has, unfortunately, come down to us in a rather ragged form. There are many gaps, and many letters are obviously merged. The chronological order breaks down frequently. Moreover, La Harpe himself only supervised the publication of the letters dating from 1774 to the middle of 1785 and did not intend to publish the letters for 1790 and 1791. The publication of the remaining letters of 1785 to 1791 in 1807 was supervised by a committee of prominent men of letters who suppressed passages that they thought to be too controversial.<sup>302</sup> To cover up what had been done, the publisher, Migneret, then destroyed the drafts.<sup>303</sup>

In addition, there has always been doubt as to the fidelity of the text of even those letters published by La Harpe himself, as it has been tempting to believe that the Catholic zealot of 1801 would hardly want all of what he wrote before his conversion to appear uncorrected, although, certainly, his almost naively uncompromising nature made him fear neither the aftermath of reawakening old quarrels, nor the accusation of inconsequence.<sup>304</sup> We have now seen the originals of eighty-six letters written to Shuvalov,<sup>305</sup> seventeen of which were not included in the published correspondence for no apparently sinister reason. The manuscripts of those that were published reveal considerable editing, both by La Harpe and by the later committee. He toned down certain harsh comments about contemporaries, cut out details that he thought too intimate for publication, and, above all, tidied up the style. The originals also contain many holograph notes of a personal nature, in which we can see La Harpe trying to curry favour with Catherine, referring to his wife's bad health as well as his own, sending his wife's regards and enclosing his own publications. In the letters themselves there is some suppression of passages defending Voltairian deism. Some anti-clerical anecdotes have been omitted. However, he had had to deal with matters of religion with great care,<sup>306</sup> for it must be remembered that these letters were written for the rather stiff-minded Russian court and thus their author always remained a little wary of expressing himself too openly. In similar vein, he carefully avoided political discussion of any importance,<sup>307</sup> withholding, for instance, his real opinion of Joseph of Austria.<sup>308</sup> He is to be believed when he says<sup>309</sup> that he refused to modify the general accuracy of the text and merely refuted certain passages in footnotes, although these footnotes are sometimes inadvertently merged with the original text. As he claimed, his

main concern — questions of style apart — was to cut out verse and anecdotes of a licentious nature and certain passages which he had already published elsewhere, but even this suppression is far from complete. During the Revolution, at least three passages from the correspondence were used by its author in the *Mercure* and they all appear in the editions of the work.<sup>310</sup> There appears to have been little attempt to prune out matters dealt with in his newspaper articles or in the *Lycée*, although the Shuvalov manuscripts do show that he suppressed repetition within the body of the correspondence itself.

The fact is that there was no need for fundamental revision of the text, as La Harpe had always shown in these letters a certain reticence. This is seen particularly when he discusses his own work. There is no mention of *Virginie*, which could have been a source of embarrassment as he did not claim it until 1792, and when referring to the equally anonymous *Aux Mânes de Voltaire*<sup>311</sup> and *Molière à la nouvelle salle*,<sup>312</sup> he is as guarded as if he were still writing in the *Mercure*. In other words, he still kept the tone and basic approach of his journalism:

sauf la différence de forme et de ton qui doit se trouver entre des lettres particulières et des écrits publics. On va beaucoup plus vite dans une correspondance que dans un journal, l'esprit et le style y sont plus libres, et les jugements peut-être encore plus sévères, quoique moins régulièrement motivés.<sup>313</sup>

His judgements certainly tend to be harsher here than in his articles. Long before he attacked Voltaire publicly, his letters revealed his disappointment in the works of the latter in his old age.<sup>314</sup> Indeed, criticism still dominates. There are, it is true, discussions of legal affairs, especially those concerning Beaumarchais,<sup>315</sup> of the quarrels of the physiocrats,<sup>316</sup> of the plastic arts,<sup>317</sup> of various *faits divers*<sup>318</sup> and inventions.<sup>319</sup> He describes the Parisian scene, giving details of the visits of Joseph of Austria<sup>320</sup> and Voltaire,<sup>321</sup> and of the latter's death.<sup>322</sup> He relates various anecdotes.<sup>323</sup> His own interests make him deal at length with the activities of the Académie française and he records faithfully the difficulties of the Comédie française<sup>324</sup> and the Opera.<sup>325</sup> He refers to the music quarrel.<sup>326</sup> He quotes a great deal of light verse, and several letters contain little or nothing else.<sup>327</sup> Yet, in spite of this apparent diversity, the main body of the correspondence is taken up with the discussion of newly performed plays and recently published books in the light of good taste. La Harpe still speaks to Paul of Russia in the way he formerly addressed his audience in his articles and he still displays the same preoccupations. Two letters<sup>328</sup> serve as a sequel to his attack on Mercier and the study of the *drame* which preceded *Barneveldt*; many letters are devoted to fairly long discussions of a single work.<sup>329</sup> Apart from the many obituary notices of differing lengths,<sup>330</sup> La Harpe frequently took advantage of a recent publication, election to the Académie française, or similar event, to review the literary career of an author in the manner that he also

developed in the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*.<sup>331</sup> It is to be noted that in most cases such reviews contain attacks on opponents such as Linguet and Diderot.

In other words, one must not expect to see in this one-sided correspondence the gay spontaneity of that of Voltaire, or the sometimes scurrilous interest to be found in the work of Bachaumont, Métra, or even Grimm. For La Harpe, the main utility of this work was to keep him in touch with the everyday commerce of criticism following Voltaire's death, and to compensate for the loss of his own position as a journalist:

Mais aujourd'hui qu'il n'y a plus aucune police au Parnasse, la basse littérature s'est mise à parodier la bonne; elle a cru qu'en déraisonnant avec confiance et avec audace, elle prendrait l'air d'autorité qui convient à la raison et au goût.<sup>332</sup>

In his letters, as in his articles, La Harpe was preparing to take over from Voltaire as the supreme arbiter of good taste.

It was in the decade preceding the Revolution that he saw this desire almost fulfilled. With the opening of the Lycée in 1786, he at last had a permanent and respected platform from which to preach his *credo* of good taste. The lectures that he gave at the Lycée, the Ecoles normales and other institutions, later edited and published under the title of the *Lycée ou Cours de littérature ancienne et moderne*, remain by far and away his best known work. Raymond Naves has aptly called the *Lycée* a 'résumé critique du siècle'.<sup>333</sup>

Its plan is an ambitious one. La Harpe's contemporaries — who were only too eager to point out its faults — called it 'un ouvrage de littérature, et le plus considérable en son genre, que l'on ait encore écrit en français'.<sup>334</sup> Brunetière<sup>335</sup> is among many who have since supported its author's own claim that the work was the first to give a general but carefully thought out picture of the history of literature throughout the ages,<sup>336</sup> while admitting that the task was well-nigh impossible for one man.<sup>337</sup> Before the publication of the *Lycée*, most literary history had been confined to specialized works such as Rollin's *Traité des Etudes*<sup>338</sup> or d'Alembert's *Mélanges de littérature*,<sup>339</sup> to vast, mainly bibliographical, compilations such as the Abbé Goujet's *Bibliothèque française*<sup>340</sup> or J. P. Nicéron's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres de la République des lettres*,<sup>341</sup> or to the rather shapeless *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*.<sup>342</sup> Marmontel's *Eléments de littérature*<sup>343</sup> — the only comparable work of criticism of the time — reflects, with its alphabetical order reminiscent of the *Encyclopédie*, an interest in questions of good taste rather than in the discussion of literary history.

La Harpe, on the contrary, follows the Voltairian line of weaving this interest in taste into discussion of works of literature. Voltaire himself discussed writers from many periods in his belief that criticism should always be seen in action and illustrated by a text. A typical example of this approach is to be found in the



literary chapters of the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*<sup>344</sup> It is in like fashion that La Harpe leads his audience through the history of literature to find the key to good taste,<sup>345</sup> but he does so in discussing texts, and not by giving a list of precepts. It is a method of criticism which he continues in his *Commentaire sur Racine* — a kind of sequel to Voltaire's commentary on Corneille — where he is able to express his admiration for the classical theatre, while showing its glories with close references to the text.

Because of this approach, the *Lycée* is, in many ways, the sum of La Harpe's critical activity and, as such, it contains much of his earlier criticism, sometimes only slightly reworked. In it, one can still easily recognize, for instance, his *Essai sur les trois tragiques grecs*,<sup>346</sup> his long article on lyric poetry,<sup>347</sup> his *Réflexions sur Lucain*,<sup>348</sup> and various sections of his *Discours préliminaire des Douze Césars*.<sup>349</sup> He also further elaborated on articles that he had already re-edited for the 1778 edition of his collected works.<sup>350</sup> Apart from the discussion of many books already reviewed in his journalism or in his *Correspondance littéraire* when they first appeared, notable examples of sections based on earlier articles are passages on subjects as diverse as early French poetry and the work of Regnard.<sup>351</sup> Further general considerations on the *drame*<sup>352</sup> merely supplement his earlier reflexions on the genre. Beaumarchais' stormy life occupies as much place here as in the correspondence.<sup>353</sup> La Harpe's final preface to *Philoctète*, published in 1781, is reproduced almost textually in the *Lycée*.<sup>354</sup>

This amalgamate composition dictates to a certain degree the shape of the *Lycée*, which is further determined by La Harpe's limiting himself to what he considered to be the golden ages of literature:<sup>355</sup> the Ancients, from Homer to Seneca, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, with only passing glances at what happened in between. His dealings with foreign literature are extremely slight. These restrictions gave a certain clarity to the work which is divided into three parts, in each of which La Harpe discusses successively poetry and the dramatic arts, oratory, and finally history, philosophy and the minor genres.

Even so, the size of the work inevitably reveals failings in his erudition. His treatment of the Ancients tends to be superficial. Aristotle and Hesiod are only dealt with partially.<sup>356</sup> He scarcely touches on fictional works such as that of Longus, just as later he will pass over Petronius and Apuleius. He mistakenly attributes poems to Orpheus, at a time when Greek scholars were already highly sceptical of this tradition. He glosses over Sappho and forgets the existence of several fabulists. His treatment of Latin writers is rather better than that of the Greeks — something that again reflects his education. Latin historians fare better than their Greek counterparts. Oratory, dominated by Quintilian and Cicero, is dealt with more fully than any other form of literature of the Ancients. Yet again, the Romans are dealt with to more effect, perhaps because Cicero can stand greater comparison with the eighteenth century than Demosthenes.

Indeed, La Harpe's chapters on the Ancients are characterized above all by an interest in things French. Much of what he says gives one the impression that he knew more thoroughly works by other critics on Greek writers than the Greek writers themselves. His study of Aristotle would appear to owe something to the Abbé Batteux<sup>357</sup> and possibly Dacier — although there is no definite proof of this.<sup>358</sup> His chapter on epic poetry is modelled, at least vaguely, on Voltaire's *Essai sur la poésie épique*.<sup>359</sup> Born in a century in which criticism had been founded on discussion of the relative merits of the Ancients and the Moderns, La Harpe's review of the Ancients relies on continual references to French literature. Shocked by Aristophanes, and preferring Terence to Plautus, his study of ancient comedy is really a basis for a discussion of its influence on Molière and Regnard. In the same way, Greek tragedy leads him into a discussion on Voltaire, Brumoy and Louis Racine. The chapter on Longinus is interesting mainly for what he has to say about Boileau. In similar vein, he defends Homer against La Motte and reviews the quarrel between La Motte and Madame Dacier. His own polemics creep in even in these early chapters. The attack on Seneca is really directed at Diderot.<sup>360</sup>

Just as his knowledge of the Ancients reflected contemporary attitudes, so it is with the seventeenth century and the rise of French classicism that he enters his element. This is not to say that the remainder of the *Lycée* is above criticism. His preference for the noble genres makes him give too much space to some authors and not enough to others. Comedy is not dealt with as fully as tragedy. His treatment of seventeenth-century poetry is extremely sketchy. Only J. B. Rousseau gets proper mention in lyrical verse. Prose fares even worse. It would seem that Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* led La Harpe to discuss the Cardinal de Retz, almost to the exclusion of all other memorialists and moralists.

The eighteenth century is dealt with with even more partiality. It is, of course, difficult to evaluate the true worth of one's contemporaries or immediate predecessors, but it says something for the influence of fashion when one sees that in tragedy La Harpe devotes more space to Voltaire alone than to Corneille and Racine combined. Other passing considerations also tend to distort the shape of the third part of the work. For the sake of instruction, and in the name of good taste, he felt obliged to talk at length about what he called errors in judgement.<sup>361</sup> As a result, he deals with subjects that are only of limited interest to posterity. He delivers a lengthy attack on descriptive poetry as defined by Roucher<sup>362</sup> and gives a great deal of space to combating those who overrated Piron and Crébillon.<sup>363</sup> As we have already noted, much of the *Lycée* is made up of former articles and, despite revision and re-editing, many passages inevitably reflect the day-to-day nature of La Harpe's journalism.

The general tone of the *Lycée* is also marred by the intolerant right-wing attitude that La Harpe adopted after his conversion in 1794. Many chapters date from after this event and even the earlier ones were then heavily revised.<sup>364</sup>

If this conversion did not alter his literary convictions, it certainly changed his approach to certain authors. He revised his treatment of Bourdaloue as he now wanted to stress the excellence of the latter's ideas.<sup>365</sup> Eighteenth-century religious oratory has rather more space than its importance would warrant. While still admiring Voltaire as an artist, he never misses the opportunity of condemning his political and philosophical ideas.<sup>366</sup> Although we shall discuss the questions involved in this change of heart when we come to look at La Harpe's religious and political views in general, it must be said here that the under-current of thought in the whole of the *Lycée* is a condemnation of the French Revolution and its nefarious effects on the arts and society.<sup>367</sup> As in nearly all his post-revolutionary writings, La Harpe is judging his own past and that of his contemporaries.

The two volumes of *La Philosophie du dix-huitième siècle*, which form a supplement to the *Lycée*, and which replace his earlier lectures on the prose genres,<sup>368</sup> merely summarize the ideas that run through the rest of the work. Here, unfortunately, as is shown by Barbier,<sup>369</sup> La Harpe makes several serious mistakes of attribution and taxes Diderot, for instance, with works that he never wrote. In other words, La Harpe displays a certain ignorance and haste in matters that are a little outside the realm of his normal preoccupations.

To be fair to him, however, we must remember that the *Lycée* is incomplete. La Harpe was already a sick man when preparing for publication the later volumes of the work and we must allow him a few mistakes that the normal process of careful editing would have disposed of.<sup>370</sup> His publisher, Agasse, seems to have confined his editing to pruning certain rather controversial allusions.<sup>371</sup> In addition, La Harpe never finished his course of lectures,<sup>372</sup> and the attempts by Agasse and other editors to fill the resultant gaps with some of his earlier articles have not always shown a happy choice. The first added article on oratory contradicts what he says a hundred pages before on Bourdaloue. We suddenly revert to the pre-revolutionary La Harpe, and there is an inevitable break in tone. Later editors of the *Lycée* have done him a positive disservice by adding an article on Fabre d'Eglantine,<sup>373</sup> which shows moderate praise where in the body of the *Lycée* itself there had only been scathing disapproval. The unity of the work has not always been respected in these additions. It is difficult to see why an article on Chamfort's *Mustapha et Zéangir* should come in a chapter on light verse.<sup>374</sup>

In fact, the unity of the work was already severely affected by La Harpe's general rule of never talking about the living in the *Lycée*.<sup>375</sup> The only exception of any importance is when he compares the Abbé Delille with Roucher.<sup>376</sup> This system has the obvious advantage of helping to separate the work from the man, but it has in places led to a disruption in the basic plan of the *Lycée*. Following their deaths, Fabre d'Eglantine, Beaumarchais, Bièvre and Rochon de Chabannes are treated in passages looking like afterthoughts at the end of the

chapter on comedy. The death of Marmontel gives rise to a long digression on tragedy in the middle of a chapter on light opera.

These faults do not destroy the value of the *Lycée*. When analysing a passage, be it in a field where he is relatively ignorant as when dealing with the Greeks, La Harpe never fails to show how well he understood accepted good taste and his views still tell us a great deal about the eighteenth century. He is particularly good when talking about what he fully understands — the French classical theatre. His genuine admiration for its exponents gives him eloquence. He knows how to rise to oratory or descend to a conversational manner as matters require.<sup>377</sup> While he still tries to avoid personal abuse,<sup>378</sup> he can still dismiss opposition with a good use of ridicule.<sup>379</sup> He is careful to vary his method of attack. Sometimes, he debates with a questioner,<sup>380</sup> sometimes he compares two authors on the same subject.<sup>381</sup> He is not above quoting a passage for the pure joy of hearing it.<sup>382</sup>

The unity and value of the work lie in La Harpe's continual reference to the ever-present underlying dictates of good taste and his admiration for those who exhibit it. For La Harpe, the *Lycée* presented the opportunity of studying on a larger scale and more systematically than before the variations in form that never really departed from basic good taste.<sup>383</sup> It is here more than anywhere else that he best served Voltaire. At last in the position of authority that he had so long sought, he was able to exploit his belief in good taste and his love of it to the full and to put into the *Lycée* all that he had gained from a long and painful career as a critic.<sup>384</sup>

This authority was to last for a number of years. Under the Consulate and the Empire, the *Lycée* became the standard work of reference for a generation whose formal education had been interrupted by the upheavals of the Revolution. In 1810, it was awarded the prize of the Institut for the best work of its kind in the preceding twenty-five years.<sup>385</sup> This success was further confirmed by the restoration of the monarchy and perhaps encouraged by memories of the author's royalist convictions. In 1824, Stendhal found that the *Lycée* was far and away the best selling book in France.<sup>386</sup> Eighteen complete editions of the work appeared between 1815 and 1830.

However, the revolt against established good taste — begun even before La Harpe was born — had been gaining more and more strength. The ideas of Madame de Staël gradually replaced those of Boileau, and La Harpe, the defender of Boileau and Racine, became the symbol of resistance to change. He had, after all, generally opposed the influence of foreign literature,<sup>387</sup> and this influence now replaced what had become a stifling respect for the Ancients and the French seventeenth century. It opened up new fields of literary inspiration<sup>388</sup> and brought what La Harpe dreaded most of all, a mixing of the genres. Little by little, critics looked to unbridled emotion rather than to the admiration of former writers implicit in good taste<sup>389</sup> and to inspiration rather

than to rules.<sup>390</sup> The strictly limited relativity of taste allowed for by La Harpe was pushed aside and his models of perfection were seen to suit only a certain state of society and thus judged in the light of change.<sup>391</sup>

The development of this growing disaffection with La Harpe and all that he stood for is seen nowhere better than in the writings of Stendhal. In 1802, the latter wrote to his sister, telling her to read La Harpe in order to gain the basic principles of taste.<sup>392</sup> In 1811, he still felt that 'un homme qui ne connaît pas la poésie a plus de plaisir après avoir lu le *Lycée de La Harpe*'.<sup>393</sup> By 1804, however, he was already accusing the latter of a lack of true thought<sup>394</sup> and was soon complaining regularly about 'les dissertations sur le goût qui corrompent le goût, et vont jusque dans l'âme du spectateur fausser la sensation'.<sup>395</sup> He accused La Harpe of removing his audience from what he himself had insisted should be the basis of criticism, the text itself. In Stendhal's view, La Harpe had turned the French into bad judges, smothered genius, especially in the provinces,<sup>396</sup> and had catered to the need for the empty-headed 'de porter des idées toutes faites dans la conversation'.<sup>397</sup> Above all, Stendhal complained about the latent chauvinism of La Harpe's work.<sup>398</sup> In his *Racine et Shakespeare*, he consciously set out to counteract the influence of La Harpe and was only sorry that he could not reply to the *Lycée* with an equal number of volumes.<sup>399</sup> Above all, Stendhal wanted a new liberal approach to criticism:

Les bons livres sur les arts ne sont pas les recueils d'arrêts à la La Harpe; mais ceux qui, jetant la lumière sur les profondeurs du cœur humain, mettent à ma portée des beautés que mon âme est faite pour sentir, mais qui, faute d'instruction, ne pouvaient traverser mon esprit.<sup>400</sup>

With the triumph of Hugo in 1830, this dissatisfaction found itself resolved and La Harpe's influence was soon eclipsed.

Posterity has never replaced him in his former position of eminence as a critic, just as it has never returned to the works of the seventeenth century as models of perfection on which to base all composition. Moreover, La Harpe lacked Voltaire's originality, and his almost slavish obedience to the latter's cause, introducing into his criticism quarrels which meant little to succeeding generations, also limited his ability to survive his time. However, Sainte-Beuve, whose thoroughly relative and almost too historical approach to criticism is almost the opposite of La Harpe's, places him 'dans le vrai milieu de la tradition française' and insists that 'il est bon en un mot d'avoir passé par La Harpe, même quand on doit bientôt en sortir'.<sup>401</sup> His views are solidly based and make him a good teacher for those who would study the brilliance as well as the sterility of a past tradition.

## CHAPTER IX

# THEATRE

### 1. *Tragedy*

Despite his long career as a critic, it was in the theatre that the young La Harpe had most dearly wished to succeed. In the eighteenth century, success at the Comédie française was still the supreme opening to the joys of Parisian society and it was with the success of *Warwick* in 1763 that its author really established himself on the literary scene and won the confidence of Voltaire. This success was never fully repeated, but he continued to write for the stage up to 1785 and was to have more plays performed than any of his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

In his eyes, the theatre, or rather Voltairian tragedy, was the greatest glory of his time.<sup>2</sup> He called Voltaire the greatest genius to have exerted the art of tragedy<sup>3</sup> and *Zaïre* the greatest tragedy ever conceived.<sup>4</sup> He saw Voltaire as the bringer of new beauties,<sup>5</sup> but at the same time shared the latter's admiration for the classical tradition of French tragedy. Placing Voltaire in this tradition and praising him as a master of dramatic effect, of the 'peinture des mœurs' and of the dramatic expression of moral ideas, he also admired and wished to emulate to differing degrees Corneille and Racine.<sup>6</sup> In Corneille, he admired with reservation the power of genius and the sublime nature of his plots. Of Racine's plays, he wanted to imitate the structure and, above all, the language.<sup>7</sup> Like Voltaire in the latter part of his career La Harpe resisted all fundamental changes in the conception of classical tragedy and in his theoretical discussions echoed the commonplaces of seventeenth-century classical doctrine. He attacked Shakespeare and accused his eulogists of wanting to destroy one of France's greatest 'titres de gloire'.<sup>8</sup>

He saw in the influence of the English playwright a threat to the pomp and dignity of tragedy in which he strictly believed. Unlike opera, true tragedy did not flatter the senses, but created what he considered to be the height of art, an embellished illusion of nature.<sup>9</sup> He was a strong opponent of any attempt at mixing the serious and the light-hearted in the manner of Shakespeare, as he felt that this was a return to the tragi-comic that had been banished by Racine.<sup>10</sup> Convinced that the theatre was aimed at a polite educated audience,<sup>11</sup> he was quick to stress the limits of decency imposed by respect for certain social conventions.<sup>12</sup> The only innovations that he fully approved of were those that were put forward by Voltaire himself. He was a keen supporter of the latter's attempts to find new local colour<sup>13</sup> and welcomed spectacle and scenic effects in

so far as they did not replace the traditional merits of a good classical play.<sup>14</sup>

It was to preserve these traditional merits that he led an unending war against the exponents of the *drame* and its everyday subject matter. He never failed to point out the importance of the subject in a play, which, like everything else in art, called for a careful choice.<sup>15</sup> A good subject can save a basically bad play, just as genius can do nothing with an unsuitable theme. An unusual but interesting subject can even give originality to what is otherwise a thoroughly derivative work.<sup>16</sup> Dramatic probability is sometimes less important than an interesting plot.<sup>17</sup> However, the range of possible subjects is limited. Tragedy is essentially heroic and noble,<sup>18</sup> and if, as in the *drame*, we choose subjects from everyday life, we lose the benefit, not only of the illusion which results from the distance between the audience and the subject,<sup>19</sup> but of the power of tragedy itself. It is natural for us to feel greater pity for the misfortune of a man of importance who falls from a position of grandeur into adversity. The petty difficulties of the common man are too mundane to move us deeply.<sup>20</sup>

The writer must therefore take his subject from history, mythology or imagination. La Harpe felt that the last two lend themselves more effectively to tragedy<sup>21</sup> and claimed that Voltaire was the first to use his imagination to any effect in plays such as *Zaïre*, *Alzire* and *Mahomet*.<sup>22</sup> History is more difficult to handle since it demands a certain respect for historical fact,<sup>23</sup> but also needs to be freely rearranged and embellished to suit the dramatist's demands.<sup>24</sup> This the dramatist should not hesitate to do. While admitting a certain exaggeration, the characters have to behave in a manner that is both true to the ways of their time and likely to please the author's audience.<sup>25</sup> The very impact of the situation can cover up factual mistakes,<sup>26</sup> since dramatic probability is not a scholastic exercise, but merely dependent on the spectator's belief.<sup>27</sup> Although La Harpe insisted that the educated French with their humanist learning were like Greeks when watching the performance of a Greek play,<sup>28</sup> above all, the modern writer must study what is most pleasing to his audience which is not at the theatre for moral or historical instruction. The play must not present cold perfection, but situations and characters in which every man can immediately see himself. It must be true to human nature.<sup>29</sup>

These ideas are, of course, reflected in his own plays. Of the eleven tragedies that he completed, eight are based ostensibly on history, but reveal frequently so free an interpretation of historical fact as to make them qualify as plays based on imagination. This is particularly true of those on national themes from comparatively recent times.

By subscribing to the tradition of national drama with its picture of outstanding men from various countries, he followed a development that Voltaire had encouraged and in some ways introduced.<sup>30</sup> It was to become particularly popular following the success of Belloy's *Siège de Calais* in February 1765;<sup>31</sup> and for this fashion La Harpe had, to a certain extent, prepared the

ground by his own triumph with *Le Comte de Warwick*. The subject of this play was certainly one to please Voltaire, who admired the strength of character of the real Warwick, 'fécond en ressources, capable de tout',<sup>32</sup> and had already called his story 'une longue et sanglante tragédie'.<sup>33</sup> This description may well have implanted the idea of his play in La Harpe's mind, but there was precedent for the staging of English history. The most notable example of a French play on an English theme was Thomas Corneille's *Le Comte d'Essex*, performed as early as 1678. Some of the character of Essex is indeed reflected in the pride of Warwick, although this is probably due more to the heroic tradition than to any conscious borrowing. The story of Warwick had already been the subject of a French play by Louis de Cahusac, staged in 1742, but never printed.<sup>34</sup> La Harpe claimed that he had never read it.<sup>35</sup> There is also no reason to link his production with Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part iii*, as the subject of La Harpe's work is merely an incident in the English play (iii.3). To his predecessors in the theatre he thus owed little. His direct source for the story of the rivalry between Edward IV and Warwick is the Abbé Prévost's *Marguerite d'Anjou*.<sup>36</sup> He may also have got some general background details from Hume's *History of England*,<sup>37</sup> Rapin-Thoyras's *Abrégé de l'Histoire de l'Angleterre*<sup>38</sup> or d'Orléans' *Histoire des Révolutions d'Angleterre*,<sup>39</sup> although none of these standard histories mentions the relationship between Warwick and Elisabeth.

Even though La Harpe relies heavily on Prévost's historical novel for the basis of his plot, he alters the story considerably to suit his dramatic needs. Warwick returns from France where he has been arranging a marriage between Edward and Bonne de Savoie, sister-in-law to Louis XI, and while he has been away, Edward has fallen in love with his mistress, Elisabeth. Whereas in the play, Edward has not yet married Elisabeth, thus allowing for the building up of dramatic tension, in the novel, Warwick returns to find a *fait accompli*. Moreover, in real life Warwick was already married and a father, and for the sake of heroic dignity, La Harpe makes him a bachelor, and Elisabeth a maid. Prévost, unlike La Harpe, sees Elisabeth as a heartless schemer, who casts aside the earl without a thought, when offered the greater prize of the throne. The novelist also remains closer to fact by having Warwick refuse to forgive Edward and eventually die at Barnet in the fight against him; La Harpe, on the other hand, has everything prepared for a magnificent reconciliation.<sup>40</sup>

The latter maintained this free approach to his historical sources and his independence of his predecessors in later plays on similar themes. Indeed, in the next tragedy that he wrote on a national subject, *Pharamond*, he had no historical source worth speaking of. In the words of Eudes de Mézeray, when talking about the early French king Pharamond: 'on ignore ses actions, le lieu de sa sépulture, le nom de sa femme, et celui de ses enfants, hormis de Clodion, qui lui succéda'.<sup>41</sup> There had already been a *Pharamond* by Louis de Cahusac,<sup>42</sup> not to mention La Calprenède's novel of this name, but apart from their titles, La Harpe's play



and these other works have nothing in common. The subject of his play was invented.

It was his desire not to imitate Piron's *Gustave Wasa*<sup>43</sup> that was one cause of the failure of his next tragedy, *Gustave*. At the same time, it did not escape critics that there were superficial similarities between the last work and a translation by Maillet du Clairon of an English play on the same subject by Henry Brook.<sup>44</sup> La Harpe certainly owes rather more to Brook's story than to the history of the real Gustav as it is found in the Abbé Vertot's *Histoire des Révolutions de Suède*,<sup>45</sup> or in the rather fragmentary version given by Raynal in his *Anecdotes historiques*,<sup>46</sup> but in fact he relied on his imagination for quite important features of his plot.

The hero of his *Menshicoff ou les Exilés* had already been the subject of a tragedy in one act by Pierre de Morand, performed at the Théâtre italien in 1738,<sup>47</sup> and of Dorat's *Zulica*, staged at the Comédie française in 1760.<sup>48</sup> Both these productions showed Menshicoff in his days of glory as the favourite of Peter the Great. These did not influence La Harpe, but on his own admission<sup>49</sup> he turned for some details to *Les Caprices de la Fortune* by P. J. B. Nougaret and J. H. Marchand, a play in which, as in La Harpe's work, the hero is shown after his disgrace. This was printed in 1773, although not performed until 1776.<sup>50</sup> One cannot, however, as has been suggested,<sup>51</sup> call it La Harpe's main source for his tragedy. It may have given him the idea of a Siberian setting and the presence of a character who has suffered at Menshicoff's hands. Nougaret and Marchand's play is, on the other hand, centred around a kind of Romeo and Juliet situation in which Menshicoff's son falls in love with the daughter of his enemy, now also exiled, whereas La Harpe invented a situation which revolves around Menshicoff's love for his ex-wife.

For the story of the real Menshicoff, La Harpe said<sup>52</sup> that he turned to Voltaire's *Histoire de l'Empire de Russie*,<sup>53</sup> to Formey's *Journal de Pierre-le-Grand*,<sup>54</sup> to the *Anecdotes du Nord*, by P. A. de La Place and J. F. de La Croix,<sup>55</sup> and to the *Mémoires historiques, politiques et militaires sur la Russie*, by General C. H. von Manstein,<sup>56</sup> which was also used as a source by Marchand and Nougaret.<sup>57</sup> He probably also consulted J. M. Lacombe's *Histoire des Révolutions de l'Empire de Russie*.<sup>58</sup> Yet, despite this long list of sources, he departed from historical fact in all but the general background to the play. He invented a divorce between Menshicoff and his wife, as well as a projected marriage between Menshicoff and the Tsarina Catherine on the grounds that there was at the time a rumour to this effect.<sup>59</sup> In the real story it is Menshicoff's wife and not his daughter who dies on the journey to Siberia. The villain of the piece, Vodemar, is entirely fictitious, as are all his machinations, and the denouement in which Menshicoff's ex-wife Arzénie stabs Vodemar at the altar steps is, as the author says, an atrocious crime 'emprunté d'une autre histoire',<sup>60</sup> which is pretty obviously *Méropé*.

In his last play on a national theme, *Jeanne de Naples*, he again elaborated on historical fact. It appears<sup>61</sup> that his main source for this work was Voltaire's *Essai sur les Mœurs*,<sup>62</sup> although he almost certainly consulted the Abbé Mignot's *Histoire de Jeanne Ire, reine de Naples*.<sup>63</sup> However, as in *Menzicoff*, he only really relies on history for the setting of the play. Although the real queen was said to be implicated in the death of her first husband and the king of Hungary did come to Naples to avenge his brother's death, she did not kill herself as a result of it and married Tarente, who here becomes a villain who spurns her. La Harpe invents a story of rivalry between the King of Hungary and Tarente for the hand of Amélie, a relation of Jeanne's.

In these plays, therefore, the subject is often little more than a nominal excuse for introducing new local colour in stock situations which were not going to make the audience feel far from home. This also applies to his two tragedies on oriental themes, although their subjects did allow him to indulge in particularly rich spectacle. In *Les Barmécides*, he appealed to the eyes with the magnificent tombs and family sepulchres which appear in the first and last acts, reminiscent of Voltaire's *Sémiramis*. It was possibly his somewhat grudging admiration for the scenic effect of the funeral pyre<sup>64</sup> in Lemierre's *Veuve du Malabar*<sup>65</sup> that incited him to introduce one in *Les Barmécides*. In choosing an Arabian subject in *Les Barmécides*, he was following the line of Voltaire's *Mahomet*, although he may have been encouraged in his choice by Cordier de Saint-Firmin's *Zaruema*, performed in 1762<sup>66</sup> and with which La Harpe's play shows some similarities. In both works, an important character has been thought dead, the ruler plans a suitably useful marriage for his son, there is a plot against the throne sealed with an oath, and a young warrior, presumed to be an orphan, turns out to be of noble birth. At the same time, other features in *Les Barmécides* remind us of La Harpe's *Pharamond* where the action is equally dependent on recognition, and where there is also rivalry between the hero and the heir presumptive to the throne. The author denied<sup>67</sup> the accusations of those who said that *Les Barmécides* ended in the manner of *Cinna*,<sup>68</sup> but in truth the whole tragedy smacks of Corneille with its plotting by a favourite against his lord and a strong heroine reminiscent of Emilie. Professor Lancaster points out the resemblance between Saëd and Couci in Voltaire's *Adélaïde du Guesclin*.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Saëd is in the same position as Narbas in Voltaire's *Mérope*.

La Harpe's initial source for this work appears<sup>70</sup> to be the Abbé Augier de Marigny's *Histoire des Arabes sous le gouvernement des Califes*,<sup>71</sup> which had been previously used as a source by the novelist Madame Falques in *Abbassai, histoire orientale*.<sup>72</sup> As he wrote much of this play while staying in Ferney, he also probably consulted Voltaire's copy<sup>73</sup> of Barthélemy d'Herbelot de Molainville's *Bibliothèque orientale*,<sup>74</sup> an encyclopaedia of oriental tales from which Voltaire himself composed lines on the fate of Barmécide.<sup>75</sup> As we have seen, however, this romanesque production owes considerably less to Arabia than to other

French playwrights, and La Harpe himself admitted that he had only turned to the original story for the friendship of the caliph, Aaron, for his minister, Barmécide, the latter's marriage and subsequent disgrace, and for the character of these two personages.<sup>76</sup> In other words, the question of characterization apart, he only relies on the story for the setting, as all these events take place before the curtain rises.

He is more faithful to his sources in *Les Brame*s. In this tragedy, he merely changes names and has the son of the Mogul Emperor going to Benares without his father's knowledge, whereas in the original story the hero is the son of the emperor's secretary, sent to discover the Brahmin's secrets. However, as we have shown elsewhere,<sup>77</sup> once again the movement of the plot owes a great deal to the author's imagination.

In general, he showed greater respect for his sources when dealing with ancient history or classical legend. He was to insist, for instance, that his *Philoctète* was based faithfully on the work by Sophocles.<sup>78</sup> He wanted to refute<sup>79</sup> Pierre Brumoy's claim that the play could not appeal to a modern audience,<sup>80</sup> and said that, on the contrary, it was the only Greek play that immediately presented itself naturally for performance on the French stage.<sup>81</sup> He even ended his version in the same way as Sophocles with the arrival of Hercules, although he was careful to point out that this was no mere *deus ex machina*; that Hercules had a definite place in a play that was centred around his weapons; and that his appearance did not offend dramatic probability as it was 'conforme aux idées religieuses du pays où se passe l'action'.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, questions of local colour apart, as in Voltaire's *Sémiramis*, the prestige of the story made the audience capable of accepting the supernatural. In *Philoctète*, La Harpe also wanted to counteract the effect of Chateaubrun's play of the same name, which had been performed at the Comédie française in 1755<sup>83</sup> and which, as he pointed out, owed little to Sophocles apart from the subject.<sup>84</sup> He condemned Chateaubrun for destroying Philoctetes' solitude by bringing in a daughter and thus producing a play 'entièrement dans le goût de la galanterie moderne'.<sup>85</sup> He wanted to meet the challenge of the subject as presented by Sophocles, of a play without love and even without a female rôle, something that had not been attempted since Voltaire's *La Mort de César*.<sup>86</sup>

This respect for Sophocles contrasts a little with the treatment of Euripides in La Harpe's abortive *Polixène*. The latter play clearly reflects his conception of tragedy. He disliked the double action in Euripides' *Hecuba* and only considered the story of Polyxena and Pyrrhus to be of any real interest.<sup>87</sup> Following the example of La Fosse, and perhaps inspired by Racine's *Iphigénie*, he shows Pyrrhus in love with Polyxena. This, incidentally, appears to rule out Petitot's suggestion that La Harpe began *Polyxène*, following the success of *Philoctète*.<sup>88</sup> We wonder whether he would introduce love interest when he had just recently so heartily condemned it in contemporary imitations of Greek theatre.

If anything, the example of *Philoctète* seems to have taught him that he could be more certain of success by showing greater respect for his sources. This is seen in his last plays, *Coriolan* and *Virginie*, both dealing with subjects from ancient history. Admittedly, he gave fairly free treatment to the original story in his first play on such a theme, *Timoléon*. Timoleon had already appeared on the French stage in a play by Saint-Germain in the seventeenth century,<sup>89</sup> and a synopsis in French of a German play by G. Behrmann had been published by von Bielfeld in 1752.<sup>90</sup> The only similarities between La Harpe's play and these earlier works spring from their common source, Plutarch. The story is also told by Diodorus Siculus<sup>91</sup> and Cornelius Nepos,<sup>92</sup> but only in Plutarch do we find a description of Timoleon's mother, who plays so important a part in La Harpe's play. Plutarch also describes how Timoleon covers his face with his cloak at the murder of his brother, just as he does in the play, and it is from Plutarch that we learn that Timoleon once saved his brother's life, a fact that the playwright makes much of. The latter has, however, made a number of important changes in the story, although his approach is still not as free as when dealing with national or oriental themes. Apart from some changes in names, the most notable being that of Timoleon's mother from Demariste to Isménie, he alters the ages of the brothers. He places Timoleon's Sicilian expedition before rather than after Timophanes' murder. In the play, Timophanes has not yet taken over power, and love interest is introduced in the person of Eronime.

In *Coriolan*, however, La Harpe does not move far from his sources which he names<sup>93</sup> as Livy,<sup>94</sup> Plutarch, and the Abbé Vertot.<sup>95</sup> He probably also consulted Rollin's *Histoire romaine*.<sup>96</sup> His main source for *Virginie* was again Livy,<sup>97</sup> together once more with Vertot<sup>98</sup> and Rollin.<sup>99</sup> The stories of both these plays were well known. They had been dramatized many times before, and there was little room left for personal improvisation. His inventions in *Virginie*, for instance, are limited in nature. He denied<sup>100</sup> any link between his play and that of Campistron, whose *Virginie* was at that time the best known play on the subject, but in fact he borrowed from the latter the name of Virginie's mother, Plautie, the setting of Virginie's wedding day, and Appius' passion for her. As a reaction to Campistron, however, he returned to history by having Virginie stabbed on the stage by her father, a character who has no part in the other production. His other main innovation was to make Virginie's nurse a party to the plot to have the girl declared the daughter of a slave. In both *Coriolan* and *Virginie*, he pays tribute to the contemporary taste for spectacle, in the former play with the statue of Jupiter in Rome and with the altar and other decorations in the Volscian camp, and in *Virginie* with flaming torches, crowd scenes and many silent characters, but otherwise these plays still reflect his respect for older traditions in the French theatre.

It was because of this respect that he argued that a successful play depended on a delicate equilibrium of all its ingredients.<sup>101</sup> Strong feelings and passion do

not stand alone.<sup>102</sup> Just as a tragic happening does not in itself constitute a tragedy, so subject, characters and emotions are all dependent on a careful development of plot and action.<sup>103</sup> He was sure that Shakespeare would have written better plays had he respected the rules of construction as did Racine.<sup>104</sup> However, for all their basic commonsense, these rules can be interpreted in various ways to suit the dramatist's immediate needs.<sup>105</sup> It is dramatic probability that decides on the use made of the rules, and, while always remaining faithful to the idea of the unity of action, and convinced that the art of the good playwright is to combine variety of interest in the plot with the supreme interest in the hero,<sup>106</sup> he frequently showed scant respect for other unities, especially for that of place.<sup>107</sup> There is a change of scene in most of his plays. On the other hand, although he allowed night to cover the stage during the action in *Les Brame*s, *Jeanne de Naples* and *Virginie*, as a general rule, he paid slightly more attention to the unity of time and favoured a plot in which the crisis is already prepared before the curtain rises.

An example of how he was willing to sacrifice the unity of place, while preserving that of time, is seen in *Coriolan*. Fearing to violate the unities of place and time, his many predecessors dealing with this subject had had to confine the plot to the attempts made to win Coriolan back to the cause of Rome and had fallen foul of the difficulty of sustaining interest after the interview between Coriolan and his mother.<sup>108</sup> To get round this difficulty, it was necessary, if not to disregard the rules, at least to interpret them liberally. Inspired at least indirectly by Shakespeare, he remembered an idea put forward by La Motte and discussed by Voltaire in the *Préface d'Œdipe*.<sup>109</sup> According to this idea Coriolan should be seen to be thrown out of Rome in the first act, accepted by the Volscians in the third, and then lay siege to Rome in the fourth. Voltaire dismissed the plan as containing three separate subjects, but, while not following La Motte too closely, La Harpe was convinced that it was possible to link these three events as the 'parties successives et nécessaires d'une même action, naissant du caractère et des passions d'un même personnage'.<sup>110</sup> In fact, the plan is less adventurous than it might at first sight appear. By bringing the events together, and by having the Volscians already below the walls of Rome, the unity of time is in no way violated, and the unity of place is no more disregarded than in his other plays where the characters frequently have to move from a palace to a prison or a temple.

In other questions of construction of plot, La Harpe showed himself to be an utter traditionalist, advocating careful preparation for the movement of the action. He maintained, for instance, that the exposition — a part of the play which is often neglected — must be laid with care, as everything that happens later on in the play must result from what is revealed in it.<sup>111</sup> Everything must be fully explained from the beginning.<sup>112</sup> The characters must remain true to the picture that we have of them in the exposition, and when there is a violent change

because of great passion, this must be part of the violence of the character and not contrary to its composition.<sup>113</sup> There must be a continual progression of interest, with no falling off in danger.<sup>114</sup> The action must progress with every scene.<sup>115</sup> While he considered an episodic plan to be less interesting,<sup>116</sup> he approved of the introduction of incidents which, while following closely the natural movement of the play in its crescendo of passion, held back the denouement.<sup>117</sup> He liked dramatic irony.<sup>118</sup> Recognitions, while liable to misuse, were not to be despised as a dramatic device.<sup>119</sup> He was fond of dramatic turns of events,<sup>120</sup> although he had to admit that it was frequently difficult to make them seem likely.<sup>121</sup> All in all, however, he remained a strong supporter of a simple action with little or no sub-plot, but enriched with a good use of feeling and character.<sup>122</sup> Tragedy is not a guessing game, and 'plus l'esprit est occupé, moins le cœur est ému'.<sup>123</sup>

He showed similar respect for tradition in his choice of incentives in tragedy, by remaining faithful to the idea of *catharsis* through pity and terror.<sup>124</sup> Joy and sorrow must alternate,<sup>125</sup> and tragedy must show both grandeur and the pathetic.<sup>126</sup> For *La Harpe* there were two kinds of interest possible in tragedy: that in which we earnestly hope for the happiness and safety of the hero, and that in which we share his unhappiness or excuse his faults because of the passion that is destroying him.<sup>127</sup> He personally preferred the first type<sup>128</sup> with a hero showing strength of character, and although his feeling for admiration as a dramatic device cooled off in later life,<sup>129</sup> he had earlier praised it.<sup>130</sup> He did not approve of Corneille's cowards, as he felt that humiliation and weakness had no place in tragedy.<sup>131</sup> Passiveness and fatality were likewise to be banned.<sup>132</sup>

For him, as for most classically-minded dramatists, passion was the keynote of all tragedy, and the denouement was a direct result of it.<sup>133</sup> Here again, he showed himself to be an enemy of the *drame* and of its direct moralizing.<sup>134</sup> Crimes and vengeance are allowed in tragedy providing that they spring from strong passion.<sup>135</sup> We pity the worst criminal when he is faced by the pangs of conscience.<sup>136</sup> The only law is that of empathy. Monsters the characters may be, their passion must be capable of arousing fellow-feeling. One of his main arguments against Shakespeare, for instance, was that the latter showed madness instead of true passion; that madness did not excite real pity or terror.<sup>137</sup> What is really strange is very near the ridiculous.<sup>138</sup>

Still insisting on the necessity for pity and terror, he was critical of various tendencies to supplant or strengthen them with other feelings. We have seen how he avoided introducing a love interest in *Philoctète*. It was an experiment which he repeated in *Coriolan*, and in the majority of his plays it remains in the background, not at the centre of the action. He felt that all too often the love interest in the French theatre had become cold, facile, and even monotonous.<sup>139</sup> It is not always suitable for the dignity of tragedy and it has no place in those tragedies that show great events and men of history.<sup>140</sup> In the same way, he dismissed the

horror of Crébillon as displeasing,<sup>141</sup> although he was influenced by the latter in so far as he showed murder on the stage in *Timoléon* and in the *drame Barneveldt*, and brought in ferocious characters such as Vodemar in *Menzicoff*. If horror is to be used, it must be used with great care. One does not want details, but the expression of a direct and immediate great passion.<sup>142</sup> Remaining true to the idea that all art is an embellishment of nature, he argued that in even the most unhappy ending, there should be something to please the spectator, be it a feeling of consolation as in *Zaïre*,<sup>143</sup> or one of justice.<sup>144</sup> Only then can tragedy achieve a perfect balance of sentiment that is both pleasing and moral: 'La grande difficulté, le grand mérite est de trouver le degré d'émotion où l'on aime à s'arrêter, et de n'exciter la pitié ou la terreur que jusqu'au point où elle est un plaisir'.<sup>145</sup>

His first and most successful dramatic production, *Warwick*, illustrates well what he demanded of a tragedy. Sending it to Voltaire, he was above all proud of having written a work of the greatest simplicity.<sup>146</sup> There are no scenic effects as in some of his later plays, and the action relies entirely on the clash of personality between the characters. There is no real sub-plot, as the only possible second source of interest, the fate of Marguerite, the wife of the deposed king, is linked directly to the outcome of the quarrel between Edward and Warwick. The play is constructed in the purest classical terms, with, admittedly, La Harpe's usual laxity over the unity of place as we move between the palace and the Tower of London. The unity of time is strictly observed. Edward is to marry Elisabeth on the evening of the same day, and when the curtain rises we are waiting for the return of Warwick, which will precipitate the action. La Harpe manages to expound the whole initial situation in the very first scene with Marguerite unfolding her plans to her confidant. Warwick, Edward and Elisabeth are described before they are seen. Each act follows a new movement in the action. In Act I, the exposition is quickly set, and all is made ready for the arrival of Warwick. Act II shows the precipitation of the crisis with a series of short scenes in which the suspense increases progressively, while the author holds back the action with a careful use of dramatic irony. Everyone knows that Warwick has been tricked, but he refuses to believe it. Act III ends with the crisis as Warwick confronts the king and is led off a prisoner. Act IV brings a new chance of hope, and Act V the tragic denouement.

La Harpe is careful to alternate joy and despair, but, at the same time, the action relies heavily on three dramatic turns of events. The first comes when Warwick finally but suddenly realizes that he has been deceived (ii.6). The single word 'Elisabeth' uttered by his friend, Summer, and repeated unconsciously by Warwick, destroys his disbelief that Edward could have deceived him. The second arises with his return to honour and glory in Act IV, when he sees as in a moment of inspiration that he should not take advantage of the opportunity for revenge against the king, but rather rally to him (iv.7). The third and last

dramatic change comes with Warwick's death in the midst of public rejoicing, in a manner reminiscent of the ending of Voltaire's *Tancrède*.

The last two sudden changes in the action are open to criticism, although it is possible to accept Warwick's change of heart while in prison in so far as it fits in with the Cornelian tradition of heroic generosity. The same cannot be said of the turn of events in the final act. The clash of passion that has dictated the movement of the action through the first four acts is almost incidental to the denouement. This last act — in which much of the action takes place in a narrative form — has every appearance of being tacked on. The crisis and its resolution are already over. The unity of the action has depended on Warwick's attitude to Edward, and this problem has now been solved. Marguerite's own desire for vengeance is too cold and too far from the centre of interest to suffice as a reason for Warwick's death. If he had to die, he should have done so as a direct result of his pride, and not as a result of a woman's scheming. This weak ending mars the otherwise careful construction of the plot.

This weakness in the ending is stressed by the writer's failure to present us with truly credible characters. They tend to fit too neatly into appointed positions in the plot. Lady Nevil — a strange name for a friend of Warwick's enemies — Summer and Suffolk are merely confidants who obviate the necessity for monologues. Marguerite is a little too much a villainess, whereas Warwick, Edward and Elisabeth all suffer from the contrary tendency to make them worthy of the nobility of tragedy. They appear rather colourless when compared to their real-life counterparts.

Warwick, true to the romance and heroic idealism of the seventeenth century, is only interested in his love and the defence of his good name. He is a warrior full of inflexible pride and 'impétueuse audace' (i.1). His return from France affords him the opportunity of revelling in his glory, which, as in Corneille, has to be a public one. He needs a mirror for his own esteem :

Ces transports, cet hommage,  
Tout ce peuple à l'envi volant sur le rivage,  
Prêtent un nouveau charme à mes félicités.

(ii.1)

Fully conscious of his own worth, his first reaction on learning that Edward no longer wants to marry Bonne de Savoie is anger that he should be thought to have given his word to the French king in vain. When he finally learns the truth about Edward's plans his fury knows no bounds (ii.6). He sees Edward's moves as a direct attack on his good name. It is only when he is restored to power that he will consider helping Edward :

Peut-être l'on préfère avec quelque plaisir  
L'orgueil de pardonner à l'orgueil de punir.

(iv.4)

He refuses to be the 'jouet d'un traître' (ii.7).



The trouble with Warwick as a dramatic character is that he is too lucid. He claims to cherish the heroic ideal of defending love and honour together. He fears above all that he should be judged: 'Infidèle à sa gloire autant qu'à sa tendresse' (ii.7). In spite of this, however, his love is never really in question and plays very little part here. He never has any doubt as to how he should defend his honour. Unlike Rodrigue, for instance, Warwick knows from the outset that he must protect his love by defending his honour. This is coupled to a never-ending righteous rage that even Elisabeth is unable to calm (iv.4). Remaining exactly as we first see him from beginning to end, his behaviour in Act IV can be explained fully by the change in the circumstances rather than by any development on his part. Admittedly, we are faced with a study of inflexibility, but the rigidity in the composition of his character interferes with the flow of the play. This is emphasised by the importance of Warwick in the play. Perhaps over anxious to stress the unity of action in which all incidents must directly concern the hero,<sup>147</sup> and where he must stand out from the other characters,<sup>148</sup> La Harpe neglects here and in several of his other plays the importance of seeing that the other characters have their own degree of interest as well.<sup>149</sup> Here, Warwick tends to obliterate the rest of the cast.

This is not to say that the other characters are totally devoid of interest. The character of Edward, for instance, is more subtle than that of Warwick. In spite of his faithless behaviour, he is a worthy king. The weak Henry VI — who is described in a way that reminds us of Corneille's Prusias or Félix (i.1) — is kept well off the stage. Edward, on the other hand, shows himself as a man who is not to be intimidated. He treats Marguerite with respect, but reminds her in no uncertain terms that he is now her king (i.2). At the same time, he betrays an interesting contrast between his noble language and kingly utterances and his private doubts and fears as a victim of guilty passion (i.3). Nevertheless, even though he is secretly consumed by passion, he is no Racinian monster, and here again lies another weakness in the play. He is no tyrant. He has not forced Elisabeth to marry him. She has only agreed in order to gratify her ambitious father. Above all, the king wants to be reasonable with Warwick (i.4) and even in his fury against the latter, when he has the Earl dragged off to prison, he still only wants him to be punished: 'Je veux son châtement, et ne veux point sa perte' (iii.5). It is as if La Harpe wishes to restore the convention in which no king should countenance insolence from a subject, and still show himself to be the subject's superior. We are tempted to say of Edward, what La Harpe said of Voltaire's Genghis Khan: 'Avec le caractère de modération qu'il a montré, et l'amour qui le possède, on est trop sûr qu'il ne fera de mal à personne: plus de terreur, plus de pitié'.<sup>150</sup> In other words, Edward is too reasonable and Warwick is never really in danger. Both Edward and Warwick are too obviously studies of a type — the one a king, the other a warrior lord. They remain fixed as they first appear and do not develop and acquire depth.

The character of Elisabeth has been sacrificed in La Harpe's desire to put manly passions first. Her love for Warwick is an infinitely legitimate and reasonable one. She quite simply loves in the warrior 'ce vertueux courage' (iii.4). She fears for his life. Nevertheless, time and again, her main fears are for her country. She is preoccupied with the dangers of civil war and the power of Marguerite.

The character of the latter was, of all the four main characters that which was least well received. Grimm complained that she would never have been allowed to roam around the palace.<sup>151</sup> Other critics said that it was unfair to make an illustrious historical figure responsible for a crime that she had never committed.<sup>152</sup> La Harpe transformed the magnificent defender of the house of Lancaster into a schemer, albeit a powerful one. This would have been irrelevant, if it had been more dramatically successful. It is she who is supposed to be ever present but hidden, directing the actions of the other players, but, in the final analysis, she is seen to have little to do with the main action of the plot.

Her first entry is very promising. She reminds us of Arsinoë in *Nicomède*. She too is stronger than her husband. She has shown the determination of an Andromaque in fighting for the freedom of her son. However, these qualities are not seen during the action of the play, and when the other characters refer to her, it is always as an example of cunning and of danger: 'Elle, qui n'eut jamais que l'intérêt pour loi' (iv.4). Her arranging of the killing of Warwick seems to spring from sheer spite. One of the translators of the play into English, Thomas Franklin, tried to remedy this by giving her a stronger motive, and having her stab Warwick herself when she sees him standing over the body of her child.<sup>153</sup> In La Harpe's play, she is merely the mirror of the feelings of the other characters.

Part of his failure in the theatre, at least in early plays, is due to his inability to escape from the mould of *Warwick*, accentuating its faults rather more than its qualities. In *Timoléon*, the first act is again taken up with waiting for the hero's return in an already tense situation. Again in Act II, the conquering hero returns to find trouble at home. While Timoléon has been away, his brother Timophanes has fallen in love with Eronime the daughter of the king of Argos, who will only agree to their marriage on the understanding that Timophanes will declare himself king of Corinth. This cannot please the republican Timoléon. The only difference in the development of the plot is that here the confrontation between the hero and his antagonist comes rather earlier in the play. The general movement of the action, however, remains the same, as the crisis is held back by the battle with the Spartans between the second and third acts and comes at the end of the third with Timophanes' final return to his ambition for the crown. Just as in *Warwick*, the exposition and the first three acts are considerably better constructed than the rest of the play, and the audience in 1764 certainly found this so.<sup>154</sup> In the last two acts, inspiration seems to have deserted La Harpe.

The fourth repeats the movement of the third with Eronime imitating Timophanes and showing herself in her turn prepared to abandon her plans for marriage. The fifth act ends with the murder on the stage of Timophanes, an act of horror which is not typical of La Harpe's theatre. Perhaps dissatisfied with the effect of the *récit* in the fifth act of *Warwick*, La Harpe decided to show on the stage an act that was at least justified by history. Be this as it may, the result is no more satisfactory. Timophanes has not yet committed wrong, and, although he may possibly do wrong in the future and represents a danger to an almost sacred conception of a republic, these motives can hardly satisfy the audience as reasons for his execution.

If this scene seems revolting, it is also because of a fault in the general construction of the plot, as our interest is divided between Timoléon and his republican cause and the love affair and the ambitions of Timophanes and Eronime. Timoléon fails as a tragic hero as he is never personally in danger, and his political considerations are better suited to forming a backdrop but not the motive for tragedy. In the same way, Timophanes' passion and resultant ambition should dominate the plot and not be sacrificed to the overriding themes of civic duty. Timophanes' murder, Isménie's curse on Timoléon, and the latter's despair all appear unfortunate and rather unnecessary.

The lack of true motivation in the plot is again stressed by the disproportion between the characters. Timoléon and Timophanes form a contrasting pair in the manner of *Warwick* and Edward, or even of Corneille's Horace and Curiaque:

L'un fier et courageux, citoyen inflexible;  
L'autre, dans ses vertus plus doux et plus sensible.

(i.1)

While owing something to Voltaire's Brutus, Timoléon is undoubtedly modelled on *Warwick*. He too is a man of great valour, a 'bras invincible' (i.1), knowing his own worth: 'Quand on veut être libre, il faut l'être par soi' (ii.3). He submits all considerations to the overriding 'devoir d'être juste' (iii.2). It is here that he is less satisfying than *Warwick* in that in him there is not even the appearance of a struggle between opposing forces such as love and duty. Timoléon is not jealous of his brother and only acts as a 'citoyen sévère' (i.4). Timophanes respects him (iii.2), and their quarrel is purely a political matter (iv.3). His mother's pleas for Timoléon to abandon his plan to kill Timophanes fall on deaf ears (iv.4), as the republican's rigid determination to serve the public cause makes him a stranger to pity (i.5). Cratès, plotting to kill Timophanes, knows that family ties will not weaken Timoléon's purpose: 'Je parle devant vous comme devant les dieux' (iv.3).

Again, as in *Warwick*, the hero's direct antagonist is slightly more complex, but again rather unsatisfactory. It is difficult to believe that Timophanes was strong enough to put Eronime's father back on the throne of Argos, or to understand why, if he did so, he should now allow this king to dictate terms for

his marriage. He shares some of Edward's qualities. He can put on a good face. Like Edward, when the latter spoke haughtily to Marguerite (*Warwick*, i.2), Timophanes tells Timoléon: 'Je veux votre amitié, sans craindre votre haine' (iv.2). He has been a good president or *prutanis* (v.1) and has many basic virtues (iii.2). Up to now, he has been 'modeste et soumis à l'état' (i.1). He is, however, much more timorous than Edward. While hardly a 'monstre naissant', he has something of Racine's Néron, and like Néron, he is afraid of his mother (i.1). He only wants popularity (i.1) and happiness (iii.2). He is full of good intentions, but is a slave to his love (i.4). Such a weak character is something of an exception in La Harpe's theatre. He makes no real attempt to face up to the situation in which he is placed:

Après ce grand effort tous mes sens abattus  
Sont demeurés sans force, et mon âme affaiblie  
Dans l'excès de ses maux demeure ensevelie.

(iii. 5)

Eronime suffers from the general mishandling of the love interest. Like Elisabeth, she has to please her father (i.5). She shares her lover's good intentions (i.5), hardly comes to life as a character. She is either 'aimable' (i.1) or sunk in a 'désespoir muet' (iii.6).

The character of Isménie, a mother with a strict sense of duty to her country, ready to fall on her knees in order to bring a son back to the path of duty, appears to be based directly on that of the mother of Coriolanus, although La Harpe's source for this is again almost certainly Plutarch rather than Shakespeare or any other dramatist.<sup>155</sup> He later used part of Isménie's rôle for that of Véturie in his own *Coriolan*.<sup>156</sup> She is a kind of Cassandra, endowed with powerless lucidity (iii.4) and despairing of both her sons (iv.4, 5).

It is difficult to say much about the since destroyed *Pharamond*. The action was noticeably simple, but shared the fault of earlier plays by relegating the love interest to the background.<sup>157</sup> The plot echoed vaguely *Sémiramis* and relied for its denouement on the recognition of the true heir to the throne.<sup>158</sup> All in all, however, it made little impression on the spectators.<sup>159</sup>

The characters resembled those of La Harpe's earlier plays. Pharamond was depicted as 'faible et perpetuellement chancelant'.<sup>160</sup> Once again, there was a dominant character, Valamir, a war-lord, almost too powerful for the other characters.<sup>161</sup> We can only imagine that Clodion was a rather spiteful villain, but we are told that Ildigone was performed by Mademoiselle Dubois, who had earlier taken the rôles of Elisabeth and Eronime, and who now acted 'd'après elle-même'.<sup>162</sup> La Harpe himself had already described her talent for gentle melancholy.<sup>163</sup> We must imagine Ildigone to have been another of his charming but helpless heroines.

As we have shown elsewhere,<sup>164</sup> *Gustave* shares the outstanding characteristics of these other earlier plays. The love interest is again of only secondary

importance, and much of the interest of the plot dies away after the third act. The war-lord hero, Gustave, again overshadows the rest of the cast.

Much of the basic similarity between these four early plays springs from their being written so soon one after the other and performed in quick succession between 1763 and 1766. Although La Harpe did not stop writing for the theatre, as we have seen, he did not have another play produced until 1775 and claimed that he used the intervening years to study 'mûrement un art où l'on n'est pas très habile pour y avoir réussi une fois'.<sup>165</sup> However, the next play that he sent to the Comédie française, *Les Barmécides*, does not reveal any real progress either as regards plot or characterization. In spite of spending many years over the work, it was evident to the author himself, when it was performed, that he would have to make major changes in a plan over which he had had 'tant de peine à arranger les ressorts'.<sup>166</sup> At first, he only made cuts,<sup>167</sup> but it soon became obvious that radical changes were needed in the second, third and fourth acts.<sup>168</sup> The fourth act had been particularly harshly judged,<sup>169</sup> and La Harpe himself became all too aware of the faults.<sup>170</sup> He was dissatisfied with the rôle of the heroine, Sémire, the opening of the second act, and the slowing down of the action in the fourth.

Yet, after the changes, it is hardly true to say, as La Harpe wrote,<sup>171</sup> that the play flows any more smoothly, or that the motivation of the plot is more clearly explained. The work is still very slow-moving, and most scenes contain involved narrative. The exposition is not completed before the end of the second act, and the plot still relies on three recognitions — where there had been four — for the action to advance. The motives given in the plot are difficult to believe. For twenty years Barmécide has not been able to tell Saëd, to whom he owed his life, that he was still alive. It is as a result of a note that he has been thought dead, and now it is again because of a note brought by a dying messenger that he has learned of his son's plot against the caliph, Aaron. The whole thing is a rather contrived romance. Two aspects of the story are in themselves distinctly distasteful. Barmécide owes his life to the slaughter of a slave, and Aaron is expected to forgive those who deliberately kill his son. At the same time, the author could not plead that such happenings can be accounted for by the Arabian setting, as Cornelian love and strictly European considerations of nobility and kingship form the centre of the plot. A princess, captive in a harem, is allowed to roam about the palace and even talk openly with the man whom she loves, and who is known to love her, and whose request for her hand has been refused by the caliph. As for Amorassan's rival, on whom the denouement largely depends, he is never seen, and in the words of the *Complainte des Barmécides*, he serves the rhyme 'et puis c'est tout'.<sup>172</sup>

The far-fetched nature of the whole work is reflected in the characters themselves. La Harpe insisted that the generous character of Barmécide was authorized by historical fact.<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that

Barmécide, banished into exile with his family slain, should abandon his desire for revenge after twenty years on the knowledge that Aaron, troubled by remorse, has committed no other crime and is a good monarch; that like Warwick he should want to preserve what he originally helped to create (iii.1). It is impossible not to compare this work with *Cinna*, but Emilie's reaction to a similar situation is more understandable. Moreover, it is hardly a sign of true generosity for a father to endanger the life of his son, especially when the son has initially placed himself in danger on his father's behalf. It may be pleasing intellectually, but it is not very moving or convincing.

The motives of the caliph are equally incredible. Throughout the play, we are supposed to believe that like Corneille's Auguste, he would be 'le plus grand des mortels, s'il savait pardonner' (i.1), so that he should be seen to be capable of forgiving Amorassan who has just murdered his son:

Si j'écoutai jadis un excès de vengeance,  
Il faut, pour l'expier, un excès de clémence.

(v.5)

Whereas Auguste's pardon for the plotters in *Cinna* remains sublime, Aaron's forgiveness for those guilty of a much more heinous crime, that must have deeply hurt the man as well as the monarch, demands a far greater capacity for belief.

Both Amorassan and Sémire suffer from the mishandling of the love interest, which is once more pushed into a secondary position with the same results as in La Harpe's earlier plays. Even after the changes in the plot, Sémire remains a pale sister to Corneille's Emilie when she reminds her lover to be faithful to the conspiracy (iv.3). Amorassan shares Cinna's hesitation, but is hot-headed. Although we hear of his past victories and are told that he reveals in his actions his noble birth (i.2), in the context of the play, he remains distinctly passive.

In spite of moving from Bagdad to Benares, the action of La Harpe's other attempt at a truly exotic theme, *Les Brames*, shows certain similarities with that of *Les Barmécides*. In both plays, the first act ends with the swearing of an oath, and both end with the pardon of a prisoner who is about to be put to death. Both Akébare and Amorassan plot against a ruler to whom they owe a great deal. Again the action is not particularly well motivated, nor are the characters well drawn.<sup>174</sup>

The first play to show any real improvement in structure is *Menzicoff*, written after both *Les Barmécides* and *Les Brames*, although performed before them. The action is more carefully laid than that of any of La Harpe's plays since *Warwick*, even if the result is not particularly dramatic. It is in places almost too prudently constructed and more contrived than tragic. At times, one can almost see the author combining the scenes so that fear and hope successfully alternate. This play illustrates particularly well the dangers of a tradition where most of the action takes place off the stage. The weighty narrative produces an

unfortunate static effect. Perhaps as an attempt to counteract this, the playwright introduced a dramatic change of events into every act and a recognition into the first. Twice, in the first and fifth acts, a dramatic turn is rather obviously prepared with preceding premonition or suspicion.

Nevertheless, there are qualities that have been lacking ever since *Warwick*. The love interest, while it is as usual subservient to the feeling of admiration that we are supposed to have for the main character, is at least at the centre of the action. The action itself is also better distributed. Each act serves its purpose. The first act is devoted to the exposition and the arrival of Menzicoff in Siberia. The arrival of his ex-wife, Arzénie, in the second act precipitates the action. The third act ends with a crisis, and the fourth act with doubt if not a little hope. The fifth act brings the catastrophe.

The characters are, however, only sketched in. In depicting Menzicoff, La Harpe wanted to show that in his exile he was greater than he had ever been.<sup>175</sup> We learn of his past ambitions and of how he was the equal of his master, Peter the Great (i.2). We hear how he had risen from nothing (i.2), how his only rules had been 'la politique et la nécessité' (iv.5), but the Menzicoff that we see is a changed man:

Il pourra t'étonner: sa fermeté modeste,  
Son courage tranquille, et sa noble douleur,  
Et ses remords surtout, lui rendent sa grandeur.  
(i.2)

As seen on the stage, he is a stoic figure of nobility, stripped of vain titles and bearing his difficulties with calm and dignity. Yet, in spite of this strength of character, he has no effect on the outcome of the plot and is never directly in physical danger.

A far stronger rôle is left, by design or accident, to Arzénie. She is both an 'âme sensible' (ii.2) and mistress of her destiny (ii.1). It is she who avenges the death of her son, and who is as much a central heroine as Mérope or Andromaque by whom she is at least indirectly inspired.

Alexan, like Amorassan in *Les Barmécides*, is hot-headed (i.2, 3), proud (iv.7), 'ardent et fier, et trop sensible' (iv.3), but only seems to serve the plot for an incident in the fourth act and as an innocent victim for Vodemar.

Suard tells us that the Court was shocked by the latter's inconceivable ferocity,<sup>176</sup> and other critics were not slow to see a link with Crébillon.<sup>177</sup> Like many of Crébillon's characters, Vodemar is almost too black a villain to be believable. He has been building up hatred for sixteen years (ii.5), until, like Atrée, hatred is the only passion that he knows (ii.6). He is without pity (iv.3) and is marked by a 'dureté farouche' (iv.1):

Des maux que l'on m'a faits l'affreux ressentiment  
De mon cœur solitaire est l'unique aliment.  
(i.2)

*Jeanne de Naples* — La Harpe's last play on a national theme — is not so well constructed as *Menzicoff*. The general situation of the play is the traditional one of Clytaemnestra, or more directly that of Voltaire's *Eriphyle* and *Sémiramis*. Just as these last two plays reflect Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, so there was at least one other echo of the English play in the version of *Jeanne de Naples* that was performed in December 1781. In the final scene, the queen stabbed herself at the foot of her husband's tomb, and the King of Hungary then killed Tarente in a duel on the stage.<sup>178</sup> This appears to have been too much for the actors,<sup>179</sup> and La Harpe suppressed it in January 1782.<sup>180</sup>

Although the setting is more colourful, with the meeting of the estates in the last act which again reflects the influence of *Sémiramis*, the action is even more static than in *Menzicoff*. The exposition is not complete until well into the second act. Probably in order to please Madame Vestris,<sup>181</sup> later editions of this play have a radically altered first act. A scene between Montescale and Tarente replaces the original opening with Jeanne and her confidant, and the final scene of the act is lengthened. None of these changes, however, really improves the structure of the play. It is one thing to build up an action before the curtain rises, another to maintain it. The basic fault in the plot is that Jeanne's story is already over. The passion which drove her to crime, and which could interest us, is now dead. We neither hope nor really fear for her. Her dethronement is not a matter for the heart, and Louis of Hungary comes into far more direct danger. La Harpe has returned to the besetting sin of a secondary love interest with the triangle of Tarente, Louis and Amélie. Our attention is inevitably drawn towards them and away from Jeanne. The play only comes to life when, like Cornélie in *Pompée*, Jeanne warns Louis of the plot against him, and when she can finally remember what she owes to her position and stabs herself.

The play would certainly have had greater unity if Jeanne had consistently shown greater strength of character. She is capable of brave talk (i.4), and when she finally kills herself, she announces proudly: 'J'ai livré l'assassin, j'ai puni sa complice' (v.5). Nevertheless, most of the time she is markedly hesitant: 'L'infortune est muette, et le remords timide' (i.4). She is weak: 'Même en cédant au crime, elle l'a détesté' (ii.2). Amélie is 'pure et vertueuse' (ii.2) and thus resembles the majority of La Harpe's youthful heroines. Louis, like Aaron in *Les Barmécides*, is a conqueror who avoids spilling blood (ii.2). For Amélie, he is 'le héros qui [l'] enflamme' (ii.1). Montescale, like Saëd in *Les Barmécides*, or Bering in *Menzicoff*, is a faithful public servant (i.4). He is a 'magistrat austère' (i.4), guided by a strict sense of uncorruptible justice (i.2, 3, ii.2). Tarente is a thorough villain, and where hatred destroys love in Vodemar, here in Cornelian vein, ambition is the overriding care (ii.2, iii.6). Tarente is 'perfide' (i.2, 4) and, while he is a ladies' man (i.3), he is 'barbare avec tranquillité' (iv.6.)

This was the last play in which La Harpe relied heavily on his imagination for the construction of the plot. As we have seen, he showed greater respect for his



sources in his final tragedies, *Coriolan* and *Virginie*, and part of the implicitly less imaginative approach is undoubtedly due to the success that he found with his adaptation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. This is not to say that he followed Sophocles slavishly. To begin with, he rearranged the material into three acts instead of five, once more looking to the authority of Voltaire to justify such an action. When discussing Voltaire's problems in the subject of *Œdipe*,<sup>182</sup> he was to refer to the 'exemple utile' of *La Mort de César* and claim that certain simple subjects called for a reduction of this nature.<sup>183</sup> *Philoctète*, which he called an even simpler subject than *Œdipe*,<sup>184</sup> needed particularly to be cut down in length as he wished to suppress the choruses which, in true Voltairian fashion,<sup>185</sup> he considered to be out of place on the French stage.<sup>186</sup> In the same way, he does not introduce a confidant and has the whole of the action explained by the leading characters.<sup>187</sup>

In fact, despite the addition of some lines, marked in the text with inverted commas and intended to clarify points that would not be immediately obvious to a modern audience,<sup>188</sup> the general tendency of La Harpe's treatment of Sophocles' play is to shorten the action. This is not always to his advantage. He rather glosses over Pyrrhus' resistance to Ulysses (i.1) and thus diminishes our appreciation of the former's inherent honesty. He cut out the scene in which one of Ulysses' soldiers, disguised as a merchant, increases Pyrrhus' and Philoctetes' desire to leave by saying that the Greeks are on their way. He did so on the grounds that it was unnecessary, since Philoctetes is already in a hurry to leave.<sup>189</sup> On the contrary, this scene prepares us for Philoctetes' immediate recognition of Ulysses when the latter appears to take possession of the arms (ii.3). J. B. Gail relates how when Talma played Philoctète, he leant forward to look more closely at Ulysses: 'cherchant à démêler ses traits, et par là suppléant finement à la préparation qui manque au poète français'.<sup>190</sup>

La Harpe also shortened the ending of the play, cutting out Philoctetes' farewell to his cave (Sophocles, 1452–1468). In the original, there is also a long moment between Philoctetes' seizing the bow and arrows and wanting to strike Ulysses (Sophocles, 1299) and the arrival of Hercules (Sophocles, 1409). In removing much of the dialogue in this scene, La Harpe has unfortunately altered the very meaning of the denouement and shown a typical eighteenth-century distaste for Fate in the Greek sense. At this moment in Sophocles, Pyrrhus deserts Ulysses and decides to take Philoctetes back to Greece, and not to Troy. The arrival of Hercules is to assure the dictates of Fate which has decided that Philoctetes should go to Troy. Hercules does not come, as in La Harpe, in order to save Ulysses.

While thus showing himself unable to rival with Sophocles, La Harpe's *Philoctète* does seem to have taught him at last the rudiments of a properly constructed plot. In *Coriolan*, the reasons for the hero's exile are well explained, and this ensures that the action proceeds naturally, although we do find the same

somewhat static effect which marred *Menzicoff* and *Jeanne de Naples*. Coriolan is condemned by Rome between the first and second act, the battle with the Romans comes between the third and the fourth, and we only learn of Coriolan's death in the fifth. This ending, while suffering from the same inconvenience that beset that of *Warwick* — appearing almost as an afterthought and in *récit* —, is at least better motivated. As in *Philoctète*, La Harpe suppressed the slightest love interest and, following the example of Gudin de La Brunellerie's *Caius Marcius Coriolan, ou les dangers d'offenser un grand homme*,<sup>191</sup> he removed Coriolan's wife and children, referring to them as already dead. Avoiding the tradition of *Athalie* and *Inès de Castro*, he wanted to strengthen the idea of Coriolan's devotion to his mother on which the whole plot depends.<sup>192</sup> The result is a particularly well-marked unity of action.

This unity is enhanced by the strong character of Coriolan who is depicted as in Livy, and whose tragic flaw is 'un trop grand sentiment de ses propres forces':<sup>193</sup> a man who does not know the feelings of the weak (iii.3). It is his belief in himself that irritates the Romans (i.3) and leads him into revolt. His 'bouillant orgueil' (iv.1) annoys Tullius, the Volscian general, and this brings about Coriolan's eventual downfall. Unfortunately, we find here a fault common in La Harpe's earlier plays. The central character is disproportionately strong. Tullius and Volumnius fail to come to life and merely serve the action. Véturie is a pale sister to Isménie in *Timoléon*, on whom she is based, even speaking some of her lines.<sup>194</sup> Véturie is proud of her son (ii.2), but, like Isménie, she preaches civic liberty (i.3) and tends to become a strong and hardly feminine representation of republican feeling.

The same discrepancy between the plot and the characters also occurs in *Virginie*. La Harpe himself called the structure of this play 'à peu près irréprochable',<sup>195</sup> although it did undergo a number of important changes. For a start, the very ending was modified. When the play was first acted, Appius killed himself on the stage.<sup>196</sup> This horrified the audience, who found that it had little to do with the action.<sup>197</sup> In his new ending, La Harpe has Appius dragged off under arrest. At the same time, he also made cuts in Act III, scene 6 and lengthened the end of Act IV.<sup>198</sup> During the Revolution, he made some more changes at the beginning of Act III to bring out the idea of the 'souveraineté du peuple'.<sup>199</sup> These changes are, however, of relatively minor importance, and the general impression given by the plot is one of being clear-cut and remarkably simple. By having the action take place on Virginie's wedding day, there is a suitable sense of urgency and good alternation of hope and fear.

Yet, the characters are little more than the representation of ideas and are scarcely endowed with true personality. The women are true to the two most common types to be found in La Harpe's plays — the helpless and the patriotic, although neither of them has a positive rôle in the work. Just as Valérius is a 'sénateur vertueux, ami de la justice' (i.2), Icilius, 'ce digne citoyen' (i.5), is

'né pour l'égalité, né pour la république' (i.1). Together, they are the people and senate of Rome. Appius, the traditional tyrant, ready to justify his weakness, is opposed by a 'guerrier vertueux' (v.1). Virginius, like Timoléon or Voltaire's Brutus, will do anything for his fatherland.

Indeed, in general fashion, it is in characterization that La Harpe is at his weakest. While many of his plots are far from perfect and present us with well-worn situations, they do generally have the quality of being fairly simple. Nor — thanks to their author's experiments in local colour, combined with a fairly free approach to the unities and even to the *bienséances* — are they quite as repetitive as the characters themselves. These fall into roughly five types that were all traditional on the French stage. The villains were, as we have seen, obviously modelled on Crébillon. La Harpe's heroes are nearly all men of might like those from the later plays of Corneille. Their merit lies not in their titles but in their moral strength which tends to eclipse that of the other characters. Most of the monarchs in this theatre are pale shadows of Corneille's Auguste, imitating his clemency and wanting to be just. Another frequent echo of *Cinna* is to be found in La Harpe's strong-willed women who resemble Emilie. His young helpless heroines are obviously inspired by the Racinian type of *jeune fille*, especially Iphigénie, and undoubtedly influenced by Zaïre. Like the rest of his characters, they lack the variety of their earlier counterparts. This stylization of the characters became even more evident as La Harpe tended to introduce more and more radical ideas into his theatre in the manner of Voltaire in his old age. They then became little more than mouthpieces for the expression of certain views.

This development was, however, only gradual, as in his basic approach to language in the theatre La Harpe still showed himself to be a traditionalist. As tragedy is an illusion which plays on feeling, he wanted the simplicity of his plots to be matched by a simple style. Although not more important than the plot, style needs just as much attention on the part of the author, and a good play is nearly always noted for its good style.<sup>200</sup> In his opinion, only Racine and Voltaire had achieved a perfect style in tragedy.<sup>201</sup> Tragic style is particularly difficult as the author must think of the character and the setting all the time.<sup>202</sup> Language must not destroy the dramatic illusion,<sup>203</sup> and each character must speak in a way that suits him and not the author.<sup>204</sup> La Harpe frowned on monologues<sup>205</sup> and lengthy political asides, even in Voltaire.<sup>206</sup> These not only slowed down the action, but again endangered dramatic illusion. He accused Corneille of saying what should only be felt.<sup>207</sup> At the same time, as tragedy is not aimed at the mind, and as he believed in the nobility of the art, he refused to conceive of tragedy written in prose. Only verse can give adequate expression to the thoughts and feelings of the mighty characters of tragedy and enhance illusion by further widening the gap between tragedy and everyday life.<sup>208</sup>

In his early plays, at least, the style is above all that of the epic where language is used to express heroic sentiment rather than to provoke political discussion.

In *Warwick*, he tried at first to avoid eternal moral truths and the ‘vers à retenir’ which clogged up many of the works of his contemporaries.<sup>209</sup> He wanted to avoid unnecessary epithets and inversions, and above all wished to say ‘de grandes choses avec des termes simples’.<sup>210</sup> It was only following his longer visit to Ferney that he started filling his play with lines that very obviously echo the philosophical thoughts of his host. Lines such as:

L’Anglais indépendant, et libre autant que brave,  
Des caprices de cour ne fut jamais esclave.  
(ii.7)

which are reminiscent of the spirit of the *Lettres philosophiques*, only date from later editions of *Warwick*. As performed and printed in 1763, the play’s style is made up of utterances linked more directly to general human behaviour. There are many neat expressions of feeling, usually in the heroic vein:

Aliment nécessaire à qui sentit l’offense,  
Seul bien des malheureux, l’espoir de la vengeance.  
(i.1)

This results in an elegant, but rather restricted style. Certain noble terms become — as in La Harpe’s more serious poetry — more than a little over-worked. The vocabulary is limited to obvious heroic words such as ‘fatal’, ‘vaillant’, ‘illustre’, &c. The author is forced to rely heavily on devices such as apostrophe, repetition, and the Voltairian trick of antithesis. This last device is found, sometimes in the juxtaposition of noun and epithet as in ‘ces impuissants éclats’ (i.2); sometimes between the two hemistichs of an alexandrine: ‘Et ce mortel abject, tout fier de son ouvrage’ (i.1). He is particularly happy to produce a well-balanced line such as: ‘D’adorer mon amant et d’admirer mon roi’ (iii.5), or even a couplet:

Vous apprendrez bientôt qui vous deviez servir,  
Vous apprendrez du moins qui vous devez haïr.  
(ii.4).

He is fond of the Cornelian habit of using the rhyme to bring in an insolent reply:

*Edouard:*  
Attendez jusque-là ma volonté suprême.  
*Marguerite:*  
J’attends tout désormais du ciel et de moi-même.  
(i.2)

Writing in so restricted an idiom, La Harpe inevitably echoed Corneille, Racine and Voltaire, and his enemies drew up a list of borrowings from the last two writers.<sup>211</sup> Nevertheless, even if it is somewhat derivative, the language is adequate and not too pompous. It flows smoothly and is undeniably generally elegant. However, it rarely rises above explaining the action. Linked to La Harpe’s desire to reduce the love interest, there is no real lyricism, and the style

fails frequently to meet the demands of strong emotion. All Edward can manage when he hears of Warwick's early return is a somewhat hackneyed: 'O Ciel! quel coup de foudre!' (i.4).

The same qualities and faults mark the style of the three plays that followed *Warwick*. *Timoléon* has many lines echoing Cornelian sentiments such as: 'La terreur est un frein pour une âme vulgaire' (iii.2). In places, *Gustave* echoes *La Henriade*.<sup>212</sup> Yet we find already the beginnings of the political and philosophical content that was to have a more important rôle in his later works. In *Timoléon* — a play with, after all, a republican theme — we have a definition of the duties of the state and of the citizen (iv.2), and there is a condemnation of slavery (v.2). We are told that while the audience found the style of *Pharamond* in general to be 'épuré du faux clinquant de la poésie',<sup>213</sup> the point in the play which received the greatest applause was when Valamir called on the king not to abdicate and expressed 'l'amour inaltérable de ce peuple pour ses rois'.<sup>214</sup>

In *Les Barmécides*, the basis of the style is still heroic. There are the usual Cornelian maxims such as:

Mais l'amour a souvent triomphé du destin,  
Et le sort d'un héros est toujours dans sa main.  
(i.1)

There is a certain philosophical triteness in sentences such as: 'Que nous laissons de nous des traces passagères' (iii.1); 'Toujours la trahison conduit de crime en crime' (iii.5). The language still shows a certain lack of flexibility and an inability to deal with subtle ideas. As if embarrassed by the manner in which Barmécide's life has been saved, La Harpe describes the event in almost coy fashion:

Un esclave à peu près de son âge,  
Assez semblable à lui de taille et de visage,  
Semblait s'offrir à moi pour remplir mon dessein;  
Sous le tranchant du sabre il expira soudain.  
(i.2)

Expressed in such terms, the *turquerie* becomes almost comic.

However, we are told that certain lines were applauded,<sup>215</sup> although we suspect that this was due more to the ideas expressed than to any inherent beauty in the verse. Political discussion is stated here more directly than in any of the earlier plays. La Harpe's stay in Ferney, composing poems such as the *Réponse d'un solitaire de la Trappe* under the direct tutelage of Voltaire, obviously encouraged stronger declarations of radical ideas. Much is made of the fact that the caliph has encouraged the arts and shunned war (i.1). More thoroughly than in *Timoléon*, civic duty is now defined closely in accordance with the Voltairian ideal of freedom of discussion: 'l'homme qui pense est meilleur citoyen' (i.1).

La Harpe's departure from the style of his earlier plays is particularly evident in the speech in which Amorassan criticizes the unfair advantage of noble birth:

Je vois de nos destins quelle est la différence;  
 Qu'il est quelques heureux qu'au jour de leur naissance  
 Le ciel marqua du sceau des enfants préférés;  
 Qu'un nom cher aux humains d'avance a consacré,  
 Et qui, dans leur berceau trouvant des diadèmes,  
 Ont été dispensés d'être grands par eux-mêmes;  
 Lorsque d'obscurs mortels laissés dans l'abandon,  
 S'ils reçurent un cœur au-dessus de leur nom,  
 Consacrent aux travaux leur généreuse audace,  
 Et n'ont point d'autres droits pour se mettre à leur place,  
 Et sortir de la foule où tout est confondu,  
 Que l'éclat des talents, la gloire et la vertu.

(ii.3)

Such social criticism had already been implicit in La Harpe's earlier plays, but it was now expressed openly for the first time.

The elements of radical propaganda are even more evident in *Les Brames*. Just as Voltaire was proud to show a people adoring a single god in his politically-minded *Les Guèbres*,<sup>216</sup> so La Harpe's play on the Brahmins — also admired by Voltaire for their monotheism<sup>217</sup> — abounds in religious and political pronouncements.<sup>218</sup> In *Menzicoff*, we again find, as in *Les Barmécides*, a defence of the commoner against the vanity of noble birth. Although La Harpe undoubtedly wanted to please his patron, Paul of Russia, and is careful to underline respect for the law and the properly constituted authorities (ii.1, iv.7), there is an underlying criticism of those whose ambition: 'Croit flatter le pouvoir en foulant l'opprimé' (ii.1). Power is seen not to be the true path to happiness (iii.3, iv.5) and the overriding theme of the play is to show the vain nature of titles (ii.1, 8). As Bering says to Arzénie:

Vous êtes au moment où les grands de la terre,  
 Quand ils ont, comme vous, signalé des vertus,  
 Retrouvent dans les cœurs le pouvoir qu'ils n'ont plus.

(ii.1)

Of all La Harpe's tragedies, *Jeanne de Naples* perhaps comes closest to direct moralizing. Tarente gets his just deserts:

Mais il faut que l'adresse à la fin se trahisse:  
 Quelquefois la candeur confondit l'artifice.

(ii.4)

Yet, this tone is allied to the by now set expression of fashionable ideas: 'Nul pouvoir n'a le droit de commander le crime' (iv.2). There is the usual condemnation of war (ii.1), and Louis, a king, makes the following rather surprising anti-clerical attack:

Le sacerdoce altier lutte contre l'empire.  
 Le plus fort est tyran, le plus faible conspire.  
 On rampe, ou l'on opprime; en ce peuple abattu  
 Le crime est sans courage, et même la vertu.  
 Je vois trente cités qu'asservissent des prêtres,  
 S'agitant sous le joug, mais pour changer de maîtres,  
 Arborer tour-à-tour sur leurs tristes remparts,  
 Ou les clefs du pontife, ou l'aigle des Césars.

(ii.4)

Apart from *Philoctète*, whose text is based, albeit freely, on that of Sophocles, a surprising break in this progression of political content in La Harpe's theatre comes in *Coriolan*. In style, this play reflects that of the youthful La Harpe. He was obviously tempted by the subject for many years, as can be seen from its influence in the plot of his *Timoléon*. There is little radical propaganda, and the main preoccupations are the traditional ones of heroic nobility:

Mais la fierté souvent égare une grande âme,  
 Soutien de l'héroïsme, elle en devient l'écueil.

(i.3)

Just as in *Timoléon* (iii.2), the author expresses here a suitably aristocratic view of the common people and hatred for its flatterers (i.1). Although this is given as the opinion of Coriolan, and is thus implicitly condemned, lines expressing this point of view stand out in the play. La Harpe even defends the Volscian cause (iv.2), in an attempt to give a truly balanced dramatic effect. It is easy to see why this work went into eclipse during the Revolution, although it was performed again fairly frequently afterwards.

*Virginie*, on the other hand, enjoyed its greatest popularity during the Revolution, and as late as 1795, La Harpe was proud to refer to it as proof of his republican spirit.<sup>219</sup> Many lines celebrate the common people who only want 'la justice, et non pas la vengeance' (i.1). One can imagine how the public thought of the war of 1792 when they heard Icilius say:

N'accusez pas en vain le peuple et les soldats,  
 Ils ont le même cœur, ils ont le même bras.  
 Mais pour qui triompher, s'il n'est plus de patrie?  
 Si la gloire, seigneur, qu'ils ont toujours chérie,  
 Si la victoire enfin abandonne leurs rangs,  
 C'est qu'ils n'ont pas voulu vaincre pour des tyrans.

(i.1)

In lines added during the Revolution, there is a direct proclamation of equality before the law:

Et qu'est-ce donc enfin que les lois les plus belles,  
 Si le législateur se met au-dessus d'elles?

(iii.2)

Icilius even shows a belief in a contemporary religion:

C'est la justice même  
 Qu'au fond de tous les cœurs grava l'Être suprême;  
 Elle unit les mortels, tous égaux à ses yeux:  
 L'erreur fit les tyrans, et la loi vient des cieux.

(iii.2)

As we have seen, after *Thermidor*, Appius came to be regarded as Robespierre, and the play was viewed in a different light, but continued to be successful. Surprisingly enough, some of the lines added in 1792 were given a general ovation by the public, who thought that they had been written to celebrate Robespierre's downfall.<sup>220</sup> The only criticism of the play at that time was that the bringing of the army to Rome echoed the behaviour of Dumouriez.<sup>221</sup> Yet, as with much of the literature of the Revolution, the very success that *Virginie* then enjoyed, restricted its appeal to posterity, and in the nineteenth century it was not considered comparable to the work on the same subject by Alfieri.<sup>222</sup>

## 2. *Drame*

This increasing use of political ideas in La Harpe's theatre reflects his general adherence to the doctrines of the *philosophes* and, for all his love of true tragedy, he was too much of a *philosophe* to dismiss the *drame* as worthless. He merely considered it to be a lesser form of art than tragedy. He regarded La Chaussée's *comédie larmoyante* as the basis of the *drame* and stated that all Diderot had done in his *drame bourgeois* was to transport the *comédie larmoyante* into prose and remove the comic element.<sup>223</sup> He claimed that it was not a new genre in its own right; that its only real distinguishing mark was in the choice of its subjects.<sup>224</sup> As far as the *comédie larmoyante* was concerned, he called it a 'genre estimable' when dealt with properly<sup>225</sup> and admired La Chaussée as a stylist. He felt, however, that the latter's plays suffered inevitably from the mixing of different genres. The resources of comedy and tragedy were diluted.<sup>226</sup> These plays lacked the character study of comedy and the sublime quality of tragedy. They tended to be insipid and too like nature that has not been touched by art.<sup>227</sup> They made less demands on the ability of the artist and, with few difficulties successfully overcome, they were less pleasing.<sup>228</sup> With the replacement of verse by prose, the way was further opened to dangerously easy mediocre writing.<sup>229</sup>

Nevertheless, he admitted that the *drame* could be particularly moving. It could make us weep more easily than tragedy,<sup>230</sup> and a love interest could be more fully developed than elsewhere.<sup>231</sup> However, he maintained that two grave dangers beset the *drame*, the 'romanesque des événements, et l'atrocité ou la bassesse des caractères'.<sup>232</sup> He called the complicated works of La Chaussée 'des romans en dialogue'.<sup>233</sup> The emotive power of the plot is everything in the *drame*, linked as it is to a moral theme, and, although this morality is frequently



good,<sup>234</sup> the action is frequently too serious and dull.<sup>235</sup> Paradoxically, this also encourages the introduction of events that are unlikely<sup>236</sup> and which tend to go beyond the bounds of decency.<sup>237</sup> In this, the *drame* is one of the main causes of decadence in the theatre.<sup>238</sup>

With this highly critical approach to the *drame*, La Harpe's own attempts at writing plays in this manner are immediately distinguishable from his tragedies only in their subject matter. *Barneveldt* is one of the many adaptations of Lillo's *The London Merchant or the History of George Barnwell*,<sup>239</sup> which enjoyed a tremendous vogue in France in the eighteenth century.<sup>240</sup> The story of *Mélanie* is drawn vaguely from a real happening. In 1768, a young novice driven to desperation by her parents hanged herself in the hall of the Couvent des Filles de la Conception in the rue Saint-Honoré rather than take her vows.<sup>241</sup> Although La Harpe had no knowledge of the actual circumstances surrounding the young girl's death, he seized the opportunity to imagine a plot in which a girl is forced to take her vows by an ambitious father, even though she is in love and no longer wants to become a nun.

Avid as usual to accuse La Harpe of plagiarism, the *Année littéraire* pointed out with some justification that the plot of *Mélanie* owed much to earlier productions.<sup>242</sup> For a start, *Mélanie*'s situation is that of Marianne in what La Harpe considered the finest of La Chaussée's plays, *L'Ecole des Mères*.<sup>243</sup> In both, a young girl in a convent is to be sacrificed for the sake of a brother, the only difference being that the rôles of the parents are reversed. In La Harpe's play it is the father and not the mother who must be taught the moral lesson not to force vows. Similar situations exist in two short stories, Dubois-Fontanelle's *Emilie ou les vœux forcés*,<sup>244</sup> and the tale of Olympia Caratini, published in *La Bigarrure*<sup>245</sup> and said to be based on a true happening when a young girl hanged herself on the day of her vows in the hay-loft of the Monastery of San Martino in Varese near Milan. In both stories, a young girl in love is sacrificed to the happiness of a sister.<sup>246</sup> The clash of love and monastic duty was also portrayed in Robert Challes' *L'Histoire de M. de Terny et de Mlle de Bernay*.<sup>247</sup> Other similarities can be found to exist between *Mélanie* and Baculard d'Arnaud's *Euphémie ou le Triomphe de la Religion*,<sup>248</sup> where one of the nuns is actually called *Mélanie*. *Euphémie*, who has been sacrificed to a heartless brother, has a lover called Sinval, whose name possibly finds a vague echo in La Harpe's Monval. Madame de Genlis called *Mélanie* 'une imitation bourgeoise d'Iphigénie' and insisted that the character of the priest was taken from Madame de Tencin's *Le Comte de Comminges*.<sup>249</sup> Whatever his real debts, La Harpe does not appear to have had to look far for inspiration.

In spite of the everyday subject and its gloomy and thoroughly instructive ending, this play has still more in common with classical tragedy than with the *drame* as understood by Diderot and others. Indeed, in writing *Mélanie*, La Harpe consciously wanted to avoid the 'romanesque des événements' and the

'bassesse dégoûtante' of the typical *drame*.<sup>250</sup> The plot is simple, respecting all three unities, and what action there is takes place off-stage. Most of the play is taken up with discussion. The first two acts flow fairly well as succeeding attempts are made to make M. de Faublas change his mind and free his daughter from the convent. The last act drags. Dying from poison, Mélanie still manages several speeches in the best dramatic tradition. The act is made up of a series of brusque entrances and exits that are designed to inform us of a duel in which Mélanie's ambitious brother gets killed, but which appear more as a theatrical device than as a natural means to advance the action. Above all, the plot offends common sense, and, as has been pointed out,<sup>251</sup> Mélanie — who has courage enough to kill herself — only has to refuse to take her vows for the whole plot to fall apart.

To have silenced this last complaint, it would have been necessary to draw the character of Mélanie far more carefully. In his characters, as in his plots, La Harpe is still more interested in romanesque dramatic effect than in realism. To strengthen the plausibility of the girl's suicide, the author has added a love interest which, as has been shown,<sup>252</sup> was contrary to the customs of contemporary French society. In fact, Mélanie suffers from the same divisions and anguish that we have already found in other heroines in La Harpe's theatre and with whom she has much in common. Her 'esprits' are 'agités' (i.4): 'Un père! il m'en faut un' (i.4). For all her discussion with the priest and with her father, she never really gives one the impression of a strong enough mind to contemplate suicide rather than to take her vows. Her mother is equally helpless (i.4). Throughout the years, La Harpe tried to improve the characters of M. de Faublas and of the priest. In the edition of 1778, he tried to explain more fully the motives of the father and strengthened the priest's insistence that Mélanie should refuse to take her vows.<sup>253</sup> Following his conversion, it was this last rôle that was to undergo the greatest number of changes when he revised the text in 1802.<sup>254</sup>

Just as the subject of the play had been greeted favourably by Voltaire,<sup>255</sup> so its style met with an expression of approval from the patriarch:

Voilà le vrai style, clair, naturel, harmonieux, point d'ornement recherché; tous les vers frappés et sentencieux naissent du fond du sujet, et se présentent d'eux mêmes; grande simplicité, grand intérêt.<sup>256</sup>

The traditional alexandrines were not, however, welcomed by those who wished to encourage the development of the true *drame* and its reflection of real life. For many, the play was typical of the epic tradition that was killing true dramatic effect in the French theatre. For some, *Mélanie* was a kind of *héroïde*.<sup>257</sup> In other words, it was hardly a departure from the tradition of La Harpe's tragedy.

If it had been meant for the stage,<sup>258</sup> his *Barneveldt* would have been a slightly more daring departure. As it is, the play shows much of the timidity that

characterizes the so-called innovations of the time. His greatest daring here is in his general fidelity to the original text.<sup>259</sup> He did not dress up Lillo's story as a classical tragedy in historical and oriental clothing as in Blin de Sainmore's *Orphanis*,<sup>260</sup> nor did he want to remove the elements of horror as in Anseaume's *L'Ecole de la Jeunesse ou le Barneveldt français*.<sup>261</sup> As opposed to Mercier in *Jenneval*,<sup>262</sup> he did not cut out the murder of Barneveldt's uncle. Yet, this murder is presented with almost comic precautions as he tries to make it 'vraisemblable et supportable'.<sup>263</sup> Firstly, he has night cover the stage, and then partially masks the act with scenery: 'L'action se passe entre des arbres qui dérobent au spectateur l'horreur du coup de poignard'.<sup>264</sup>

Moreover, for the decency of the French stage, he cuts out the spectacle of Barneveldt's execution and, like Anseaume, turns the prostitute Millwood into a widow who has fallen on hard times. Like Blin de Sainmore, he shortens the action by having the hero already in love and invents the scene where the hero is actually driven to commit murder by the artful mistress. Scene changes are, nevertheless, as free as in the English original. We move from the merchant's house to the Great Park at Windsor and then to a prison. The action takes more than one day.

In general, the characters also run true to their English counterparts. Barneveldt is basically timid and, in his rake's progress, he is filled with 'tant de honte et tant d'honnêteté' (i.1). He is deeply ashamed of his actions, but is powerless to resist: 'J'aperçois l'abîme, et je m'y précipite' (ii.1). Despite the change in social status, and despite La Harpe's claims<sup>265</sup> to have made Sara more respectable than Millwood, she is still pretty villainous:

Elle paraît naïve à force d'artifice,  
Séduit par ses talents et même par ses vices.

(i.1)

Lucy — Lillo's Mary, and who now has a bigger rôle than in the original play — is, on the other hand, almost too good to be true. As she tells herself: 'Ne fais rien pour l'amant, et tout pour la vertu' (ii.6).

The language is on a highly moral tone, with many maxims on the folly and dangers of first passion:

Où la rougeur modeste est encor sur le front,  
L'erreur est si facile, et le remords si prompt.

(i.1)

As in the works of Sedaine and Diderot and other exponents of the *drame bourgeois*, there is some praise of the qualities suitable to the genre:

ce haut degré  
Où le négociant, aux grands objets livré,  
S'approche des ressorts qui meuvent les puissances,  
Soumet la politique à ses calculs immenses.

(i.1)

Yet, once again, the style is basically that of classical tragedy, and there is considerably less political discussion than in, for instance, La Harpe's own later tragedies. The general impression is still one of elegance in the traditional heroic vein:

Et lorsqu'enfin les flots, trop prompts à t'enlever,  
De ce dernier plaisir auront pu me priver,  
Tout à mon désespoir, et te nommant encore,  
J'enfonce le poignard dans ce cœur qui t'adore.

(iii.4)

In this play, designed to be read rather than acted, the poet comes again and again between the characters and the reader, and confirms what *Mélanie* suggested, that La Harpe made no real attempt to grasp the vividness and immediate realism of the true *drame*.

### 3. *Comedy*

La Harpe's experiments in comedy were also extremely limited in nature. He only wrote two short one-act plays, remembered more for the circumstances in which they were written than for their own merits. Comedy was, he believed, rather out of favour among his contemporaries who preferred to have their emotions stirred rather than to be merely amused.<sup>266</sup> As a *philosophe*, showing, as we have seen, a moderate taste for the moral tone of La Chaussée, he felt that the latter expressed the aims of the eighteenth century better than any attempt to follow Molière too slavishly.<sup>267</sup> At the same time, he left no doubt as to his own general preference for tragedy. In his view, comedy lacked the poetic grandeur and sublimity of tragedy.<sup>268</sup> It is narrower in its scope<sup>269</sup> and has less power as a form of art as it is aimed at the mind rather than the heart. It is therefore less imaginative.<sup>270</sup> It does not face the same difficulties as tragedy. It can deal with any subject at any length,<sup>271</sup> the only rule being that it must not be too long.<sup>272</sup> The denouement is not very important and does not necessarily depend on what has gone before.<sup>273</sup> The characters only need to be developed to a limited degree,<sup>274</sup> and there is no time in comedy for fine details.<sup>275</sup>

He was particularly disappointed with comedy in the eighteenth century. He maintained that no one had in any way equalled Molière who was the first to show us 'le ridicule de nos faiblesses'.<sup>276</sup> Comedy has a definite moral purpose,<sup>277</sup> but again the morality must not be stated directly, but through characters that are both universal and true to nature, and which show us to ourselves.<sup>278</sup> Believing in the idea of combining utility and pleasure, he insisted that comedy should 'instruire en divertissant'.<sup>279</sup> He defended Molière against Rousseau's attack on *Le Misanthrope*. Virtue, when misused, becomes a fault.<sup>280</sup> In the same way, comedy must show the ridiculous side of vice, and Molière's picture of hypocrisy, for instance, is both moral and amusing.<sup>281</sup> He accused Beaumarchais — whom he admired for his dialogue<sup>282</sup> — of making vice attractive.<sup>283</sup>

True to the tradition of Boileau,<sup>284</sup> La Harpe insisted on the limits imposed on comedy by decency.<sup>285</sup> We must remember that the theatre belongs to polite society, and it must show universal characters and exclude personal satire.<sup>286</sup> Again echoing Boileau,<sup>287</sup> he did not like farce.<sup>288</sup> He had a certain fondness for the gay comedy of writers such as Regnard.<sup>289</sup> In comedy, one is not allowed to be sad.<sup>290</sup> Situation comedy is amusing in so far as it stresses the contrast between character and situation.<sup>291</sup> Nevertheless, Molière's more important comedies of character remained in La Harpe's eyes, the highest form of the art. He had two main complaints to make against writers of comedy in the eighteenth century. He wished that they had depicted the manners of their society in the way Molière had depicted his.<sup>292</sup> Instead, they had rejected the comedy of character and manners, and had returned to the *imbroglio* with all the complications that he disliked in any theatrical plot.<sup>293</sup> He abhorred Italian comedy and considered Harlequin to be unnatural.<sup>294</sup> He was a harsh critic of Marivaux and thought it to be a sign of mediocrity that the 'finesse des petits aperçus' that we find in the latter's theatre only makes us smile.<sup>295</sup> He felt that the pictures of devoted valets were out of date,<sup>296</sup> that there was something immoral about valets and their masters changing places and dressing up.<sup>297</sup> He also refused to believe that people in real life undergo as complete and as quick a metamorphosis as they do in Marivaux's theatre.<sup>298</sup> Most of all, he disliked *marivaudage*, as it was too rich and, in his view, too obviously the style of the author and never that of each character in a given setting.<sup>299</sup> Once more referring to the authority of Molière, he claimed that elegant verse was the only true medium for comedy.<sup>300</sup>

Written in free verse, neither of his own comedies has anything approaching a proper plot. They are made up of a succession of scenes on a central theme. *Les Muses rivales* shows us the Muses vying with one another as to which of them has the greatest claim to introduce Voltaire's universal soul to Parnassus and Apollo. They are joined by the Graces and Apollo, and then by Mercury who tells them that on reaching Parnassus Voltaire has met his hero, Henri IV, and prefers to stay with him. In the absence of Voltaire, the Muses venerate his statue. One must not look here for jokes or other forms of humour. The play consists entirely of praise. The lines list Voltaire's qualities, above all, his enlightenment:

Partout des oppresseurs il brise la statue;  
 Et relevant avec grandeur  
 L'humanité sacrée, à leurs pieds abattue,  
 Comme il en est le peintre, il en est le vengeur.  
 (sc.4)

For *Molière à la nouvelle salle, ou les Audiences de Thalie*. La Harpe could hardly follow the same plan. During the centenary celebrations of Molière's death in February 1773, the Comédie française had already performed two plays,

Artaud's *Le Centenaire de Molière*<sup>301</sup> and the Abbé de Schosne's *L'Assemblée*,<sup>302</sup> which both showed the Muses fêting Molière's bust in the traditional way. Although the Muses still appear in La Harpe's play, they do not hold pride of place. True enough, the scene is set by Melpomene and Thalia, but the latter soon leaves Molière alone on the stage to serve as her substitute to meet those who come to seek her advice. Although, when discussing Mercier's imitation of Goldoni's *Il Moliere*, La Harpe had called the act of putting Molière on the stage 'une entreprise assez hardie',<sup>303</sup> the idea was not particularly original. To give only two examples, Molière also appeared in the play that immediately preceded *Molière à la nouvelle salle*, Imbert's *Inauguration du Théâtre français*,<sup>304</sup> and in Carrière-Doisin's *Séances de Melpomène et de Thalie*,<sup>305</sup> which possibly also influenced La Harpe in the lay-out of his own work.<sup>306</sup>

A more general influence, however, comes undoubtedly from Piron's *La Métromanie*, which — followed by Gresset's *Le Glorieux* — La Harpe considered to be the finest comedy of the eighteenth century.<sup>307</sup> Piron's portrayal of literary abuse — one of Molière's favourite subjects for comedy — led off a score of plays on similar themes, plays such as Palissot's *Les Philosophes*<sup>308</sup> or Cailhava's *Les Journalistes anglais*.<sup>309</sup> All these productions were given new meaning in the light of quarrels between the rival troupes of actors, and this was seen to contribute directly to the success of La Harpe's work.<sup>310</sup>

The play is not entirely satirical. There is a rather artificial joke about the preservation of Molière's chair at the Comédie française:

Je n'y vois personne s'asseoir,  
Que le *Malade imaginaire*.

(sc.1)

We have the description of a man writing verse for his parrot as in *Vert-Vert* (sc.6). There are coy quotations from *Zaire* and *Polyeucte*. There is visual humour. As the Muse du Drame, the audience saw the actor, Dugazon, dressed as a woman in black with a long paper streamer bearing the words: 'Ah! Ciel! Dieu! Grands Dieux! Vertu! Crime! Nature!'<sup>311</sup> There is praise of Louis XVI.

Nevertheless, the best parts of the play display La Harpe's undoubted talent for literary satire. The work is above all a proclamation of his literary faith and, as such, is, in a way, a reply to Mercier's *Molière*. Tragedy is defended against La Foire, just as comedy is opposed to farce (sc.1). There are his usual attacks on ignorant journalists and those who compiled almanachs and dictionaries (sc.2). The scene with M. Misogamme, whose wife has turned their home into a *bureau d'esprit* — obviously an echo of *Les Femmes savantes* — gives him the opportunity to express his dislike of those who bandy literary terms without much thought: 'Ils ont tous du génie, et pas le sens commun' (sc.6). The critic is using his favourite weapon — ridicule.

Both these plays, based on a series of episodes rather than a proper plot, demanded little dramatic preparation. They should perhaps be judged more as

poems. *Les Muses rivales* is a forerunner of La Harpe's *Aux Mânes de Voltaire*, and *Molière à la nouvelle salle* continues the tradition of satires such as *L'Ombre de Duclos*. La Harpe himself admitted that such 'pièces à tiroirs' belonged to a 'genre à part, réservé pour des circonstances particulières, et par conséquent très borné'.<sup>312</sup>

#### 4. Opera

He showed the same condescension to opera, which he again considered to be an inferior genre to tragedy, but he was, as we have seen, an outstanding protagonist in the music quarrel and thus fairly interested in the subject. Like Voltaire, he never failed to defend Quinault against the harsh judgement of Boileau.<sup>313</sup> In his criticism of operas, La Harpe was particularly severe on those who referred to Greek tragedy as the forerunner of modern opera, and who even adapted tragedies as librettos. He argued that modern opera was essentially different from tragedy, ancient or modern; that it had different movement in its action, different dialogue, and different versification, in which poetry is inevitably sacrificed to music.<sup>314</sup> Appealing directly to the senses, there is no illusion as in tragedy.<sup>315</sup> There is no place for the sweeping speeches of tragedy,<sup>316</sup> nor can opera deal with historical subjects.<sup>317</sup> Only in the portrayal of myths is the audience ready to accept what is so obviously fictitious. Lacking the dignity of tragedy,<sup>318</sup> it is impossible for opera to 's'approprier des effets de la tragédie'.<sup>319</sup>

Yet, despite this severe distinction between the genres that he advocated in his criticism, from what we can see of his *Vengeance d'Achille*,<sup>320</sup> the libretto remains nearer tragedy than opera. Admittedly, it is taken from myth and based on the same part of the *Iliad* as Poinset de Sivry's *Briséis*.<sup>321</sup> This, however, is the only feature of the opera that truly coincides with La Harpe's rules. Fearing, as in other genres, the over-use of machines<sup>322</sup> and other complications, he only permitted a momentary appearance of the marvellous in the opening act, and for the rest presented a plot as simple as in any of his tragedies. There is a certain amount of spectacle, with celebrations and sacrifices, but without the full text it is difficult to see whether it was used successfully and was suitable for music.

*Aboulcassem* follows the line of *Les Barmécides*, again showing La Harpe's fondness for the Arabian nights. He knew of no 'histoire plus agréable que celle d'Aboulcassem'<sup>323</sup> and although called a *drame lyrique* this work is a light comic opera. In judging comic opera, La Harpe considered it to be a minor genre demanding indulgence from the critic<sup>324</sup> and certainly from what we can see of *Aboulcassem*, the plot is as involved a romance as could be desired.

#### 5. Conclusion

This love of romance colours the whole of La Harpe's theatre. He follows fashion in adopting national, oriental and ancient settings which allowed for

exotic spectacle. He appealed to the increasingly widespread love of sentiment by showing helpless heroines and truly generous heroes. Collé, for one, attributed the popularity of *Warwick* to the play's false romantic heroism, 'espèce de transport au cerveau'.<sup>325</sup> Although this recipe never brought La Harpe quite the same success again, it became an acceptable background for the stirring cries of the patriot and for the general emotive discussion of religion and politics so in keeping with the time. No play displays better this discussion of such ideas in an essentially almost maudlin way than the melodramatic *Mélanie*. Not only was this play the joy of Paris in 1770 when society learned it by heart,<sup>326</sup> but it continued to drag tears from the eyes of fine ladies for many a year.<sup>327</sup> The future Madame de Staël played the title rôle in Montpellier in 1785.<sup>328</sup> La Harpe's picture of a wise priest found an echo in *Atala*,<sup>329</sup> and Chateaubriand expressed his admiration for the work.<sup>330</sup> In the content of his theatre at least, La Harpe reflected the feelings of the time.

It is in the form of his plays that he remained steadfastly faithful to the increasingly sterile traditions of the classical stage. The thoroughly derivative nature of his works is seen nowhere better than in those whose plots demanded imagination. He quite blatantly turned to his masters as if to a dictionary of the art. He maintained that he could only use the dramatic means employed with success by the great classical writers and limited his task as a playwright to 'les combinaisons nouvelles de ces mêmes moyens'.<sup>331</sup> The critic betrayed the dramatist who should look to nature and not to past tradition for the basis of his art. Moreover, La Harpe condemned the essential immediacy of the theatre, by judging plays above all as poems fit to be read in private.<sup>332</sup> His plays were academic exercises lacking the dramatic interest that was to flourish in the theatre of the nineteenth century, and even as poems they do not match the productions of his classical predecessors.

After his death, four of his plays continued to be performed at the Comédie française for some time. *Warwick* was staged in 1809 and 1818. *Mélanie* was performed frequently up to 1805 and then revived in 1836 and 1837. *Philoctète* and *Coriolan* were permanent fixtures in the repertory up to 1826, and the last play was revived in 1839. No play by La Harpe has ever been performed there since.



## CHAPTER X

### POETRY

Just as in his theatre, La Harpe showed an essentially academic approach to poetry in general. He wished to preserve a tradition of poetry in the grand manner that was now threatened by the melancholy of the imitators of Young.<sup>1</sup> He shunned the 'brutes esquisses', produced by this foreign influence, and turned instinctively to:

Les ouvrages de l'art qui des peuples polis  
Ont fait l'honneur et les délices,  
Monuments achevés, par le goût embellis.<sup>2</sup>

Wanting, as in his prose, to be straightforward and simple,<sup>3</sup> he wished to attain elegance and claimed, in true Voltairian fashion that, while good verse differs from prose in its harmony, it retains the same exactitude and clarity of expression.<sup>4</sup> He pointed out that the mark of true poetry was its masculine vigour<sup>5</sup> and that the true poet was proud to proclaim his debt to the traditional masters of his art.<sup>6</sup> He frowned on contemporary attempts to restore the influence of Ronsard<sup>7</sup> and still looked to Malherbe as the true father of French poetry.<sup>8</sup>

As firm a Voltairian as in other genres, he showed allegiance to his master in his discussion of the earlier quarrels over the rival merits of verse and prose. He refused to call *Télémaque* a poem,<sup>9</sup> since, being written in prose, it lacks the advantage of showing difficulty overcome. Verse possesses inimitable beauties of harmony.<sup>10</sup> Good poetry reaches the heart and becomes what Voltaire calls the music of the soul.<sup>11</sup> A true poet thinks in verse, and the rhythm and the expression of his thoughts are not possible in prose.<sup>12</sup> In addition, rhyme is an essential part of French poetry.<sup>13</sup> La Harpe agreed that French was not a naturally poetic language,<sup>14</sup> and that poetry was an art that needed both to be carefully thought out and learned.<sup>15</sup> It had to be judged dispassionately,<sup>16</sup> and extravagance and other faults should, as elsewhere, be condemned.<sup>17</sup>

He also wished to protect the traditional purpose of poetry. Poetry is not merely a means of communication,<sup>18</sup> and La Harpe frowned on lengthy metaphysical discussion in verse.<sup>19</sup> While admitting that there was a general tendency in the poetry of his day to introduce reasoning,<sup>20</sup> he was convinced that the effect on the ear<sup>21</sup> and feeling<sup>22</sup> are the real interests of the true poet. He always recognized man's natural inclination for the pleasure of lyricism which is at the basis of all poetry.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, despite this respect for lyricism, he himself had a greater propensity for more didactic forms of verse. He had an undoubted gift for satire in the tradition of Boileau. Like Boileau, he could defend his literary creed by producing in verse succinct but telling portraits of his opponents. Here he cast aside the restraint of his journalism and indulged in the irony that he otherwise left to the *Année littéraire*:

Damon, dont le barreau vit briller les aïeux,  
 Né dans l'antique robe au sein du Jansénisme,  
 Dès l'enfance a sucé le lait du pédantisme.  
 Il en a sur le front et la morgue et les plis.  
 Toujours en quatre points divisant son avis,  
 Héritier de l'étude, et du goût de ses pères,  
 Et fait pour figurer dans des cercles austères,  
 Il s'arrache lui-même à ces succès flatteurs.  
 Egaré sur les pas de jeunes séducteurs,  
 Il s'efforce de prendre un nouveau caractère.  
 Le voilà près d'Eglé, rival d'un mousquetaire.  
 D'un élégant robin il affecte les airs,  
 Il est aux petits soins, et même aux petits vers.  
 Le boudoir a chez lui remplacé l'oratoire;  
 L'haute-lisse a fait place au pékin, à la moire;  
 Et lorsqu'il se ruine on se moque de lui.  
 Il apporte partout la fadeur et l'ennui.  
 Il a fait, en un mot, faute de se connaître,  
 D'un pédant fort passable un mauvais petit maître.<sup>24</sup>

He defended the right of satire to deal with objects of only minor importance<sup>25</sup> and still displayed in such verse his love of elegance. As the catch-line is often borrowed, the main merit of a good epigram, for instance, was, he felt, to be found in the concision and elegance of each line.<sup>26</sup> The genre could adopt any tone and even end with a fine thought rather than a witty remark.<sup>27</sup> It does not even need to be mordant, but merely to express an ingenious and amusing idea.<sup>28</sup>

Again in the tradition of Boileau, many of his poems are forms of *art poétique* in verse,<sup>29</sup> and his satires usually have literary quarrels as their theme.<sup>30</sup> Often, especially in his didactic verse, he returns to traditional themes such as a defence of the arts in general.<sup>31</sup> He likes to put forward a picture of the artist's path to glory,<sup>32</sup> showing Voltaire at the summit of human achievement. Another favourite theme in his verse is the defence of genius against envy.<sup>33</sup> While he imposed severe restrictions on the content of his serious verse, claiming that his first duty was not to find strong imagery, but to be 'simple et intéressant',<sup>34</sup> before his conversion at least, he admired the Voltairian union of poetry and philosophy.<sup>35</sup> Many of his early poems read like dissertations in which a question is put forward and then logically analysed. The problem: 'L'homme le plus sensible est-il le plus heureux?'<sup>36</sup> is reviewed in relation to the opposition between the innocent and those hardened by experience, between youth and age, between

sentiment and intellect. Such poems were good preparation for the *concours académiques*, in which, joining his talents for a logical *exposé* to the expression of sentiments liable to please the dominant faction in the Académie française, he excelled with poems such as *Des Talents dans leur rapport avec la société et le bonheur*.<sup>37</sup> For Diderot and others who wanted greater vividness in poetry, this verse was cold and unoriginal, like 'une eau fade qui distille goutte à goutte',<sup>38</sup> but the rather studied elegance brought its author continual success. It was Fréron's joke to talk of the 'prix de poésie fondé pour M. de La Harpe à l'Académie française'.<sup>39</sup>

This talent for the clear expression of ideas allied to a certain wit is seen used to good effect in his only attempt at writing a *conte* in verse, called *Tangu et Félimé*. Reflecting his taste for oriental tales — which the critic even explains at the beginning of his work (I, 1–20) — this poem in four cantos is based on the traditional tale of Fortunatus<sup>40</sup> and J. P. Bignon's *Les Aventures d'Abdalla*.<sup>41</sup> It tells how Tangu, the son of a merchant of Aleppo, woos Félimé, the daughter of the Sultan of Damascus, with the aid of several magic presents, given him by his father. She tricks Tangu and gets hold of the presents. In revenge, he persuades her to eat a magic fig and leaves her to live out her days with a nose as big as a foot, the poem proving:

. . . combien l'on peut faire accroire  
A qui se prend au doux parler d'amour;  
Mais que la fourbe est sujette au retour.

(I, 25–7)

Written in a genre where, according to La Harpe, anything goes, providing it is gay and amusing,<sup>42</sup> the poem is lighthearted and straightforward. It reads easily. There are witty asides in which the writer confides in the reader while commenting on the tale (I, 130–6, 210–15; II, 214–23). He plays with local colour (I, 139–60), with gallantry (III, 190–5), with mock morality (III, 39) and mock proverbs:

Femme qui pleure a, dit-on, bien des charmes,  
Mais certains nez gâtent beaucoup les larmes.

(IV, 254–5)

Presented as a mere 'bagatelle',<sup>43</sup> this poem reflects nevertheless its author's additional talent for light verse. While he condemned the banter of poets such as Dorat<sup>44</sup> and found anacreontic verse in general rather facile,<sup>45</sup> he demanded respect for the simplest forms of poetry<sup>46</sup> and, like Boileau, wanted to preserve a certain *marotisme*.<sup>47</sup> Here, as in most of his work, he looked instinctively to the Ancients, especially, like Voltaire, to Horace, whom he admired for his good sense,<sup>48</sup> for his noble and polite familiarity,<sup>49</sup> and for the mixture of gentleness and reproachfulness, of praise and of satire which could find a ready echo in the gallant poetry of the French.<sup>50</sup>

Above all, La Harpe displays in his light verse his usual preoccupation with elegance, and apart from his early *Épître à Zélis* in which the reader senses his

anger at being imprisoned in 1760, he allows very little personal feeling to creep into his verse: 'La poésie légère est la conversation d'un homme de beaucoup d'esprit et de très bonne compagnie, qui parle avec aisance et avec grâce, ne se permet pas tout et ne se répète jamais'.<sup>51</sup> Clinging to the traditional themes of friendship<sup>52</sup> and taste for company,<sup>53</sup> his main aim was to produce subtle praise, which he considered superior to ingenious satire.<sup>54</sup> He wanted a well-turned compliment:

Telle Flore, au soir d'un beau jour,  
Fuit devant le Zéphyre,  
S'arrête, et d'un œil plein d'amour,  
Vient encor lui sourire.  
Mais si de tes regards charmants  
Flore avait le langage,  
Zéphyre des volages amants  
Ne serait plus l'image.<sup>55</sup>

Although this is not always in the best of taste,<sup>56</sup> he preserved the tradition of gallantry à *double entente* that was more noticeable for its reticence than for its daring. The nearest that he comes to mentioning carnal love is in the poem which begins 'Je rêvais: volontiers, c'est de vous que je rêve'.<sup>57</sup> In a dream, he has seen his lady:

. . . comme Adam voyait Eve  
Aussi belle, aussi nue . . .  
(4-5)

but, like J. B. Rousseau in *Les Filets de Vulcain*,<sup>58</sup> the poet dare not express in words what his eyes have seen:

Je veux vous offrir votre image,  
Ce que mon œil a vu, ce qu'a touché ma main . . .  
Mais vous m'ordonnez d'être sage.  
(16-18)

If the poet wanted to avoid 'l'air frivole et le rire apprêté',<sup>59</sup> it is because the author of *Mélanie* had a deep-seated respect for women:

Femmes, c'est près de vous que l'âme est plus sensible,  
Le goût plus épuré, le talent plus flexible.<sup>60</sup>

It was to please women that he wrote many songs and *romances*. He felt that it was in song that his contemporaries had notably improved on the work of their predecessors. They had more elegance and wit.<sup>61</sup> In his own work, the *romance* was to have an elegiac quality. While feeling that the elegy itself could be used, not only as a lament, but to celebrate the return of a friend, birth as well as death, happy as well as unhappy love,<sup>62</sup> he defined the *romance* as the expression of the misfortune and complaints of love.<sup>63</sup> Simplicity is the keynote of all his songs. Most are based on stanzas of eight lines made up of two quatrains

with alternate rhymes, with the occasional enclosed quatrain to vary the rhythm. The quatrain was, he felt, particularly suited to a familiar style,<sup>64</sup> and, as he admitted, alternate rhymes were easier to handle than the classical distich.<sup>65</sup> The only poem where there is any elaboration in form is the *Vers adressés à Mme de Grammont* where the first line of each stanza — made up of the quintet *ababa* — is repeated at the end. It is a very slight modification. In the same spirit of simplicity, he approved of the soft and naive charm of a refrain<sup>66</sup> and used one in *L'Amour timide* and *Le Ruisseau*. He also used a refrain in his *La Prise de Toulon* which was sung to the tune of *La Marseillaise*.

We find the same basic simplicity in the comparatively few odes and similar lyric poems that he wrote in an elevated style. The *Philosophe des Alpes*, for instance, is written in the traditional symmetrical sixains that developed from the medieval *strophes couées*. The perfect balance achieved in this verse form with the shortened rhyming third and sixth lines of six syllables produces a particularly regular and satisfying rhythm.<sup>67</sup> La Harpe is careful to have a masculine rhyme on these shorter lines, as he wants each movement of the rhythm to be rounded off clearly for the 'repos naturel de l'oreille'.<sup>68</sup> In the *Ode à Mgr le Prince de Condé*, the form used is less symmetrical. The rhyme scheme is the same, but here it is the third and fifth lines which have only six syllables. A form of verse favoured by Malherbe, it has been little used since the decline of his influence.<sup>69</sup> *La Gloire* and *Le Chant des Triomphes de la France* are written in octosyllabic dizains with a standard dizain rhyme scheme: *ababccdeed*, with a softening of the couplets by the use of feminine rhymes. It is a form much used by Voltaire. The structure of *Sur la Navigation* is simplicity itself: one alexandrine couplet followed by an enclosed quatrain of which the third line is shortened to six syllables.

As we have pointed out, La Harpe did not write a great deal of elevated lyric poetry, although he certainly lamented the fact that the ode was neglected in France. He attributed this to the national love for a logical progression of ideas.<sup>70</sup> It was a genre which allowed the poet a great deal of freedom, although one had to be wary of introducing too many commonplace utterances on time, death and other eternal questions,<sup>71</sup> and there was always the danger of the poet's introducing himself too obviously into the poem.<sup>72</sup> There was no limit to the choice of subject for an ode, providing that it spurred the imagination and appealed to man's natural feeling for rhythm and harmony<sup>73</sup> with a rapid succession of images, stressing each new feeling strongly and leaving no time for careful transitions and developments.<sup>74</sup> Although what Boileau calls the *beau désordre* of the ode<sup>75</sup> is only apparent and is the result of much hidden art,<sup>76</sup> the poet must remember that he is out to please the ear and the heart<sup>77</sup> and must therefore only allow an impression of fleeting and sudden inspiration, and not of long careful thought. It is for this reason that the ode is particularly suitable for the celebration of a victory, for homage to a great man, or, as in the case of

his *Ode sur la Navigation*, to bear witness to the grandeur of nature and human achievement.<sup>78</sup>

The ideas in La Harpe's odes are again traditional, and the movement of all these poems is very much the same. He maintained that the essence of the art was the careful use of apostrophe or invocation,<sup>79</sup> and in each of his odes the poet takes up his lyre and very consciously calls out to the Muses or Nature for inspiration.

All in all, he may have found the stanza form of the ode somewhat constraining, as he attempted to replace it in maturity with a lyric free verse form which he called a *dithyramb*. This was originally a choral hymn in praise of Bacchus, then extended to the praise of any hero. On the authority of Horace,<sup>80</sup> La Harpe insisted that it was 'un genre de poésie hardi . . . , qui n'était assujetti à aucune mesure de vers déterminée, et pouvait les admettre toutes'.<sup>81</sup> It was particularly suited to subjects of a varied nature.<sup>82</sup> He chose this form for his *Aux Mânes de Voltaire*, since he felt that no subject showed greater diversity than Voltaire and his achievements in many fields of human endeavour.<sup>83</sup> In this way, different rhythms are used to describe different aspects of the latter's work:

Quand il en vient aux ouvrages agréables et aux poésies familières, il emploie la mesure légère et rapide de trois pieds et demi, et reprend ensuite le vers alexandrin et la strophe imposante de dix vers à quatre pieds, quand il s'agit de l'influence générale que Voltaire a eue sur son siècle et de la protection que son génie a étendue sur les opprimés . . .<sup>84</sup>

He was particularly proud of having rediscovered this verse form and what he considered to be its new and varied resources.<sup>85</sup> Under the Revolution, he found that it was a natural form for imposing subjects,<sup>86</sup> and his somewhat bloodthirsty *Hymne à la liberté*, again written in free verse, could, with its praise of the soldiers of France, be called a *dithyramb*.

This search for a satisfactory form for poetry in an elevated style reveals La Harpe's deep-rooted respect for the traditional scale of values in the choice of genres. Ambitious, just as in his theatre, to preserve classical taste for the sublime, he hankered all his life after the most difficult poetry of all, the epic.<sup>87</sup> The very scope of the art, the fact that it is less clear-cut in form than tragedy, makes it all the more difficult.<sup>88</sup> The magic of the theatre is not present to mask any defects, and any fault in the particularly difficult style is immediately obvious.<sup>89</sup> As so few people have succeeded in the epic, its rules have not been fully confirmed by experience. It therefore makes heavy demands on the power of unguided genius.<sup>90</sup> As in tragedy, there is a necessary unity of action in which all must be linked to one central object,<sup>91</sup> but the action can take any amount of time,<sup>92</sup> and epics are through necessity divided into episodes. The art is to make these episodes converge naturally on the central action.<sup>93</sup>

Like Voltaire, he was haunted by the problem of adapting the epic form to the needs of his day:

Quoi! ne peut-on chanter que ces fameux combats,  
 Où le destin d'un jour a détruit des états,  
 Ces triomphes sanglants, jeux cruels de la guerre,  
 Crimes de la fortune et malheurs de la terre?  
 O Muse! offre à mon siècle, à la postérité,  
 Des exploits bienfaisants, chers à l'humanité.<sup>94</sup>

Voltaire had stressed the fact that polite French society hardly encouraged the epic,<sup>95</sup> and La Harpe conceded that the genre had lost its original religious purpose; that only the heroic nature remained.<sup>96</sup> Ideally, the modern epic should be probable in a moral sense, heroic and moving.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, the moral is implied in the story, but the modern epic is not, as some have said,<sup>98</sup> allegorical.<sup>99</sup> Any moral observation must be called for by the situation.<sup>100</sup> The first interest is the grandeur and the moving nature of the story itself.<sup>101</sup> Here, we should be able to admire man at his finest hour, at the height of human endeavour.<sup>102</sup>

To study the art, he turned most readily to the Ancients. Where, like Voltaire, he felt that Virgil had led the art to unsurpassed heights,<sup>103</sup> nevertheless, for all his lack of refinement, Homer remained, in his eyes, a master of the art.<sup>104</sup> Reflecting the state of medieval studies in the eighteenth century, he completely ignored the French Middle Ages and dismissed all attempts in the genre by French writers of the seventeenth century.<sup>105</sup> He complained about the lack of action and truly heroic characters in the work of Camões<sup>106</sup> and maintained that Tasso was the only modern writer to have succeeded to a degree comparable to the Ancients, although his style was far from perfect.<sup>107</sup> In France, only the *Henriade*, and again with severe restrictions — notably, over its plan<sup>108</sup> — was, in any way, worthy of the name of epic.<sup>109</sup> In the *Henriade*, he also found that there was little action and no dialogue.<sup>110</sup> Among modern writers, only Tasso had excelled in dialogue<sup>111</sup> and had been able to give colour to his lesser characters in such a way that they had personality and still offset the hero.<sup>112</sup> He admired the variety of Tasso's descriptions<sup>113</sup> and his art of raising the humblest things to the sublime.<sup>114</sup>

This interest in the genre is reflected in some of La Harpe's earliest poems, his *héroïdes*, which could be called short studies in the epic,<sup>115</sup> although he himself later admitted that in writing these poems, he had above all followed fashion.<sup>116</sup> In itself, the genre was by no means a new one, having been practised by Ovid, but it enjoyed a new popularity through the many translations of Pope's *Letter from Eloisa to Abelard*, whose theme of unhappy love was to ensure its success well into the age of pre-romanticism.<sup>117</sup> What seems to characterize this kind of poem is an intentionally dramatic if imaginary monologue, an apostrophe to an absent partner where language is used to describe passion rather than detail.<sup>118</sup> The situation is, however, usually precise, and the hero is well-known. We see him at a moment of extreme stress, frequently, as in La Harpe, just before

his death. Indeed, La Harpe found the usual emphasis on love rather insipid and not worthy of the epic qualities of the genre. He was probably encouraged in this view by the masculine vigour and republican sentiment that he found in Lucan, whom he began to translate at about the same time.<sup>119</sup> In his own *héroïdes* he wanted to show the great characters of history struggling alone but with dignity with a destiny that would change the fate of mankind.<sup>120</sup>

The only *héroïde* in which he allows the love tradition of Pope to have full play is *Elisabeth de France à Don Carlos*, which he only printed once. There is an echo of *Britannicus* (iv.3) and the picture of a mother who is angry with her son in *Servilie à Brutus après la mort de César*. The other poems all show characters of resolution or, as in the case of Montezuma, of new-found resolution, cast in the Cornelian mould. We see the stoic hero facing up to his victor, Montezuma finding new strength to defy Cortez, Cato defying Caesar, Hannibal defying Flaminius, Socrates accepting his death from the people of Athens. At the same time, the undercurrent of republican sentiment presents us with the preoccupations of eighteenth-century France. There are many attacks on war and intolerance, and tyranny is seen diversely as the Inquisition, the Spaniards, Caesar, Rome, the rulers of Athens, and civil war. The besetting sin of these poems is an inability to vary the tone, as there is little room for background details and graduation of feeling. The heroes rage and rant, linger on their past glory, before calling out for vengeance. The most successful example of rage is to be found in *Annibal à Flaminius*. The heroes have little personality, and the narrative soon gives way to the commonplace utterances of the *philosophe*. In any case, La Harpe abandoned the genre after 1767, as he was forced to admit that it was difficult to have only one character speaking for any length of time without falling into 'les lieux communs et la déclamation'.<sup>121</sup>

He did not return to the epic itself until the end of his life, after his conversion. We have already touched on the difficulties of making the epic fit the needs of the modern world, and one of the main difficulties was that with the loss of the original religious beliefs of the Ancients, it became increasingly difficult to reproduce the supernatural elements that served as a backdrop for every action in the traditional epic. It was in the convincing representation of the marvellous that Voltaire had notably failed.<sup>122</sup>

Before his conversion, La Harpe had accepted the traditional line of thought on this question, by believing that it was impossible to use Christianity in the same way as the ancient religions, since in Christianity:

ses merveilles ne sont pas des fables, mais des mystères. Tout y est rigoureusement métaphysique. Dieu est tout, et le reste rien.<sup>123</sup>

As a Christian, however, he shared Chateaubriand's desire to use Christianity as a source of inspiration<sup>124</sup> and felt that it should be possible to replace the gods of antiquity with the lesser personages of religion such as angels, which, as



had been shown by both Milton and Tasso, were equally capable of pleasing the imagination.<sup>125</sup>

Strengthened by his new-found faith, sometime in 1795<sup>126</sup> he set out to trace the history of the Revolution in epic form in his *Triomphe de la Religion ou le Roi martyr*, of which he had only completed the first six cantos when he died.<sup>127</sup> The work was intended as a poetic expression of the religious and political views of his old age,<sup>128</sup> and as such is a kind of reply to the *Henriade*. A visit by Clermont-Tonnerre to Brunswick closely resembles Henri's visit to Elisabeth. In both, the visitor tells reluctantly of France's ills, but where Henri begins:

Reine, l'excès des maux où la France est livrée  
Est d'autant plus affreux que leur source est sacrée.

(II, 1-2)

Clermont insists:

Prince, de nos malheurs la source empoisonnée,  
C'est des *sages* du jour cette audace effrénée.

(II, 1-2)

As a poem, it suffers from its polemic content and from the choice of its hero. Louis XVI was too well-known for his pusillanimity.

The main interest of the work lies in its language. La Harpe was fully aware of the difficulties of epic style. Apart from the general difficulties inherent in any sustained style, an additional difficulty in the epic is that it is not suited to straightforward description,<sup>129</sup> even if an historical subject such as the *Henriade* does call for carefully drawn portraits.<sup>130</sup> He was all too conscious of the dangers of too much detail.<sup>131</sup> All detail must serve the principal object of the poem,<sup>132</sup> and every image must stir the soul and the imagination of the reader.<sup>133</sup> Voltaire himself attempted to recapture a rich style, which, while keeping to the purity of Racine, was to preserve more of the colour of the heroic grandeur of Corneille.<sup>134</sup> We have already seen how La Harpe followed this example in his theatre, and he saw his *héroïdes*, for instance, as exercises in dramatic style.<sup>135</sup> In these poems, there are many Cornelian lines such as: 'Mon sort est dans mes mains, seul j'en puis ordonner',<sup>136</sup> but the influence of Racine is still very strong:

Pâles et pénétrés d'un désespoir mortel,  
Comme on marche au trépas, nous marchions à l'autel;

Que d'enfants regrettés! que de veuves en pleurs!  
Tes murs retentissaient du cri de tes douleurs.<sup>138</sup>

These last lines reflect even more closely the author's desire to preserve the traditional epic imagery of Virgil:<sup>139</sup>

Assouvir de ton sang les traits de la vengeance;<sup>140</sup>  
Je vois nos dieux frémir, et leur front se voiler  
Sur l'airain amolli, je vois des pleurs couler.<sup>141</sup>

This elevated style was, however, considerably modified by La Harpe's conversion. Where Voltaire in the *Henriade* called on 'auguste Vérité' to rule his verse (I, 7), in the *Triomphe de la Religion* (I, 15–24), in a passage at least influenced by Milton<sup>142</sup> and Tasso,<sup>143</sup> the poet invokes religion and turns his back on the traditional forms of inspiration: 'L'oubli doit engloutir les filles de mémoire' (I, 22). With his new beliefs, he was able to discard the somewhat heavy personification of ideas that clogs up the description of hell in the *Henriade* (VII, 141–58). While he retained the traditional Virgilian picture of hell:

Plonge et descend toujours vers l'abîme embrasé,  
Aussi profondément sous la terre creusé,  
Que s'élève le ciel au-dessus de la terre;<sup>144</sup>  
Un long cri pénétra les cavernes fatales,  
Et fit mugir au loin les voûtes infernales,<sup>145</sup>

he combines this with the more direct biblical tone of Milton. Indeed, his picture of hell owes a great deal to the latter, both with the general picture of Satan surrounded by Moloch and Mammon, and even in details. In both, there is a burning lake,<sup>146</sup> again reflecting Virgil (*Aeneid*, VI, 550), and, in both, Satan prefaces his speech with a triple movement of fury:

Il renia trois fois le nom du tout puissant,  
Trois fois il éleva son sceptre menaçant.<sup>147</sup>

In similar vein, the picture of heaven combines the tradition of the Apocalypse with that of the Elysian fields:

Lorsque l'âme échappée à sa prison fragile  
Vole, esprit immortel, au monde des esprits.<sup>148</sup>

Yet, the echoes of Virgil mark the essential classicism of all of La Harpe's verse. Even if he turns to the Bible in *Le Triomphe de la Religion*, elsewhere in his verse traditional poetic diction abounds, with references to the gods of antiquity, to 'la Renommée aux cent voix', to 'les filles de mémoire', to the 'neuf sœurs' of the Helicon. Many of his images come directly from the writings of the Ancients. In his *Épître au Tasse*, he imitates the *Aeneid* on purpose:

Elle traîne, à travers les cadavres épars,  
Les lambeaux déchirés de sa robe sanglante.<sup>149</sup>

but elsewhere, the borrowing from Virgil is more instinctive than conscious:

Où les mortels les plus fameux  
Sous le marbre et l'airain revivaient à mes yeux.<sup>150</sup>

Virgil's influence is most clearly seen in war-imagery: 'Une moisson de fer hérise nos sillons',<sup>151</sup> and the expression of despair frequently echoes his picture of hell:

Où l'on entend des cris de rage,  
 Et des pleurs et des sifflements,  
 Les soupirs plaintifs des mourants,  
 Le bruit des armes, du ravage,  
 Et l'infortune qui gémit,  
 Et les hurlements de la haine,  
 Et le crime traînant sa chaîne,  
 Et le désespoir qui rugit.<sup>152</sup>

The force of nature too is expressed in terms reminiscent of those of Virgil:

Vos vaisseaux menacés roulent sous la tempête,  
 Et la nuit des enfers se répand sur les flots;  
 Le vent frappe et tourmente, au gré de ses caprices,  
 Vos frères édifices,  
 Entre les feux du ciel et le gouffre des eaux.<sup>153</sup>

Writing in this traditional poetic idiom, La Harpe also echoes the work of other French writers. Sharing many of Boileau's ideas, there are places where he reproduces the general movement of the latter's lines:

Qu'un sublime talent soit un talent utile;<sup>154</sup>  
 Ton génie excité s'agrandira près d'eux.<sup>155</sup>

La Harpe's *Le Chant des Triomphes* is quite obviously modelled on Boileau's *Ode sur la prise de Namur*, with a description of the Rhine which echoes the latter's *Epître IV*, lines 45 and 60.

Attempting to equal the grace of Racine, La Harpe produces lines that are reminiscent, not only of the sibilant sound so characteristic of Racinian verse in general, but, in places, of Racinian lines themselves:

Monstre que l'on caresse au lieu de l'étouffer.<sup>156</sup>  
 Laisse ces vils serpents qui sifflent sur tes pas.<sup>157</sup>

In similar fashion, many lines in La Harpe's poetry remind us of the work of the supreme imitator of Racine, Voltaire:

L'Aréthuse aperçoit de ses grottes profondes  
 Les débris du Croissant qui flottent sur les ondes.<sup>158</sup>

The influence of Voltaire is most strongly felt in descriptions of *turquerie* and fierce action:

Il attire vers lui les vapeurs de la terre,  
 Et le soufre et le nître, éléments du tonnerre,  
 Qui, mêlés à ses feux, et portés par les vents,  
 Se dispersent dans l'air en sillons foudroyants.<sup>159</sup>

Although La Harpe is generally rather gentler in tone than his master, many lines throughout his work owe something to the latter:

Gourmandez ces bourgeois d'une espèce amphibie;<sup>160</sup>  
 Le muphti, les schérifs, (noms peu faits pour les vers);<sup>161</sup>

Rois, contemplez la Grèce, et permettez qu'on pense;<sup>162</sup>  
 Et de l'homme peureux, du grand jour effrayé,  
 La paupière du moins est ouverte à moitié,  
 Vous craignez qu'il n'apprenne à l'ouvrir tout entière.<sup>163</sup>

An interesting influence of Voltaire on La Harpe is seen in the very early *Lettre à M\*\*\**, which — written in prose as well as in verse — reads like a very short *Temple du Goût*.

These borrowings are above all indicative, not only of the increasing sterility of the classical tradition, but of La Harpe's own rather limited powers of invention. In places, he even borrows from himself. For instance, an image which he first used in the 1765 edition of one of his earliest poems, *Montézume à Cortez*: 'L'or tout souillé de sang brille en leurs mains fumantes' (52), is to be found only slightly altered in his very last poem, *Le Triomphe de la Religion*: 'Que l'or souillé de sang brille en ses mains fumantes' (v, 486). A passage in *Sur la Sensibilité* (63–70), first published in 1765, reappears in 1779 in the *Épître à Schowalow* (158–65). Parts of *L'Homme de lettres* (63–79, 200–7) are also found in the *Lettre à M\*\*\**, and the end of the third *Épître à Mme de\*\*\** (16–40) is added to later editions of *Sur le Malheur* (76–102).

This poverty of true inspiration is often all too apparent. His verse abounds in allegory, with imagination, envy, time, unhappiness, &c., personified in set images. In one poem alone, one can read 'affreux sifflements . . . affreux serpents . . . pontife affreux . . . rire affreux'.<sup>164</sup> It is an adjective which appears in many poems, along with other overworked strong terms.<sup>165</sup> As in his theatre, he indulges in a rather creaking antithesis, which is frequently carried through to the rhyme.<sup>166</sup> There is little care taken over rhymes, which are frequently visual rather than audible,<sup>167</sup> tend to be repetitive,<sup>168</sup> and display a general disregard for the supporting consonant.<sup>169</sup>

These faults are made all the more evident by his slavish respect for the traditional techniques of versification. He still believed that the finest verse was written in classical alexandrines. Although it is the most natural line in French, it is, as La Harpe himself admits,<sup>170</sup> the most difficult to handle well. It is in itself the essence of nobility in verse,<sup>171</sup> where the very grandeur of the line carries the reader along and should make him forget the presence of the author.<sup>172</sup> The art of the great writer is to overcome the built-in danger of monotony,<sup>173</sup> but La Harpe placed strict limitations on the variations allowed to combat this. Feeling that enjambment did not go well with rhyme, he thought that it was only to be used when it served a particular well-marked purpose.<sup>174</sup> As a general rule, variations were to come within the rhythm of the line itself, either by changing the rhythm within each hemistich, or by occasionally shifting the caesura by bringing a sentence or clause to an end before the rhyme.<sup>175</sup> In other words, in his mind, the movement of this verse is largely dependent on punctuation. In his noble verse, his elegance is of a rather studied kind.

Understandably, he found that shorter lines were easier to handle. The decasyllabic line, for instance, he found particularly easy as it allowed a free use of enjambment<sup>176</sup> and was suitable for familiarity and wit.<sup>177</sup> He himself used it for this purpose.<sup>178</sup> The line that he used most widely, however, was the octosyllabic, with the free lyricism afforded by its shifting caesura. He liked the freedom given by the relatively minor importance of punctuation in this verse form.<sup>179</sup> He very occasionally used shorter lines, such as the seven-syllable *impair*,<sup>180</sup> or lines of six<sup>181</sup> or five syllables.<sup>182</sup> He disapproved of lines under four syllables long and, in any case, felt that all short lines were best kept for short poems in regular stanzas, as it was exceedingly difficult to give variety to the short rhythm.<sup>183</sup> When it came to mixing verse, the most successful amalgam was, he was sure, between lines of eight and twelve syllables.<sup>184</sup> He only rarely used other combinations such as eight and six<sup>185</sup> and eight and four.<sup>186</sup> All in all, he was not an adventurous versifier and showed throughout his poetry a clear desire to preserve classical form.

However, just as in his theatre, this respect for classical form does not exclude the presence in his verse of certain new tendencies. We have seen his respect for women. Like Voltaire and most of his contemporaries, he condemned the misogynist in Boileau,<sup>187</sup> and it is this feeling for women that seems to have encouraged in La Harpe a definite taste for sentimentality. Wanting 'un beau sentiment rendu dans un beau vers',<sup>188</sup> in places, his poetry shows all the maudlin qualities of a picture by Greuze:

Le père accablé d'ans, pleurant sur sa charrue,  
Perd son dernier soutien, et dans son désespoir  
Maudit encor Paris, qu'il n'a jamais pu voir.<sup>189</sup>

Admittedly, even here La Harpe displayed a marked lack of invention that exasperated, for instance, Diderot.<sup>190</sup> His pictures of sentiment tend to follow set patterns, such as the recurring description of a mother watching her daughter.<sup>191</sup>

In similar vein, the thought of Nature produces two tendencies in his verse. The classicist in La Harpe only looked to nature for 'la leçon et l'image'<sup>192</sup> and, true to his creed that all art is an embellishment of nature, he was convinced that 'la vraie poésie n'est en effet que l'expression de la belle nature'.<sup>193</sup> He was extremely wary of the influence of the German preromantics and of the vogue for descriptive poetry:<sup>194</sup>

C'est peu de crayonner; il faut . . .  
Placer des traits choisis dans des cadres heureux.  
Et n'allez pas surtout, l'un de l'autre copiste,  
Peintre minutieux, scrupuleux botaniste,  
Effeuille chaque rose, ouvrir chaque bouton,  
User votre palette à peindre un papillon.<sup>195</sup>

Not living in the wild, he felt that pastoral poetry did not come naturally to the eighteenth-century Frenchman;<sup>196</sup> that, through necessity rather than desire, the poet still had to turn to classical mythology rather than nature itself.<sup>197</sup> Thus, in his *Vers à la fontaine de Meudon*, for instance, we still find a conscious imitation of Horace.<sup>198</sup> For La Harpe, nature tended to be a pretty garden adjoining a country house:

Où chaque soir enfin, au moment du retour,  
Un concert terminait tous les plaisirs du jour.<sup>199</sup>

Welcoming his friends to his country retreat in *L'Impromptu de campagne*, he thinks quite naturally of Boileau in his garden at Auteuil.<sup>200</sup> We see nature in its summer garb, whence the townsman can return, refreshed for 'le tourbillon de Paris':

La Nature alors est si belle!  
Pour des plaisirs nouveaux elle éveille nos sens.<sup>201</sup>

Even in fiercer mood, nature only serves as a backdrop for reflections on man.<sup>202</sup> Yet the young poet had admired the German preromantics<sup>203</sup> and, even if he did not wish to imitate their 'fausse abondance',<sup>204</sup> he certainly developed — albeit in classical terms — the feeling for nature that was to grow even stronger under the Romantics:

La Nature nous plaît alors qu'elle épouvante.  
Le désert a son charme et l'horreur ses appas.<sup>205</sup>

Under the direct influence of J. J. Rousseau,<sup>206</sup> he liked to express his life-long admiration for the majesty of mountains.<sup>207</sup> Even in reflective mood, he can show a feeling of personal involvement, a melancholy which is most effective, and which is seen in one of his best poems, *Les Regrets*:

Le sombre hiver va disparaître;  
Le printemps sourit à nos vœux;  
Mais le printemps ne semble naître  
Que pour les cœurs qui sont heureux.

Le mien, que la douleur accable,  
Voit tous les objets s'obscurcir,  
Et quand la nature est aimable,  
Je perds le pouvoir d'en jouir.

(1-8)

The same is true in his picture of his own feeling of encroaching age:

Prévenons, s'il se peut, le temps et le besoin;  
La vieillesse prévue en devient moins cruelle.  
Songeons, en la voyant de loin,  
Que nous allons au-devant d'elle;  
Que le temps jusqu'à nous l'apporte sur son aile,  
Rien ne peut nous y dérober:  
L'été sur son déclin rembrunit le feuillage;  
Il séchera bientôt; bientôt il va tomber.

De son premier éclat se retraçant l'image,  
 Vainement le désir revole aux jours passés,  
     Reproduit des cieux éclipsés,  
 Erre encore sur les fleurs, et revient sous l'ombrage.  
 Ces fantômes légers trompent quelques instants;  
 La vérité détruit ce que l'erreur nous donne,  
 L'imagination rappelle le printemps:  
 Mais la raison nous crie: 'Amasse pour l'Automne,  
 Sur la course du temps mesure tous tes pas,  
     L'Hiver ne te surprendra pas'.<sup>208</sup>

The theme is traditional, but the didacticism is fresh as the tone is direct and personal. It is here that La Harpe is at his best.<sup>209</sup> When he is simple and unambitious in ideas and form, he can produce, if not great poetry, at least verse of a good meditative quality.

It is in this form of art, perhaps more clearly than in any other, that we see particularly well his limitations as an artist. His qualities as a critic helped him to compose telling attacks in verse as well as in prose. His elegance as a versifier, allied to a gentle sentiment which offsets the harshness of the critic, is put to good effect in light verse written for fêtes at country-houses, or for dinner in town. But, when he tries to rehandle well-worked ideas on a grandiose scale, he is more than a little tedious.

## CHAPTER XI

# TRANSLATION

As a good humanist, longing for the erudition of an earlier age, La Harpe would have liked all educated men to appreciate the Ancients in the original text.<sup>1</sup> In the transposition from Greek or Latin into French, he felt that something was inevitably lost, since French was inferior to both classical tongues. Its importance in Europe in the eighteenth century was due, not to its intrinsic qualities as a language, but to the mastery of its writers of genius who, especially in the theatre, had hidden the poverty of language beneath the richness of their talent.<sup>2</sup> Its supreme quality, clarity, is a virtue born of necessity.<sup>3</sup> Its relative weakness is particularly evident in poetry,<sup>4</sup> as French lacks the natural harmony of the ancient tongues,<sup>5</sup> having syllables of only vague quantity and value.<sup>6</sup> He longed nostalgically for the concision and synthesis of the Romans and Greeks.<sup>7</sup> He viewed with distaste in his own language the personal pronouns, the use of auxiliary verbs and composite conjugation, and the lack of a true passive voice.<sup>8</sup> He particularly disliked the French need for monosyllabic particles.<sup>9</sup> These basic differences between French and the ancient languages made satisfactory translation extremely difficult. The loss of accident made inversion unnatural in French,<sup>10</sup> and it was impossible to imitate the classical period with its main verb coming at the end.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, he was fully aware of the usefulness of translations, even if it was almost apologetically that he conceded, for instance, the need to insert translations from the Ancients into the *Lycée*.<sup>12</sup> While it could not match the original a good translation was able to reveal some of the beauties of the much-maligned Ancients,<sup>13</sup> and, in the face of wide-spread frivolity and a perverse love of jargon, La Harpe saw that right-minded people turned to the Ancients for 'une nourriture plus solide'.<sup>14</sup> It was in this light that he was to go so far as to proclaim that translations were among the best books of his time.<sup>15</sup> Delille, for instance, as the translator of Virgil, was 'fait pour consoler les amateurs éclairés de ce déluge de vers barbares qui tombent continuellement dans le gouffre de l'oubli'.<sup>16</sup> First and foremost, therefore, he looked to translation as a bulwark against bad taste.

In his views on the techniques of translation, he drew a sharp distinction between verse and prose. Much of his own translation in prose was done on a straightforward commercial basis, and he did not express any deeply felt opinion on the subject other than demanding a fairly rigorous respect for the



original text.<sup>17</sup> He regarded translation in verse, however, as complementary to the creation of poetry. While he admitted that occasionally it was necessary to use prose to translate poetry,<sup>18</sup> as he does once or twice to explain a passage in the *Lycée*,<sup>19</sup> in general, he maintained that a poet should be translated into verse, as it is not enough merely to follow his plan and his ideas, but one must render 'son génie même, et paraître animé du même feu'.<sup>20</sup> Delille, for instance, had led the way by making up for the loss of natural harmony with subtle changes in the rhythm and construction of his verse.<sup>21</sup>

Convinced, as in other forms of literature, that the translator must make his work pleasing and readable,<sup>22</sup> he felt that a good translation was in some ways a second creation.<sup>23</sup> He admired those whose own greatness allowed them to overcome the 'lutte de style et [la] rivalité de génie' that translation implied.<sup>24</sup> He called for only relative fidelity as far as verse was concerned.<sup>25</sup> The only general rule that he observed for all translation, in prose as well as in verse, was the necessity to render the original author's meaning and the general characteristics of his style.<sup>26</sup> He considered it permissible to replace an image which did not suit the spirit of French.<sup>27</sup> In the same way, it was not always possible to keep familiar expressions not normally accepted in the modern tongue.<sup>28</sup> The translator must have the freedom to shorten in his translation what might be too long for the modern reader, and to lengthen what might appear in the same way too short.<sup>29</sup> He can — while preserving the original analogy between them — rearrange ideas and place them in different parts of the sentence, if the sentence then flows more easily and is thus more pleasing to the ear.<sup>30</sup> Translation is, after all, an art:

Tout homme qui traduit en vers doit, autant qu'il le peut, donner à son style toutes les qualités qu'il pourrait avoir, s'il écrivait d'après lui, le même air de liberté, la même élégance dans les expressions, la même grâce dans les tournures . . . il doit enfin . . . tirer de sa langue le même parti qu'en aurait tiré l'auteur qu'il traduit.<sup>31</sup>

The outstanding example of La Harpe's putting this attitude into practice is *Philoctète*. Discussing this work as a play, we have already examined the discrepancies between his version and the original text as regards plot and dramatic intent. In so far as language is concerned, he claimed to have followed the Greek text as closely as he could: 'autant que me l'a permis la différence des langues et le caractère de notre versification, j'ai suivi non seulement les idées et le dialogue, mais même les tournures et les constructions du texte grec.'<sup>32</sup> Yet, on the general question of translating Greek tragedy, he had been forced to admit that the Ancients' simplicity was almost diametrically opposed to 'la noblesse quelquefois un peu trop superbe' of French dramatic verse.<sup>33</sup>

When, for instance, he translated passages from Sophocles' *Ajax*, for the first line of Ajax's last speech (815):

Ὁ μὲν σφαγῆς ἔστηκεν

(here is the murderer standing),<sup>34</sup> he had first written :

Oui, le fer est tout prêt . . . ,<sup>35</sup>

and then substituted :

Oui, le glaive est tout prêt. . . .<sup>36</sup>

At the end of the speech, for the double movement of the Greek (864–5):

τοῦθ' ὑμῖν Αἴας τοῦπος ὕστατον θροεῖ,  
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν Αἰδοῦ τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

(this is the last thing that Ajax tells you, the rest I will say to those from below (i.e. the dead)), he substituted:

Recevez mes adieux; il est temps que je meure,  
Que je termine enfin ma plainte et mes revers:  
Mon ombre désormais va gémir aux enfers.<sup>37</sup>

He even modifies the meaning further by later changing the last line to:

Mon ombre va chercher du repos aux enfers.<sup>38</sup>

His supreme interest is the effect of his verse in French.

In the same way, throughout *Philoctète*, the original spirit of the Greek lines is consistently sacrificed to the elegant traditions of the French theatre. This is seen from the very beginning. For the straightforward description of Philoctetes' cries interrupting the religious ceremonies of the Greeks (Sophocles, 8–11), La Harpe introduced his favourite rhythmic device, antithesis:

Il troublait de ses cris la paix des sacrifices,  
De son aspect impur blessait leur sainteté,  
Et souillait tout le camp de sa calamité.

(i.1)

He also — and this is unfortunate — generally hardened the tone of the language, so that where the Greek Philoctetes shows throughout the play a paternal attitude to Pyrrhus, the son of a friend, in La Harpe's work he rages in precisely the same way against Pyrrhus as against his arch-enemy, Ulysses. Where, for instance, in Sophocles (468–72), Philoctetes implores Pyrrhus to take him with him by appealing to him above all in the name of his mother and father, pride of place is now given to the gods:

Ah! par les immortels de qui tu tiens le jour,  
Par tout ce qui jamais fut cher à ton amour,  
Par les mânes d'Achille, et l'ombre de ta mère,  
Mon fils, je t'en conjure, écoute ma prière,  
Ne me laisse pas seul en proie au désespoir.

(i.4)

In similar fashion, the French playwright (ii.2, 3) completely destroys the contrast in the Greek text (895–1080) between Philoctetes' pleading with Pyrrhus for the return of his arms and his outright hatred and contempt for

Ulysses. According to Gail,<sup>39</sup> Talma managed to win great applause with the line: ‘Mes armes, c’en est trop, mes armes’ (ii.3), but, aware of the illogicality of the unbroken harsh tone, showed the difference for Philoctetes between Pyrrhus and Ulysses by varying the expression in his eyes.

In addition, in several places La Harpe owes more to Racine than Sophocles. This influence is seen to alter further the meaning of the text in the famous scene when Philoctetes’ divinely-inspired affliction reaches a crisis and ends with his falling unconscious. In the Greek text, the illness is described thus:

κοῦ δυνήσομαι κακὸν  
κρύφαι παρ’ ὑμῖν, ἄττατατ᾽ διέρχεται, διέρχεται.

(and I shall not be able to keep my ill secret from you. It goes through, it goes through (742–4)),

στάζει γὰρ αὖ μοι φοίνιον τόδ’ ἐκ βυθοῦ κηκῆιον αἷμα.

(Indeed, in me again drips the red blood, gushing forth from the depth (783–4)). Under the influence of *Phèdre* (1637–9), La Harpe transforms this illness into a poison:

Le poison se répand dans mes brûlantes veines! . . .  
L’indomptable venin, passant jusqu’à mon cœur. (i.4)

He also echoes *Phèdre* (844) in his version of:

Κάγω δακρύσας εὐθὺς ἐξάνισταμαι ὀργῇ βαρεία, καὶ καταλήσας (. . .).

(And I rise at one, weeping with great anger and suffering pain (367–8)). This becomes:

Et l’œil humide encor de mes pleurs répandus  
Je me présente aux chefs . . .  
(i.4)

The memory of *Phèdre* (1327–8) is no less clear in his rendering of:

ὅς γε σὰν λιπῶν ἱερὰν  
λιδάδ’ ἐχθροῖς ἔδαν Δαναοῖς  
ἄρωγός; ἔτ’ οὐδὲν εἶμι.

(I who having left the sacred stream have stood fast helping the hated Greeks; yet I am nothing (i.e. am dying)). La Harpe writes:

Pour eux seuls j’ai tout fait, pour eux seuls tout quitté;  
Ma mort en est le prix . . . je l’ai bien mérité.  
(ii.4)

In reality, despite his attempts to show his fidelity to Sophocles, again and again he reveals that he is basically more interested in producing a work similar in nature to his own original productions in the same genre.

The same tendency is to be found in all his translations in verse. They are best understood in relation to, and in the light of, his own creations in related genres.

Just as he turned to the theatre of the ancient Greeks to enrich his own, so he turned to classical writers in other genres ostensibly to enrich his own poetic style; to Lucretius for the didactic, to Martial for the satirical, to Tibullus for a meditative style, and, above all, for the general mastery of light verse, to Horace. Yet, in every case the result owes as much to the general characteristics of La Harpe's poetry as to the work of the original writer. His translation of Tibullus, for instance, does not pretend to be more than an imitation.<sup>40</sup> As for Horace, even Voltaire had said that it was practically impossible to give a satisfactory rendering of his verse in French.<sup>41</sup> La Harpe avoids much of the difficulty by making no attempt to imitate even in stanza form the untransferable Latin lyric metres. In this way, the fourth Asclepiad in 'Quis multa gracilis' (*Carmina*, I, v) is turned into straightforward mixed verse. In 'Ulla si juris tibi peierati' (*Carmina*, II, viii) — which, incidentally, he addresses to Chloé, as he finds the original name, Barine, unpleasant in French<sup>42</sup> — the original Sapphic stanza is replaced by quatrains in seven-syllable lines. Combining the two odes 'Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens' and 'O diva gratum quæ regis Antium' (*Carmina*, I, xxxiv, xxxv), written in Alcaic stanzas, La Harpe says that he has allowed a mixing of rhythms 'pour rendre mieux la variété des tons'.<sup>43</sup> The result is similar in form to his dithyramb, *Aux Mânes de Voltaire*.

The same analogy exists between his two fairly long translations from Lucan and Tasso and his other works in epic vein. One of the passages from Lucan that he published in 1765, *Brutus à Caton* (*Pharsalia*, ii.242–84) reads almost like one of his *héroïdes*. If we were to look only at his critical attitude to Lucan, his reasons for translating him would not appear altogether clear. Whereas Marmontel — the greatest defender of Lucan in the eighteenth century — had praised him for writing an epic without 'le secours des enfers et des cieux'<sup>44</sup> and was himself applauded for his translation of the Latin writer,<sup>45</sup> La Harpe consistently attacked him both as an artist and as a man.

The artist, he felt, had found the secret of making what had been an interesting story in prose a boring one in verse.<sup>46</sup> As if in reply to Marmontel,<sup>47</sup> he argued that Lucan did not know how to tell a story since in his shapeless history of the whole of the civil war,<sup>48</sup> he lingered in a most tiresome way over minor details,<sup>49</sup> in which the interest is always destroyed by the length and turgidity of his descriptions.<sup>50</sup> The result is that he tends to exaggerate and is cold and monotonous.<sup>51</sup> Condemning the man, La Harpe said that he was incapable of appreciating true grandeur,<sup>52</sup> and could not forgive him for his unjust picture of Caesar as a ferocious bloodthirsty tyrant.<sup>53</sup> But no *philosophe* could afford to dismiss Lucan out of hand. Like Voltaire, La Harpe admitted that Lucan's work had moments of true grandeur.<sup>54</sup> Above all, its theme was worthy of the epic,<sup>55</sup> for, if the author was momentarily led astray by the hopeful beginnings of the reign of Nero, his poem nevertheless constitutes an unending cry against tyranny.<sup>56</sup> It is this feeling for freedom that leads him in

places to sublime eloquence where we find 'ces beautés d'un caractère mâle et neuf qui l'ont rendu digne des regards de la postérité'.<sup>57</sup>

With encouragement from Voltaire,<sup>58</sup> La Harpe therefore limited his translation to chosen passages<sup>59</sup> and only preserved, in general, the moments of extreme action and those speeches where the Latin writer showed his qualities as an orator if not as a poet.<sup>60</sup> He dealt with these passages 'dans une imitation très libre, telle que doit être celle d'un écrivain qui n'est pas un modèle'.<sup>61</sup> He seems generally to be intent on shortening the text as far as is possible. This is most clearly seen by comparing the passages that originally appeared in 1765 with the equivalent text of the final version, published in 1778 and 1806. Either he cuts out a passage as in the case of an image of a tiger in Caesar's speech to his soldiers (*Pharsalia*, I, 327–9), preserved in 1765 but taken out in 1778, or else he further compresses in an even freer précis of the text a passage that was already an abbreviation.<sup>62</sup> He even alters the movement of the poem as when he places after Caesar's speech (I, 337–44) the soldier's applause that originally greeted a speech by Laelius (*Pharsalia*, I, 387–91). In Lucan, Caesar's speech meets with a lukewarm reception (*Pharsalia*, I, 352–6).

For an idea of the little respect shown for the original text, it is again expedient to compare variants. For instance, to translate:

*Primo gentes oriente coactæ  
innumeræque urbes, quantas in proelia numquam  
excivere manus*

(from the end of the orient collected peoples and countless towns have summoned forces such as never seen before in battle (VII, 360–2)), La Harpe first wrote:

Appelés dans mon camp des bornes de l'Asie,  
Des forêts du Caucase et des champs de Scythie,  
Cent peuples du combat attendent le hasard,<sup>63</sup>

and then:

Appelés dans mon camp des bornes de l'Asie,  
Des sommets du Taurus, des champs de la Mésie,  
Cent peuples de ce jour partagent le hasard.

(VII, 281–3)

He is composing in French. In this way, he is not above elaborating on the text, introducing imagery of his own, as for instance, replacing:

*horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos  
Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus aruis*

(Hesperia (i.e. Italy) is bristling with thorn-bushes, fallow for many years, and hands are missing from the fields that call for them (I, 28–9)) by:

Si Cérès de nos champs pleurant le déshonneur,  
Y redemande en vain la main du laboureur.

(i.35–6)

In fact, the main interest of this work is to see how La Harpe replaces the style of Lucan with the poetic diction of the eighteenth century. He consciously suppresses the quirks of the latter's style such as his habit of referring to the sun as Titan<sup>64</sup> and to Pompey by his nickname of Magnus.<sup>65</sup> Nor does he adopt Lucan's trick of qualifying a proper noun with an adjective which suggests its etymological meaning as in *puniceus Rubicon* (reddish Rubicon (i, 214)), which in La Harpe becomes merely 'le Rubicon naissant' (i, 205). If he keeps the description of the sail of Theseus' boat, *mentitis . . . velis* (ii, 612), 'la voile mensongère' (ii, 553), he feels that he has to explain it in a footnote.<sup>66</sup>

Where Lucan's style is admittedly often too rich, that of the translator frequently appears merely flat, as when *vicerat astra jubar* (the light of day had vanquished the stars (vii, 45)) becomes 'le jour brillait enfin' (vii, 23). In general, he is less precise than Lucan as when *limosa . . . ulva* (the muddy sedge (ii, 70)) is rendered by 'la fange' (ii, 64). Apart from the normal ennoblement of language in which a term such as *viscera* (i, 3, vii, 500) is constantly translated by 'flancs déchirés' (i, 4, vii, 388), the general impression is one of adulteration, as when La Harpe (ii, 89–176) tones down the description of the purges of Sulla and Marius (*Pharsalia*, ii, 134–233). In one place (ii, 580), feeling that he could do no better,<sup>67</sup> he retained a line from the well-known translation of the *Pharsalia* by Brébeuf,<sup>68</sup> whom, like Voltaire, he judged with mixed feelings.<sup>69</sup>

Elsewhere, the language is very much La Harpe's own. An idea of the jargon with which he replaces Lucan's style can be seen in the description of Caesar's troops occupying a town:

*Constitit ut capto jussus deponere miles  
signa foro, stridor lituum clangorque tubarum  
non pia concinuit cum rauco classica cornu*

(when the soldier took up position in the forum and received the order to lay down the standards, the grating of the bugles and the clanging of the war-trumpets sounded together with the strident horn in an impious fanfare (i, 236–8)):

'Le soldat dans la place arborant l'aigle altièrè  
Fait retentir soudain la trompette guerrière'.

(i.225–6)

If he gains in simplicity, in general he weakens the text. To see this one only has to compare Lucan's and La Harpe's description of the death of Julia:

*Nam pignora juncti  
sanguinis et diro ferales omine tædas  
abstulit ad manes Parcarum Julia sæva  
intercepta manu*

(Julia, cut off by the cruel hand of the Fates, has borne away to the lower world the pledges of the union of their blood and the funeral torches with their dread omen (i.111–14)):

Chez les dieux des enfers, Julie infortunée  
 Emporta les flambeaux de son triste hyménée.  
 (I, 69–70)

The purist in La Harpe led him to destroy one of the finest moments in Lucan — also mutilated by Brébeuf<sup>70</sup> —, the description of a mother clutching a dead child:

*membra premit fugiente rigentia vita  
 voltusque exanimis oculosque in morte minaces*

(she hugs the limbs stiff from the fleeing of life, the inanimate face, the eyes threatening in death (II, 25–6)). The vivid image evoked by *minaces* is replaced by the insipid: ‘Un fils que par degrés vient glacer le trépas’ (II, 24).

He did not allow himself quite so much freedom when he came to translate Tasso. As an expression of his lifelong admiration for the latter, he felt that Tasso had to be treated with respect<sup>71</sup> and not freely adapted like Lucan.<sup>72</sup> Whereas, La Harpe insisted, most of his compatriots had imitated, abbreviated or mutilated the text in their versions of the Italian poet, he claimed to have been ‘tout simplement . . . traducteur, du moins comme on peut l’être en poésie’.<sup>73</sup>

However, he was no scholar of Italian,<sup>74</sup> and his translation is characterized by an endless struggle with *l’esprit italien*, even if he only admitted to having slightly altered the text by cutting out the occasional *conchetti*.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, in the eight cantos that he completed by the time of his death, he follows the movement of the original poem faithfully. He preserves all the controversial episodes in Tasso such as that of Olinda and Sophronia in canto II, which he calls ‘hors de propos un très beau propos’,<sup>76</sup> and, in the same way, Armida’s seduction of the Christian warriors in canto IV which is a mere ‘tableau de coquetterie, ennobli par la poésie’.<sup>77</sup> In places, he silenced his severity as a critic and hesitated to remove images that he nevertheless felt to be unsuitable for the modern epic.<sup>78</sup> It is in this context that he kept the comparison:

*Così coperti van ne’giochi mori  
 Dalle palle lanciate i fuggitori*  
 (III, st. xxxii)

Tel le Maure en ses jeux, par l’habitude,  
 Sait parer en fuyant la balle que le suit.  
 (III, 253–4)

In similar fashion, he preserves Tasso’s word *Avventurieri* (I, st. lii), ‘aventuriers’ (I, 413) to describe the Christian volunteers, despite the derogatory sense in modern French. He felt that it was more important to retain local colour.<sup>79</sup> He insisted that he had not changed more than a hundred lines and claimed to have explained each change in the accompanying notes ‘par respect pour un aussi beau génie que le Tasse’.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, just as his translation of Lucan reflects his interest in the *héroïde*, so his translation of Tasso runs parallel to his other attempts to write a

Christian epic. Where he felt that he had solved the problem of the supernatural in the epic by introducing the lesser personages of religion, he pointed out that it was the duty of the Christian writer to show the 'esprits malfaisants' or demons in hideous form and, for the same reason, angels or 'esprits purs' endowed with beauty.<sup>81</sup> He accused Tasso of using a rather unfortunate amalgam of classical and biblical imagery, especially in the picture of the infernal council in his canto iv. La Harpe therefore suppressed in his translation all the references to the figures of the classical underworld such as Pluto and Cerberus, feeling that they were misplaced in the description of beings who had been cast out of heaven.<sup>82</sup> In this line of thought, he objected to Tasso's use of the term *Orrida maestà* (iv, st. vii) to describe the ruler of hell. The picture thus conjured up was still that of the respectable lord of the underworld and not of the archangel of damnation.<sup>83</sup> In place of Tasso's description, he substituted a line based on Milton (*Paradise Lost*, I, 600-1): 'Ce front encore empreint des traits qui l'ont frappé' (iv, 49). Admittedly, he admired Tasso's 'figures monstrueuses' and felt that the translator's only difficulty was to give new life to well-worked images.<sup>84</sup> On poetic as well as religious grounds, it was quite permissible to place mythological characters such as Gorgons and Cyclops in the Christian's vision of hell, but one had to explain their purpose. It is for this reason that he introduced into his translation the following three lines, again influenced by Milton (*Paradise Lost*, I, 477):

Là sont réalisés les fantômes bizarres  
Que l'erreur inventa dans des siècles barbares:  
Tous, enfants du mensonge, en peuplent le séjour.  
(iv, 35-7)

These changes dictated by La Harpe's views on the Christian epic are, however, of lesser importance than the many modifications that he made of Tasso's text in order to avoid 'ce malheureux esprit des sonnets italiens, insupportable dans le style sérieux, et ridicule dans l'épopée'.<sup>85</sup> In the description of Tancredi's first seeing Clorinda, he suppresses the lines:

*Oh meraviglia! Amor ch'appena è nato,  
Già grande vola, e'già trionfa armato*  
(I, st. xlvii)

('O merveille!, L'amour à peine né, vole déjà grand, et triomphe d'un guerrier.')

<sup>86</sup> He objects to Tasso's tendency to bring love into everything,<sup>87</sup> and this is particularly out of place in the description of Sophronia, whose name means wisdom. The line *Di natura, d'Amor, de' cieli amici* (II, st. xviii) becomes therefore: 'L'innocence la pare, et le ciel l'embellit' (II, 145). He cuts out puns:

*Vince fortezza, anzi s'accorda, e face  
Se vergognosa, e la vergogna audace*  
(II, st. xvii)



(‘Le courage l’emporte, ou plutôt il s’accorde avec la pudeur; il se fait pudique, et la pudeur se fait courageuse.’)<sup>88</sup> This is rendered by: ‘La vertu la rassure et la rend intrépide’ (II, 136). He accuses Tasso of not choosing his imagery with sufficient care. While admiring<sup>89</sup> the latter’s comparison of the devil to a *tauro ferito* or wounded bull (IV, st. i), he cuts out the image that preceded it:

*Ambo lel abbra per furor si morse*

(‘De fureur il se mordit les lèvres’).<sup>90</sup>

Thus, if the pruning is less drastic than for Lucan, it nevertheless results once more in an imposed elegance that reflects far more La Harpe’s own poetic aspirations than those of the original writer. He attempts less to give a true rendering of Tasso’s text than to preserve the general sense in ‘des équivalents en expression et en harmonie’.<sup>91</sup> One must not therefore look to this translation or to any of La Harpe’s translations in verse for great accuracy. As he himself admitted, such translations were above all a means of keeping his hand in at writing verse, while resting from the more arduous ‘travail de création’.<sup>92</sup> It is as lesser creations by La Harpe and as expressions of his own interests that they are to be judged.

The reasons for his undertaking translations in prose are more varied, even if these works all attempt to answer the eighteenth-century need for them.<sup>93</sup> Firstly, there are those productions which he carried out for financial gain such as his re-working into ‘prose poétique’ of Vaquet d’Hermilly’s version of Camões’ *Os Lusíadas* — which we will not discuss here<sup>94</sup> — and his translation of Suetonius. Then, there is the work of the Christian — his translation of the psalms. Lastly, there are the many translations, usually fragmentary in nature and used to illustrate criticism, which he inserted in journals and in the *Lycée*. In these last works, he can again be seen to be more interested in elegance than accuracy, as is proved, for instance, by a passage from Lucan which he translated into prose<sup>95</sup> in order to show what should be cut out or preserved when translating in verse.<sup>96</sup> It especially begs examination, as he introduces it as ‘un morceau fidèlement rendu’, a ‘traduction exacte’.<sup>97</sup>

One can, in fact, even quibble with his translation of the very first sentence:

*Soluerat armorum fessas nox languida curas,  
parva quies miseris, in quorum pectora somno  
dat vires fortuna minor; iam castra silebant,  
tertia iam vigiles commoverat hora secundos;  
Cæsar sollicito per vasta silentia gressu  
vix famulis audenda parat, cinctisque relictis  
sola placet Fortuna comes.*

(Pharsalia, v, 504–10)

La nuit avait suspendu les alarmes de la guerre et amené les instants du repos pour ces malheureux soldats, qui du moins dans leur humble fortune ont un sommeil profond. Tout le camp était tranquille, et la sentinelle venait d’être relevée à la troisième veille. César s’avance d’un pas inquiet,

dans le vaste silence de la nuit: plein de ses projets téméraires, dignes à peine du dernier de ses soldats, il marche sans suite: sa fortune seule est avec lui.<sup>98</sup>

Without going into too much detail, one could ask why he has not translated *languida* and *iam . . . iam*; *fessas . . . curas* (tired cares) is hardly rendered by 'les alarmes'. One wonders why, in translating *per vasta silentia*, he adds 'de la nuit'. This lack of a strict observance of the text is even more evident when we come to a descriptive passage, as when the boatman gives his reasons for not wishing to embark:

*Multa quidem prohibent nocturno credere ponto;  
nam sol non rutilas deduxit in aequora nubes  
concordesque tulit radios: noton altera Phæbi,  
altera pars borean diducta luce vocabat.  
Orbe quoque exhaustus medio languensque recessit  
spectantis oculos infirmo lumine passus;  
lunaque non gracili surrexit lucida cornu  
aut orbis medii puros exesa recessus,  
nec duxit recto tenuata cacumina cornu  
ventorumque nota rubuit . . .*

(*Pharsalia*, v, 540–9)

(In fact, many things stop me trusting the night sea, for the sun did not unfurl red clouds on the surface of the sea, nor bring forth concordant rays: with its divided light part of Phœbus summoned the south wind, part the wind of the north. Also, it grew faint in the middle of its course, worn out and languishing, leaving eyes able to face its weak light; and the moon did not rise bright with a slender crescent, or rather the disc had grown faint with its clear lines eaten away, nor did it draw forth its thinned extremities in a straight crescent, it has blushed from the reproach of the winds . . .). In La Harpe, even the imagery is severely modified:

Beaucoup de raisons m'empêcheraient de me confier cette nuit à la mer. Le soleil en se couchant était environné de nuages, ses rayons partagés semblaient appeler d'un côté le vent du midi, et de l'autre le vent du nord, et même au milieu de sa course, sa lumière était faible et pouvait être regardé d'un œil fixe. La lune n'a point jeté une clarté brillante; son croissant n'était point net et serein; sa rougeur présageait un vent violent . . .<sup>99</sup>

In those passages which he inserted in the *Lycée*, he can be seen to have the additional purpose of producing good well-flowing French suitable for recitation in his lectures. This is proved by his reworking of an earlier translation of a passage from Velleius Paterculus:

*Mithridates, Ponticus rex, vir neque silendus neque dicendus sine cura, bello acerrimus, virtute eximius aliquando fortuna, semper animo maximus, consiliis dux, miles manu, odio in Romanos Hannibal. (Res Gestae Divi Augusti, II, xviii).*

(Mithridates, king of Pontus, a man about whom one can neither say nothing nor speak without anxiety; most keen on war, exceptional in courage, sometimes in fortune, always the greatest in spirit, a leader in decisions, a soldier in the fray, in hatred to the Romans a Hannibal). In 1770, La Harpe had written:

Mithridate, roi de Pont, qu'il ne faut point passer sous silence, et dont il est difficile de bien parler, infatigable dans la guerre, terrible par sa politique autant que par son courage, toujours grand par le génie, quelquefois par la fortune, soldat et capitaine, qui haïssait les Romains au point d'être pour eux un autre Annibal.<sup>100</sup>

In the *Lycée*, this becomes:

Mithridate, qu'il n'est pas permis de passer sous silence, mais dont il est difficile de parler dignement, infatigable dans la guerre, terrible par sa politique autant que par son courage, toujours grand par le génie, quelquefois par la fortune, soldat à la fois et capitaine, et pour les Romains un autre Annibal.<sup>101</sup>

The second version is undeniably more eloquent, but it is, at the same time, further from the original text.

This interest in the elegance of the French at the expense of accuracy is even more noticeable when he translates from Greek. The rhythms of his language give a false idea of the original writers, especially in the case of Demosthenes. When La Harpe published passages from *De Corona* in January 1777,<sup>102</sup> they were analysed pitilessly in the *Année littéraire*.<sup>103</sup> By translating the beginning of paragraph three by 'Eschine . . . a dans cette accusation de grands avantages, oui, Athéniens, de bien grands', he mistranslated, as his critic pointed out, the word πολλὰ, by making it mean 'great' instead of 'many', and at the same time he missed out δύο δ' — the fact that Aeschines had two advantages over Demosthenes. Allowing these to be errors due to haste, it is interesting to note that the text remains unaltered in the 1778 edition of his collected works,<sup>104</sup> whereas in the *Lycée* he finally changed it to 'Eschine a déjà dans cette cause, assez d'avantage sur moi; oui, Athéniens, et deux surtout bien grands'.<sup>105</sup> Apart from further criticism of detail, the *Année littéraire* also points out with a certain justification that La Harpe is altogether too liberal in the substitution of his own figures of speech for the movement of Demosthenes' sentences. In paragraph two hundred and eight of *De Corona*, for instance, he introduces<sup>106</sup> repetition, a device which his critic calls a 'jeu puérole, indigne de Démosthène'.<sup>107</sup>

The same hostility greeted the publication of his translation of Suetonius. Even Voltaire wrote on the title-page of his copy of the work 'mauvaise traduction'.<sup>108</sup> It was generally condemned,<sup>109</sup> and the translator's critics had a field day pointing out mistakes.<sup>110</sup> Admittedly, they exist, and the work bears unmistakable signs of haste. In his *errata*,<sup>111</sup> La Harpe conceded that in translating *Ob hanc eamdem valitudinem . . . palliolatus novo more praesedit* (Claudius,

2), he had written ‘en manteau grec’<sup>112</sup> for ‘la tête couverte’ through reading *palliatu*s for *palliolatu*s. His critics seized on many other similar mistakes which he himself did not mention. For example, in translating *Campum Stellatam majoribus consecratum . . .* (Cæsar, 20), he read *stellatum* for *Stellatam* and wrote ‘la plaine étoilée, consacrée aux dieux . . .’<sup>113</sup> instead of ‘Le Champ Stellate’. Again in the same life (34) for *Lucio Domitio, qui Corfinium in præsidio tenebat, in deditionem redacto* we find ‘Il prend à discretion Domitius, qui s’était enfermé dans Corfou’.<sup>114</sup> He has taken the town of Corfinium for the island of Corfu, which is *Corcyra* in Latin.

He is also led into inaccuracy through a lack of specialized knowledge. In the life of Augustus (1), for instance, for *semicruda exta rapta foco prosequit*, his lack of familiarity with sacrificial rites made him translate *exta* — the internal organs of the sacrificial victim — by ‘les chairs’. In the same way, the verb *prosecare* does not signify, as he thought, that the priest then gave these organs to the congregation — ‘les distribua selon la coutume’<sup>115</sup> —, but that they were cut off and offered up to the gods.

In the face of general criticism, he replied rather weakly that he had been led astray by a certain ‘facilité entraînante’, and that all his mistakes could be removed in a revised edition.<sup>116</sup> The damage had, however, been done, and La Harpe — who stressed in any case that he had undertaken this work reluctantly<sup>117</sup> — notably omitted it from his collected works in 1777 and 1778. Nevertheless, there was a serious need for a standard translation of Suetonius. Before La Harpe, there existed only five rather early versions of the work in French,<sup>118</sup> and certainly his version was to be of greater use than that published at the same time and attributed to Delisle de Sales.<sup>119</sup> Even the *Année littéraire*, which naturally endeavoured to prove that the work of any other translator was superior to that of La Harpe, had to admit that his rival had mutilated the text.<sup>120</sup> La Harpe, on the other hand, with the exception of two short passages,<sup>121</sup> tries to follow Suetonius faithfully.

His translation also has the advantage of being written in fairly elegant if not outstanding style. His harsher critics said that it was ‘une version d’écolier où une phrase est cousue à l’autre’<sup>122</sup> and complained of continual cacophony with too many ‘qui, que, qu’ils, qu’on’, too many sentences beginning with ‘il’, and too much hiatus.<sup>123</sup> The more impartial commentators, however, called on the reader to accept the version despite its mistakes, to appreciate ‘tout ce qu’elle a d’agréable et d’intéressant, soit que l’on ne songe qu’aux faits, soit qu’on ne fasse attention qu’à l’élégance du traducteur’.<sup>124</sup> Again in comparison with the work by Delisle de Sales, La Harpe’s version was seen to be ‘plus serré, d’un style plus ferme, plus énergique, plus adapté à l’original’.<sup>125</sup>

His translation was therefore not without merit. Its main need was careful re-editing. Boulard brought out a new edition in 1805 which incorporated most of the changes originally suggested in the *Année littéraire*.<sup>126</sup> Since then, other

editors have further revised the text, and in one form or another, it has continued to appear at regular intervals.<sup>127</sup> Although there have been since 1770 a further eight translations of Suetonius in French, of all translations, La Harpe's has had the greatest number of editions.

It was with the same desire to produce an everyday translation of which the outstanding quality should be 'l'espèce d'agrément que doit avoir ce qui doit être souvent relu'<sup>128</sup> that he worked on a psalter or book of the hours for those Christians whose lack of education did not permit them to appreciate the psalms in Latin.<sup>129</sup> While translating hymns from the Latin of Coffin — taken from the *Bréviaire de Paris* — he used as his text for the psalms and canticles the Vulgate, since, as he readily admitted,<sup>130</sup> he had no knowledge of Hebrew. At the same time, he made free use of the notes given by Father Berthier in his *Psaumes traduits en français*,<sup>131</sup> since these notes often contained word for word translations from the Hebrew.<sup>132</sup>

From what he could see in these notes and from the influence of Hebrew on Greek and Latin texts, he claimed that the elliptic nature of Hebrew made true translation all but impossible.<sup>133</sup> He felt that earlier translators such as Le Maistre de Sacy and Augustin Calmet had tried to remain too faithful to the original text and their work needed continual explanation in notes and commentary for it to be intelligible to the ordinary reader.<sup>134</sup> Most books of the hours, on the other hand, had tended to become completely divorced from the original text.<sup>135</sup> Here, he tried to reproduce as far as was possible the original forms and constructions of the sentences,<sup>136</sup> while feeling permitted

de donner quelque chose au complément et à l'effet de la phrase française. Pour ce qui est la version même, j'ai tâché d'y mettre ce degré de précision qui ne nuit ni au sentiment ni à la clarté, et, si j'ose le dire, cette espèce d'élégance qui s'accorde avec la simplicité.<sup>137</sup>

In fact, his work is still rather too heavily indebted to the Vulgate, even though he claimed to have followed Berthier for indications of variants from the Hebrew. To see this, one only has to study the very first sentence of *Psalm I*:

*Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit, et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit*

(Happy the man who does not go in the council of the impious, and does not persist in the way of sinners, and does not sit in the chair of unhealthiness). This La Harpe renders as:

Heureux l'homme qui ne s'est point laissé aller aux conseils des impies, qui ne s'est point arrêté dans la voie des pêcheurs, et ne s'est point assis dans la chaire de corruption.

He writes 'la chaire de corruption' despite Berthier's having pointed out<sup>138</sup> that the Hebrew reads here 'le siège des moqueurs', and that the change dates from the original Greek translation's ἐπί καθέδρα λοιμῶν, 'sur le siège des pestes'.

Nevertheless, La Harpe's psalter answered the need prompted by the religious revival following the Revolution, and continued to be re-edited during the first half of the nineteenth century,<sup>139</sup> until superseded by versions which showed greater scholarship and understanding of the original Hebrew text.

Indeed, in general, his translations in prose can hardly be regarded as works of great erudition, but, in a way, they run parallel to, and have some of the qualities of, the *Lycée* in that they are a form of *vulgarisation* or means of presenting to the common reader what is not immediately accessible. As such, they are on the whole elegant if not thoroughly accurate. They give a fair idea of the original in pleasant terms.

## CHAPTER XII

# RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS

In spite of his overriding interest in pure literature, long before the Revolution La Harpe saw himself as a *philosophe*, conscious of the writer's rôle as a worker for progress.<sup>1</sup> Even in work which might at first seem wholly divorced from such discussion, such as his translation of Suetonius, he preferred to make moral and philosophical judgements in his notes rather than show 'l'étalage pédantesque d'une érudition facile'.<sup>2</sup> When the Revolution came, he believed that civil liberty would for a time open the door to mediocrity in the arts — especially in the theatre<sup>3</sup> — but emphasized that social justice was to be won as the result of the concerted actions of an elite of enlightened writers. It was they who had struck the first blow for liberty by attacking ignorance and religious and political domination.<sup>4</sup> He proclaimed to his fellow-citizens that throughout his work one could find a continuous clearly stated radical purpose.<sup>5</sup> He displayed as wounds won in the cause of freedom the suppression of his *Eloge de Fénelon* in 1771 and of his article on Voltaire's *Diatribes à l'auteur des Ephémérides* in 1775.

It is certainly true that from his very first entry on to the Parisian scene he had been proud to be a *philosophe*. In his eyes, the greatest men of the day were *philosophes*, as renowned throughout the world for their uprightness as for their writings.<sup>6</sup> In 1775, he refused to admit that they acted in stereotyped fashion and claimed that their characteristic quality was their ability to reason.<sup>7</sup> In matters of religion also he subscribed to the opinions of at least one section of the *philosophes*. Up to 1794, for the same reasons as Voltaire, he was to call himself a deist, stressing a belief in a so-called natural religion based on reason rather than revelation.<sup>8</sup> He praised those men of religion such as Massillon, Fénelon and Fléchier who had made others love religion through their writings and their exemplary way of life.<sup>9</sup> Men such as these were worthy of bearing both the title of 'prêtre et celui de philosophe'.<sup>10</sup>

He displayed a truly Voltairian mistrust of metaphysics and elaborate philosophical doctrines, even if they had unwittingly been the source of frequent progress.<sup>11</sup> In his eyes, these doctrines were all too easily torn to pieces by atheists, as they attempted to explain what goes beyond our understanding.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, he felt that there must be a prime cause or Creator of the Universe, as our reason teaches us that without this initiator of all things we would be unable to form any idea of existence.<sup>13</sup> We live in a world given over

to general laws which, once fixed, produce all the necessary moral and physical effects that make up the Universe, even if we can only see a minute part of this.<sup>14</sup> With such ignorance, however, we can still suppose that God, a benign father to mankind,<sup>15</sup> has placed us in the best position we can occupy in the general order of things.<sup>16</sup>

Thus judging religion within the confines of human knowledge, he discussed it mainly in the light of its practical effect on society. While, in part, dissociating himself from those who only considered the abuses of the Church, without appreciating the qualities of Christianity itself,<sup>17</sup> he was proud to draw inspiration from Voltaire as the originator of the movement to destroy the first and most formidable stronghold of despotism, the temporal power of the Church.<sup>18</sup> Before his conversion, as much as any *philosophe*, he was sure that if a desire to rule over one's fellow creatures is common to all men, Christians had the particular characteristic of seeking power through proselytism.<sup>19</sup> His voice was one of many to condemn religious fanaticism,<sup>20</sup> proclaiming that religious fervour was capable of producing good and evil in equal strength.<sup>21</sup> He shared Voltaire's admiration for the Quakers, the only religious sect free of intolerance and with a sincere hatred of war.<sup>22</sup> The abolition of religious vows on 13 February 1790 must have seemed to him an answer to his *Mélanie* and *La Réponse d'un solitaire de La Trappe*. He saw the monastic way of life as a misuse of God's gift:<sup>23</sup>

O Dieu, être suprême et nécessaire, que j'ignore et que je crois parce que tout me l'annonce sans que rien ne l'explique! tu n'as pas créé la beauté pour que l'homme en détournât ses regards: tu n'as pas déployé devant lui les richesses de la création pour qu'il habitât des cachots: tu n'as pas mis dans son cœur le besoin d'aimer ses semblables pour qu'il trompât sans cesse ce besoin si doux, et qu'il jurât de n'aimer rien.

On a défiguré ton ouvrage avant de nier son auteur; et l'athée alors a osé te dire, *Tu ne m'as pas fait*, et le fanatique, plus coupable, t'a dit, *Tu m'as fait ainsi*.<sup>24</sup>

Filled with these ideas, between 1789 and 1794 he welcomed every move made to diminish the authority of the Church in the fight to break down what he and others saw as the tyranny of Rome.<sup>25</sup> He praised as necessary and just the law of 2 November 1789, under which all Church property was nationalized and the parish priests became employees of the state.<sup>26</sup> He defended Mirabeau's *constitution civile du clergé*.<sup>27</sup> Whereas in England there existed what could be called a prevailing religion naturally implanted in society, he felt that this was not true in France.<sup>28</sup> Following the decree of 27 August 1791, he considered the celibacy of priests to be contrary to nature and hence unacceptable in society.<sup>29</sup> They were now to be treated as ordinary citizens. Joining the campaign for divorce, he insisted that the celebration of marriage and burial were to be in the hands of the civil authorities.<sup>30</sup> Little by little, he moved into open conflict with all forms of organized religion.<sup>31</sup> Taking his lead from Voltaire, and foreshadowing



Robespierre's *Culte de l'Être suprême*, he called for a civic and brotherly form of worship,<sup>32</sup> free from incomprehensible dogma.<sup>33</sup> He suggested that man's natural disposition for religion was to be satisfied by the teaching of the simple straightforward worship of a universal god of reason at certain times of the year to coincide with the seasons.<sup>34</sup>

As can be seen, he did little more than subscribe to the widely-held opinions of his time. Indeed, after his conversion, he was to write of his attacks on religion under the Revolution that he had merely repeated what he had heard said by others, and admitted that he had never really thought deeply about the questions involved.<sup>35</sup> He felt that he had been led astray initially by the foolishness of youth and the desire to shine in society.<sup>36</sup> He was to see less inconsequence in his change of position than was imputed by his enemies. Introducing the unchanged text of his *Correspondance littéraire*, he was to say that if it showed him as a friend of the *philosophes*, it did not reveal him to be a flatterer of their mistakes.<sup>37</sup> In his post-revolutionary fight, he attacked not so much the *philosophes* themselves as their disciples of lesser renown who had now replaced them.<sup>38</sup> He was careful to draw a line between the atheists and those *philosophes* who were not what he called completely mad.<sup>39</sup> Whereas before the Revolution he had attacked the *protégés* of the enemies of Voltaire, he was in his old age critical of Rœderer, Dupuis, Lenoir-Laroche, Laréveillère-Lépaux, and others who, in the Institut, the Convention, newspapers and elsewhere, made a cult of La Mettrie and Diderot.<sup>40</sup> If Voltaire had attacked 'l'homme religieux', Diderot and his like had done far worse with 'une guerre mortelle à l'homme moral'.<sup>41</sup>

As much as any religious fanatic, these *philosophes* and their disciples had built up dangerous metaphysical doctrines which had sought to explain what is beyond our grasp.<sup>42</sup> They had been guilty of that most fundamental of sins — pride.<sup>43</sup> The materialists, under the leadership of Helvétius, had been particularly guilty in this respect.<sup>44</sup> Henceforth, he set out to prove that many of the *philosophes* were guilty of more dangerous sophistry and intellectual intolerance in their so-called philosophy than had been the Church in recent times in matters of religion.<sup>45</sup> If anyone had sought proselytes in the eighteenth century it had been the *philosophes* and not the Church.<sup>46</sup> Above all, he saw in their irreligion and their hatred for authority a threat to the very basis of civilized society.<sup>47</sup> They had become the true spiritual fathers of the worst excesses of the Revolution.<sup>48</sup> Voltaire was seen as relatively blameless when compared to these men.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, the latter was not spared harsh attack. The disciple of Voltaire now called his ex-master 'la sirène de l'impiété',<sup>50</sup> and, whilst he still admired him as an artist, he accused him of being biased even in his literary criticism<sup>51</sup> and condemned him for making fun of everything in a way that was contrary to common sense.<sup>52</sup> It was Voltaire who had given the *philosophes* their most

valuable weapon, this power of mockery which crowned their insults, their lack of morality, and their lies.<sup>53</sup> La Harpe named him — along with Diderot, Raynal, Rousseau and Helvétius — as one of the first and most powerful forces behind the upheaval that led to the horrors of the Revolution.<sup>54</sup> Placing him among the sophists, he was to say of Voltaire that it was impossible to show more thoughtlessness, audacity or bad faith.<sup>55</sup>

Yet, polemics aside, when it came to basic principles, La Harpe remained very much a Voltairian. He still considered deism to be the necessary first step of a reasonable approach to religion,<sup>56</sup> although he now believed that sincere and carefully thought out deism led naturally to Christianity.<sup>57</sup> Reiterating his belief in man's need for religion,<sup>58</sup> and stressing the frailty of man<sup>59</sup> by now adopting an almost Pascalian approach to reason,<sup>60</sup> he was still convinced of the idea of a prime cause as being natural to man's needs,<sup>61</sup> a limiting factor to stop man's desire for knowledge from leading to fanaticism.<sup>62</sup> If he maintained that he had never fully subscribed to certain aspects of Voltaire's fatalism,<sup>63</sup> he still believed in a Voltairian view of free will not pre-determined on a practical level by outside causes.<sup>64</sup> Whereas Providence exists and had foretold the terrible apostasy of the Revolution, if only men had troubled to look,<sup>65</sup> and whereas God chooses certain times of terror and destruction so as to ensure the triumph of his law,<sup>66</sup> this action does not apply to everyday life.

He remained fairly close to the Voltairian line of thought even when he set out to prove the social utility of religion and the necessity of public worship.<sup>67</sup> Still careful to separate religion from its abuses,<sup>68</sup> he was sure that whilst morality is engraved in our conscience by God himself,<sup>69</sup> it is the practice of an established religion which must control our natural desires. He believed that the man who made out that he knew nothing, felt no moral obligation in any sphere of activity.<sup>70</sup> Dismissing the *Fête de la Raison* as a Revolutionary farce really intended for praising Robespierre,<sup>71</sup> he claimed that organized religion and public morality were indissoluble; that religion formed the basis of civil order and general prosperity.<sup>72</sup> In this way, although every citizen has the right to disbelieve and not to practise religion, no government should countenance attacks on religion, as these necessarily constitute a danger to public order.<sup>73</sup> In similar vein, the question of a dominant or state religion can only be decided by political and local needs and not through either religious or irreligious fanaticism.<sup>74</sup>

However, if La Harpe's conversion was not to bring so abrupt or extreme a change in position as might have been expected, in practical terms his new-found faith was to be a militant one, as the troubled times of *Thermidor* and of the *Directoire*, and his irascible nature demanded. He was to become the most severe of Catholics, condemning Protestants as dangerous heretics<sup>75</sup> and abandoning the atheist to eternal damnation.<sup>76</sup> He refused to recognize his second divorce, since it was contrary to the will of God,<sup>77</sup> and was dismayed at

the idea that illegitimate children should be treated on an equal footing with those born in wedlock.<sup>78</sup> It was as a champion of the Catholic cause that he became the ardent defender of the non-juring priests<sup>79</sup> and saw the *Concordat* as the crowning of his dearest wishes.<sup>80</sup> Claiming to be no longer interested in the vanities of this world,<sup>81</sup> he was to adopt, in the face of widespread cynicism from his enemies, a penitent humility.<sup>82</sup>

Naturally enough, this change in attitude in religion affected his political loyalties. From being a radical, he was to become thought of as a man of the right and sympathetic to the royalists. Yet, again the times changed more than he did. In his basic political outlook, he always remained, in his principles at least, something of a moderate. In common with many of the *constituants*, he originally regarded the Revolution as an unpleasant but necessary operation to restore the health of the nation. It was an operation which was not to last long,<sup>83</sup> and he did not feel that the preservation of liberty should necessarily imply a rigorous existence.<sup>84</sup> He shared the all too widespread optimism of the time — the belief that the Constitution was to be the answer to all ills.<sup>85</sup> From the beginning, he was aware of the dangers of demagoguery<sup>86</sup> and despised those who flattered the masses.<sup>87</sup> In the early days of a revolution there was a place for the hot-headed who only knew how to destroy the old order of things, but he proclaimed that they should soon give way to those who could construct the new order following the dictates of Reason:

Il y a longtemps qu'elle dit aux forcenés, aux illuminés, aux fanatiques de tout espèce: Arrière, arrière, enfants perdus de la Révolution, votre tâche est faite, et nous n'oublierons pas que vous avez été utiles; mais ne gêtez pas votre ouvrage et le nôtre: nous n'avons plus besoin de gens qui crient; il nous faut des gens qui pensent.<sup>88</sup>

His appeal was to fall on deaf ears.

If, understandably, he remained silent as constitutional revolution became popular revolution and was replaced by the Terror, and if, unfortunately, under the Terror he carried favour with Robespierre, his basic views on government and society were to remain largely unaltered by his change of faith. Looking back on the beginnings of the Revolution and on those who then led it, he was to write that he too had been mistaken, not in the principles involved, but in their application.<sup>89</sup> The great mistake of these early revolutionaries had been, he felt, firstly to incorporate into their Constitution the elements of its own destruction, and at the same time to abandon their powers too soon,<sup>90</sup> thus giving free rein to the anarchy of the popular societies, which, under leaders like Danton, became the centres of a purely destructive force, infinitely more powerful than that of those who tried vainly to give France a legal constitution.<sup>91</sup>

It was in this spirit that after 1794 he was to miss no opportunity of condemning any recurrence of what he judged to be activities by the Terrorists

either in France in general or within the Convention.<sup>92</sup> It was also to this extent that he now admitted to being a counter-revolutionary:

Songez qu'à présent c'est en effet de liberté, de constitution, de république qu'il s'agit, et non plus de révolution, et que par conséquent des législateurs ne doivent approuver que ce qui est favorable à la liberté, à la constitution, à la république, et ne doivent réprover que ce qui leur est contraire.<sup>93</sup>

Thinking of Cromwell after the civil war in England,<sup>94</sup> he sensed that it was now time to turn one's back on the excesses of the past and fulfil the betrayed hopes of 1789.

As in matters of religion and good taste, from the beginning of the Revolution he took his lead in all political matters from Voltaire himself, whom he saw as the supreme liberator of the human mind and as the centre of the campaign to teach people to think.<sup>95</sup> During the Revolution, he was proud to name as fathers of the revolutionary movement Voltaire, Rousseau, Mably and Helvétius,<sup>96</sup> although he was to insist in later years that he had always found fault with the political doctrines of the last-named writer, together with those of Diderot, Raynal and Boulanger.<sup>97</sup> In any case, he always tended to see in these writers theorists whose thought was highly important but often divorced from reality and its difficulties.<sup>98</sup> Thus, he felt that Mably was over systematic,<sup>99</sup> and, above all, he wished to limit the influence of Rousseau, whose writings — full of contradictions and far-fetched ideas — were becoming 'un arsenal commun où nos ennemis allaient chercher des armes contre nous, comme nous en trouvions contre eux'.<sup>100</sup>

Putting aside the *Confessions*, whose few moments of beauty could not make up for its many faults,<sup>101</sup> and attacking Ginguéné for praising Rousseau as a man,<sup>102</sup> La Harpe admired much in Rousseau as a writer and willingly paid tribute to his eloquence and fine style.<sup>103</sup> He accepted Rousseau's importance, not as a prime mover of the Revolution, but as a source of inspiration once the Revolution was under way. He pointed to a fact which tended to be forgotten by his contemporaries: that before the Revolution, *Du Contrat social*, which, admittedly, was to become the breviary of the law-givers,<sup>104</sup> was practically unknown. In earlier years, Rousseau's reputation reflected the general taste for lighter literature<sup>105</sup> and rested mainly on *L'Emile* with its *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* and on *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which appealed particularly to women and to the young.<sup>106</sup>

He did not consider the *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* to be revolutionary in nature, since, even if it was the work of a moralist leading an open direct attack against the Church,<sup>107</sup> the actual substance of the work was comparatively mild, implying an underlying defence of basic belief.<sup>108</sup> He was more worried by the influence of Rousseau in ideas on society and government. Stressing Rousseau's own admission that his ideas were often merely hypothetical.<sup>109</sup> La Harpe reminded his fellow-citizens that Rousseau's writings

were to be seen mainly as works of philosophical speculation and not as guides for practical action.<sup>110</sup>

As a good Voltairian, La Harpe found that Rousseau gave a false picture of the true nature of man. It is abundantly clear that man himself, like any finite and imperfect being, is made up of both good and evil.<sup>111</sup> The potentialities for good and evil are merely greater as man develops.<sup>112</sup> La Harpe was willing to agree that man in society was not perfect, but followed his master in being wary of those who judged the world over optimistically.<sup>113</sup> In theory, at least, he admitted that the only kind of happiness possible for man consisted in trying to limit the effects of evil on others and on oneself.<sup>114</sup> Again as with Voltaire, despite his conversion, his old age was merely to accentuate this already latent limited pessimism.<sup>115</sup>

La Harpe had no wish to return to the state of nature, about which we know so little.<sup>116</sup> Far from subscribing to Rousseau's idea that, divorced from society, man will preserve a celestial and majestic simplicity given him by God,<sup>117</sup> the Voltairian was convinced that the further man moves from primitive nature, the more he conforms to his own natural desires which encourage learning and other social activities.<sup>118</sup> He maintained that society is natural, as man is a social animal.<sup>119</sup> In common with most writers in the eighteenth century, he admitted the existence and utility of natural desires. He completely rejected any theory of innate ideas,<sup>120</sup> although he did refuse to accept Rousseau's complete belief in natural sentiment.<sup>121</sup> Passion had to be controlled by reason.<sup>122</sup> He called on his fellows not to follow Rousseau's dangerous mistake of inciting men to return to ignorance, instead of teaching them to make better use of the knowledge gained by civilization.<sup>123</sup>

The Revolution was in this way a challenge for the proper use of reason. The liberty brought by revolution was not an invitation to unlimited licence, but an opportunity for man to assume responsibility.<sup>124</sup> La Harpe shared the idea put forward in the Constitution of 1791<sup>125</sup> that all men are born free and equal in rights,<sup>126</sup> but never subscribed to the Constitution of 1793, which declared that all men were equal 'par la nature'.<sup>127</sup> He believed to the very end of his life that the organization of society must always be based on respect for the equality of natural rights and complete freedom in the exercising of these rights,<sup>128</sup> with its implication of protection for the individual,<sup>129</sup> but he argued that inequality in society does not come from a kind of tacit agreement on the part of man,<sup>130</sup> but from the essential differences in the abilities of different men, which are part of the nature of man whatever his condition and not merely of man in already established society.<sup>131</sup>

The organization of society, therefore, must reflect this essential inequality,<sup>132</sup> and again disagreeing with Rousseau,<sup>133</sup> La Harpe always defended the right of property.<sup>134</sup> He agreed that property was the basis of all law, but saw this as a primary instinct based on a desire for self-preservation. This desire makes us

respect the property of others through a wish that similar respect be shown for our own.<sup>135</sup> Law must protect the right of property, as it did in 1791<sup>136</sup> and 1795,<sup>137</sup> but not in 1793:

La Loi ne donne pas les propriétés, elle les garantit à ceux qui les ont. Le riche pourra dormir en pleine sécurité dans sa maison, parce que, sans cela, l'artisan ne dormirait pas dans sa boutique, ni le cultivateur dans son héritage.<sup>138</sup>

In protecting the rich as well as the poor, the law protects that most essential of qualities in society, order,<sup>139</sup> and respects the basis of society, the nature of man himself.<sup>140</sup> La Harpe was to become an opponent of the agrarian laws,<sup>141</sup> and, later on, the very idea of Babeuf and his *communauté des biens* horrified him.<sup>142</sup>

At all times, as a result of this belief in the right of property, La Harpe, together with many of the middle classes, remained a firm defender of commerce.<sup>143</sup> If he disapproved of war, it was to a certain extent because it endangered the wealth of the country.<sup>144</sup> For the same reason, he attacked the means used for taxation under the *ancien régime*, accusing them of failing to encourage a stable healthy economy, based on a sane and farsighted fiscal policy.<sup>145</sup> Believing that the first duty of a government is to make every citizen interested in the public good by respecting his individual interests,<sup>146</sup> he wanted a fiscal policy which took this into account. In the first years of the Revolution, he shared the optimistic belief of many in a legally approved form of taxation.<sup>147</sup> Having been a friend of both Turgot and Necker, he followed fashion in seeing agriculture as the basis of a truly rich economy.<sup>148</sup> However, he was not, any more than Voltaire, a physiocrat, and insisted that other activities were not to be despised.<sup>149</sup> He praised Turgot for having extracted from the muddle of the writings of physiocrats such as the elder Mirabeau what was reasonable and useful.<sup>150</sup> He would appear to have sided with Turgot in the disagreement with Necker in 1775 over the question of unlimited freedom of trade,<sup>151</sup> but he tended as time went by to look to the latter, who had experience on his side.<sup>152</sup> He felt that Turgot was too rigid<sup>153</sup> and that Necker showed desirable moderation.<sup>154</sup>

Despite his disagreement with Rousseau over the nature of man and property, certain of La Harpe's opinions were nevertheless influenced by the latter. His ideal for a perfect society was not so very different from Rousseau's. Like Rousseau, he wanted a situation in which every man could through his own honest toil meet his own daily needs and not depend on the pity of others.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, we have seen how he deplored anarchy, and, with his love of order and justice, he followed the feelings of his time by showing an almost religious respect for law.<sup>156</sup> In later years, he was to complain about laws whose lack of precision allowed every form of dangerous interpretation,<sup>157</sup> and said that the action of law, devoid of any moral purpose, should be limited to dealing with

subversive or criminal acts, and not with opinions.<sup>158</sup> Initially, however, he subscribed to the idea of a universal rule of law, in which no man was beyond the law.<sup>159</sup> He was to state that all authority is the power given by the law to assure respect for the law,<sup>160</sup> and that any man who exercises power other than that of the law is by definition a despot.<sup>161</sup> It was this belief that, for a time at least, led him to disagree with Montesquieu over the question of *pouvoirs intermédiaires*.<sup>162</sup> While showing a fair amount of respect for ministers of the *ancien régime* to whom he owed a great deal,<sup>163</sup> he said that their every move was dictated by 'le droit du plus fort'.<sup>164</sup> He also rose in true Voltairian fashion against judicial despotism.<sup>165</sup> Remembering what he considered to be Voltaire's justified hatred for the *parlements*<sup>166</sup> and how he himself had suffered at their hands,<sup>167</sup> he called for and welcomed their suppression.<sup>168</sup> He always condemned Louis XV as the example of a weak king who encouraged abuse by not ruling for himself,<sup>169</sup> since the evil that kings can commit is always less than that which can be committed in their name.<sup>170</sup>

Brought up under the *ancien régime*, it was not until fear of the Terror forced him to speak disrespectfully of kings<sup>171</sup> that he ever really doubted their right. Earlier, he had insisted that subjects should obey their prince and see in him the protector both of themselves and of their property.<sup>172</sup> This did not, however, stop the Voltairian from questioning the behaviour of kings, nor from suggesting the qualities of an ideal ruler:

Le monarque doit réunir, du moins en partie, tous les talents divers dont dépend le sort des nations . . . il doit rassembler sous ses regards la guerre et les lois, l'administration intérieure et étrangère, et . . . il doit avoir surtout ces vues générales et bienfaisantes qui sont la philosophie du trône.<sup>173</sup>

As a king was no longer a soldier at the head of an army,<sup>174</sup> and since, if war occasionally benefited a king and his ministers, the common people — on the winning as well as the losing side — could only suffer a great deal,<sup>175</sup> it was now the duty of a good king to work for what could be his greatest glory — that of making his subjects happy with peace and prosperity.<sup>176</sup> All too often, kings had been educated wrongly<sup>177</sup> and had remained ignorant of the misfortunes of their people.<sup>178</sup> Although merit is perhaps more easily recognized in a feudal system,<sup>179</sup> it is in the art of employing great men for the good of the nation that we can recognize the great king.<sup>180</sup>

Standing in direct contact with his people, the king's prime purpose is to punish crime and reward virtue,<sup>181</sup> and it was seeing kings as living symbols of the law<sup>182</sup> that led La Harpe and his contemporaries to the conception of a constitutional monarchy.<sup>183</sup> Although he was later forced to admit that Louis' power had been at the most a right to be represented when decisions were made,<sup>184</sup> in the early years of the Revolution, when all power seemed to be in the hands of the legislative assembly, La Harpe had been among those to advocate a certain amount of authority for the executive. He saw it as a safeguard

against anarchy.<sup>185</sup> He praised Louis XVI for avoiding civil war by turning himself into the first citizen under the law,<sup>186</sup> and, as late as May 1792, he still refused to believe that Louis had ever plotted against the people.<sup>187</sup>

If, as early as April 1792, he was proclaiming that no king could have done for the people what the people did for itself<sup>188</sup> and if he claimed to be a good supporter of the Republic at a time when an admission to the contrary would have been dangerous, one can suspect that secretly he was more than a little disappointed when the monarchy fell.<sup>189</sup> After *Thermidor*, he was to be no friend of the Convention when all power lay in its hands and, when a new executive force was set up in the being of the *Directoire*, his opposition to it was finally to lead to his exile. He dismissed any idea of a royalist plot within France as a myth exaggerating the danger of the rebellion in Vendée and set in motion by the Terrorists in order to stir up popular feeling.<sup>190</sup> He kept a certain nostalgia for the aspirations of former days, for the hope of an enlightened monarchy, for honour rather than republican virtues.<sup>191</sup>

Forced to admit that Louis had been loved more than he had been respected,<sup>192</sup> La Harpe now saw that he had been wrong to attack the *pouvoirs intermédiaires*, feeling that he had criticized Montesquieu over this question when blinded by a fanciful conception of things as they should be. He had failed to see what benefits could be drawn from a necessarily imperfect state of affairs.<sup>193</sup> At the same time, to be fair to La Harpe, we must point out that he never fully rejected Montesquieu's views on law and readily referred to him as his master in such questions, preferring at heart Montesquieu's practical observations to the hypotheses of Rousseau.<sup>194</sup> The beginning of his quarrel with Linguet, for instance, was over the latter's attack on Montesquieu's definition<sup>195</sup> of republics, monarchies and states ruled over by despots.<sup>196</sup> Sharing both Montesquieu's and Voltaire's admiration for England,<sup>197</sup> he showed that he clearly understood the problems involved in the division of power between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Like Montesquieu<sup>198</sup> and Voltaire,<sup>199</sup> he was proud to subscribe<sup>200</sup> to Locke's ideas on the subject.<sup>201</sup> While insisting that judicial power must always be placed between the citizen and the executive<sup>202</sup> and, after *Vendémiaire*, becoming steadily more suspicious of the executive,<sup>203</sup> he at all times defended the right of the legally elected legislature to speak for the people and never accepted Rousseau's definition of the will of the people with its refusal to allow legislative power to be placed in the hands of their representatives.<sup>204</sup> Once there was a Constitution which clearly defined the division between the powers of government,<sup>205</sup> he remained not only its ardent supporter,<sup>206</sup> but an active defender of the legally elected representatives. In a nation of any size, he maintained, representation and delegation of power was a practical necessity. A popular referendum for the passing of every law would lead to complete anarchy.<sup>207</sup> In this light, he spoke for those for whom respect was due under the Constitution.<sup>208</sup> The electors certainly had the right to watch



their representatives very closely and criticize, when necessary. They did not have the right to slander or insult them.<sup>209</sup>

It was with despair that all around him La Harpe saw the popular societies take on a legal and political character which, in his eyes, belonged only to assemblies set up by the law.<sup>210</sup> This agitation prepared the end of the rule of law to which he so heartily subscribed and led to a constitution in which government was clearly placed where he did not want to see it placed — in the hands of the people.<sup>211</sup>

In the light of these principles — borrowed on the whole from Montesquieu and Voltaire — La Harpe can hardly have been fit — as was suggested by his enemies<sup>212</sup> — to fill the fifth act of a tragedy in which the other acts consisted of various murders by the mob. His beliefs are essentially those of restraint and order. Indicative of this continual desire for order is his trust in education as one of the most solid foundations possible for a truly free society.<sup>213</sup> In various forms, it was a recurring theme in his journalism during the Revolution, and, from July 1790 on,<sup>214</sup> he joined the campaign for organized state education which was becoming a major subject of discussion. He inserted a *Plan sommaire d'Education publique* in the *Mercure* on 22 and 29 January 1791 in order to back up his review on the fifteenth of the same month of Etienne Lacépède's *Vues sur l'enseignement public*.<sup>215</sup> With the backing of Condorcet, Talleyrand finally introduced a bill for elementary education on 10 September 1791,<sup>216</sup> but it was not voted on and, to La Harpe's dismay, the matter was still in the hands of the *Comité d'Instruction* in April 1792.<sup>217</sup>

Naturally enough, all this discussion reflected the general preoccupation with education shown by all the major writers of the eighteenth century. Like many of his contemporaries, La Harpe felt that it was time to use schools to form men and citizens, and not just humanists and students of rhetoric.<sup>218</sup> Although this former brilliant pupil of the Oratorians did not openly advocate the banning of the Church in matters of education until January 1792<sup>219</sup> — four months after Talleyrand's lead<sup>220</sup> — he then became, as in other questions, one of its bitterest opponents. He was particularly harsh on the Jesuits, who, although removed from education as far back as 1762, still exerted influence through their pupils imbued with their scholasticism and their love of the niceties of theology.<sup>221</sup> In other words, the Jesuits had shown throughout their educational system a hatred for everything that even remotely suggested liberty of thought.<sup>222</sup>

Wanting therefore to restore a certain respect for the natural growth of children, in questions of education at least, he readily accepted the lead given to his generation by Rousseau.<sup>223</sup> He regarded *L'Emile* as the book in which the latter had placed the greatest eloquence and true moral philosophy, even if the educational system proposed was not thoroughly practicable.<sup>224</sup> He admired the book in so far as it reflected the liberating theme of Locke, especially as

Rousseau, with his eloquence, had managed to turn what Locke had merely indicated dryly into vivid, persuasive ideas.<sup>225</sup> However, just as he condemned other excesses in Rousseau's thought, he regretted the impracticability of most of the ideas in *L'Emile* and felt that the only really valuable part of the work was that dealing with early childhood.<sup>226</sup> While agreeing that one should condemn the repressive atmosphere of the old-fashioned teaching establishments,<sup>227</sup> he still believed in organized teaching in institutions<sup>228</sup> and accused Helvétius, for instance, of underrating the moral power of traditional education.<sup>229</sup> He frowned<sup>230</sup> on Rousseau's idea of an *éducation négative et libre*.<sup>231</sup>

Another work to exert considerable influence in the eighteenth century in matters of education was *De l'Éducation publique*,<sup>232</sup> variously attributed to Diderot or, as is more likely, to J. B. L. Crévier.<sup>233</sup> Although La Harpe claimed not to have read it by the time he composed his own educational plan,<sup>234</sup> when he later studied it for his *Histoire de la Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*,<sup>235</sup> he found that his views on the subject coincided with those of the author in many respects. Taking the book to be by Diderot, he said that, for once, the latter had been fairly reasonable.<sup>236</sup> However, agreement is, on the whole, again limited to the question of primary education, as, all in all, he was struck by the work's sharing a fault common to all such treatises at this time — a failure to make the type of education proposed invariably suitable to the age of the pupils.<sup>237</sup>

Not least important as writers on education at this time were women, and La Harpe had been on close terms with at least two female authorities on the subject, Madame Necker and Madame de Genlis. Although there was no question of women in his plan, as early as 1765 — obviously influenced by *L'Emile*<sup>238</sup> — he made an eloquent plea in their defence:

Ce sexe que le nôtre encense  
D'un nuage de préjugés  
Voit obscurcir par nous les jours de son enfance,  
Et tous ces devoirs partagés  
Entre la feinte et l'ignorance.  
Il tremble de penser, il tremble de sentir;  
Sa raison est muette, et son âme est captive.  
On s'efforce d'anéantir  
L'aimable expression de sa candeur naïve.  
Pour le mieux asservir, on cherche à l'aveugler;  
Et l'on n'instruit enfin sa jeunesse craintive,  
Que dans l'art de rougir et de dissimuler.<sup>239</sup>

It would, however, be wrong to see in this appeal feminism as we understand it. Like Rousseau and the rest of his contemporaries, he looked to women to complement the qualities of men.<sup>240</sup> We have seen how the poet generally wanted to please women, and, as a Parisian, he admired women as the creators of urbanity and as the legislators of the manners of French society.<sup>241</sup> At the

same time, underneath their charm and their talents, he liked to find eternal feminine qualities and admired, above all, the mother with her family.<sup>242</sup>

In his plan for organized education, therefore, he confined himself to the education of men and there again displayed a traditional outlook. He did not attempt to be original, wanting to be more useful than unusual,<sup>243</sup> and echoing his deep respect for the University as it stood<sup>244</sup> and for its teachers in the tradition of Rollin and Coffin.<sup>245</sup> His main changes were to be in the distribution of learning, in a course of study which would be less heavy in the early years and more intensive in the late years of a child's development, while bringing in more minor innovations throughout the course.<sup>246</sup> The beginning was to take its inspiration from the new spirit of Locke and Rousseau, where the end was still to reflect his humanist background and encourage an elite of orators.

Covering the years of four to seventeen, he placed the beginning of secondary education at the age of ten. Saying that henceforth all teachers would have to be properly qualified, he wanted primary education to be placed in the hands of the public authorities, with a teacher appointed by the *département* in every parish. He felt that in existent primary education, one had tended to overload the child's mind with questions of metaphysics, grammar and syntax. For the first two years, at an age which to us still appears rather young, he proposed that the child should learn to read, do a little arithmetic, and have some religious instruction. In the last three years, the child was to perfect his reading, writing and simple arithmetic. In general, for the earliest years of education, La Harpe argued that one had to occupy solely memory and the senses.<sup>247</sup> It was only when the power of reasoning began to develop that the child could be taught a little local geography and the history that it directly evoked, and a limited form of moral catechism.<sup>248</sup>

He was convinced that children have a natural perception of what is just, if it is explained clearly and not in abstract terms.<sup>249</sup> If, unlike Rousseau,<sup>250</sup> he was to consider competition to be a good incentive,<sup>251</sup> and approved of prizes in the final years of his educational system, he shared the belief in natural discipline:

il faut bannir de l'éducation ce despotisme grossier qu'on a nommé pédantisme, et y substituer une autorité toujours raisonnée. Les enfants aiment qu'on raisonne avec eux: c'est leur faire croire qu'ils sont déjà ce qu'ils ont toujours envie d'être, de *grandes* personnes. Il importe de les soumettre à l'obéissance la plus exacte, mais toujours en leur démontrant la nécessité de les punir suivant l'exigence des cas, mais jamais par la force, et toujours par des privations, par la honte, par un petit surcroît de travail.<sup>252</sup>

In this way, he wanted to encourage the introduction of prefects, which had previously only been found in a few schools. Not only would this prepare the prefects themselves for authority in later life, but it would give all the pupils a greater idea of the meaning of law.

In secondary education, he again showed his respect for the colleges of the University and for the services that they had rendered society through their scholarships. He condemned the all-too-widespread desire to destroy them.<sup>253</sup> The colleges were to remain much as they were, with a little less ceremonial and fewer holidays. They were to be independent, but under the protection and encouragement of the government. The Rector of the University was to be assisted in his functions by two inspectors, elected once every three years by the governing bodies of the University and entrusted with seeing that the schools carried out their duties satisfactorily. They were to report to the municipal authorities. Two major changes that La Harpe did want to see here, however, were the suppression firstly of the division of the University into four *nations* and, secondly, that of the formidable faculty of theology, at whose hands he had suffered in 1771, and whose metaphysical niceties now seemed an anachronism. Its job — to teach the positive practical theology needed by the working priest — could be carried on in seminaries.<sup>254</sup> In addition, he wanted to abolish faculty divisions, and vocational studies such as medicine and law were to be pursued in specialized schools divorced from the University.<sup>255</sup> Such studies were, in any case, to come after the completion of general education.<sup>256</sup>

In the first part of secondary education, from ten to fourteen years, he was sure that the pupils were now old enough to tackle the abstract problems involved in learning grammar and dead languages, thus reducing the length of study from six to four years. Bringing in this form of instruction later on in a boy's education meant that it could be assimilated more thoroughly and more quickly.<sup>257</sup> All too often in the past, the very young, finding it difficult to understand the principles involved, had lost interest, and thus lacked a solid basis for the more fruitful studies of rhetoric. Brought up in a tradition where the study of the Ancients was paramount, he believed that a knowledge of the classical languages was the basis of any proper education.<sup>258</sup> Moreover, whereas Diderot, for instance, wanted this study to be interspersed with useful practical knowledge,<sup>259</sup> for La Harpe, the purpose of such a study was to bring the pupil into contact with the Ancients, as they were the supreme models for all forms of intellectual expression. After all, it was in reference to them that the youth was to develop his taste.<sup>260</sup> He believed that it was better to read ancient history in Livy or Plutarch than in modern commentators such as Rollin, and maintained that it was impossible to learn such matters satisfactorily in later life. Reflecting, however, his own propensity for Latin, he wanted the teaching of Greek to be begun only in the last year of the four-year cycle, and then it was to be reserved for those who already had a fair mastery of the other language.

While he had nothing to say about the way in which the humanities and rhetoric were taught, when it came to the two years of philosophy — to be reserved in his view to pupils aged fifteen and sixteen — he felt that there was

room for considerable reform. Where he left the choice of curriculum in physics and mathematics to the individual teacher, since he considered them to be subjects of only secondary importance at this stage,<sup>261</sup> he suggested that one should do away with the usual text-books on logic, metaphysics or ethics written in bad Latin. For an understanding of logic, pupils should read an extract from the *Logique de Port-Royal*, or Father Lamy's *Art de Penser*. For metaphysics, he proposed Locke and Condillac, and, for ethics, Cicero's *De officiis*.

At the end of this period, when the pupil would have attained the age of seventeen, La Harpe wanted to introduce a special year of *Rhétorique supérieure ou Classe d'éloquence*, as, again referring to the Ancients, he saw instruction in oratory as all important in a proper education.<sup>262</sup> In this Aristotelean school of learning, the pupils were to do all their work in French, with five exercises to complete per week. Two of these exercises were to be in deliberative oratory, two in judicial oratory, and one in demonstrative oratory. In this last category, they were to be either in panegyrics or the discussion and development of a moral or political idea.

As this year of study was to be reserved for an élite, he wanted its pupils to be taught at the Collège Royal (now the Collège de France), which, for this purpose, was to become part of the University and to undergo considerable reform:

ce collège, tel qu'il est aujourd'hui, n'est guère qu'une sorte de luxe littéraire qui fait partie des ornements de la capitale; les chaires dont plusieurs sont remplies par des hommes d'un grand mérite, sont plutôt des récompenses de leurs travaux qu'un objet d'utilité générale.<sup>263</sup>

Reawakening old literary squabbles, he was horrified that the chair of French literature should be held by the Abbé Aubert and, while taking care to point out that what he said did not apply to his own lectures at the Lycée, stated that, in any case, it was not in attending lectures, but in reading good writers that the public could form its taste.<sup>264</sup> The same was true for the chairs of Latin eloquence and poetry, even if the latter post was held by as respectable an authority as Delille. He wanted the study of medicine and subjects of a similar nature to be dealt with in their respective specialized schools. The chair of canon law served no useful purpose following the confiscation of Church property and, as for the chairs of history and ethics, history is only studied in books, and morality cannot be taught.<sup>265</sup>

While making sure that those teachers who would lose their jobs under his reform would be pensioned off, he wanted as the central function of the institution a chair of *éloquence française* whose incumbent was to be appointed by the municipality, and whose activities were to be supported by the teaching of sciences such as geometry, astronomy, mechanics, physics, chemistry and natural history and, in similar fashion, of oriental languages and Greek, as they were difficult subjects not widely taught elsewhere. In addition, to give the institution

greater vitality, he advocated the introduction of boarders living in dormitories and thus sharing in the life of the establishment, and, in order to ensure that teaching continued every morning without interruption, he called for the use of *agrégés* to replace teachers when they fell ill.

The plan, naturally enough, irritated the theologians,<sup>266</sup> and N. J. Sélis, Delille's substitute at the Collège Royal, who wrote a brochure in defence of the institution.<sup>267</sup> Otherwise, there was little that appeared even remotely new. La Harpe still put far too much stress on the teaching of the classical languages. For many years before the Revolution, educationalists had wanted to reduce this influence in favour of the study of French.<sup>268</sup> The new plan was also not particularly practical. For instance, he wanted children to start their formal schooling at the age of four. Talleyrand was to propose, more reasonably, that such education should begin at the age of six.<sup>269</sup> To the modern reader of La Harpe's plan, the ideas of Locke and Rousseau seem to be grafted on to the traditional outlook of a much older age. If, in some ways, these speculations foreshadow the development of the Ecole normale supérieure and its preparatory *khâgne*, they reflect in a more general fashion the needs of a very special period — the Revolution. Not only has the importance of the humanities diminished in favour of subjects neglected by La Harpe, but, except in times of trouble, oratory has never been the most useful of assets.

Moreover, it is somewhat typical of the man that this preoccupation with classical learning and oratory should have remained at the centre of his interests during a time of social upheaval, when oratory was being rapidly replaced by demagogy, and when classical learning had long since become a little irrelevant. It was as a voice from the past that he continued to lecture his readers through the most critical period of the Revolution. As a journalist, with one whole printer's page at his disposition every week, and as ambitious as ever, he wanted to build up his articles into nothing less than a series of philosophical, literary and political memoirs worthy of being re-read at leisure.<sup>270</sup> Several of his articles at this time were *réflexions* or *observations* prompted by a new publication and were, in fact, fairly lengthy digressions, frequently running over several issues, on one or more questions of political or social theory.<sup>271</sup> It was a time when papers became the most powerful means of spreading truth or falsehood.<sup>272</sup> In good hands, journalism could be seen as a bastion of liberty, bearing faithful witness to events for posterity.<sup>273</sup>

Aware of the importance of his rôle as a journalist,<sup>274</sup> he still showed no more tolerance than when papers were concerned with literature alone. He now poured scorn on those so-called men of letters — upstarts unknown before the Revolution — who thought that journalism consisted merely in a display of revolutionary sentiment, devoid of any attempt to follow common sense.<sup>275</sup> Where, in matters of taste, he had always referred to well-defined tenets, again, when attacking those whom he thought dangerous to the Revolution — be

they absolute royalists or demagogues — he made his opinions clear by setting forth his general principles.<sup>276</sup> Unfortunately, as in his articles on pure literature, it would seem to be this essentially dogmatic approach that led him into excess. Although his principles were those of moderation, he rejected moderation in practice by arguing that those who wanted continually to appear moderate ran the risk of encouraging the dangerous as well as the good.<sup>277</sup> He maintained that it was always his duty to show clearly where he stood.<sup>278</sup> While the first Constitution was respected, this attitude was laudible, but it became pure folly under the Terror.

Only fear can explain his continued support for the Revolution up to the spring of 1794. In his heart he must have known that he was betraying his principles. In November 1792, three months after the fall of the monarchy, he said of Voltaire — his mentor in political outlook as in much else — that the latter would have seen the events of August 1792 as the end of the world.<sup>279</sup> With such lucidity, it is a pity that he did not share the courage of his fellow journalist, Camille Desmoulins, or of that other disciple of Voltaire, Condorcet. To his eternal regret, he now served his new masters:

*La faiblesse fut dans la crainte d'un danger individuel, qui n'était rien, si on l'eût bravé, et dans l'oubli d'un péril général véritablement formidable, du moment où les aboyeurs de tribune deviendraient législateurs, administrateurs et juges. Chacun s'imagina longtemps qu'il se déroberait au danger en se tenant à l'écart, et n'avoir rien à craindre en n'étant rien, ne faisant rien. Ce calcul eût été juste, quoique lâche, dans toute autre révolution; il était absolument faux dans la nôtre.*<sup>280</sup>

Indeed, principles have little meaning when compared with the behaviour of a man who praised at their successive moments of glory men of widely differing views such as Necker, Mirabeau, Robespierre and Bonaparte. After his death, Petitot echoed the feelings of many of his contemporaries by saying of La Harpe:

*si on nous interroge pour savoir de quelle école il était, nous serons fort embarrassés pour trouver une réponse positive; et peut-être nous deviendra-t-il plus facile de dire les torts qu'il n'eut jamais, que de détailler les opinions qu'il adopta.*<sup>281</sup>

Learned by heart like so many school lessons rather than the deep-seated convictions of the man of sincerity, his principles were to be cast aside at moments of stress, leaving him then unable to explain his inconsequence and turning to God for solace.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ORATORY

In the previous chapter we saw the importance that La Harpe attached to oratory under the Revolution. In such troubled times, it was for him 'le grand art des peuples libres'.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this was only the reflection of a lifelong respect for this form of art. Long before the Revolution, oratory was for the critic and the *philosophe* both a means of preserving good taste and of expressing radical propaganda. His esteem for oratory in literature is immediately seen in the amount of space devoted to it in the *Lycée*, a work which he wanted to be of particular use to orators.<sup>2</sup> The discussion of oratory takes up by far and away the greatest number of pages in the section on the Ancients. Like most of his contemporaries, he followed the lead of Fénelon<sup>3</sup> — whose judgements on the art he found somewhat summary but sound<sup>4</sup> — and turned to the Ancients to study the techniques of all oratory. He did not conform slavishly to the ideas of Antiquity and refused, for instance, to draw the traditional sharp divisions,<sup>5</sup> feeling that the differences between demonstrative and deliberative oratory should not be over-stressed,<sup>6</sup> but he was still convinced that the would-be orator should have a deep knowledge of Demosthenes and Cicero.<sup>7</sup> It was again with respect for the traditions of good taste that he was to express his radical views.

The effect of these views on his oratory must not be under-estimated. It will be remembered that it was as a *philosophe* that he became a member of the Académie française, and it is in his *éloges* that he expressed in particularly outspoken terms his support for the ideas of the *philosophes*. When, shortly before his death, his religious fervour led him to revise these *éloges*, only two remained unaltered.<sup>8</sup> He had always maintained that oratory was a weapon for progress,<sup>9</sup> and this had led him to disapprove of *oraisons funèbres*. Although he naturally modified his opinion in his closing years,<sup>10</sup> before his conversion, he tended to dismiss them as the final lies of flattery<sup>11</sup> and the opposite of the true *éloge* which should reflect the moral and social awareness of the proper historian:<sup>12</sup> 'Le philosophe voit le grand homme placé dans son siècle entre les lumières et les ténèbres, et il le juge sur ce qu'il a ôté aux unes et ajouté aux autres'.<sup>13</sup>

This love of the philosophically inspired panegyric became widespread in the years immediately preceding the French Revolution. It was not until 1759 that a prize was first given at the Académie française for praise of a famous man. This prize was carried off by A. L. Thomas for his *Eloge du Maréchal de Saxe*, and



henceforth heroes of diverse natures had the honour of being chosen by the Academy for an hour's eulogy. Provincial academies soon followed suit. D'Aguesseau, Duguai-Trouin, Sully, Colbert, Montausier and Louis XII were only a few of those chosen to be thus celebrated. Although his praise for Thomas was somewhat qualified,<sup>14</sup> La Harpe claimed that the latter's example had given new life to the Academy's competitions and turned the prize-givings into great social occasions.<sup>15</sup> Earlier competitions on the discussion of a moral saying or judgement had, in La Harpe's view, severely restricted the orator's scope<sup>16</sup> and thus held back until now one of the greatest glories of the institution as an encouragement to the arts.

Nevertheless, in his experience of praising talents of different kinds, he came to see that not every great man was a suitable subject for an *éloge*. He did not consider it to be the duty of the genre — especially in the Académie française — to be devoted to the praise of those whose talents were highly specialized, such as philosophers and scientists, and among whom he placed Fontenelle and Descartes.<sup>17</sup> Nor did he feel that a eulogy was to be used to defend a man whose talents were, if not in doubt, at least the subject of discussion.<sup>18</sup> He therefore took his subjects, firstly, from among universally appreciated men of action such as great kings, warriors, ministers, magistrates and prelates and, secondly, from among those literary giants from whom all good taste was seen to stem.<sup>19</sup>

In the first category, he praised Charles V, Henri IV, Fénelon, and Catinat, and in the second, La Fontaine, Racine, and — in an *éloge* not written for a competition — Voltaire himself. He did begin an abortive *Eloge de Molière*,<sup>20</sup> but later regretted it as he did not believe sufficiently in the grandeur of the subject.<sup>21</sup>

Part of this need for restriction in the choice of subjects comes from the difficulty of convincing an audience whose reaction to the announcement that one is going to indulge in praise is almost instinctively hostile.<sup>22</sup> If the subject is unworthy of oratory, the orator is at a disadvantage and liable either to lower the standards of his art or to exaggerate his praise, with the result that he indulges in bombast and the expression of well-worn commonplace ideas.<sup>23</sup> Although historical truth is not of prime interest to the eulogist, who cannot be expected to draw a complete picture of his subject in an hour's talk, the *éloge* will be more effective if he respects truth in what he does show.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, an *éloge* is not a factual history of a great man or a mere catalogue of his achievements,<sup>25</sup> as was shown when La Harpe triumphed over Guibert — a professional soldier and author of a treatise on tactics — with his *Eloge du Maréchal de Catinat*. Specialized knowledge could be useful, and La Harpe felt that it had helped Necker in his *Eloge de Colbert*,<sup>26</sup> but in preparing his own *éloges*, he limited himself to reading the most authoritative authors, notably Voltaire, and the memoirs of the period.<sup>27</sup> He preferred contemporary memoirs to general histories, as the biased views of the interested contemporaries

still gave a more accurate picture than that produced by usually dogmatic historians.<sup>28</sup> In any case, in oratory, he was sure, eloquence was more important than fact. He did not want to draw a fine portrait of his subject, but to show a 'physionomie passionnée dans un tableau d'histoire'.<sup>29</sup> Although he never imitated Thomas, he certainly admired the dramatic setting that the latter gave to his *Eloge de Marc-Aurèle*.<sup>30</sup>

As for the question of truth, when facts would appear to detract from the grandeur of the subject, the secret is for the eulogist to pass over them without excusing his subject, merely mentioning them to show that he is aware of the limits imposed on him by human nature.<sup>31</sup> In his *éloges*, La Harpe therefore tends to gloss over such difficulties. Questions such as Charles V's treatment of Du Guesclin or the horrors that followed his death,<sup>32</sup> Fénelon's *quiétisme*,<sup>33</sup> La Fontaine's *contes*,<sup>34</sup> or the misuse by others of Voltaire's ideas<sup>35</sup> are dealt with summarily. Truth is not to be found in detail, but in the general significance of the great man's life. Faithful to his purpose as a *philosophe*, he tried to show in the man whom he was praising 'tout ce qui peut agrandir en nous l'amour du devoir et l'idée du beau'.<sup>36</sup>

It is as a *philosophe*, therefore, that in his two eulogies of kings, he tried to bring out the qualities of the enlightened monarch. In Charles V, he showed the two-sided image of the restorer of peace and prosperity in France and of the lawgiver,<sup>37</sup> and in Henri IV the warrior against fanaticism as well as the great king.<sup>38</sup> He wrote his *Eloge de Charles V* while he was at Ferney and was, in the words of the Duc de Villars, 'inspiré par le dieu qui y préside'.<sup>39</sup> His crowning at the Académie française was generally seen as a triumph for the *philosophes* over the *dévots*. However, under article vi of the rules of 1671, the Academy had to submit all speeches for a writ of approval by two theologians from the Sorbonne. To d'Alembert's disgust, the clergy managed to have certain anti-clerical passages watered down.<sup>40</sup> The Academy's reply was to stop asking for the theologians' approval, and this led inevitably to the head-on clash over the *Eloge de Fénelon* in 1771.<sup>41</sup>

According to Collé, it was a political consideration that lost La Harpe the prize at the Académie de La Rochelle for his *Eloge de Henri IV*: 'Il s'est trouvé . . . une apostrophe du pauvre cultivateur aux riches inutiles à l'Etat, qui était de la dernière véhémence, et qui paraissait une critique trop vive du gouvernement actuel'.<sup>42</sup> Collé said that La Harpe's censor, Saurin, had cut the passage out, but even as printed, the second part of the *éloge* contains a fairly long attack on those courtiers who were responsible for Sully's disgrace and, at the same time, on 'l'oisiveté, qui dans un état est presque aussi funeste que les crimes'.<sup>43</sup> Petitot, on the other hand, suggests that the author failed to realize that the secret intention of the Academy was not so much to have a panegyric of the king as an apologia of protestantism.<sup>44</sup> Be this as it may, in depicting Voltaire's hero, La Harpe certainly lingered on the fanaticism

of the religious wars of the sixteenth century and on the massacre of St Bartholomew's day.<sup>45</sup>

In similar vein, in the *Eloge de Fénelon*, he set out to show that 'Fénelon est parmi les gens de lettres ce que Henri IV est parmi les rois',<sup>46</sup> or, in other words, yet another symbolic figure for the *philosophes*:

Je dirai aux littérateurs, il eut l'éloquence de l'âme et le naturel des anciens; aux ministres de l'église, il fut le père et le modèle de son peuple; aux controversistes, il fut tolérant, il fut docile; aux courtisans, il ne rechercha point la faveur, et fut heureux dans la disgrâce; aux instituteurs des rois, la nation attendait son bonheur du prince qu'il avait élevé; à tous les hommes, il fut vertueux, il fut aimé.<sup>47</sup>

La Harpe drew a picture of an archbishop who was a leader of virtuous men spread throughout the world and enlightened by his writings,<sup>48</sup> whose memory had the same effect as his life — namely, to make religion attractive.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the underlying theme of the whole work is a defence of an eighteenth-century view of religion: 's'il est des esprits infortunés et superbes qui ne connaissent la religion que par des abus, le peuple ne doit la connaître que par des bienfaits'.<sup>50</sup>

This treatment naturally horrified orthodox Christians and delighted enemies of the Church such as Diderot.<sup>51</sup> The ecclesiastical view was summed up by Father F. P. Gourdin who condemned the eulogist for attributing to Fénelon a tolerance of other religions that he never had, for implicitly rising against the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, for his harsh treatment of Bossuet, for his views on religious fervour, and, above all, for turning Fénelon into a Voltairian: 'Après nous l'avoir offert comme un homme de lettres citoyen, vous deviez nous le montrer comme un philosophe chrétien'.<sup>52</sup> The royal edict, which suppressed the work,<sup>53</sup> complained especially about the description of religious fervour,<sup>54</sup> as well as the other features that displeased Gourdin and his fellow priests. If Marmontel thought that it was an outstanding monument to good taste,<sup>55</sup> and if Voltaire welcomed it as 'le génie du grand siècle passé fondu dans la philosophie du siècle présent',<sup>56</sup> the authorities thought it dangerous.

With Nicholas de Catinat, the subject of La Harpe's last eulogy of a man occupying an important position in the state, he was on safer ground. Placing his *éloge* under the aegis of patriotism, he set out to produce a truly Voltairian picture of Catinat as a man of all trades<sup>57</sup> and again managed to associate him with the cause of the *philosophes*. He admired Catinat's moderation<sup>58</sup> and, above all, the fact that this great soldier saw war as a public crime and as a calamity from which one could only be saved by victory.<sup>59</sup> Catinat put the interests of the state above his own:<sup>60</sup> 'Mais Catinat que rien ne pouvait enivrer ni éblouir, portait dans son cœur ces principes d'ordre, d'équité, de bienveillance universelle, trop oubliés dans son siècle, et plus développés, plus sentis dans le nôtre'.<sup>61</sup>

The same unity of purpose is to be found in the literary *éloges*, although here the general guiding light is, naturally enough, good taste rather than *philosophie*.

The *Eloge de Racine* of 1772, for instance, sets out to prove that Racine did not follow on from Corneille; to stress the uniqueness of his genius, how he is the supreme model for good taste. This is not to say that the ideas of the Enlightenment have no place in these works. In the *Eloge de Racine*, the author allowed an aside — which he suppressed in his old age — in which he praised republics as the natural home of glory and talent, where only true merit was praised.<sup>62</sup>

In his *Eloge de La Fontaine* of 1774, La Harpe wanted to show both the great poet and ‘le bon homme’,<sup>63</sup> but, at the same time, to make clear that the poet loved by children and the common people was also much appreciated by philosophers.<sup>64</sup> In the *Eloge de Voltaire* — his final work in the genre — while showing that, along with Racine, Voltaire is a model for all times in matters of taste,<sup>65</sup> La Harpe discusses the importance of his work as a catalyst to social reform.<sup>66</sup> The abolition by edict in 1779 of the *droit de main-morte* or serfdom was to be celebrated by the Académie française as the subject of its *concours de poésie* in 1780, and it was this that gave rise in the *éloge* to the general digression in praise of Necker’s policies.<sup>67</sup>

Such ideas, however, do not alone account for the success of an *éloge*. For La Harpe, the eulogy of a famous man was the supreme chance for the orator to make full use of his imagination, ‘non pas, il est vrai, celle qui invente, mais celle qui peint et qui émeut’.<sup>68</sup> With the emphasis on description, and a moving description at that, he considered that more than anything else a natural gift of expression and a strong belief in what one has to say are subordinate to the need for method.<sup>69</sup> Like Quintilian,<sup>70</sup> he placed the composition of a speech under three headings: invention, which he limited to the proper understanding of the subject, disposition or the proper placing of material, and elocution or the use of a style suited to the subject.<sup>71</sup> Although a logical progression of ideas is not as important in demonstrative as in deliberative oratory,<sup>72</sup> he still felt that every part of a speech called for care. If fixed divisions did not have to be clearly marked, at least the orator should make sure that the public’s attention is drawn to the principal features of his speech on which all the rest should depend.<sup>73</sup> In all oratory, the introduction or exordium should have few personal reflexions and is best based on a universal truth.<sup>74</sup> He himself usually limits this section in his *éloges* to an opening paragraph expressing his own admiration for his hero, followed by a succinct description of how he will praise him. This introduction needs to be clear and to the point,<sup>75</sup> and, in the same way, especially in demonstrative oratory, the conclusion has to be kept short and straightforward.<sup>76</sup> In the body of the speech, however, he frowned on too quick a flow of ideas;<sup>77</sup> the orator’s judgement determines the right amount of development called for,<sup>78</sup> leaving ample space for feelings, variety and grace.<sup>79</sup>

In all but two of La Harpe’s *éloges*, the divisions between the various parts of the *discours* are clearly marked, showing that the strict discipline of *rhétorique* still lurked in his subconscious mind. His most common plan is to divide the

body of the speech into two halves and, while letting the general movement of the speech follow the chronological order of the life of the hero, find two dominant themes around which to build these halves so that they balance and complement each other.

In his *Eloge de Charles V*, he announces this plan in the introduction and then devotes the first part of the speech to tracing the misfortunes of France under civil war and Du Guesclin's fight against the English. In the second, he draws a picture of Charles as a lawgiver and reformer. A certain similarity of plan appears in his *Eloge de Henri IV*. In an apostrophe to Henri in the introduction, he states: 'Je raconterai ta vie: je ne connais point d'autre manière de louer ce qui est grand'.<sup>80</sup> So, in part one, he passes in review Henri's simple life in Béarn — seen as the opposite to the soft living of the Royal court in Paris — before dwelling on the horrors of the religious wars. In part two, he considers Henri's work as a king, leading up to a final contemplation of his tomb at Saint-Denis. Here, Sully occupies the place that was held in the earlier work by Du Guesclin.

In the *Eloge de Fénelon*, he first deals with Fénelon when he was in favour at court. He outlines Fénelon's education of the dauphin and discusses Fénelon's literary work, especially *Télémaque*. The second half of the speech is devoted to Fénelon's fall from favour and his persecution by Bossuet. He compares the two and tries to show the reasonable qualities of Fénelon as a man of religion.

The same technique characterizes his *Eloge de La Fontaine*. In part one, he sets out to show how La Fontaine's *bonhomie* and original manner pervade his work, and dwells on the dramatic qualities of the fables, on the writer's style, and on his common sense. In the second section, devoted to the man, the eulogist talks about La Fontaine's essential goodness, his association with Lully, and how he is honoured by posterity. However, as in La Harpe's other literary *éloges*, the life of the hero is less fully dealt with than in those devoted to men of action. Reflecting his essentially non-relative approach to literature, he maintained that 'l'éloge d'un écrivain est dans ses ouvrages'.<sup>81</sup>

It is perhaps for this reason that he departed from his usual plan of sections in his *Eloge de Racine*, which is a major piece of criticism. Supporting the text with copious notes, he discusses in turn Racine's superiority over Corneille, the unique qualities of his theatre, the quarrel with Pradon over *Phèdre*, and finally how Racine is the model of good taste.

The *Eloge de Catinat* also shows a departure from the bipartite technique. La Harpe follows Catinat's career without interruption. Still showing the influence of Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV*, he gives a general picture of the political situation of Europe at the time. He then traces Catinat's military career, before dealing with his difficulties at Versailles. He reviews his friendship with Vauban and his military reforms. We witness his disgrace under Villeroy. The *éloge* ends with his retirement and his calm and frugal life in old age.

In contrast, the *Eloge de Voltaire* is divided into three sections. In section one — which is supposed to be a general discussion of Voltaire's literary activities — La Harpe echoes the taste of his time by talking, above all, about Voltaire's theatre, stressing its superiority over that of Crébillon, and placing Voltaire alongside Racine. In section two — as we have already pointed out — Voltaire is discussed as a guiding light for reform, and in the closing section of this work, written two years after the subject's death, the disciple defends his master's memory and his intellectual heritage. He draws a picture of peace, of the patriarch's finding refuge at Ferney from the literary squabbles that had plagued him for so long. The *éloge* ends with its author reminding his audience of his own debt to Voltaire.

In each *éloge*, in accordance with his views on oratory, La Harpe attempts to suit his style to the subject.<sup>82</sup> His desire for dramatic effect, for instance, would appear to be most in evidence in his first two *éloges*, when dealing with the majesty of kings. He then uses a great deal of apostrophe and antithesis.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the sentences are longer, and the movement of the prose is slower, in the *Eloge de Fénelon*, as the discussion is on a deeper plane.<sup>84</sup> In the *Eloge de Racine*, after a fairly sober assessment of Racine's qualities, La Harpe's admiration leads him to exhort his audience.<sup>85</sup> His *Eloge de La Fontaine* is written in a style that tries to recapture the simplicity of the subject, just as that of the *Eloge de Catinat* seems to be influenced by the latter's moderation.<sup>86</sup> In his *Eloge de Voltaire* the disciple adopts an exultant tone to celebrate his master.<sup>87</sup>

The essential point to remember in oratory is that the total effect of a speech is more important than a moment of brilliance, and La Harpe thought that maxims and other sententious utterances tended to disrupt the flow of the speech.<sup>88</sup> He was wary of imagery,<sup>89</sup> and it is rare in his *éloges*. He ruled out jokes,<sup>90</sup> but was also afraid of pedantry.<sup>91</sup> In deliberative oratory, he will even feel that ideas are more important than fine expressions,<sup>92</sup> and he could on occasions disapprove of the classical period, convinced that great orators, aiming at concision, made a greater impression on their public by expressing their ideas in short sentences.<sup>93</sup> The secret of true eloquence is to be straightforward but elegant, to speak for everybody, without speaking like everybody.<sup>94</sup>

He tries to produce the same effect of simplicity in his first two attempts at deliberative oratory, *Des Malheurs de la Guerre et des Avantages de la Paix* and *Combien le Génie des grands écrivains influe sur l'esprit de leur siècle*. Although shorter than the *éloges*, they show the same simple dichotomy in their composition. In the first speech, the misfortunes of war are opposed in the first section to the advantages of peace in the second. In the second speech, in similar fashion, he compares the effects of ancient writers on their time before showing the same effects in more recent epochs.

He was aware that the main difficulty for the orator in a speech on war was that the subject was so well-worn.<sup>95</sup> However necessary it still was to moralize over war, he did not dare describe it, since such descriptions were themselves hackneyed and no longer interested the public.<sup>96</sup> Instead, he set out to show the effects of war on society, especially on those who had suffered most from it, through losing their livelihood. In so doing he was echoing widespread feelings in France as the speech was written only three years after the end of the Seven Years' War. However, like most of the *éloges*, it was also intended to appeal to the more radically-minded members of the Académie française. It is dedicated to the *philosophes*, the friends of mankind,<sup>97</sup> to whom the orator looks for hope of reform.<sup>98</sup> The underlying theme is, therefore, not war itself, but an eighteenth-century view of kingship: 'Et l'homme qui dans les forêts mourait du moins à son gré, n'a-t-il rien reçu de tant d'institutions sociales et politiques, que des chefs pour le conduire à la mort'.<sup>99</sup> Thus, calling on kings to remember that their greatest glory is to make their subjects happy,<sup>100</sup> La Harpe first shows how war ruins economy and administration, and how the peasants are the first to suffer from it; secondly, how it ruins commerce, making the merchants the second people to experience it; and how all too often the king is the last person to feel its ills. In the picture of peace, he advocates wealth in every domain and dialogues with those who would dispute its advantages. He reiterates once more the claim that the king's first task is to work for the happiness of his people, praises Henri IV, condemns the fanaticism of the crusades, and ends with a prayer to the god of reason.

The same spirit animates *Combien le génie des grands écrivains influe sur l'esprit de leur siècle*, which was written at Ferney. While setting out to trace a rapid history of the influence of the educated throughout the ages, the work is in fact an expression of Voltairian intellectual aristocracy. The central idea is that only intellect lies beyond the power of tyranny;<sup>101</sup> that this quality is best used by the wise man who combats prejudice and error<sup>102</sup> with the ultimate aim of seeing the general improvement of mankind.<sup>103</sup> Before leading up to a final exhortation to young genius to dare all, the orator once more gets in an attack on fanaticism, tied this time to praise for Montesquieu, Catherine the Great and Voltaire himself. La Harpe said that he failed to win a prize for this work at the Académie de Marseille, since he was excluded by the rules, having already won the poetry prize for the same year.<sup>104</sup> Boulard was to maintain that the author withdrew from the competition in deference to Chamfort,<sup>105</sup> but the real reason was probably given by the Duc de Villars: 'Je l'aurais vu couronner avec bien du plaisir à notre académie de Marseille pour un très beau discours, si on n'eût craint d'irriter encore plus le fanatisme en lui montrant le fidèle et énergique tableau de son délire et de ses horreurs'.<sup>106</sup> Provincial academies did not have as secretaries such energetic partisans of change as Duclos and d'Alembert.

This assiduous expression of fidelity to radical views undoubtedly helped La Harpe in his path to the Académie française, and the bitterness of his enemies at the news of his election had some justification. In his *Discours de réception*, however, he made little if any concession to them:

Mes premiers regards se sont tournés vers cette classe d'hommes choisis, qui me donnait une idée plus noble de mon état et de mes travaux, vers ceux chez qui j'ai cru voir la dignité des lettres conservée comme un dépôt dont ils sont responsables à la nation, et qui fait partie de leur propre gloire. J'ai regardé comme le but de mes efforts cette adoption qui en devient aujourd'hui la récompense.<sup>107</sup>

Tradition demanded that this speech be filled with praise, but La Harpe felt that it was of greater interest to embark on a general discussion of a topic of more widespread appeal<sup>108</sup> and took as his central theme the idea — possibly inspired by Quintilian<sup>109</sup> — that a man of letters is most at home in the society of his colleagues.<sup>110</sup> This overshadows, and pushes to the end of the speech, the *compliments d'usage* for the two men that he was replacing, Colardeau and Saint-Aignan.

Announcing his plan clearly and linking the subject to his election to the Académie française, he first attempts to define true men of letters. They were those who throughout Europe were bound together by mutual esteem and enlightenment, and love for humanity.<sup>111</sup> They were noted for their admiration for Virgil, Racine, Tacitus, Montesquieu and Fénelon. In the strict habit of balancing ideas, he then contrasts the natural desire for solitude and the need for company that all men experience. After a short picture of the writer in his retreat, whence rises 'la voix du génie qui va se faire entendre au monde',<sup>112</sup> we are shown the advantages and disadvantages of fashionable society which are then compared to the supreme benefits to be gained from meeting one's fellow writers. Fashionable society can teach amenity, which should characterize all social intercourse and help writers to temper the austerity of their writings.<sup>113</sup> However, fashionable society only wants to shine and neglects truth. It is contact with other writers that rekindles 'dans les âmes le feu du génie de l'amour des arts'.<sup>114</sup>

There are 'des couleurs sinistres [qu'il interdit à ses] pinceaux',<sup>115</sup> he admits, and he refuses to discuss personal disappointments and how he has been a victim of envy. Nevertheless, it is as an example of a writer who has escaped envy that he manages to work in praise for Colardeau, claiming that he did not have to alter what he said of Colardeau on earlier occasions.<sup>116</sup> The passage on Colardeau, however, is mainly devoted to the intentionally pathetic picture of Colardeau's dying before being able to take his place at the Academy:

Lorsque vos suffrages, qu'il n'avait brigüés que par son mérite, vinrent le chercher sur le lit de douleur, qu'il ne quittait presque plus, vous vous souvenez, messieurs, de quelle joie pure il parut rempli, et combien l'expression en était aimable et touchante. On vous porta sa lettre de remerciement,



et vous crûtes entendre le chant du cygne. Son âme semblait se ranimer un moment pour la gloire et la reconnaissance; mais ce dernier rayon allait bientôt s'éteindre dans la tombe, et son nom inscrit dans vos fastes, était donc tout ce qui devait vous rester de lui!<sup>117</sup>

This elegiac tone is soon replaced by one of triumph. He uses the long life of Saint-Aignan to run quickly over the three reigns that it spanned and lead up to praise for Louis XVI, 'la vertu sur le trône, assise à côté des grâces'.<sup>118</sup> The speech ends with an almost prophetic picture of Voltaire's coming to Paris:

Quel moment, messieurs, si nous pouvions le voir, à la fin de sa carrière, jouir à la fois de sa gloire et de sa patrie! s'il pouvait, sur ce théâtre qu'il a tant de fois embelli de ses chefs-d'œuvre, s'avancer courbé sous l'amas de ses couronnes; répondre par des larmes de joie aux cris de la France assemblée et plus heureux que Sophocle, survivre encore à son triomphe.<sup>119</sup>

The work was not seen to be particularly original,<sup>120</sup> but, allowing for a certain exaggeration, called for by the occasion, it is nevertheless carefully constructed, with the transition from one idea to another carefully managed in a particularly well-phased progression from discussion to the more intense eloquence of praise. If much of the speech seemed a little self-satisfied to La Harpe's enemies,<sup>121</sup> who could not accept his rhetorical claims to modesty while he implicitly associated himself with great men,<sup>122</sup> at least they could not deny that it had a certain elegance.

These three speeches were all that he wrote in the way of true deliberative oratory before the Revolution. Once he became a member of the Academy, his only platforms for public speaking were either the Academy itself, as when he gave a speech as director in 1782 on the purpose of the institution and its prizes,<sup>123</sup> or, beginning in January 1786, the Lycée. One must remember that the major part of the *Lycée ou cours de littérature ancienne et moderne* was originally intended to be read aloud,<sup>124</sup> and, while he had to agree not to read or recite from memory the lectures that he prepared for the Ecoles normales,<sup>125</sup> at the Lycée itself it was essentially part of his method to write down what he had to say beforehand.<sup>126</sup> His lectures can, therefore, be regarded as carefully prepared speeches.

This does not mean that each section of the *Lycée* is a formal oration, although parts of the work — notably the introduction on the general notions of writing — are eloquent pleas for good taste. It does, however, explain why he should have regarded as *discours* works that are little more than literary *exposés*. The *Discours prononcé à l'ouverture du Lycée, le 3 frimaire an IX*, apart from a few personal remarks to celebrate his return to the Lycée after an absence of four years and some praise of Bonaparte, is really an introduction to his translation of Tasso. It was printed merely to prevent misquotations.<sup>127</sup> The so-called *Discours de l'état des lettres en Europe depuis la fin du siècle qui a suivi celui d'Auguste jusqu'au règne de Louis XIV* is a link between parts one and two of

the *Lycée*,<sup>128</sup> in which the author hurries over the periods of literature that he does not intend to deal with at length, and is more a catalogue of human achievement in the Dark and Middle Ages than a proper speech. Although first printed separately, it was later placed in its proper place in the *Lycée*.<sup>129</sup>

Another *discours* to be found in this work<sup>130</sup> is *De la guerre déclarée par nos derniers tyrans à la raison, à la morale, aux lettres et aux arts*. Given shortly after *Thermidor*, it is far more of a speech in its own right, not fitting into the plan of the *Lycée* as a whole.<sup>131</sup> Although rather formless, being merely a 'résumé succinct',<sup>132</sup> it marks its author's first public atonement for having remained silent under the Terror, and is an earnest exhortation to Frenchmen to cast aside all that the Terror implied:

Vous tous qui avez un cœur, vous qui avez pleuré sur tant de crimes, pleurez sur celui qui les renferme tous, sur l'entière dégradation de la nature humaine en France, et au dix-huitième siècle! pleurez . . .<sup>133</sup>

Elsewhere under the Revolution, he became an active if not an important orator, first in 1790, when defending authors' rights, then in 1795, in the troubles leading up to *Vendémiaire*. Yet, not only was the Revolution to tax La Harpe's moral strength, but it was also to be a severe strain on his aesthetic judgement, especially in questions of oratory. He was torn between the constrained elegance of Academic oratory and the unbridled excesses of the oratory of the Revolution. He was forced to admit that most Academic speakers were eloquent moralists rather than true orators,<sup>134</sup> and he had always claimed that deliberative oratory could only really flourish in a republic.<sup>135</sup> It had now come to life in 1789,<sup>136</sup> but he remained wary of the misuses of language in the name of Liberty.<sup>137</sup> His first article published under the Revolution<sup>138</sup> was an attack on Mirabeau's habit of using a favourable adjective with a noun that could only mean something evil, such as *crime héroïque* and *vertueux délateurs*:<sup>139</sup>

Je vois déjà s'élever un édifice oratoire de figures violentes, d'apostrophes hardies et de maximes impérieuses. Heureusement, nous autres, un peu initiés dans le secret de la Rhétorique, nous connaissons un peu ces grandes ressources, et je pourrais sur ce texte [de la Liberté], faire ma tirade comme un autre. Mais j'ai toujours cru qu'il fallait laisser aux orateurs du barreau cet art facile et commun, qui ne consiste qu'à montrer un côté des objets. La véritable éloquence, celle qui convient aux grandes assemblées, consiste au contraire à embrasser les objets sous tous les rapports, et à saisir le point où est la vérité: or, quand on m'aura étalé tout ce qu'on peut dire de plus gravement sentencieux sur l'importance de tout ce qui touche à la Liberté; quand on se sera bien passionné pour la chose ou pour le mot, j'approuverai les sentences, selon la tournure, je louerai le pathétique selon sa valeur, et je ramènerai la question par cette seule parole: à l'application.<sup>140</sup>

He particularly disapproved of those who were prepared to slander their enemies for the sake of dramatic effect.<sup>141</sup>

This expression of what Revolutionary oratory should consist of was not, however, based on experience. It was now no longer a question of reiterating praise for an already well-loved figure, of exposing widely-held ideas on an overworked theme, or of cloaking compliments in elegant praise, but of convincing a quite possibly hostile audience with the only language that it could understand. In neither of his two speeches on author's copyright is La Harpe to be noted for giving both sides of the question, and in both he turns the rather complex and specialized subject of rules and regulations into a matter of patriotism.

In the *Adresse des Auteurs dramatiques à l'Assemblée nationale*, which precedes the petition and its five propositions for a law to guarantee authors' rights, he sets out to gain the sympathy of the deputies by stressing how the dramatists, under Voltaire's lead, turned the theatre into a weapon for freeing the oppressed, and thus won themselves the hatred of the tyrants. Before the Revolution, the theatre had become, he claimed, the only place where the slightest expression of a desire for freedom had been preserved:

Mais aussi que de soins, que d'efforts pour l'anéantir! combien le despotisme en était effrayé! que d'inquisiteurs à gages occupés à le rassurer! quelle servile industrie exercée à calculer l'effet d'un vers, l'intention d'un mot! On eût dit que ce qu'il y avait de plus bas dans la pensée des tyrans et des esclaves, fut constamment employé à deviner ce qu'il pouvait y avoir de noble et d'honnête dans la pensée des âmes libres.<sup>142</sup>

He implied that even if the Comédiens français no longer had their exclusive privilege, their refusal to give the authors their proper rights was indicative of how they belonged to the old order and stood in the way of liberty and equality.

These points are carried to their logical conclusion in the *Discours sur la liberté du théâtre* — his only speech as a *jacobin*. Once more beginning with a general statement in which he claims to speak not as an author but as a citizen, he again sets out to prove that 'l'intérêt particulier des auteurs dramatiques s'identifie si évidemment et si heureusement avec l'intérêt général',<sup>143</sup> and insinuates that, if the actors had their way, it would be 'le triomphe de l'aristocratie et du despotisme sur l'esprit patriotique et sur la liberté',<sup>144</sup> by referring to the actors' quarrel with the *commune*, and by maintaining that it was on aristocratic grounds that nationalist plays by Belloy were put on at the time of the *états généraux*.

Man of letters that he was, he still stooped to revolutionary jargon, and, if he did not indulge in personal calumny, cloaked in the calm of these early revolutionary speeches, there is all the inuendo and veiled allusions to opponents as enemies of the people that were to become the stock-in-trade of popular oratory, and which he pretended to despise. Moreover, he would appear to have progressed with the Revolution, for in a speech given at the Théâtre de la République in 1793 — and which has disappeared — the audience heard 'le despotisme

traité comme il le mérite'.<sup>145</sup> In oratory, as in other fields, La Harpe's conversion was to call for a radical change of position.

After *Thermidor*, echoing public sentiment,<sup>146</sup> he began a monumental *Commentaire sur la langue révolutionnaire*,<sup>147</sup> which was to remain unfinished at his death. To use his expression, as much as any act of the Revolution, language had become a 'monstruosité',<sup>148</sup> the most powerful instrument for general perversion.<sup>149</sup> He reiterated his despair at the revolutionaries' love of slander,<sup>150</sup> which — now turned against him — had become 'ces imputations odieuses d'*aristocratie* et de *royalisme*'.<sup>151</sup> Insisting that a proper proportion and use of style was not only a social convention, but was essential to the protection of freedom,<sup>152</sup> he defined revolutionary style as a 'style à contresens',<sup>153</sup> which consisted of taking common words and making them signify the opposite of what was their normally accepted meaning.<sup>154</sup> He claimed that the Revolutionaries were presumptuous schoolboys who did not appreciate the value of the words that they used<sup>155</sup> and misused them,<sup>156</sup> while indulging in ranting, redundant appellations and generally vacuous remarks.<sup>157</sup> Their invective was as empty of real meaning as it was immoderate.<sup>158</sup> Just as he was to hold the *philosophes* responsible for much else in the Revolution, he was to make out that they had set the tone with their pomposity, their arrogance and their trickery, and their pedantic and turgid language.<sup>159</sup>

As a counter-revolutionary, however, he was hardly less virulent than before. Even his lectures were marked by outbursts of fervour that had little to do with literature: 'Opprobre et exécution! (et puisse ma voix retentir, pour nous justifier, jusqu'aux extrémités du monde et jusqu'aux dernières générations)! Opprobre et exécution sur les monstres qui, en violant les tombeaux des morts qu'ils dépouillaient, en refusaient aux victimes qu'ils égorgaient. Je sais que ceci est une digression; mais rien n'est déplacé, rien n'est perdu toutes les fois qu'il s'agit d'élever un cri de vengeance contre ceux qui, pendant si longtemps, ont élevé impunément un cri de guerre contre l'espèce humaine toute entière'.<sup>160</sup>

From what remains of the speeches that he composed when he entered the fight against the Convention in 1795, we can see that La Harpe now relied for dramatic effect upon reminding his audience of the urgency of the situation, and he took the language of his opponents and showed how empty it was of meaning:

Sachez surtout ce que vos plats démagogues se gardent bien de vous dire, et ce qui n'est que trop vrai: sachez que l'Europe humiliée par vos victoires, est consolée et vengée de reste, en regardant avec le sourire du plus profond dédain et de la plus insultante pitié, ce que vous appelez votre *liberté*.<sup>161</sup>

Using all known oratorical devices such as apostrophe, repetition, antithesis, suspension, enumeration, and rhetorical questions, he paints a sinister picture of danger and pours forth his scorn for his enemies:

Et que sera-ce si les tyrans sont d'une espèce à inspirer non-seulement la haine, mais le mépris qu'ils méritent? Ouvrez leur cœur, et vous y lirez l'arrêt de mort écrit contre tout ce qui vaut mieux qu'eux, contre quiconque ne les rassure pas contre eux-mêmes en s'abaissant à les flatter. Et croyez-vous qu'il n'y ait plus de ces tyrans-là? qu'il n'y ait plus de ces hommes tout prêts à crier encore dans l'occasion, *A moi, sans-culottes?* . . . Vous qui savez ce que signifie ce cri . . . ne l'oubliez pas.

Et que sera-ce encore, si par une suite de circonstances inouïes qui n'ont pas encore cessé, l'idée de l'incarcération présente en même temps celle du massacre? . . . Quand un homme sera-t-il au-dessus des frayeurs de tout ce qui l'environne, d'un père, d'une mère, d'une femme, de ses enfants, de ses amis? Voilà l'homme le plus ferme anéanti; et n'est-ce pas le vœu des tyrans?<sup>162</sup>

For all his care over words, in politics he replaced the studied elegance of his academic oratory with the sweeping movement of strife.

It was his misfortune to waste his natural gift for eloquent prose on matters of only relative importance, be they the dry subjects of the *concours académiques*, where there was no place for a fresh or novel idea, or the heated invective of polemics whose interest for posterity is limited by the day-to-day nature of the events which incited them. Moreover, taste in oratory as in other genres has changed. The modern reader can appreciate the grace with which the ideas are expressed in these speeches, but experiences an almost instinctive desire to brush aside the oratorical devices which appear as a surplus embroidery on a rather fine clear flow of language. Nevertheless some of La Harpe's *éloges* — by far and away the most important examples of his oratory — are of value as works of criticism. In some ways, they prepared the ground for the *Lycée*. Both in his *éloges* and in the *Lycée*, he praises and defends his heroes with an eloquence inspired by sincerity.

CHAPTER XIV

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUES, PAMPHLETS  
AND APOLOGIAS

Parallel to much of La Harpe's oratory, there is a whole series of other works which share the distinction of being devoted above all to the expression of political or religious ideas. Obviously inspired by the example of both Diderot and Voltaire, his very first attempt at expressing such ideas was in a form of dialogue. In the *Dialogue entre Alexandre et un solitaire du Caucase*, first published in 1765, Alexander, caught in a storm, seeks refuge in the cave of a hermit, referred to as the *philosophe*. In this interlude between battles, the vain glory of the conqueror is opposed to the inner richness and true happiness of the simple man. Apart from the setting of the scene with details such as the old man worrying about his vegetables and offering Alexander some of his soup, the whole work is taken up with the dialogue.

The serious tone is rather more reminiscent of Diderot in his shorter *entretiens* or of Voltaire in parts of the *Dictionnaire philosophique* than of the latter in his *contes*. La Harpe would appear at this time to have felt safer in satire and gentle bantering when writing in verse. He always found the imaginary dialogue tempting, but lacking the versatility of, say, Diderot in his longer works, he was only too aware of the difficulties of achieving a proper balance between the arguments of the interlocutors.<sup>1</sup> Here, Alexander's claims to grandeur make little headway against the all-too-powerful arguments of the hermit. Refusing to leave his cave for the honours of the court, the hermit displays the same common sense and almost escapist attitude as Martin in *Candide*: 'Non, Alexandre, mon bonheur est dans ma caverne; que m'importent les maux de l'univers?'<sup>2</sup> In spite of the very definite expression of the views of the Enlightenment, the conversation itself remains rather inconclusive. When the sun reappears, Alexander rejoins his troops: 'Il était rêveur, et commençait à s'interroger sur ses conquêtes. On lui annonça que l'ennemi paraissait. La trompette sonna, et il oublia tout.'<sup>3</sup> We are shown a short episode without a real beginning or end.

This rather fragmentary nature is repeated in *Le Couvent des Camaldules*, written about 1770.<sup>4</sup> We again meet a hermit, but this time it is a man who does not know happiness. The author is out walking at sunset in the woods near Yerres: 'Jamais ces bois ne m'avaient paru plus beaux; il me semblait qu'entour de moi tout devait goûter le repos et le bonheur.'<sup>5</sup> This joyful vision of nature is,

however, destroyed when he starts talking to a solitary monk. The monk is in every way the opposite of the philosopher-hermit. Like Mélanie, he has been forced to take vows by his ambitious family, although here it is the mother and not the father who has been hard-hearted. Echoing his *Réponse d'un solitaire de La Trappe*, La Harpe shows a monk who has become embittered to a point where he has only one sad mission in life: 'Je jurai dans mon cœur que tous ceux que j'aurais occasion d'entretenir sauraient de moi les dangers, la honte et les horreurs de la vie monastique'.<sup>6</sup>

Although the form of this dialogue is freer than that of the earlier one, the theme still leaves little place for proper narrative or description. Nature is expressed in La Harpe's usual terms with the approach of a storm, which makes the monk hurry off and leave the author to reflect on his misfortune and — in a manner reminiscent of La Harpe's *héroïdes* — address the deist's god for an answer: 'Mon âme était profondément triste. Je vis que le malheur, quand il est extrême, finit par rendre le cœur dur, et que les plaintes du désespoir deviennent des blasphèmes'.<sup>7</sup> There is little to be said about these two works except that they lack the wit and charm which make similar productions by Voltaire so readable. They are very short and are too obviously vehicles for the expression of a given idea.

An attempt at a playful tone is, on the other hand, to be found in *Oui ou non*, a supposed conversation between an uncommitted Parisian and a foreigner called *le bon sens* over the decrees of August and September 1795. It illustrates particularly well how, even after his conversion, La Harpe still looked to Voltaire for literary form. Like the latter on England, he was to state here that the history of the Revolution was to be written by executioners.<sup>8</sup> La Harpe's foreigner has the open-mindedness of Voltaire's Babouc and other travellers. Perhaps out of respect for the moderate American republic, and vaguely echoing Voltaire's *Ingénu*, the foreigner is an uninformed and hence unprejudiced American: 'Je viens de loin, d'une petite habitation, isolée dans le nord de l'Amérique, où je ne communiquais avec personne, et je suis venu par mer jusqu'au Havre, j'ignore tout'.<sup>9</sup>

The Parisian is quite unable to explain what is happening in the Convention, nor can the foreigner understand the deputies' language, but then neither can the French, mystified by 'l'absence de toute loi, proclamée en LOI par un corps législatif'.<sup>10</sup> Denying the foreigner's idea that what France has had for six years is civil war, the Parisian ingenuously claims that this has been a magnificent Revolution with such marvellous inventions as the guillotine — a 'célérité destructive' which is only one of the wonderful discoveries of the time.<sup>11</sup> When the Parisian tells the foreigner that the deputies have condemned in advance as rebels and enemies of the state all those who would not vote to re-elect them, the latter asks naively: 'Ne m'avez-vous pas dit que par votre constitution le peuple était souverain; et comment le souverain peut-il être rebelle?'<sup>12</sup>

This syllogism, while far from reflecting the author's real opinion, has enough truth in it to make the situation amusing. Here, even if the manner is a little stilted and artificial, we can see the disciple of Voltaire using wit as an effective weapon. His exasperation with the Convention soon turns from direct irony to affected despair. After the dialogue, there is a post-scriptum in which the voting figures are analysed, and the work ends with the abrupt cry: 'La plume tombe des mains'.<sup>13</sup> Having poured out ridicule, what more can the writer say?

Another fairly successful attempt at a witty dramatic setting is to be found in the *Prédiction* or *Prophétie de Cazotte*, a work which was much admired by Sainte-Beuve.<sup>14</sup> It certainly caters for La Harpe's taste for satire. It purports to tell of a dinner party given at the beginning of 1788 for Cazotte, La Harpe, Chamfort, Condorcet, Vicq-d'Azir, Nicolaï, Bailly, Malesherbes, Roucher, and the Duchesse de Grammont. Each character is clearly drawn, and the work is not lacking in mordant humour. The subject of conversation has been the *révolution des esprits* and the inroads made against the Church: 'On conclut que la Révolution ne tardera pas à se consommer; qu'il faut absolument que la superstition et le fanatisme fassent place à la philosophie, et l'on est à calculer la probabilité de l'époque et quels seront ceux de la société qui verront le règne de la raison'.<sup>15</sup> However, in the midst of this mirth, Jacques Cazotte, the author of the *Diable amoureux* and other mystic tales, has remained silent. When provoked by the others, he tells each of them in turn what fate awaits them — poison for Condorcet, opened veins for Chamfort and Vicq-d'Azir, and, with the exception of La Harpe, the scaffold for the rest: 'Vous serez alors gouvernés par la seule philosophie, par la seule raison'.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, this prophecy is not to be seen merely as that of a mystic. It had been self-evident for anyone prepared to see the dangers inherent in a society corrupted by the *philosophes*:

Si vous en êtes encore à ne voir dans ce que nous avons vu que ce qu'on appelle *une révolution*; si vous croyez que celle-là est comme une autre, c'est que vous n'avez ni lu, ni réfléchi, ni senti. En ce cas, la prophétie même, *si elle avait eu lieu*, ne serait qu'un miracle de plus perdu pour vous comme pour les autres, et c'est là le plus grand mal.<sup>17</sup>

It is a common enough theme in La Harpe's post-revolutionary work,<sup>18</sup> but it is not always expressed with such concision and art. The author's personal involvement brings life to the dialogue, and the vivacity of the work in general makes us regret that he did not write more in the genre.

His other polemic writings are not as entertaining. His pamphlets, for instance, tend either to back up a particular speech and deal with the single dominant question raised in that speech, or to develop into rather long-winded political treatises. The plan adopted in the first type is best seen in the petition following the *Adresse des auteurs dramatiques* and in the introduction to the *Acte de garantie*, following the short address, entitled *Réflexions préliminaires*.



In both these works, the principles of the questions involved — authors' rights and civil liberties — are laid out in straightforward fashion so as to introduce clearly proposals for reform. The *Réponse aux observations pour les comédiens français*<sup>19</sup> and, like the latter work, contains long quotations of formal agreements for plays.

Two longer pamphlets are *La Liberté de la presse défendue . . . contre Chénier* and *Le Salut public*. The first of these is a reply to M. J. Chénier's report to the Convention on 2 May 1795 (12 floréal an III) and, in particular, to article v of Chénier's projected law for censorship. Written in haste,<sup>20</sup> the tone of this brochure is extremely harsh. Calling Chénier one of the presumptuous school-boys of the Convention<sup>21</sup> and thus associating him with those whom he attacked in his campaign against Revolutionary language, La Harpe sets out to prove the dangers of Chénier's proposals:

le rapport est une déclamation insignifiante et souvent ridicule, . . . le décret consacre l'arbitraire le plus tyrannique, et ne tiendrait à rien moins, par ses conséquences, qu'à nous ramener sous le régime des décemvirs, qui ont été les tyrans de la pensée avant de l'être de la France.<sup>22</sup>

Insisting throughout on the revolutionary and thus meaningless but dangerous language of Chénier's report, he counters ten points brought up by the latter, denying his claims to the existence of a royalist and *émigré* plot, insisting on the right to one's own opinions, expressing horror at the idea of deportation, and discussing at greater length the implications of the above-mentioned article v. Considering the immoderate tone of this brochure, it is indeed surprising to see how Chénier was nevertheless to remain one of La Harpe's main protectors against authority.

*Le Salut public* is a much more moderate piece of work. Written some time after the riots and other troubles of Prairial an III and before the disturbances of Vendémiaire an IV, it reflects a mood of greater calm and confidence. In essence, it is a reply to P. C. L. Baudin's bill to allow an automatic return to office of a third of the deputies in the new legislature of the autumn of 1795. At the same time, it develops into a discussion on civil liberty in more general terms. Baudin's idea that the extension of the deputies' term of office is in the interest of *le salut public* is merely indicative of the Convention's general misunderstanding of the term.<sup>23</sup>

Speaking in the name of truth and common sense,<sup>24</sup> he is convinced that he shows extreme caution in all he says,<sup>25</sup> but the main line of his attack on the Convention as a whole is rather rigid, with again a certain trace of bitterness:

Ce n'est qu'en tenant à la main les pièces originales et authentiques que la postérité pourra croire qu'à la face de l'Europe qui a les yeux sur nous, des législateurs aient pu tenir un pareil langage. Il serait trop long de rapporter

tous les discours; ce serait une trop grande perte de temps et de papier. Mais en voici un résumé de la plus rigoureuse fidélité, et je défie qui que ce soit de le contester.<sup>26</sup>

When, however, he comes to Baudin himself, he tries not to offend the man. Insisting on his appreciation of the latter's talents as a writer, he points out that he usually admires his ability to reason<sup>27</sup> and regrets that for once he has been led astray.<sup>28</sup> The critic has returned to his first duty, which is to examine the text. If Baudin was not satisfied,<sup>29</sup> at least La Harpe could show how little personal abuse he had brought into the criticism of Baudin's report.<sup>30</sup>

Yet a tone of detached impartiality is no more typical of La Harpe's political writings than it is of his writings on questions of taste. Just as in literature, his personal involvement in politics was to lead to a form of militant crusade for the very defence of civilization. He became a fierce defender of the faith as well as a tyrannical protector of the arts. It was the persecution of the non-juring priests and their deportation to Cayenne that led him to publish part of his abortive *Commentaire sur la langue révolutionnaire* separately in 1797 under the title of *Du fanatisme dans la langue révolutionnaire, ou de la persécution suscitée par les barbares du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle contre la religion chrétienne et ses ministres*.<sup>31</sup> In this publication, he set out to show that for fifty years the only true fanaticism that France had known had been that of irreligion.<sup>32</sup> Divided into thirty sections, it deals first with the general abuses to be found in religion, philosophy and language. Defending the non-juring priests, it tries to limit the importance of the Vendée insurrection as a danger to the Republic now that the main disturbances are over. It lingers on the horror of the Terror and the persecution of the clergy. It shows how all this stems from the ideas and language of the *philosophes* and calls for an end to revolution with the restoration of worship in obedience to the designs of Providence. In true polemic vein, it condemns above all public crimes committed in the name of a public authority.<sup>33</sup>

A work of similar purpose, but dealing with religion in more general terms, is the *Apologie de la religion*, again possibly based on material gathered for the *Commentaire sur la langue révolutionnaire*. In what exists of this work,<sup>34</sup> the author first claims to prove man's natural dependence on God in the light of the strictly defined philosophical concepts of necessity and contingency.<sup>35</sup> Satisfied in his own mind with the conclusions reached in his *prolegomena*, he then launches out on an attack on heretics and atheists and on the credulity of the *philosophes*, before expounding his belief in a divine order of things whose earthly manifestations or miracles are recorded in an unbroken tradition by both the Old and the New Testaments. In a similar way, the prophecies of the Bible are seen to be linked to one another and to prove each other with the birth of Christ.

Yet, as the times called for answers to the *philosophes* rather than theological dissertations, in a work where the title alone is a reproach against the apostasy

of the times,<sup>36</sup> the arguments are based on the convert's own reactions to the gospel, the psalms and the scriptures,<sup>37</sup> on the grounds that feeling gives sight to the soul.<sup>38</sup> As for the *philosophes*, he maintained: 'Je suis dans leur conscience comme dans la mienne, tant je les ai vus et connus: je la mettrai à nu; et si je ne fais pas rougir les maîtres, je pourrai du moins en dégoûter les disciples, et c'est quelque chose.'<sup>39</sup> After a fairly lengthy *exposé* of the ideas of the Bible, he announces: 'Je vais marcher désormais dans une route plus libre et plus spacieuse, un peu moins embarrassée des épines de la discussion. Fort des démonstrations précédentes, je pourrai m'adresser en même temps à ceux qui croient et à ceux qui ne croient pas.'<sup>40</sup> Convinced that the scriptures have a reply to everything,<sup>41</sup> he is more at home in proclaiming his own faith than in actually proving the existence of divine nature for others.<sup>42</sup> What argument there is is usually a general condemnation of the *philosophes* or the refutation of their ideas.

The work foreshadows Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* in theme and in purpose, but there is little of the picturesque quality of the latter work, or of what Chateaubriand himself calls 'l'extrême variété des tons qui le composent'.<sup>43</sup> There is little to make the *Apologie* attractive. La Harpe does not get beyond questions of dogma and doctrine, and, in preaching a religion of love, he displays an intolerance that characterizes much of his polemics. His cause is hardly helped by his calling the *philosophes* monsters and madmen.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, as the work was not only designed as an attack on the *philosophes*, but for its author himself as a means of expressing his own humiliation before God and before mankind,<sup>45</sup> it is not lacking in moments of almost sublime eloquence:

Un homme a été assez malheureux pour oublier, pendant quarante ans, la loi d'un Dieu dont il reconnaissait l'existence, et pour blasphémer la religion sainte que ce Dieu est venu lui-même apporter aux hommes. Ce même Dieu, par un miracle de sa grâce, le touche en un moment par la lecture des livres saints, qu'il avait toujours négligée; Dieu éclaire son esprit et parle à son cœur. Le voile tombe, et, devenu chrétien, et chrétien pénitent, il reconnaît que sa vie a été une suite des égarements les plus honteux et les plus coupables, même devant les hommes.<sup>46</sup>

This very simplicity and directness is proof enough of the sincerity, if not of the perfection, of La Harpe's beliefs. It is in his penitence that he is best able to speak for the faults of a whole generation.

## CONCLUSION

Emile Faguet rightly compares La Harpe to two other would be artists best remembered as critics, Boileau and Sainte-Beuve,<sup>1</sup> and it is tempting to explain him in accordance with Coleridge's much quoted view of critics as men who have failed in other forms of art.<sup>2</sup>

He certainly never lived up to the early promise of his *Comte de Warwick*. His theatre reflects all too well the inevitable sterility of writing in a tradition that had already long since reached its zenith. His plays are of interest in so far as they reveal in their content the fashions of the day. On to a basically classical form, he grafts, in the manner of Voltaire, greater spectacle and new local colour. Although wary of direct moralizing, he does introduce into his dramatic works the propaganda of the *philosophes*. However, the result lacks both the glory of the tragedies of the seventeenth century and the efficiency of the less elegant prose *drame*. While introducing new ideas and new settings, he remains too declamatory and shows an unfortunate propensity for the romanesque. His work lacks the power of action and the realism that is the mark of true theatre. It is a reflection of his conception of the theatre that in the *Lycée* he deals with the dramatic arts under the general heading of *poésie*.

His poetry is again cast in a strictly traditional mould, but at least he does not always have to be as ambitious as in his theatre. Where he is ambitious, his lines sound hackneyed and more than a little trite. His lighter verse, however, is, if not outstanding, fairly elegant and sometimes amusing. The same elegance is to be found in his work as a translator, where he had no pretensions as a great scholar. He was, perhaps, most at home in his *éloges* and other academic types of oratory where form was everything. It is, undoubtedly, a reflection of his belief in form that his political ideas are underlined by an unbroken desire to preserve order under the rule of the educated. Certainly, it is this belief in the importance of form that characterizes his work in all genres.

Indeed, if in general he failed as an artist, he did so largely because from the outset he approached all art armed with his thorough schooling as a critic. Every production became an academic exercise carried out in imitation of those whom he considered to be the masters of good taste — notably Voltaire. Whereas the latter had wit and a power of expression which have ensured the continuing success of a fair part of his work despite posterity's many changes in taste, to the modern reader most of the work of his disciple appears stilted and unoriginal.

At the same time, while great artists may be the best critics (and Voltaire again would seem to be proof of this), La Harpe is an eloquent defender of

Voltairean tradition. His tyrannical attitude in matters of taste did not stem from jealousy of those who succeeded where he had failed, but from a sincere and deeply felt belief in the taste of his master. Villemain, who was convinced that the greatest critics were great artists, since 'le talent seul peut faire agrandir l'horizon du goût',<sup>3</sup> found La Harpe lacking in boldness and depth,<sup>4</sup> but said of him that:

sa véritable gloire sera toujours d'avoir proclamé le génie de quelques-uns de nos grands hommes. Je ne sais en effet si dans les lettres, après l'honneur de produire des beautés originales, il est un titre plus noble que de les admirer avec éloquence, d'en expliquer les merveilles, d'en augmenter le sentiment, d'en perpétuer l'imitation. La Harpe, qui n'avait pas assez de force pour recevoir, pour saisir puissamment la première inspiration, s'anime et s'échauffe par le reflet des grandes beautés qu'elle a produites.<sup>5</sup>

The principal drawback of this dogmatic approach based on admiration for what has gone before was that it made it difficult for La Harpe to understand the purpose of innovation, and he became above all identified with resistance to change. Nevertheless, his views on literature are, on the whole, based on common sense. He tends to be chauvinistic and is frequently the prisoner of his own prejudices, but what he says is clear and elegantly stated. He illustrates superbly the essentially active Voltairian approach to criticism, by teaching good taste by examples and not by precepts. It is also refreshing for the modern reader to escape from the all-pervading psycho-somatic approach to literature that characterizes much of more recent criticism and rediscover an approach where works of art are evaluated separately on their own merits.

France's debt to La Harpe is no minor one. For all its faults — its gaps and its imbalance — the *Lycée* assured, more than any other critical work, the continuity of French literary culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between the death of Voltaire and the triumph of the Romantics, no great writer dominated the literary scene. The upheavals of the Revolution and the following years meant a breakdown in standards of education and taste. With no outstanding genius or new school of thought yet in a position of authority, people still turned for guidance to the last firmly established tradition of literary taste — that of Voltaire. La Harpe's *Lycée* presented a fairly compact, clear and methodical repertory of Voltaire's views applied to all the more important French writers of the past. It was after his own death that La Harpe probably best served the interests of his master.

In life, he was more often than not a liability to the Voltairian cause. One cannot help but be struck by the naive vanity of the man whose irascibility and thorough belief in himself led him into many a trap. Yet, his almost aggressive attachment to Voltaire makes him an interesting witness to his times. He belonged to a breed of men which seems to have begun to flourish widely for the first time in France, in the eighteenth century — the professional man of

letters who had to fight for a living and who could no longer count on birth or automatic patronage to secure success. La Harpe was made for the polemics that surrounded the last twenty years of Voltaire's life. His belief in himself then gave him strength to act as the upholder of Voltairian purity after the latter's death. All in all, the faults and qualities of all his writings, his lack of originality as an artist as well as his prejudices as a critic, tell us far more about the period than would the highly personal productions or the calm impartial observations of a man who had not been in the thick of the fray.

## NOTES

### Notes to Introduction

1. *Correspondance générale de Chateaubriand*, publiée par L. Thomas, 5 vols (1912), I, 61.
2. R. Naves, *Le Goût de Voltaire* (1938), p. 430.
3. *Lycée*, XIII, 63–4, XV, 34–5.
4. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, 174.
5. 'Examen de plusieurs assertions hasardées par J. F. Laharpe dans la *Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*', *Magasin encyclopédique*, May 1805, III, 1–22.
6. 'Rapport sur le grand prix de littérature', *Lycée* (1825), I, pp. clxxxvii–cxc.
7. 'Discours préliminaire sur la vie de La Harpe, sur ses œuvres, et spécialement sur son cours de littérature', *Lycée* (1825), I, pp. i–clxxxvi.
8. 'Du Lycée de La Harpe; étude critique', *L'Investigateur, journal de l'Institut historique*, 6 (1846), 5–16.
9. B. Eldrich, *J. F. de La Harpe als Kritiker der französischen Literatur im Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV* (Borna-Leipzig, 1910).
10. L. Geiger, 'La Harpe und die deutsche Literatur', *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1882.
11. H. Hoffmann, *Aesthetik und Poetik von J. F. de La Harpe*. Diss., Heidelberg, 1922.
12. 'The first use of *couleur locale* in French literary criticism', *Modern language notes*, 60 (1945), 98–9.
13. *The critical doctrine of J. F. de La Harpe*. Diss., Chicago, 1937.
14. *La Harpe as judge of his contemporaries*. Diss., Ohio State University, 1961.
15. *French tragedy in the time of Louis XV and Voltaire*, 2 vols (Baltimore, 1950) and *French tragedy in the reign of Louis XVI and the early years of the French Revolution* (Baltimore, 1953).
16. *La Harpe als Tragiker* (Leipzig, 1913).
17. *Tragic theory and the eighteenth century French critics* (Chapel Hill, 1967).
18. *Examen du Philoctète de La Harpe* (1813).
19. 'Les trois textes de la *Mélanie* de La Harpe', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 16 (1909), 540–53.
20. 'Two lost plays by La Harpe', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 62 (1958), 151–272.
21. Although P. H. Meyer has looked at the *Histoire de la Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* as an example of reaction in his 'The French Revolution and the legacy of the *philosophes*', *French Review*, 30 (1956/57), 429–34.
22. *Revue des cours et conférences*, 13 (1904), 183–200, 241–9, 289–98, 337–46.
23. *Correspondance inédite de J. F. de La Harpe* (1965).
24. 'La Harpe quarrels with the actors', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 53 (1967), 223–337.
25. In the course of our research we came across references to 151 unpublished letters, both in sales catalogues and elsewhere.
26. P. Bonnefon, 'Une aventure de la jeunesse de La Harpe', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 18 (1911), 354–63.
27. Goncourt, *La Société française pendant le Directoire* (1914), pp. 249–52; L. Préaudeau, 'La Harpe et son bonnet rouge', *Revue hebdomadaire*, 9 (1911), 532–6.
28. G. Peignot, *Recherches historiques, littéraires et bibliographiques sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. de La Harpe* (Dijon, 1820).
29. *Correspondance littéraire*, XII, 248.

### Notes to Chapter I

1. *Mémoires secrets*, 1 December 1763, I, 306.
2. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 July 1777, V, 40; *Chronique scandaleuse, ou mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la génération présente*, par G. Imbert; publiée par O. Uzanne (1879), p. 47.
3. *Les Trois Siècles de la littérature française*, 4 vols (1781), III, 39.
4. 1789, VIII, 316.
5. *Merc.*, 20 February 1790, pp. 110–11.

## Notes to Chapter I, continued

6. A.N.: 0<sup>1</sup>679, n<sup>o</sup>196 (copy of baptism certificate of 21 November 1739 from the Registers of the Parish of Notre Dame du Chardonnet). This was first published by Nauroy in *Le Curieux*, 1 December 1883, i, 52, and reproduced in the *Intermédiaire des Chercheurs*, 28 February 1899, xxix, col. 307–8. Details of this act were first given by the deputy mayor of the former ninth arrondissement, Ledru, in the *Journal des débats*, 23 pluviôse an xi (12 February 1803), p. 3. In addition, Sainte-Beuve asked Ravanal to consult the now largely destroyed Parisian *état civil* and published these and other details concerning La Harpe in his *Causeries du Lundi*, 10 November 1851 (1885), v, 104.  
It is not possible to locate La Harpe's place of birth accurately, as the rue Saint-Victor — now a short line of houses opposite the Ecole Polytechnique — then ran all the way from the Jardin des Plantes to the Place Maubert (J. Hillairet, *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Paris*, 2 vols (1965), ii, 488).
7. E. de La Harpe, *Notice sur la famille de La Harpe* (Lausanne, 1884), pp. 74–5. The La Harpe family writes its name in various ways. The writer signs his name in one word 'Delaharpe', except during the Revolution when he drops the particle.
8. Sainte-Beuve, loc. cit. Were his parents married in the provinces? As far as Paris is concerned, their names do not figure on the lists of donations for the period (Archives de la Seine: série DC6) or in the somewhat incomplete registers of 'insinuations au Châtelet' (A.N.: série Y). Being poor, they quite possibly married without a contract.
9. *Merc.*, 20 February 1790, p. 110. It is not possible to refute or confirm this claim, as all the documents concerning this order are extremely fragmentary. His name is not on the very incomplete list by d'Hozier, *Recueil de tous les membres composant l'ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis*, 2 vols (1817); he is not among those receiving pensions from the order in 1740 (Arsenal: MS., 6117), nor is he mentioned in the series MM in the Archives nationales (Ordres militaires). There is no file on him at the Archives du ministère de la guerre at Vincennes. He was not a member of the 'cent Suisses' (A.N.: series Z<sup>1</sup>R). Monsieur W. Zurbuchen of the State Archives in Geneva has pointed out to me that La Harpe's father was possibly a member of a regular French regiment as artillery units were rare, although not unknown, in Swiss regiments in France.
10. A.N.: 0<sup>1</sup>679, n<sup>o</sup>196.
11. C. B. Petitot, 'Mémoires sur la vie de La Harpe', *Œuvres choisies et posthumes de M. de La Harpe*, 4 vols (1806), i, p.i.
12. Métra and Imbert say that there were three children: 'L'aîné fut celui dont on écrit ici la vie, un autre qui fut précepteur dans une pension, et une fille qui fut mariée à un vitrier' (*Correspondance secrète*, 22 July 1777, v, 40). There is no proof of the existence of a brother, but the reference to the sister is surprisingly accurate. She was married on 31 March 1761 (Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., v, 105), and her husband was indeed a glazier, whose surname was Cretin (*Minutier central des notaires: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup> 1177*).
13. Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., v, 104.
14. *Lycée*, xvi, 850.
15. Léger was himself appointed by the University (C.B. Jourdain, *Histoire de l'Université de Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, 2 vols (1867), ii, 365). A very active spirit of change, he became La Harpe's model for the 'bon curé' in *Mélanie* (*Lycée*, vii, 37; *Verdière*, xi, 417). Documentary evidence of La Harpe's connexion with the Collège d'Harcourt is again lacking, but in a police interrogation in March 1760, he replied, when asked if he had studied there, that he had spent nine years there, 'savoir un an comme externe et huit ans comme pensionnaire' (E. Campardon, 'Interrogatoire subi par La Harpe', *Revue des documents historiques*, 7 (1880), 1).
16. *Merc.*, September 1769, pp. 184–5; *Lycée*, xvi, 393.
17. *Ibid.*, xvi, 153.
18. *Merc.*, September 1769, p. 177.
19. *Journal de Verdun*, September 1753, p. 225.
20. *Ibid.*, September 1755, p. 207.
21. *Ibid.*, September 1756, pp. 206–8.
22. *Ibid.*, October 1757, pp. 297–8.
23. *Moland*, xvii, 184.
24. *Lycée*, xvi, 403, compare *Marmontel*, xii, 35–6, 205–12.
25. *Lycée*, xvi, 393.
26. *Ibid.*, xvi, 391.
27. *Ibid.*, xvi, 388.
28. *Merc.*, September 1769, p. 184.



## Notes to Chapter I, continued

29. *Lycée*, xi, 528.
30. *Ibid.*, xi, 529.
31. *Ibid.*, xi, 530.
32. H. L. Bouquet, *L'Ancien Collège d'Harcourt et le Lycée Saint-Louis* (1891), pp. 370–2.
33. *Merc.*, 4 August 1792, p. 27.
34. Sainte-Beuve, loc. cit. The Archives de l'Assistance publique have unfortunately no Register for before 1791.
35. Sainte-Beuve, for instance, makes much of the fact that La Harpe did not sign his sister's wedding contract (op. cit., v, 105).
36. *Les Prétentions*, 110–12.
37. *Ibid.*, 113–29; *Verdière*, x, 162.
38. *Lycée*, xvi, 147.
39. *Best.*, 844, 848, 874, 891, 901, 906, 955, 963, 991.
40. *J. Pol.*, 25 November 1776, III, 447.
41. *Verdière*, xvi, 348, n.
42. *Lycée*, xv, 487, n.
43. Fréron called him the *bébé* of the literary world (*Année littéraire*, 1760, VIII, 31), and Voltaire said of him that he was 'haut comme Ragotin' (*Best.*, 13034). A police description in 1797 said that he was not even five foot tall (A.N. : F<sup>7</sup> 6311).
44. Mme. Suard, *Essais de mémoires sur Suard* (1881), p. 152.
45. *Année littéraire*, 1776, VI, 262.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Merc.*, 20 October 1792, pp. 83–4.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 73–5.
49. *Ibid.*, 17 and 24 November 1792, pp. 70, 76.
50. *Thomas*, 25 (1918), 139.
51. Petitot, op. cit., p. lii.
52. *Best.*, 11941, 12282.
53. *Verdière*, v, 581, n.
54. *Lycée*, xv, 8.
55. Petitot, op. cit., pp. li–lii.
56. *Ibid.*, p.v.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. v–vi.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Lycée*, xvi, 77–8.
60. *Verdière*, xvi, 348, n.
61. *Lycée*, IX, 245–6, 251.
62. *Espion anglais*, 28 December 1776, IV, 389, n.
63. *Lewis*, VII, 456–7; *Lycée*, xv, 54; *Merc.*, 19 November 1791, pp. 93–4.
64. *Verdière*, x, 244.
65. *Ibid.*, x, 324–8; *Correspondance inédite de Condorcet avec Turgot*, publiée par C. Henry (1883), p. 26.
66. *Verdière*, xi, 432.
67. *Lewis*, v, 373; Mme. de Genlis, *Mémoires inédits sur le dix-huitième siècle et la Révolution française* (1825), I, 294, n.
68. *Verdière*, xi, 316; *Lewis*, VII, 344; Mme. Campan, *Mémoires sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette . . . suivis de souvenirs et anecdotes sur les règnes de Louis XV et de Louis XVI* (1849), p. 385.
69. Mme. Suard, op. cit., p. 150; D. J. Garat, *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de Suard*, 2 vols (1829), I, 344.
70. *Mémoires secrets*, 30 October 1770, XIX, 272; *Verdière*, x, 214.
71. *J. Pol.*, 25 November 1776, III, 447. La Harpe dates this as 1754, saying that 'cette ode était telle qu'on peut l'attendre d'un écolier qui sort de troisième', but then rules this date out by telling us that the subject of the poem was Damiens' pen-knife attack on Louis XV in 1757.
72. *Ibid.*, III, 447–9; *Verdière*, x, 293–4; *Année littéraire*, 1776, VI, 262–5.
73. *Ibid.*, VI, 263.
74. Campardon, op. cit., p. 1.
75. *Mélanges*, p. 41.
76. (Amsterdam, 1758). This work was first attributed to La Harpe by L. M. S. Fréron (*Année littéraire*, 1776, VI, 88–9). He said that from 1758 to 1760 the work was thought

## Notes to Chapter I, continued

to have been written by a certain Lombard, aide-de-camp to the Comte de Saint-Germain, and a noted swordsman whom no one dared challenge. In 1760, however, Lombard was invited to dinner by Dorat and Dudoey de Gastels. Having dined well, he asked who was the amiable man with whom he had conversed during the meal and, on learning that it was Elie Fréron, he asked his forgiveness and declared that he was not the author of the brochure; that 'ce chef-d'œuvre d'urbanité est le coup d'essai de monsieur de La Harpe'.

This production forms part of the *cacouacs* quarrel, started by the Abbé de Saint-Cyr with his 'Avis utile sur les Cacouacs', *Merc.*, October 1757, I, 15–19. The word *aléthophile* was coined by J. N. Moreau in his *Nouveau Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire des Cacouacs* (Amsterdam, 1757) to describe the conquerors of the Cacouacs — in whom we are supposed to see the *philosophes* — who used whistles to disarm their enemies. *L'Aléthophile, ou l'ami de la vérité* is a reply to the work by Moreau, to Palissot for his *Petites Lettres sur de grands philosophes* (1757), and to Fréron for his review of Palissot's book (*Année littéraire*, 1757, VIII, 238–62).

The tone and the content of *L'Aléthophile* resemble fairly closely those of the *Réflexions utiles* which La Harpe published in 1764 with *Timoléon*. In these *Réflexions* he proclaimed:

'Tandis qu'un petit nombre d'écrivains illustres honore et éclaire la nation, un bien plus grand nombre d'écrivains obscurs, possédés de la manie d'être littérateurs sans titre et sans études, ont fait une espèce deligie pour se venger du public, qui les oublie, et des véritables gens de lettres qui ne les connaissent pas . . .' (*Verdière*, I, 93).

In the same way, the author of *L'Aléthophile* decries those who 'blâment tout ce qu'ils ne sauraient faire, qui déprécient tout ce qu'ils ne sauraient atteindre, qui attaquent les grandes réputations pour s'en faire une, et qui pensent que quelques injures grossièrement aiguës, pourront rabaisser un corps composé de tout ce qu'il y a de plus respectable dans la République des Lettres . . .' (pp. 6–7).

The writer defends the *Encyclopédistes* and especially Diderot, whom La Harpe frequently visited at this time. Voltaire is also defended, and Fréron is referred to as *Zoïle*, a term often used by La Harpe when attacking Fréron in his poetry. All one can say, looking at the text, is that it is written in a dogmatic tone common in La Harpe's criticism and that it fits in with both his literary tenets and his social ambition to be accepted by the *philosophes*.

77. *Héroïdes nouvelles, précédées d'un essai sur l'héroïde en général* (Amsterdam, 1759), containing *Montézume à Cortez* and *Elisabeth de France à Don Carlos*.
78. *Merc.*, November 1759, pp. 96–106 (article by Marmontel); *Journal encyclopédique*, 1759, VIII, 118–28.
79. All the documents concerning this affair are in the Arsenal: MS. 12.070, ff. 28–75. They have been used by Campardon and Bonnefon, op. cit., and by F. Ravaisson, *Archives de la Bastille* (1881), XII, 454–7.
80. *Mémoires secrets*, 1 December 1763, I, 306.
81. Bonnefon, op. cit., p. 357.
82. The evidence of the calligraphy experts and a test sheet of Lafitte's handwriting are in the Arsenal: MS. 12.070, ff. 32, 34. La Harpe denied any close friendship with Lafitte, considering their difference in age. However, he was to write to the boy's father: 'vous qui m'ayant fait l'honneur de me recevoir chez vous pendant un an' (Bonnefon, op. cit., p. 358). Had he been the family's lodger?
83. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
84. When he was finally arrested in a room on the third floor of a house belonging to a joiner in the rue d'Enfer he had been there only for a day.
85. Bonnefon, op. cit., pp. 357–8.
86. The seventh and eighth verses, which are, surprisingly, the most obscene.
87. In his interrogation, La Harpe insisted that all he had ever given Lafitte to copy were his *héroïdes* for the reviewer in the *Journal encyclopédique* of December 1759 (*supra.*, n. 78).
88. *Mélanges*, pp. 30–3.
89. Bonnefon, op. cit., p. 361. She sent it on to Sartine with a covering letter (Arsenal: MS. 12.070, ff. 67–8).
90. Arsenal: MS. 12.070, f. 61.
91. Bonnefon, op. cit., p. 362.
92. Arsenal: MS. 12.070, ff. 71–2.
93. Warrant for his release (Arsenal: MS. 12.070, ff. 73–4).

## Notes to Chapter I, continued

94. *Verdière*, I, 91; compare *Mémoires secrets*, 30 January 1765, II, 148.
95. *Merc.*, 20 February 1790, p. 103.
96. Arsenal : MS. 12.070, f. 29.
97. *Ibid.*, f. 35. Bonnefon, who condemns La Harpe out of hand, only printed six of the eleven stanzas on the grounds that the rest were too obscene for publication. He does not attempt to study the names mentioned in the verse as a means to weighing-up La Harpe's guilt or innocence. The whole poem is given without commentary by Ravaisson, op. cit., pp. 454–5.
98. Nicolas Louvel was, during La Harpe's schooldays, in charge of scholarships. After Asselin's retirement, he was headmaster from 1762 to 1780 (Bouquet, op. cit., pp. 392, 399).
99. Michel Asselin de Vaulegeard — no relation of the headmaster — taught classics (*ibid.*, p. 384).
100. J. B. Gardin-Dumesnil was a teacher of rhetoric and eloquence (*ibid.*).
101. In his interrogation, La Harpe admitted that he had had 'quelques démêlés avec mm. Daunay et Lefranc, maîtres de chambres particulières dudit Collège, et le sr. Allais, ancien maître de chambre dudit collège et actuellement en Normandie.'
102. Puzzled by this name, the police thought that it was a reference to Guillaume Dagoumer, who was headmaster from 1713 to 1730 and who died on 15 April 1745, before La Harpe had any connexion with the school (Bouquet, op. cit., 348–69). Indeed, according to Beuchot, he was renowned for his love of the bottle (*Biographie universelle*, x, 13). However, the reference is probably to Dagomer, who was La Harpe's form master in *troisième* (*Verdière*, I, 92).
103. *Ibid.*
104. François Brenet, who was dead by 1760 (A.N. : H<sup>3</sup>2819). Had the verse been circulating for some time?
105. Either Jean-François or Thomas Viel (Bouquet, op. cit., p. 366). They were both dead by 1760.
106. For lines written by La Harpe at about this time and similar in manner if not in form, see his 'Lettre à m\*\*\*, en prose et en vers' (*Mélanges*, pp. 55–7). This is presented as 'la première pièce de l'auteur' (*ibid.*, p. 55, n.). It is undoubtedly through confusion that a work entitled *Épîtres en vers et en prose sur l'Ennui* (1757) has been named as his 'première pièce imprimée' (*Quérard I*, IV, 440). On at least three occasions, La Harpe himself has stated that the first works that he ever published were his *héroïdes* (*Mélanges*, p. 67, n.; *J. Pol.*, 25 November 1776, III, 447; *Merc.*, 15 August 1778, p. 155).
107. *Mélanges*, p. 30.

## Notes to Chapter II

1. *L'Homme de lettres, épître à M.\*\*\** ([1760]).
2. Sérieys, *La Harpe peint par lui-même* (1817), p. 4.
3. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 July 1777, v, 41.
4. (Berne, 1761.)
5. *Année littéraire*, 1776, IV, 273–8.
6. *J. Pol.*, 25 November 1776, III, 444–6.
7. *Best.*, 15404.
8. *Best.*, 8984.
9. *Les Choses utiles et agréables* (Berlin, 1770), II, 350–402; *L'Évangile du jour* (Londres, 1770), VIII, 165–73. See Bengesco, II, 92–6. The work is quite possibly by Voltaire himself, and he did later defend La Harpe against this accusation. In 1770, he said that the *Anecdotes* had been sent to him by Thieriot (*Best.*, 15505, 15546, 15475). In 1777, on d'Alembert's request, he wrote an open letter in which he said that he had only attributed the work to La Harpe because Thieriot had insisted that the latter was widely held to be the author (*Best.*, app. 378). This did not altogether satisfy La Harpe who would have preferred a more positive defence (*Best.*, 19443), but Voltaire's final word on the matter was merely to insist that the bad style of the work naturally excluded La Harpe (*Best.*, 19473).
10. See Part 2, chapter VIII.
11. *Caton à César, et Annibal à Flaminius. Héroïdes. Par l'auteur de Montézume* (1760).

## Notes to Chapter II, continued

12. *Ode à son altesse sérénissime mgr. le prince de Condé* (1762), *Le Philosophe des Alpes, ode qui a concouru pour le prix de l'Académie française en 1762* (1762), which also contained another ode called *La Gloire* (*Mélanges*, pp. 91–104).
13. *Brenner*, 7731.
14. *Verdière*, II, 619.
15. *Thomas*, 25 (1918), 134.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
17. *Correspondance littéraire*, v, 416.
18. *Merc.*, January 1764, I, 154.
19. *Mémoires secrets*, 4 December 1763, I, 357. The young man found this experience somewhat unnerving: 'J'eus l'honneur de lui être présenté lors de mon premier ouvrage qui fut joué devant lui avec beaucoup de succès, et ce fut lui-même qui voulut en voir l'auteur. — Et il ne vous dit rien? — Non: il me regarda beaucoup, et se contenta de dire à ceux qui étaient autour de lui, que j'étais bien jeune' (*Merc.*, 2 June 1792, p. 30). It was said that Mlle. Clairon was annoyed at the success of Mlle. Dumesnil in the role of Marguerite and took a particular delight in spreading stories about La Harpe (*Mémoires secrets*, 9 November 1763, I, 344).
20. He sold the printing rights to N. B. Duchesne for 1,500 *livres* on 11 November 1763 (*Revue des Autographes*, December 1905, p. 9, n° 162). For the first fifteen performances of the play, La Harpe was paid 2,142 *livres* 17 *sols* 2 *deniers* on 19 December 1763, and the additional performance of 28 December brought him a further 139 *livres* 6 *sols* 1½ *deniers* on 20 February 1764 (*Archives de la Comédie française*). He received a fairly steady income from this play in the following years:
  - For five performances in 1764: 544 *livres* 11 *sols* 8 *deniers* (paid on 20 January 1765);
  - For four performances for the *début* of Augé in the spring of 1768: 562 *livres* 6 *sols* 8 *deniers* (paid on 20 April 1768);
  - For three performances in October 1768: 618 *livres* 13 *sols* 9 *deniers* (paid on 28 October 1768);
  - For three performances for the *début* of Dalainville in 1769: 200 *livres* 11 *sols* 8 *deniers* (paid on 29 October 1769);
  - For one performance for the *début* of La Tour in 1771: 201 *livres* 16 *sols* 8 *deniers* (paid on 20 March 1771);
  - For one performance in July 1773: 145 *livres* 13 *sols* 4 *deniers* (paid on 15 July 1773);
  - For two performances for the *début* of Larive in June 1775: 260 *livres* 6 *sols* 8 *deniers* (paid on 13 September 1775);
  - For one performance on 13 January 1779: 90 *livres* 14 *sols* 5 *deniers* (undated receipt);
  - For performances on 12 and 17 April 1779; 339 *livres* 14 *sols* 2 *deniers* (undated receipt).
 He finally abandoned his rights in the work on 24 May 1783 when he was paid 793 *livres* 1 *sol* 10 *deniers* for three performances in 1782 (*Todd I*, pp. 235, 280–2).
22. *Verdière*, I, 15.
23. *Best.*, 10672, 11053.
24. *Best.*, 11126.
25. *Petitot*, op. cit., pp. x–xi. He still continued to meet Diderot in society (*Verdière*, x, 48; *Lycée*, xvi, 77–8, n.).
26. *Verdière*, xi, 265.
27. *Mémoires secrets*, 19 December 1763, xvi, 192.
28. *Année littéraire*, 1763, viii, 73–126.
29. 'Bon Dieu, que cet auteur est triste en sa gaîté, &c.'. This epigram was, at one time, attributed to Voltaire (*Mémoires secrets*, 8, 17 December 1767, III, 273–4, 270–1 [*sic*]) and Dorat complained to him about it (*Best.*, 12890). Voltaire denied any knowledge of the work, but hinted that La Harpe was the author by calling on Dorat not to be too harsh on the young man (*Best.*, 13168). La Harpe first admitted authorship in 1801 (*Verdière*, x, 408, n.).
 

Dorat was to remain linked with Fréron and quarrelled with most of the *philosophes*, while still preserving a certain naivety. He wrote to Suard on 21 December 1768 and poured out his resentment against the *philosophes*, and in particular against La Harpe: 'Qu'ai-je fait à m. de La Harpe que de l'avoir prôné, accueilli, aimé comme un frère et qui pour cela a eu le bon procédé de faire contre moi des libelles et des épigrammes?' (letter published by Bonnefon, *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, 6 (1899), 440–2).
30. A. de Tilly, 'Souvenirs', *Mémoires du duc de Lauzun et du comte de Tilly* (1862), p. 239.

## Notes to Chapter II, continued

31. *Brenner*, 7745.
32. *Correspondance littéraire*, vi, 49; C. Collé, *Journal et mémoires*, édités par H. Bonhomme, 3 vols (1868), II, 369–70.
33. It was as a financial necessity that La Harpe agreed to print the play (*Verdière*, II, 619). He sold the rights to Duchesne on 11 December 1764 (*Revue des Autographes*, June 1907, p. 8, n° 123). The four performances of the play brought La Harpe 583 livres 15 sols, paid on 31 December 1764 (*Archives de la Comédie française*).  
Collé suggested that it was withdrawn to make way for Belloy's *Le Siège de Calais* (*Brenner*, 3582), which was first performed on 13 February 1765. He also claimed that *Timoléon* should have had at least six performances since 'elle n'était tombée dans les règles qu'une seule fois, et encore à vingt francs près' (op. cit., II, 386).
34. *Sainte-Beuve*, op. cit., v, 126; *Le Curieux*, I, 52. The café appears to have stood on the corner of the rue de Condé and the rue des Quatre-Vents. Marie-Marthe Monmayeux was one of the seven children of Ambroise Monmayeux and his wife, Catherine Dubois. There were three sisters, Marie-Marthe, Marie-Hélène, and Marie-Louise, and four brothers, Antoine, Claude, Eutrope and Ambroise-Antoine. The profession of La Harpe's father-in-law was a cause for merriment in literary circles, but if the family was humble, it was by no means poor. The family fortune was valued at 37,610 livres after the children had been set up in marriage or in business. Apart from giving a dowry to Marie-Marthe, Ambroise Monmayeux endowed Antoine and Claude with 4,000 livres each. He had property in the then rural area of Petit Gentilly (now built on, between the rue de Croulebarbe and the Place d'Italie), some fields and an ice-pit, as well as two cafés, one called *Le Grand Turc* and the other, *Le Cheval blanc* (*Minutier central: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>* 1180).  
Under the terms of a contract agreed on in the afternoon of 21 November 1764, Ambroise Monmayeux and his wife gave the couple 1,000 livres and settled another 3,000 livres on Marie-Marthe as an annuity of 150 livres, paid off by Ambroise Monmayeux on 14 July 1775. La Harpe himself contributed 2,000 livres as an annual income of 100 livres for his wife and intended to provide for the children of the marriage (*Minutier central: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>* 1018).
35. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 July 1777, v, 42. Two of Marie-Marthe's brothers, Antoine and Claude, followed their father's profession. Eutrope was a travelling showman and had lost touch with his family. He was in Moulins in 1782. Ambroise-Antoine seems to have been the problem-child of the family. He was penniless when found dead in a furnished room on 24 April 1779. Bachaumont claimed that La Harpe 'a épousé la fille du café ou il avait un logement' (*Mémoires secrets*, 23 November 1764, II, 123), but his address is given in the marriage contract as the rue Gilles Cœur (Gît-le-Cœur).
36. *Correspondance littéraire*, vi, 138. She gave La Harpe two children, who did not live long (*Sainte-Beuve*, loc. cit.; see *Best.*, 13168).
37. *Les Etudes littéraires et poétiques d'un vieillard*, 6 vols (1827), III, 217.
38. See *Mémoires secrets*, 31 December 1764, II, 155–7.
39. *Merc.*, 23 January 1790, pp. 156–7, n.; compare *Best.*, 11569.
40. *Mélanges littéraires, ou Epîtres et Pièces philosophiques* (1765).
41. 'Réflexions sur Lucaïn', *Mélanges*, pp. 105–25.
42. *Brenner*, 7740. Voltaire first mentioned that La Harpe was in Ferney on 7 June 1765 (*Best.*, 11791). See *Mémoires secrets*, 19 June 1765, II, 203.
43. *Best.*, 11807, 11938. The play was, however, ready by 25 July (*Mémoires de Lekain*, 2<sup>e</sup> édition (1825), pp. 338–9).
44. 'Vers récités sur le théâtre de Ferney, le mardi 9 juillet 1765, avant la représentation d'Alzire' (*Verdière*, III, 428–9).
45. *Lekain*, loc. cit.
46. *Ibid.*
47. A. Tougard, *Documents concernant l'histoire littéraire du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rouen, 1912), II, 114–18; compare *Best.*, 11972, 12004.
48. (Paris, 1765.)
49. *Correspondance littéraire*, vi, 356; *Mémoires secrets*, 15 August 1765, II, 221–2.
50. *Ibid.*; *Merc.*, September 1765, pp. 175–6.
51. *Sabatier de Castres*, op. cit., III, 41.
52. *Brenner*, 7733.
53. *Lewis*, VII, 286.
54. *Verdière*, II, 618.

## Notes to Chapter II, continued

55. *Ibid.*, II, 619–20.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Registres*.
58. (Paris, 1766.)
59. *Pharamond* brought La Harpe 331 livres 12 sols 3 deniers, paid on 31 August 1765 (*Archives de la Comédie française*). He received 277 livres 14 sols 6 deniers on 20 April 1768 for *Gustave* (*Todd 2*, p. 165).
60. *Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup> 1018.
61. *Best.*, 12337.
62. *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, 217.
63. *Best.*, 12572, 12574.
64. *Best.*, 12756.
65. *Best.*, 12867.
66. *Best.*, 12823, 12856, 12950, 12951, 12969.
67. *Best.*, 13324.
68. *Best.*, 13338. Little is known about this first play, other than the fact that it was called *Selima* (*Revue des Autographes*, April 1889, p. 6, February 1893, p. 11).
69. *Brenner*, 7728.
70. *Best.*, 13570.
71. *Best.*, 13367.
72. *Best.*, 13101.
73. *Best.*, 12827, 12875.
74. (Paris, 1767.) An anonymous gift for the prize of 600 livres was made in May 1766 (*Merc.*, April 1767, I, 88). The contest was set up on 3 July 1766: ‘Il consiste à exposer les avantages de la paix, à inspirer de l’horreur pour les ravages de la guerre, et à inviter toutes les nations à se réunir pour assurer la tranquillité générale’ (*Registres*). It closed on 1 December 1766, and the prize was to have been allocated on 2 January 1767. It was finally awarded on 2 December, and La Harpe was crowned in his absence on 22 January. The runner-up was G. H. Gaillard.
75. *Longchamp-Wagnière*, I, 258; see *Best.*, 13150, 13159, 13160.
76. ‘Réponse d’un solitaire de la Trappe à la lettre de l’abbé de Rancé’ (*Verdière*, III, 409–15 (preface by Voltaire, *ibid.*, III, 405–8)).
77. *Best.*, 13346.
78. (Paris, 1767.) La Harpe was working on this in June 1767 (*Best.*, 13346), and the prize was awarded on 20 July (*Best.*, 13402).
79. *Best.*, 13051, 13127. La Harpe was made a member of the Académie de Rouen in March 1767 (*Best.*, 13188).
80. *Verdière*, III, 398–404.
81. *Ibid.*, V, 33–54.
82. *Best.*, 13508.
83. *Todd 1*, p. 227. La Harpe also came to know the family of the future writer, Constant, who was born in October 1767 (*Verdière*, V, 515, n.).
84. *Merc.*, 20 February 1790, pp. 110–11. This was Louis-Philippe Samuel La Harpe (E. de La Harpe, *op. cit.*, p. 78, n.).
85. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 35.
86. *Best.*, 13155. It was even suggested that Voltaire wanted the La Harpes to take up acting professionally (*Correspondance littéraire*, VII, 307).
87. He played Athamare in *Les Scythes* and Vendôme in *Adélaïde du Guesclin* (*Best.*, 13007, 13204, 13263, 13308).
88. *Best.*, 13007.
89. *Best.*, 13008.
90. *Best.*, 13248.
91. *Lycée*, XIII, 163–5, n.
92. M. P. G. de Chabanon, *Tableau de quelques circonstances de ma vie* (1795), p. 145.
93. C. Pougens, *Lettres philosophiques à mme.* \*\*\* (1826), pp. 36–7.
94. *Best.*, 13299.
95. See *Verdière*, III, 497–9, x, 229–30.
96. According to Suard, the replies were in fact written by her husband! (*Suard 1*, pp. 206–7).
97. *Best.*, 13575, 13611, 13861.
98. For a supposed reason, see *Todd 1*, p. 227.

## Notes to Chapter II, continued

99. 'Je félicite m. de La Harpe de tous ses succès, il en est si occupé qu'il n'a pas daigné m'écrire un mot depuis qu'il est parti de Ferney' (*Best.*, 13663). What successes?
100. *Best.*, 13772.
101. *Mémoires secrets*, 12 May 1768, xviii, 370; Peignot, op. cit., pp. 34, 37. There is no mention of this appointment in either Voltaire's or La Harpe's correspondence, and documentary proof is lacking. The list of official appointments for 1767 does not name La Harpe, and that for 1768 does not give secretaries (A.N. : V<sup>1</sup>439, 444). The *Almanach royal* for both these years names Boutin's official secretary as Dubos. Moreover, during his stay in Paris, La Harpe was living in the rue du Batoir (*Best.*, 13733), which is either the rue de Quatrefages or the rue Serpente, and in either case far from Boutin's official office in the rue Vivienne. There is perhaps confusion with La Harpe's dealings with another administrator, Boullongne, whom he saw in order to get a pension (*Best.*, 12988).
102. *Best.*, 13841.
103. *Best.*, 13850, 13858; *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 48–50, 53, 55.
104. La Harpe himself admitted that Voltaire did not want this part of the poem published: 'J'étais à Ferney quand Voltaire fit ce malheureux poème de *La Guerre de Genève*. Il en fit lecture chez lui, dans un cercle assez nombreux. On rit et l'on applaudit à quelques détails, ou, malgré la faiblesse de l'ensemble, on retrouvait la verve et la gaieté de l'auteur, surtout dans le premier chant. Mais quand ce vint au second, où sont toutes les ordures contre Rousseau, il régna dans l'assemblée un silence de consternation qui n'échappa nullement à l'auteur, et lui donna même une humeur qui dura toute la journée. La leçon pourtant ne fut pas inutile; car il prit le parti de ne plus lire ce second chant à personne, quoiqu'il lût très souvent et très volontiers le premier' (*Merc.*, 17 November 1792, p. 68).
105. *Mémoires secrets*, 7 December 1767, iii, 275.
106. *Best.*, 13861, 13910.
107. *Best.*, 13861.
108. *Ibid.* La Harpe's guilt in so far as the distribution of the second canto of this poem is concerned is confirmed by a letter he wrote to Choiseul (J. Vercruyse, 'La Harpe et *La Gazette d'Utrecht*'; une lettre inédite à Choiseul', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 79 (1971), 196–7).
109. *Best.*, 14813.
110. *Best.*, 13864, 13910.
111. *Best.*, 13861, compare *Best.*, 13863, 13864, 13871, 13873.
112. *Best.*, 13892, 13898.
113. *Best.*, 13887; *Longchamp-Wagnière*, i, 70.
114. I. O. Wade, 'The search for a new Voltaire', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 48 (July 1958), 31–4; *Best.*, 13965, 14832; *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 53. To protect her, Voltaire will pretend that he sent her to Paris to discuss the possible selling of Ferney (*Best.*, 13899, 13902). Dr Besterman suggests quite plausibly that she may have seduced La Harpe into stealing the manuscripts ('Le vrai Voltaire par ses lettres', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 10 (1959), 39–40).
115. And complaining that Voltaire no longer wanted to help La Harpe financially (*Best.*, 13910). One of the latter's reasons for taking the manuscripts may have been that he despaired of the eventual success of moves that Voltaire was making to get him out of his financial difficulties.
116. *Merc.*, April 1768, ii, 148–9.
117. *Best.*, 13968.
118. *Best.*, 13941.
119. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 September 1778, vii, 25–7.
120. *Best.*, 13960, 14020.
121. *Todd 1*, pp. 227–31; R. L. Hawkins, 'Unpublished French letters of the eighteenth century', *Romanic Review*, 21 (1930), 8–9.
122. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 35.

## Notes to Chapter III

1. *Best.*, 14005, 14101.
2. *Longchamp-Wagnière*, i, 272–3. This quick return to favour made some believe that the

## Notes to Chapter III, continued

whole affair was a manoeuvre by Voltaire, and La Harpe was said to have tried to make his friends believe this (*Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 48–50).

3. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 September 1778, vii, 26; *Best.*, 13858. Throughout 1767, Voltaire had tried to get part of a royal pension in his name transferred to that of La Harpe (*Best.*, 12956, 12957, 13134, 13450, 13457, 13546).
4. There is no evidence of La Harpe's having been a contributor to this paper before 1768. Because Voltaire wrote to Marmontel on 12 February 1767: '[La Harpe] a paru vous combattre un peu au sujet de Lucaïn', successive editors of the letter have accepted Beuchot's statement that 'La Harpe avait donné quatre articles sur la traduction, par Marmontel, de la *Pharsale* de Lucaïn' (*Moland*, xlv, 111; *Best.*, 13051). In fact, the articles in question — *Merc.*, July 1766, i, 135–45, ii, 91–105, August 1766, pp. 102–18, November 1766, pp. 94–101 — contain nothing but praise, and Voltaire's reference is pretty obviously to La Harpe's 'Réflexions sur Lucaïn' (*Mélanges*, pp. 105–25).

At the same time, details on when and how La Harpe started work for the *Mercur* are hard to come by. He himself stated merely that he began working there after his return from Ferney in 1768 (*J. Pol.*, 25 November 1776, iii, 451–2). It is natural to suppose that he was taken on when the privilege passed from La Place to Lacombe in June 1768. However, although the transfer was completed by 1 July, on 22 July, Voltaire was still asking Lacombe whether La Harpe had begun work (*Best.*, 14192).

Moreover, although it had been rumoured that Lacombe intended to reinstate Marmontel as editor-in-chief and main author of the paper (*Mémoires secrets*, 12 January 1768, iii, 282), when it appeared, the *avertissement* (June and July 1768) proclaimed that it was to be 'principalement l'ouvrage en général des amateurs de lettres et de ceux qui les cultivent, sans être l'ouvrage d'aucun en particulier'. La Harpe was, therefore, only one of several editors and occasional contributors working under Lacombe. We have found at least one unsigned article by Chamfort (*Merc.*, May 1769, pp. 68–85, see *ibid.*, May 1771, p. 122). La Harpe himself said that all articles of a scientific nature were written either by Lacombe or by his brother.

The exact extent of La Harpe's contribution during this first period of association with the journal from 1768 to 1776 is extremely difficult to define. He first published verse there in September 1768, but the earliest positively identifiable article is not found until March 1769. From 1771 on, he decided to sign all his articles 'comme on lui en attribué qui ne sont pas de lui' (*Merc.*, January 1771, ii, 124). We have found only three later articles for this period that are definitely by La Harpe and which are not signed, although on one other occasion he only acknowledged an article in a later issue.

It remains tempting to attribute many other articles to La Harpe, especially when they show a rigorous respect for Voltairian tradition, or deal with themes dear to La Harpe. He appears to have written, for instance, most of the articles on meetings of the Académie française. In the same way, although he claimed not to have criticized Linguet before July 1769 (*Verdière*, xiv, 60), a reader of the *Mercur* complained of the change in attitude towards Linguet from the moment Lacombe became the paper's proprietor (*Merc.*, August 1769, p. 141). In addition, the *Mémoires secrets*, 19 November 1769, v, 12, claimed that La Harpe did theatre reviews, and he himself said that Belloy had thanked him for praise in the *Mercur* of *Le Siège de Calais*, 'dans le temps de la reprise de la pièce' (*Pissot*, vi, 507). Yet, it is clearly dangerous to attribute unsigned articles to La Harpe without proper confirmation from reliable contemporary sources. An example of the folly of doing so can be seen in Berriat de Saint-Prix's *Remarques et recherches diverses sur Massillon, d'Alembert et La Harpe* (1811), where an attempt is made to show La Harpe as inconsistent by comparing comments on d'Alembert from his literary correspondence with others from unsigned articles.

We have not been able to confirm the claim made in the *Correspondance littéraire*, x, 374, that Suard and La Harpe shared the 'direction suprême' of Panckoucke's *Gazette et l'Avant-Coureur de la littérature*, which ran for a few months in 1774. Although the paper contains poems by La Harpe, it is not possible to say whether he wrote any of the articles.

5. He later had an annual pension of 3,000 livres on the paper (*Minutier central: Etude LXXVI<sup>xx</sup>514*).
6. L. P. de Ségur, *Mémoires, souvenirs et anecdotes . . .*, 2 vols (1859), i, 38.
7. *Œuvres de Saint-Auge*, 11 vols (1823), i, 5.
8. *Ibid.*



## Notes to Chapter III, continued

9. *Verdière*, xiv, 200–16.
10. *Correspondance secrète*, 21 October 1775, 27 June 1778, ii, 208–9, vi, 295.
11. *Merc.*, February 1774, pp. 52–84.
12. *Correspondance littéraire*, x, 370–1; *Mémoires secrets*, 2 March 1774, xxvii, 202.
13. J. P. Brissot de Warville, *Mémoires* (1877), pp. 42–3. An interesting glimpse of La Harpe's unconscious arrogance is given by Doigny du Ponceau, who, some years later, went to see him and asked for his advice on a new play. La Harpe replied: 'Votre pièce est assez bien écrite, mais le sujet n'est nullement propre au théâtre; s'il l'était, Voltaire, ou moi, nous nous en serions emparés' (*Marie Stuart, reine d'Ecosse, tragédie en cinq actes* (1820), p.v.). See Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols (1881), iii, 172, 398.
14. J. N. Bouilly, *Les Encouragements de la jeunesse* (1830), i, 152.
15. Mme. de Genlis, *Les Veillées du château*, 3 vols (1784), iii, 7–8; compare her *Mémoires inédits sur le dix-huitième siècle et sur la Révolution française*, 10 vols (1825), iii, 116–17.
16. Mme. Suard, op. cit., pp. 151–2.
17. Garat, op. cit., i, 345.
18. Mme. Suard, op. cit., p. 150; Garat, op. cit., i, 344.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Espion anglais*, 11 March 1776, iii, 47; *Correspondance secrète*, 22 September 1778, vii, 24.
21. *Best.*, 16585.
22. *Best.*, 16306.
23. *Best.*, 17443.
24. *Best.*, 15245; *Mémoires secrets*, 14 January 1783, xxii, 36.
25. *Merc.*, 6 March 1790, pp. 28–31, 9 April 1791, p. 85, 23 June 1792, p. 90.
26. *Ibid.*, 25 June 1791, p. 139.
27. Condorcet, op. cit., pp. 258–9.
28. *Lycée*, xii, 363.
29. 'Correspondance inédite de Bourlet de Vauxcelles avec Fontanes, publiée par H. Bonhomme', *Revue Britannique*, September 1877, p. 188; *J. Pol.*, 15 October 1776, iii, 260–1, 5 June 1777, ii, 180–3; Mme. de Genlis, op. cit., iii, 120, n.
30. *Best.*, 19079; *Verdière*, x, 417, n.
31. Garat, op. cit., i, 353–4.
32. Ségur, op. cit., i, 98.
33. *Verdière*, x, 71–3, xii, 107.
34. *Ibid.*, x, 66–8.
35. *Lycée*, xi, 588, n. 1.
36. *Correspondance littéraire*, x, 39.
37. *Mémoires secrets*, 8 October 1772, vi, 198.
38. Garat, op. cit., i, 351–2.
39. Mme. Suard, op. cit., p. 154.
40. Mme. de Genlis, op. cit., i, 294, n.
41. Petitot, op. cit., p.v.
42. *A mes amis au retour de la campagne*, 1–4.
43. *Lycée*, xii, 349.
44. *Ibid.*, viii, 218; compare *Verdière*, v, 167.
45. Since lost. Perhaps reworked into later writings.
46. *Mémoires secrets*, 17 August 1768, iv, 86.
47. *Best.*, 14231.
48. *Correspondance de Diderot*, édition établie, annotée et préfacée par Georges Roth (1955), viii, 152–3.
49. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 September 1778, vii, 22–3.
50. (Paris, 1769.) The entries for the contest had to be sent to the Académie de La Rochelle before 15 October 1768 (*Merc.*, July 1767, i, 172–3). The prize was awarded to Gaillard on 28 December.
51. *Merc.*, January 1769, ii, 141–4.
52. *Les Douze Césars, traduits du Latin de Suétone, avec des notes et des réflexions* (1770).
53. *Best.*, 14624.
54. *Merc.*, September 1769, p. 148.
55. *Brenner*, 7735. See *Vers à la Fontaine de Meudon*, 91.
56. *Best.*, 14851, 14886, 14899, 14928.
57. *Verdière*, v, 57–67.

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58. *Journal encyclopédique*, 1 June 1769, iv, 249–55; *Merc.*, July 1769, i, 5–15, &c.
59. *Verdière*, x, 137. Mme. Du Deffand had heard it by 4 February (*Best.*, 15146, app. 54).
60. *Affiches de Province*, 21 March 1770, p. 48.
61. *Lycée*, xiv, 60, n.
62. *J. Paris*, 18 May 1792, suppl. n° 71 (letter from Jean Devaines); *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 470; *Mémoires secrets*, 20 February 1770, v, 67–8.
63. *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 470. La Harpe sold the printing rights to Mme vve N. B. Duchesne on 21 March 1770 ('Acte de cession' which passed at the sale of the collection of P. Capelle, organized by Laverdet on 6 June 1849, p. 81, n° 626 (2) and the Charavay sale of 11 February 1856, p. 3, n° 4). The first edition, bearing the imprint of H. J. J. van Harrewelt (Amsterdam, 1770), had appeared by 27 February (*Best.*, 15191).
64. *J. Paris*, 18 May 1792, suppl. n° 71 (letter from J. Devaines).
65. *Merc.*, June 1770, p. 148.
66. Voltaire hinted that La Harpe should be employed for this supplement in January 1770 (*Best.*, 15123), but the latter abandoned the idea because of other commitments, and because he felt unable to work under Marmontel whose views on literature were not always his own (*Verdière*, x, 173). He published an article that he had prepared for this supplement — *Du mot amour, dans ses différentes acceptions* — in the *Mercure*, November 1770, pp. 135–45. Interestingly enough, his name is still found written on to an agreement drawn up by Panckoucke in 1777 for a new edition of the *Encyclopédie* (J. Lough, *Essays on the Encyclopédie* (1968), p. 109).
67. Condorcet, op. cit., pp. 27–8.
68. *Brenner*, 7729.
69. Condorcet, op. cit., pp. 26, 28–9.
70. *Brenner*, 7741; see *Merc.*, January 1771, ii, 147.
71. Letter from Dubois-Fontanelle to J. D. Antoine, 12 September 1771 (B.N. : n.a.fr. 3035, ff. 3–4).
72. Collé, op. cit., iii, 280.
73. Are these the lines given in the *Correspondance secrète*, 12 July 1784, xvi, 323–5?
74. *Best.*, 16634, 16667.
75. Collé, op. cit., iii, 283.
76. *Best.*, 15793.
77. (Paris, 1771.)
78. (Paris, 1771.)
79. After the crowning on 25 August 1771, the archbishops of Paris and Rheims went to Versailles to demand that the work be suppressed (*Best.*, 16348), and their wish was fulfilled by an *Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat du Roi, du 21 septembre 1771. Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'Etat* [signed: Phelypeaux] (A.N. : AD\* 998, f. 60), published towards the end of October (*Affiches de Province*, 30 October 1771, p. 175).
80. Letter from Turgot to J. Devaines, published by Bonnefon, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 8 (1901), 587–8.
81. *Mémoires secrets*, 1 October 1771, vi, 1–5. The three theologians are named as Le Fèvre, Couture and Agnette.
82. *Ibid.*, 19 October 1771, vi, 10.
83. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1771, vi, 18.
84. *Best.*, 16511, 16522.
85. Letter from Dubois-Fontanelle to J. D. Antoine, 17 February 1772 (B.N. : n.a.fr. 3035, ff. 6–7).
86. See *Verdière*, iii, 466–7, 475–6, 481–3, 490–4, &c.
87. *Gazette de littérature (Esprit des Journaux)*, October 1772, pp. 77–80); *Correspondance littéraire*, x, 39; *Verdière*, iii, 481–3.
88. *Best.*, 16875. La Harpe's address at this time is not known. Before going to Ferney in 1766, his address had been 'Rue de Vaugirard, auprès des écuries du Luxembourg' (Tougaard, op. cit., ii, 114–18). When he returned to Paris in October 1767, he stayed in the rue du Battoir — either the rue de Quatrefages or the rue Serpente (*Best.*, 13733). His new address appears to be the 'rue Montmartre, vis-à-vis la rue des vieux Augustins (rue d'Argout)', where he was certainly living by the beginning of 1774 (*Best.*, 17685, 17686, 18121).
89. *Galerie universelle, contenant les portraits de personnes célèbres, de tout pays, actuellement vivantes, gravés en couleurs par mm. Gautier Dagoty père, et fils aîné; avec des notices*

## Notes to Chapter III, continued

- historiques relatives à chaque portrait par une société de gens de lettres (1773). The other contributors were Linguet, La Beaumelle and Marmontel (see *Merc.*, September 1772, p. 168, August 1773, pp. 184–6). A notice on Frederick the Great was given anonymously, La Harpe himself having refused to write it (*Best.*, 16566). He composed *précis historiques* on Voltaire and d'Alembert, getting help with the latter from Condorcet (*Pissot*, iv, 112). He also began a *précis* on Choiseul, which was withheld at the demand of the Choiseul family (*J. Paris*, 18 May 1792, suppl. n° 71 (letter from J. Devaines)). We have not seen this *galerie*, and La Harpe himself claimed that 'ce projet n'a pas été achevé' (*Pissot*, iv, 98).
90. (Amsterdam, 1772.)
91. *Lewis*, v, 373, 419.
92. *Lettres nouvelles ou nouvellement recouvrées de la Marquise de Sévigné et de la marquise de Simiane, sa petite-fille, pour servir de suite aux différentes éditions des lettres de la marquise de Sévigné* (1773).
93. *Best.*, 17004.
94. *Best.*, 17617.
95. Lekain, op. cit., pp. 233–4. In a letter to La Harpe of 4 January 1773, Voltaire writes: 'en attendant que votre *Amide* soit prête' (*Best.*, 17052). In spite of what has been suggested, we feel that this and other references to a new tragedy (*Best.*, 17046, 17230) are to *Les Barmécides*, and that *Amide* — perhaps taken from Amida, the town of Diarbekr (Ammianus Marcellinus, 18, viii, 9–10) — is a near-rhyming pun.
96. *Verdière*, x, 137; *Correspondance littéraire*, x, 411.
97. *Thomas*, 34 (1927), 129.
98. *Lewis*, v, 322, 338–9.
99. *Mémoires secrets*, 27 June 1773, vii, 17–18.
100. *La Navigation, ode qui a remporté le prix de l'Académie française, en 1773* (1773).
101. *Mémoires secrets*, 6, 21 August 1773, xxiv, 324–5, 329.
102. See, for instance, the *Ode à m. de La Harpe*, by Gaspard de Pagès, avocat au parlement de Navarre (*Merc.*, May 1772, Opp. 42–6).
103. *Épître d'un poète à un jeune guerrier* (1773). See *Affiches de Province*, 8 September 1773, p. 142.
104. *Verdière*, x, 23.
105. According to Colnet du Ravel, La Harpe earned 100 louis a year for this service (*Correspondance turque* (1801), p. iii). A receipt dated 29 October 1781 for 1,600 livres is kept in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York, and another for 595 livres, dated 13 August 1789, was offered in the *Revue des Autographes*, June 1907, p. 8, n° 124. Paul settled an annuity on La Harpe late in 1774 (*Best.*, 18119, 18130; *Verdière*, x, 98).
106. *Vers à S. M. Louis XVI*, 43–6; *Verdière*, v, 87; *Merc.*, 25 September 1778, p. 297, 9 April 1791, p. 90, 23 July 1792, p. 93.
107. *Vers pour le portrait de la reine*, passim, *A m. le comte de Schowalow*, 46–67.
108. (Paris, 1774).
109. *Merc.*, October 1774, i, 165–6; *J. Pol.*, 5 October 1774, i, 28; *Suard I*, pp. 195–6. La Harpe's would-be benefactor was wrongly named by some as Necker (*Mémoires secrets*, 13 September 1774, xxvii, 342–3; *Correspondance secrète*, 6 October 1774, i, 89).
110. (Paris, 1775).
111. *Mémoires secrets*, 18 August 1774, vi, 206.
112. Condorcet, op. cit., p. 162.
113. *Brenner*, 7730.
114. *L'Impromptu de Campagne*, 1–19; *Verdière*, x, 52.
115. *Best.*, 18121.
116. *Brenner*, 7736.
117. *Verdière*, x, 114–17.
118. *Lewis*, vi, 165, 169.
119. *Verdière*, x, 124; *Correspondance secrète*, 25 March 1775, i, 293.
120. *Todd I*, p. 234.
121. *Mémoires secrets*, 30 November 1775, viii, 272; *Correspondance secrète*, 9 December 1775, ii, 265; *Verdière*, x, 117, n. The initial reason for its not being staged in Paris was that it had been performed out of turn at Fontainebleau (*Merc.*, December 1775, pp. 153–4) and its author soon saw that there was, in any case, no hope of getting a further performance before the winter of 1776 (*Verdière*, x, 252). During the course of 1776, he carried out some corrections on it (*Best.*, 19064). By 1780, the play had reached

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- the top of the waiting-list, but he later gave up his turn on three occasions (*Todd I*, pp. 256, 302–3).
122. A.N. : 0<sup>6</sup>79, n° 195–7; see *Verdière*, x, 115, *Mémoires secrets*, 26 April, 25 May 1775, viii, 13, 46.
  123. *Abrégé de l'Histoire générale des Voyages . . .*, 44 vols and atlas (1780–1803). La Harpe was only concerned with the editing of the first 21 volumes that appeared in 1780.
  124. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 23–6.
  125. (Paris, 1775.)
  126. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiv, 323.
  127. *Verdière*, x, 209.
  128. *Mémoires secrets*, 26 August 1775, xxxi, 322–4.
  129. *Verdière*, iii, 298–306.
  130. *Ibid.*, x, 217–18. The quotation is from *Best.*, 18484.
  131. pp. 44–58.
  132. *Espion anglais*, 14 December 1775, ii, 236, n.; *Mémoires secrets*, 6 September 1775, xxxi, 342–3; *Correspondance secrète*, 3 September 1775, ii, 142.
  133. On a report drawn up by maître Léonard Sahuguet, the attorney-general, A. L. Séguier, gave a requisition against both Voltaire's brochure and La Harpe's article (H. Monin, *L'Etat de Paris en 1789* (1889), pp. 183–6). The printed decrees 'enjoignant à de La Harpe . . . de se montrer à l'avenir plus circonspect' and 'blâmant de La Harpe, Louvel et Lacombe, respectivement comme auteur, censeur et imprimeur . . .' are preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale: MS. fr.22101, 22179.
  134. *Best.*, 18750.
  135. *Espion anglais*, 14 December 1775, ii, 236, n.; *Mémoires secrets*, 24 September 1775, viii, 191.
  136. *Verdière*, x, 275.
  137. *Mémoires secrets*, 9 December 1775, viii, 322; *Correspondance secrète*, 3 January 1776, ii, 306.
  138. Under the terms of a will drawn up on 1 July 1775 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1131). This will was not finally settled until five years later. The inheritance had originally been intended for equal division, but had been complicated by the death of Madame Monmayeux on 6 February 1774 and by that of Marie-Hélène Monmayeux at the beginning of December 1774 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1119, 1122). Moreover, Marie-Louise and Ambroise-Antoine had both sold their rights in the succession on 20 January and 9 February 1775 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1126, 1127). At the same time, Eutrope Monmayeux could not be found, although he later claimed his share on 3 October 1782 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1192). Of those present, La Harpe and his wife were the keenest to get the matter settled. La Harpe was present when the inventory of Ambroise Monmayeux's effects was drawn up on 30 December 1775. He was there again at the selling of the business and the furniture on 18 and 23 January 1776 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1134, 1135). He and his wife deposited a demand for settlement against Eutrope Monmayeux in default as absent on 24 January 1776 and had the property valued. On 11 March 1776, La Harpe witnessed the leasing of some land (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1137). However, the matter was to be further complicated by the death of Marie-Louise Monmayeux on 13 January 1777 (*Petites Affiches*, 23 January 1777, p. 111). Under the terms of a will signed on 11 January 1777, she left 10,000 livres to Marie-Marthe de La Harpe. So as not to lose the benefit of this legacy, M. et Mme de La Harpe had to sign an act of renunciation to their share in Marie-Louise's part of the family inheritance on 13 February 1777 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1147, 1148). To settle the succession, the remaining heirs finally met on 18 September 1779. La Harpe represented his wife with a power of attorney passed on 12 September 1779. A further meeting took place on 23 September 1780, at which both M. and Mme de La Harpe were present (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup>1192). Mme de La Harpe's share came to 23,007 livres 4 sols.
  139. Condorcet, op. cit., pp. 266–7.
  140. *Mémoires secrets*, 15 May 1776, ix, 110.
  141. *Registres*; *Verdière*, x, 315; *Correspondance secrète*, 26 May 1776, iii, 77.
  142. *Registres*.
  143. *Discours prononcés dans l'Académie Française le jeudi 20 juin 1776 à la réception de M. de La Harpe* (1776).

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144. *Correspondance secrète*, 27 June 1776, III, 131–3; *Correspondance littéraire*, XI, 268; *Mémoires secrets*, 21 June 1776, IX, 140. La Harpe was also accused at this time of having prepared his way to the Academy by composing a virulent *Eptre aux calomnieux de la philosophie* (Londres, 1776). See *Espion anglais*, 13 May 1776, III, 201–14; *Mémoires secrets*, 22 May 1776, IX, 116–17. It was attributed to La Harpe among others ostensibly because it was written ‘dans la manière dure, rocailleuse et obscure’, but these are hardly typical features of La Harpe’s poetry. In tone, this poem reflects that of the poetry of Voltaire’s generation. The language is far more outspoken than is normal in La Harpe and contrasts sharply with that of his well-known tribute to the *philosophes*, *La Réponse d’un Solitaire de la Trappe*. Nevertheless, La Harpe’s contemporaries went on believing him to be the author and it was to spite him that his enemies republished the work as a sequel to Palissot’s *Etrennes à M. de La Harpe* (1802), under the title of *Nouvelles Etrennes à M. de La Harpe* (1802). The poem is reprinted in *Verdière*, III, 333–45, since the editors believe with little justification that La Harpe’s silence at the time of its reissue in 1802 ‘prouve assez qu’il en est l’auteur.’
145. *Marmontel*, x, 23.
146. *Ibid.*, x, 25.
147. Condorcet, op. cit., p. 284.
148. *Marmontel*, loc. cit.
149. *Ibid.*, x, 23.
150. *Ibid.*, x, 23–5.
151. *Ibid.*
152. *Merc.*, July 1776, II, 212; *Gazette de France*, 12 July 1776.
153. *Best.*, 19009.
154. *J. Pol.*, 25 July 1776, II, 405.
155. See Linguet, *Lettre au Roi* (Is.l.n.d.), pp. 4–6, *Lettre à M. le comte de Vergennes* (Londres, 1777), p. 11, *Précis et consultation dans la cause entre S. N. H. Linguet et C. J. Panckoucke* (1787), pp. 11–23; *Correspondance secrète*, 9 August 1776, III, 277–80; *Mémoires secrets*, 2, 4 and 8 August 1776, IX, 178, 180, 183–4. Linguet then went into exile and, when he started up his *Annales* in London in 1777, he wrote in the prospectus: ‘Ce n’est pas ici un journal nouveau; c’est la continuation de celui qui a été commencé à Paris en 1774, sous le titre de *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* de Bruxelles, et interrompu, comme on sait, en 1776’ (I, 3).
156. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 29–33. Grimm says that the job brought in an annual income of 6,000 livres (*Correspondance littéraire*, XI, 306–7), but Linguet himself said that he had been paid a guaranteed 10,000 livres per annum, plus an extra 1,000 livres for every thousand subscribers over six thousand (*Lettre au Roi* (Is.l.n.d.), p. 1., *Précis et consultation* . . . (1787), p. 6).
157. La Harpe’s last article for the *Mercure* at this time appeared there in September 1776, and the fact that he no longer had any connection with it was announced by Lacombe, *Merc.*, October 1776, II, 188. On at least three occasions, Panckoucke named La Harpe as the sole author of the literary section of the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature* from 5 August 1776 on (*J. Pol.*, 5 October, 25 November 1776, III, 163, 405–6; *Merc.*, June 1778, p. 4). Some doubt about this has been cast by La Harpe’s denying responsibility for all that the literary section contained in two letters that he wrote to the *Journal de Paris*, 29 August 1777, p. 2, 7 November 1777, p. 2. Yet, the articles in question are unmistakably by La Harpe. In the first letter, for instance, he claimed that the review of Marmontel’s *Essai sur les Révolutions de la musique* (1777), — *J. Pol.*, 25 August 1777, II, 538–44 — had been sent to him and that he had published it ‘sans trop d’examen’. He is more honest in a letter that he wrote to an unidentified correspondent on 27 August 1777 and in which he protested that he had not intended to make unkind remarks in the article about Suard and the Abbé Arnaud (holograph which passed at the Laverdet sale of 16 February 1859, n° 233). In fact, he only denied authorship of the article because it had caused the doors of certain *salons* to be closed to him (*Correspondance littéraire*, XI, 538).

As a general rule, La Harpe points out when an article has been written by someone else. Frequently, articles by other people take the form of letters to the editor, where he could proclaim his own impartiality (see *J. Pol.*, 25 February 1778, I, 277, n.). Other contributors — notably Voltaire, Condorcet, d’Alembert and the Abbé Bourlet de Vauxcelles — signed their articles with initials. On one occasion, La Harpe apologizes for having omitted the initial (*ibid.*, 25 May 1777, II, 130). He was always most anxious

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- that contributors should sign their articles when they dealt with controversial subjects (*Todd 1*, pp. 247–8). All remaining articles in the literary section are almost certainly his work alone. We should also mention that we have found no reason for believing that Suard had any part in the production of this paper although his name was linked with it in August 1776 (*Mémoires secrets*, 15 August 1776, ix, 190).
158. *Correspondance secrète*, 4 January 1777, iv, 82.
  159. *Ibid.*, 29 January 1777, iv, 117–18; Brissot, op. cit., p. 65.
  160. *Mémoires secrets*, 6 September 1776, ix, 206–7.
  161. *Ibid.*, 27 November 1776, 20 January 1777, ix, 273, x, 14.
  162. 15 March 1777, i, 381–4.
  163. 5 October, 5 November, 15 December 1776, iii, 191–6, 356, 545–6, 5 August 1777, ii, 451–3.
  164. 25 April, 5, 15 and 25 May 1777, i, 568–70, ii, 38–43, 85–7, 133–6. For La Harpe's reaction to this help, see *Merc.*, 21 January 1792, pp. 77–8.
  165. *Best.*, 19284.
  166. *Best.*, 19305, compare *Best.*, 19331.
  167. *Correspondance secrète*, 23 November 1776, 3 February 1778, iv, 8–9, v, 418–19. In an unpublished letter to Shuvalov of 15 November 1774, La Harpe claims that he gave Chamfort considerable help, but that they only remained friends in appearance when he won the poetry prize in 1766. Chamfort finally broke with La Harpe when he published in the *Mercure* of December 1770, pp. 133–43, his *Idées sur Molière*, seen as a reply to Chamfort's *éloge* of the writer (*Soviet Academy of Sciences*).
  168. *Correspondance secrète*, 17 December 1776, iv, 53.
  169. *Ibid.*, 26 April 1777, iv, 339; *Mémoires secrets*, 24 April 1777, x, 111.
  170. *Verdière*, x, 450–1.
  171. *Ibid.*, x, 305.
  172. *J. Pol.*, 5 December 1776, iii, 490.
  173. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1777, i, 326–7.
  174. *J. Paris*, 8 March 1777, pp. 2–3.
  175. *Ibid.*, 28 March 1777, pp. 2–3, &c. See *Best.*, 19751. The letters from the *Anonyme de Vaugirard* ended with a note, announcing that he was going away on a trip (*J. Paris*, 21 February 1778, p. 207). Mme. Suard claimed that she persuaded her husband and the Abbé Arnaud to abandon the correspondence (op. cit., p. 176), and La Harpe himself said that the Prince de Beauvau had asked them to do so (*Verdière*, x, 479–80).
  176. 17 August, 16 December 1776 (*Registres*).
  177. 4, 9, 18 January, 20 February, 3, 7, 15, 26 May, 8 November 1777 (*ibid.*).
  178. *La Lusiade de Louis Camoëns* (1776), in which La Harpe rendered into poetic prose 'une version littéraire du texte portugais' by Vaquette d'Hermilly (*Verdière*, viii, 5).
  179. *Registres*; *Merc.*, September 1776, p. 152; *J. Pol.*, 5 September 1776, iii, 33–4.
  180. *Verdière*, x, 443; *Journal encyclopédique*, 1 July 1777, v, 148–9.
  181. *Pissot*, ii, 317–63.
  182. *Merc.*, September 1777, p. 159.
  183. He signed a lease on 29 January 1777 — to begin on 1 April — for a second storey flat in the rue Saint-Honoré, facing the rue Saint-Florentin (*Minutier central*: Etude XXI.R.481). Strangely enough, Voltaire was still writing to his old address as late as 25 October 1777 (*Best.*, 19703).
  184. *Merc.*, 25 October 1778, p. 308; see V. Giraud, 'Les derniers jours et la mort de Voltaire', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 45 (1938), 361.
  185. J. P. Perret, *Les Imprimeries d'Yverdon au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Lausanne, 1945).
  186. *Ibid.*, pp. 298–9.
  187. *Le Comte de Varvic, tragédie* (Yverdon, 1776).
  188. *La Lusiade de Camoëns* (Londres [sic], 1776).
  189. *Œuvres de Mr. de La H\*\*\*, revues et corrigées par l'auteur*, 3 vols (Yverdon, 1777).
  190. *Œuvres de m. de La Harpe, de l'Académie française. Nouvellement recueillies*, 6 vols (1778). See *J. Pol.*, 15 November 1777, iii, 350; *J. Paris*, 29 November 1777, p. 2.
  191. Perret, op. cit., pp. 291–2.
  192. *Merc.*, 23 June 1792, p. 94.
  193. *Registres*, 12 February 1778.
  194. *Verdière*, xi, 15.
  195. *Registres*. La Harpe was still a busy member of this institution. On 14 February, he was entrusted with 240 livres which he handed to the Comédie française for a benefit performance for Corneille's grand-nephew (*ibid.*, 14, 16 February 1778).

## Notes to Chapter III, continued

196. *Registres; Verdière*, xi, 22.  
 197. *Mémoires secrets*, 3 March 1778, xi, 130; *Longchamp-Wagnière*, i, 442.  
 198. *Mémoires secrets*, 5 March 1778, xi, 132.  
 199. *Lycée*, xvi, 77–8, n.  
 200. *Merc.*, 25 February 1792, p. 99.  
 201. *Verdière*, xi, 34.  
 202. *Ibid.*, xi, 26, 34–5.  
 203. *Ibid.*, xi, 45.  
 204. Giraud, op. cit., p. 362.  
 205. *Mémoires secrets*, 28 January 1778, xi, 76.  
 206. *Todd I*, pp. 237–43.  
 207. *Ibid.*, p. 247.  
 208. *Correspondance littéraire*, xii, 124–5.  
 209. *Mémoires secrets*, 17 August 1778, xii, 72.  
 210. pp. 789–91.  
 211. *Correspondance littéraire*, xii, 124–5, *Mémoires secrets*, 18 July 1778, xii, 45.  
 212. *J. Pol.*, 5 October 1777, iii, 170–4.  
 213. *J. Paris*, 20 July 1778, p. 802.  
 214. *Merc.*, 15 August 1778, p. 170.  
 215. *Brenner*, 3004.  
 216. *Mémoires secrets*, 17 August 1778, xii, 72–3; *Année littéraire*, 1778, viii, 313, n.; *Lycée*, xii, 295–8, n.; *Verdière*, xi, 69.  
 217. *Correspondance secrète*, 1 September 1778, vi, 419.  
 218. In May 1778, the former owner of the *Mercure*, Lacombe, went bankrupt (*Correspondance secrète*, 16 May 1778, vi, 224–5; *Mémoires secrets*, 14 May 1778, xi, 225) and the last issue under his control was approved for publication on 18 May. He sold the privilege to Panckoucke a few days later (*Correspondance secrète*, 6 June 1778, vi, 271; *Mémoires secrets*, 22 June 1778, xii, 24), and the latter then combined the *Mercure* and the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*, modelling the lay-out of the new paper on that of the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*. With a circulation of 7,000 copies (*Verdière*, xi, 94), the new *Mercure* first appeared on 25 June 1778 (*Merc.*, 15 September 1778, p. 139, n.), and, like the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*, became a thrice-monthly publication, appearing on 5, 15 and 25 of every month. It was to become a weekly — appearing on Saturdays — on 10 July 1779.

At first, the authorship of the new paper remained largely in the hands of those who had run the *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*. Dubois-Fontanelle was kept on as author of the new political section, and La Harpe's job did not change appreciably either: Tout ce qui est du ressort de la littérature et des spectacles sera traité par m. de La Harpe, qui était chargé de ces mêmes objets dans le Journal de Bruxelles: mais il y a cette différence, qu'il était renfermé auparavant dans des bornes très étroites, qui le gênaient pour l'étendue, le nombre et la variété des articles; au lieu que dans la nouvelle rédaction, il parcourra plus librement un plus grand espace. Il rédigera d'ailleurs tout ce qui ne regardera pas la politique, les sciences et les arts . . . (*Merc.*, June 1778, p. 4).

At the same time, the paper appeared as the work of a 'société de gens de lettres'. Many writers promised to help in its production. The naturalist Louis Daubenton agreed to write articles on natural history, Macquer and Bucquet, articles on chemistry and medicine, the Abbé J. Rémy and P. J. J. G. Guyot, those on jurisprudence, the physiocrat, Nicolas Baudeau, those on economy, and Suard 'la rédaction de tout ce qui regarde la philosophie, les sciences et les arts' (*ibid.*). Further future collaborators were named as B. Imbert, Dorat, Berquin, d'Alembert, Marmontel and Condorcet. However, as La Harpe himself has pointed out, much of this was to impress possible subscribers, 'et la plupart des prétendus coopérateurs ne fournirent guère que leur nom' (*Verdière*, xi, 55, n.).

In any case, as long as La Harpe was main editor and author of the literary section of the paper, other contributors signed their articles. During this period, we have found articles signed: *Macquer*, *Garat*, *d'Alembert*, *m. le m. de [ondorcer]*, *Baudeau*, *m. R[émy]*, *L. A. R.* (again Rémy?), *L\*C\**, *avocat* (Delacroix?), and *m. M[armontel]*, who, on one occasion, complained about his initials being omitted from an article (*Merc.*, 5 August 1778, p. 70). All other articles during the following four months appear to be the work of La Harpe.

*Notes to Chapter III, continued*

219. *Merc.*, 5 July 1778, p. 68.  
 220. 10 July 1778, pp. 761–3.  
 221. *Merc.*, 15 July 1778, p. 183.  
 222. *Ibid.*, pp. 178–85; *J. Paris*, 11 July 1778, pp. 766–7.  
 223. *Merc.*, 15 July 1778, pp. 181–2.  
 224. *J. Paris*, 11 July 1778, pp. 766–7.  
 225. *Merc.*, 15 July 1778, p. 183.  
 226. *Correspondance secrète*, 6 June 1778, vi, 278.  
 227. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1778, vi, 300; *Longchamp-Wagnière*, I, 443; *Correspondance littéraire*, xii, 122–4.  
 228. *Longchamp-Wagnière*, I, 138–9.  
 229. *Todd I*, pp. 243–5.  
 230. *Correspondance secrète*, 22 September 1778, 23 January 1779, vii, 24, 244; *Mémoires secrets*, 14 December 1778, xii, 193.  
 231. 12 July 1778, pp. 770–1.  
 232. *Correspondance secrète*, 15 September 1778, vii, 11–13; *Mémoires secrets*, 12 October 1778, xii, 132.  
 233. *J. Paris*, 3 pluviôse an iii (22 January 1795), p. 498.  
 234. *Correspondance secrète*, 28 November 1778, vii, 149.  
 235. ‘Lettres inédites de Florian, publiées par P. Bonnefon’, *Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France*, 18 (1911), 187.  
 236. *Courrier de l’Europe*, 27 October 1778, iv, 268–9.  
 237. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1778, iv, 205–6.  
 238. Letter from the Abbé Maury to Dureau de La Malle, 9 December 1778, quoted by Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi* (1885), v, 116.  
 239. The issue of 25 October contained book reviews by Garat, Rémy and d’Alembert, while La Harpe merely contributed articles on the Opera and the Théâtre italien and a letter. He had no part in the issue of 5 November, in which there were no theatre reviews and the book reviews were signed by Rémy, d’Alembert and Longueville. However, apart from two theatre reviews by Marmontel in the issues of 15 and 25 November, La Harpe remained the anonymous author of ‘l’article des trois spectacles’ (*Merc.*, 25 April 1779, p. 290). His contributions elsewhere in the paper were now signed. In the spring of 1779, Suard began to take over the articles on opera. Although not signed, his first article would appear to be that of 25 April 1779, pp. 290–303. From 25 May on, he signed his articles *M.S.\*\**. At the end of June, Le Vacher de Charnois started replacing La Harpe in either or both the articles on the other two theatres. La Harpe last wrote a theatre review for the issue of 14 August 1779, and, at the beginning of September, there appeared the following note: ‘Ses occupations ne lui permettant plus de travailler au Mercure, [La Harpe] avait déjà remis l’article des spectacles à m. de Charnois; et désormais il ne sera plus chargé d’aucune partie de ce journal’ (*Merc.*, 4 September 1779, p. 47, n.).  
 240. Florian, *op. cit.*, p. 189; *Mémoires secrets*, 5, 8 November, 14 December 1778, xii, 153–4, 157, 193.

*Notes to Chapter IV*

1. *Correspondance secrète*, 9 January, 1 May 1779, vii, 224, 413.
2. *Brenner*, 7738.
3. *Merc.*, 15 March 1779, p. 184, n. (article by Marmontel).
4. See *Todd I*, p. 251.
5. *Correspondance littéraire*, iv, 353; *Correspondance secrète*, 18, 25 February 1779, vii, 284, 293; *Mémoires secrets*, 11 February 1779, xiii, 280.
6. *Correspondance secrète*, 3 August 1779, viii, 216.
7. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1779, viii, 246.
8. *Registres*; *Verdière*, xi, 189–90.
9. *Correspondance secrète*, 14, 21 August 1779, viii, 246, 256.
10. *Registres*.
11. Linguet, *Annales*, vi, 327–8; *Mémoires secrets*, 5 August 1779, xiv, 141.
12. Linguet, *op. cit.*, vi, 455; *Correspondance secrète*, 11 September 1779, viii, 295; *Mémoires secrets*, 26 August 1779, xiv, 165.



## Notes to Chapter IV, continued

13. *Aux Mânes de Voltaire, dithyrambe qui a remporté le prix au jugement de l'Académie française en 1779* (1779). The *Dialogue entre lui et moi sur le Dithyrambe couronné à l'Académie* (1779) — attributed to La Harpe by Ersch, *La France littéraire, contenant les auteurs français de 1771 à 1796*, 5 vols (Hambourg, 1797), II, 169 — would appear to be the work of N. C. Salaun (*Correspondance secrète*, 18 September 1779, VIII, 328).
14. *J. Paris*, 26 August 1779, p. 970.
15. Linguet, op. cit., VII, 121–5.
16. Although he did remain on fairly good terms with Suard (see *Jovicevich* 2, pp. 220–1).
17. Crèvecœur, *Saint-John de Crèvecœur, sa vie et ses ouvrages* (1883), p. 330, n. The lines in question are the *Vers sur la machine de Marly*, inserted by La Harpe in the *J. Pol.*, 25 July 1777, II, 397.
18. Zurich, *Une femme heureuse, mme. de La Briche . . .* (1934), pp. 190–2.
19. *Verdière*, XII, 145–6.
20. *Ibid.*, XII, 130–1.
21. *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 88; see *Jovicevich* 1, pp. 51–3.
22. *Verdière*, XI, 476; *Le Revenant du Marais*, passim.
23. *Lycée*, XII, 557–8; *Merc.*, 7 January 1792, pp. 22, 34.
24. *Journal encyclopédique*, 15 June 1788, IV, 460; *Correspondance de Louis de Fontanes et Joseph Joubert* (1943), p. 45.
25. *Correspondance littéraire*, XII, 254–5.
26. *Ibid.*, XIII, 198.
27. Tilly, op. cit., pp. 365–7.
28. *Verdière*, XI, 230–2.
29. *Lycée*, XII, 397.
30. *Ibid.*, XI, 548, 551.
31. Giraud, op. cit., passim; *Jovicevich* 1, pp. 57–9.
32. *Journal encyclopédique*, 15 June 1788, IV, 460.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Jovicevich* 1, pp. 59, 63; *Todd* 1, pp. 291, 304, 321.
35. *Mémoires secrets*, 4 April 1774, VII, 176.
36. *Ibid.*, 28 August 1782, XXI, 79–81.
37. *Correspondance secrète*, 7 August 1782, XIII, 914; *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 170.
38. Mme de Genlis, op. cit., II, 338–9; *Verdière*, XI, 141–2.
39. Mme de Genlis, op. cit., III, 117.
40. *Ibid.*, III, 118.
41. *Ibid.*, III, 116–17, 120–2.
42. *Ibid.*, III, 119.
43. *Verdière*, XI, 141–2, 153–5, 160–1, 196, 229–30, 239–40, 261, 398–9; Mme de Genlis, op. cit., III, 118–19.
44. *Merc.*, 24 July 1779, pp. 217–27, 31 July 1779, pp. 313–31, 22 and 29 January 1780, pp. 151–80, 217–32, 5 February 1780, pp. 26–39, 3 February 1781, pp. 21–37, 25 August 1781, pp. 154–65.
45. Announced in *J. Paris*, 20 January, and in the *Catalogue hebdomadaire*, 26 January 1782.
46. *Verdière*, XI, 455.
47. *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 58–9.
48. Mme de Genlis, op. cit., III, 172–3.
49. *Merc.*, 13, 20 April 1782, pp. 55–72, 103–22.
50. Mme de Genlis, op. cit., III, 173.
51. *Verdière*, XII, 220.
52. Under the name of Damoville in 'Les deux réputations, conte moral', *Les Veillées du Château*, 3 vols (1784), III, 4–204. See *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 532.
53. *Verdière*, XI, 199–200.
54. See supra., chapter III, n. 239.
55. *Todd* 1, pp. 250–1, 253–4.
56. *Correspondance secrète*, 9 November 1779, IX, 6; *Verdière*, XI, 228.
57. Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires inédits . . .* (1825), III, 117–18; compare *Épître à m. le comte de Schowalow*, 138–49.
58. Linguet, op. cit., VII, 458, VIII, 81–2; *Correspondance littéraire*, XII, 330. We have not located any such publication, although La Harpe had intended to publish a long attack on Linguet with his *Eloge de Voltaire* (*Verdière*, X, 217–18). This attack did not appear.

## Notes to Chapter IV, continued

- La Harpe said that he had suppressed all his notes that he had intended to bring out with this *éloge*, because it had too many (*avertissement*).
59. *Verdière*, xi, 401–2, 406–7; *Merc.*, 2 June 1792, p. 20.
  60. *Correspondance secrète*, 5 April 1781, xi, 180.
  61. *Op. cit.*, pp. 167–8. The text of these compliments is given in the *J. Paris*, 6 and 9 November 1781, pp. 1249, 1261, and in the *Mémoires secrets*, 6 and 7 November 1781, xviii, 124, 127–8.
  62. *Verdière*, xi, 91.
  63. G. B. Watts, 'La Harpe's Voltaire correspondence', *French Review*, 32 (1958), 363; Hawkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–1.
  64. *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs*, 61 (30 April 1910), col. 610.
  65. *Mémoires secrets*, 16 March 1779, xiii, 317; *Jovicevich I*, p. 25.
  66. *J. Paris*, 21 January 1780, p. 87; *Mémoires secrets*, 24 January 1780, xv, 24; *Verdière*, xi, 236.
  67. (Genève, 1780). *J. Paris*, 30 March 1780, p. 370.
  68. *Merc.*, 8 April 1780, p. 94.
  69. (Paris [s.d.]). *J. Paris*, 17 April 1780, p. 446.
  70. *Todd I*, p. 253.
  71. *Lewis*, vii, 236, 456.
  72. *J. Paris*, 26 August 1780, p. 969; *Correspondance littéraire*, xii, 420; *Correspondance secrète*, 27 August 1780, ix, 154–5; *Mémoires secrets*, 27 August 1780, xv, 273.
  73. *Todd I*, p. 261.
  74. *Verdière*, xi, 305.
  75. (Paris, 1781). *J. Paris*, 8 February 1781, p. 155.
  76. (Paris, 1781). *J. Paris*, 20 March 1781, p. 315.
  77. *Todd I*, pp. 260–1.
  78. *Verdière*, xii, 42–4.
  79. *Todd I*, pp. 261–2.
  80. *Correspondance littéraire*, xv, 307.
  81. *Todd I*, p. 263.
  82. *Brenner*, 7734.
  83. *Todd I*, p. 264.
  84. *Mémoires secrets*, 22 November 1781, xviii, 172–3.
  85. *Todd I*, pp. 265–6.
  86. *J. Paris*, 28 November 1781.
  87. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiii, 43–4.
  88. *Mémoires secrets*, 11 December 1781, xviii, 205–6.
  89. *Correspondance secrète*, 2 January 1782, xii, 234.
  90. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1782, xii, 243.
  91. *Todd I*, pp. 272–3.
  92. *Ibid.*, pp. 273–5.
  93. *J. Pol.*, 5 July 1777, ii, 307–8.
  94. *Todd I*, pp. 283–5.
  95. *Brenner*, 7737.
  96. *Mémoires secrets*, 15 April 1782, xx, 184.
  97. *Verdière*, xi, 482–3.
  98. *Ibid.*
  99. *Ibid.*, xi, 496.
  100. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiii, 148–9.
  101. D. Thiébauld, *Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjour à Berlin*, 2 vols (1860), ii, 81.
  102. *Mémoires secrets*, 19 June 1782, xx, 306.
  103. *Verdière*, xi, 496–9.
  104. 'Épître à m. le comte de Schowaloff, sur les effets de la nature champêtre et sur la poésie descriptive' (*Verdière*, iii, 314–33).
  105. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiii, 149–50; *Mémoires secrets*, 14 June 1782, xx, 300–1.
  106. *Verdière*, xi, 496.
  107. *Todd I*, p. 279.
  108. *J. Paris*, 7 June 1782, p. 642.
  109. *Mémoires secrets*, 10 June 1782, xx, 295.
  110. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1782, xx, 17.
  111. *Brenner*, 4242.

## Notes to Chapter IV, continued

112. *Mémoires secrets*, 18 August 1782, XXI, 61.  
 113. *Lycée*, xv, 80; *Correspondance secrète*, 6 February 1782, XII, 288.  
 114. *Verdière*, xi, 451–2.  
 115. *Registres*, 2 July 1781, 1 July 1782.  
 116. *Mémoires secrets*, 26 August 1781, XVIII, 7; *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 17; *Correspondance secrète*, 29 August 1781, XII, 19.  
 117. *Verdière*, XII, 35–8; see *J. Paris*, 26 August 1782, p. 971; *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 198; *Mémoires secrets*, 25 August 1782, XXI, 73–4.  
 118. *Merc.*, 16, 23 October 1790, pp. 108, 153; compare *Moland*, XVII, 52.  
 119. *Mémoires secrets*, 5 August 1786, XXXII, 309–10.  
 120. *Lycée*, XII, 397.  
 121. *Correspondance secrète*, 5 May 1785, XVIII, 75.  
 122. *Verdière*, x, 458.  
 123. Florian, *Mélanges* (1829), pp. 198–202.  
 124. *Correspondance littéraire*, XIV, 196.  
 125. *Correspondance secrète*, 28 December 1784, XVII, 216; *Correspondance littéraire*, XIV, 103.  
 126. Marmontel, *Mémoires d'un père* (1846), pp. 421–3.  
 127. *Verdière*, XII, 115.  
 128. *Merc.*, 5 July 1783, pp. 41–5; *Mémoires secrets*, 16 June 1783, XXXIII, 12.  
 129. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1783, XXXIII, 83.  
 130. *Todd 1*, pp. 305–7.  
 131. *Ibid.*  
 132. Brenner, 8863.  
 133. *Todd 1*, p. 286.  
 134. Brenner, 5886.  
 135. *Todd 1*, p. 287.  
 136. *Verdière*, XII, 145.  
 137. *Ibid.*, XII, 139.  
 138. *Todd 2*, p. 203.  
 139. *J. Paris*, 19 December 1783, p. 1453.  
 140. *Verdière*, XII, 173–4.  
 141. *J. Paris*, 21 June 1783, p. 719; *Verdière*, XII, 124.  
 142. *Todd 1*, pp. 288–90.  
 143. *J. Paris*, 15 January 1784, pp. 69–70.  
 144. *Correspondance littéraire*, XIII, 470–3.  
 145. Brenner, 7732.  
 146. *Todd 1*, p. 290.  
 147. *J. Paris*, 10 March 1784, p. 315.  
 148. *Mémoires secrets*, 29 February 1784, XXXV, 160.  
 149. *Coriolan*, in Leprincé and Baudrais's *Petite Bibliothèque des théâtres* (1784), IV, pp. xii–xxiv.  
 150. *Verdière*, XII, 193–4.  
 151. *Todd 1*, p. 297.  
 152. See, for instance, the *Charade* by Arnault in the *Merc.*, 1 May 1784, p. 6, a reply to epigrams by Rulhière and Chamfort (*Œuvres posthumes de Rulhière*, 2 vols (1819), I, 426–7, n.).  
 153. *Todd 1*, pp. 294–9.  
 154. *Ibid.*, pp. 299–300.  
 155. When his attendance at the meetings of the Académie française suddenly became erratic. For no apparent reason, he missed all the meetings from 4 November 1782 to 2 January 1783 and subsequently continued to be far less regular than in the past (*Registres*).  
 156. *Verdière*, XII, 152; *Merc.*, 20 September 1783, p. 101.  
 157. *Verdière*, XII, 138.  
 158. *Ibid.*, XII, 208–9, 239–40.  
 159. *J. Paris*, 8 December 1784, p. 1450.  
 160. *Correspondance littéraire*, XIV, 104, n., 139. La Harpe himself referred to it as a 'maladie grave, causée par une révolution d'humeurs' (unpublished part of a letter to Shuvalov (*Soviet Academy of Sciences*)).  
 161. *Mémoires secrets*, 14 March 1785, XXXVIII, 214–5.  
 162. *Jovicevich 1*, p. 45.

## Notes to Chapter IV, continued

163. Pougens, op. cit., p. 37; G. Strenger, *La Société française pendant le consulat*, quatrième série: les écrivains et les comédiens (1905), p. 67.
164. *Registres*, 3 April 1783.
165. He remained just as erratic in his attendance at meetings as before (ibid.).
166. Ibid., 23 February 1784.
167. *Verdière*, xii, 42–4.
168. Mme. Vigée Le Brun, *Souvenirs*, 2 vols (1867), i, 38.
169. *J. Paris*, 16 June 1784, p. 723; *Mémoires secrets*, 15 June 1784, xxvi, 58–9.
170. *Les Talents des Femmes*, 489.
171. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiii, 546, n.
172. *Correspondance secrète*, 7 October 1785, xviii, 419.
173. *Todd I*, pp. 321–2.
174. *Chronique de Paris*, 8 May 1792, p. 515. Métra says that the play was presented to the actors by Garat (*Correspondance secrète*, loc. cit.).
175. Brenner, 7745. Another anonymous play, *Olinde et Sophronie, tragédie, en cinq actes, en vers*. Par l'auteur de *Virginie* (La Haye, 1774), is attributed to La Harpe in *Barbier-Billard*, iii, col. 706, even though La Harpe was first accused of being the author of a *Virginie* eleven years after the publication of this *Olinde et Sophronie*. The author of this last play is almost certainly someone who had already published a *Virginie* by 1774. Leaving aside the early plays of this name by Mairet and Campistron, three or four plays on the subject had already been written by contemporaries of La Harpe. Carrière-Doisin had written his *Virginie, ou les décemvirs* in 1770, but he did not publish it until 1777 (in *Mes Récréations* (1777), see p. 163). Another *Virginie* was written by the anti-Voltairian, La Beaumelle, during his detention in the Bastille. It does not appear to have been published (*Quérard I*, iv, 334). On the other hand, there had appeared an anonymous work in verse: *Virginie, tragédie en cinq actes* (1767). Again for reasons that are not altogether clear, *Barbier-Billard*, iv, col. 1038, attributes a *Virginie, tragédie en cinq actes et en prose* (1767) to L. S. Mercier. We have found no other reference to such a work, and it is undoubtedly through confusion that the Bibliothèque nationale catalogue places copies of the verse play under Mercier. With more justification, Brenner (4752) and the Arsenal catalogue (Rf.8.398) give this work to M. P. G. de Chabanon who wrote a *Virginie* under Voltaire's guidance while staying at Ferney at the same time as La Harpe. It was on the waiting-list of the Comédie française in 1767. Yet, while Chabanon talks at length about his *Virginie* in his *Tableau de quelques circonstances de ma vie* (1795), he makes no mention of an *Olinde et Sophronie*.
- When *Olinde et Sophronie* appeared in 1774, Fréron called it the work of a provincial writer worthy of encouragement and compared it favourably with Mercier's earlier prose version (*Année littéraire*, 12, 26 May 1774, ii, 217–52, iii, 42–8). Sautreau de Marsy said of it: 'on a faussement attribué cette pièce à m. de Voltaire: elle est d'un avocat au Parlement de Rennes, très distingué dans son ordre' (*Almanach des Muses*, 1775, p. 309).
176. *Chronique de Paris*, loc. cit.
177. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiv, 434.
178. *Journal politique*, p. 82.
179. *J. Paris*, 16 November 1785, p. 1319.
180. Ibid.
181. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiv, 435.
182. Ibid., xiv, 436; *Mémoires secrets*, 30 August 1786, xxxii, 315–16.
183. Pilatre de Rozier's Musée was only one of many literary and scientific clubs opened in Paris and in the more important provincial cities of France in the second half of the eighteenth century, and inspired by Addison and Steele's imaginary coffee-house club in the *Spectator* (*Mémoires secrets*, 28 April 1784, xxv, 301). It was originally part of the Musée de Paris, which was founded on 11 December 1781 (ibid., 2 December 1781, xviii, 173–4) to replace an earlier establishment run on similar lines by La Blancherie, set up in 1778 (*J. Paris*, 17 June, 16 October 1778, pp. 670–1, 1159). La Blancherie himself tried later to revive what he called a 'salon de correspondance' (*Mémoires secrets*, 18 December 1784, xxvii, 81).
- The Musée de Paris began with ambitious aims. Apart from providing its subscribers with laboratories, it ran courses in various scientific subjects and in modern languages (ibid., 3 December 1781, 3 January 1782, xviii, 174–5, xx, 8–9). On the first Thursday of every month, it had public lectures organized by Court de Gebelin and the Abbé

## Notes to Chapter IV, continued

- Cordier de Saint-Firmin (*ibid.*, 10 March 1782, xx, 116–17), at which there were readings by writers such as Saint-Ange and Cailhava (*ibid.*, 19 July, 3 October 1782, xxi, 24, 131).
- Towards the end of 1782, however, the institution was split in two by a quarrel between Pilatre de Rozier and his colleagues. Leaving the Abbé Cordier de Saint-Firmin and Court de Gebelin in the rue Dauphine, he moved to the rue Sainte-Avoie (rue du Temple), where he set up a Musée scientifique (*ibid.*, 9 December 1782, xxi, 225). He was later joined there by Cailhava (*ibid.*, 1 January 1784, xxv, 11–12) and soon had courses going in English, Chemistry and Mathematics (*J. Paris*, 13 April 1784, p. 456). He moved to the Palais-Royal in the autumn of 1784 (*ibid.*, 13 October 1784, pp. 1209–10; *Mémoires secrets*, 7 December 1784, xxvii, 67–8). In spite of suffering from quarrels among its members (*ibid.*, 27 July, 7, 9 August 1783, xxiii, 78, 91–2, 96–7), the Musée de Paris continued without Pilatre de Rozier and at the time of the setting up of the Lycée was presided over by Sélis (*ibid.*, 18 December 1785, xxx, 132).
184. *Correspondance secrète*, 7 July 1785, xviii, 223.
185. L. Aimable, 'Les origines maçonniques du Musée de Paris et du Lycée', *Révolution française*, 31 (1896), 484–500.
186. *Mémoires secrets*, 5 August 1785, xxix, 190.
187. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1784, 26 June 1785, xxvi, 134, xxix, 108.
188. *Ibid.*, 5 August 1785, xxix, 190.
189. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1785, xxx, 13.
190. *Minutier central: Etude L<sup>xx</sup>756; Verdière*, xii, 366–70.
191. The name had been used by Bassi in Lyons in 1777. In 1784, he tried to set up a Lycée de Paris in the Palais-Royal, under the patronage of the Duc de Chartres (*J. Paris*, 2 January 1784, pp. 5–6; *Mémoires secrets*, 28 April 1784, xxv, 301–2).
192. *Ibid.*, 24 December 1785, xxx, 142.
193. *Programme du Lycée* (1785), pp. 15–17.
194. *Verdière*, iv, 161.
195. *Archives historiques du département de la Gironde*, 24 (1884/85), 510–11; 30 (1895), 232; *Jovicevich I*, pp. 41–9.
196. *Merc.*, 18 December 1790, p. 118.
197. *Verdière*, xii, 366–8; *Correspondance littéraire*, xiv, 363.
198. *Verdière*, xii, 368–70.
199. *Merc.*, 29 November 1788, p. 231.
200. Bouilly, *op. cit.*, i, 150. Some, admittedly, found that in general La Harpe's manner of reading was over-declamatory (Le Texier, *Petit Cours de littérature* (1801), quoted by the *J. Paris*, 25 germinal an ix (15 April 1801), pp. 1236–7), Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires* (1857), p. 409).
201. E. Géraud, *Journal d'un étudiant pendant la révolution*, publié par G. Maugras (1935), p. 71.
202. A. F. F. de Frénilly, *Souvenirs*, publiés par A. Chuquet (1908), p. 90.
203. *La Quotidienne*, 7 December 1792, p. 3.

## Notes to Chapter V

1. It is not possible to say what days he taught on during the first session. In 1786/1787 he taught on Mondays and Thursdays (*Amateur des Autographes*, 5 (1866), 323–4). In 1787/1788 he gave his lectures on Wednesdays and Saturdays (*J. Paris*, 1 December 1787, p. 1445) and in 1788/1789 his lectures took place at noon on Thursdays and on Saturdays at 6.30 p.m. (*ibid.*, 1 January 1789, p. 3).
2. *Moniteur*, 6 December 1789, réimp., ii, 317, n.
3. *Verdière*, xii, 446; *Amateur des Autographes*, loc. cit.
4. Bouilly, *op. cit.*, i, 155–65.
5. *Merc.*, 29 November 1788, p. 231.
6. Florian, *op. cit.*, pp. 195–6.
7. *J. Paris*, 22 January 1788, p. 102.
8. *Merc.*, 10 July 1790, p. 78.
9. *Lycée*, xiv, 412.
10. *Ibid.*, xiv, 413.
11. *Merc.*, 28 April 1792, p. 100.
12. *Ibid.*, 6 March 1790, p. 31.
13. *Verdière*, xiii, 88–9, 107.

## Notes to Chapter V, continued

14. *Mémoires secrets*, 22 December 1786, xxxiii, 289.
15. *Lycée*, iv, 8–9.
16. *Nouvelles politiques*, 30 frimaire an v (20 December 1796), p. 358.
17. *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 89.
18. *J. Paris*, 9 April 1789, p. 449.
19. *Moniteur*, 6 December 1789, réimp., ii, 316.
20. Letter to Mme Shuvalov (*Soviet Academy of Sciences*).
21. *Merc.*, 10 March 1792, pp. 53–4, n.
22. C. L. Chassin, *Les Elections et les cahiers de Paris*, 4 vols (1888), i, 82.
23. *Merc.*, 28 April 1792, p. 100.
24. *Discours sur la liberté du théâtre* (1790), pp. 1–2.
25. Giving 19 *marcs* 1 *once* in money on 29 October 1789 (*J. Paris*, 20 October 1789, suppl. au n° 293, &c., p. xxviii).
26. P. Robiquet, *Le Personnel municipal de Paris* (1890), p. 229; Lacroix, *Les Actes de la commune de Paris pendant la Révolution*, 8 vols (1894), i, 95. La Harpe was now living at n° 24, rue Guénégaud (Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, nouvelle édition, avec une introduction, des notes et des appendices par E. Biré, 6 vols (1899), i, 219; *Merc.*, 5 December 1789, p. 29). It is not possible to say when he moved there. His lease on his former flat in the rue Saint-Honoré ran out on 1 April 1786 (*Minutier central*: Etude XXI.R.481), but he was still there on 9 March 1787 (*Minutier central*: Etude XLVIII<sup>xx</sup> 313), and the *Almanach royal* continued to give this address until 1791.
27. *Verdière*, xiii, 94.
28. *Ibid.*, xii, 130–1.
29. Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, ii, 326.
30. Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, 5 vols (1891), i, 135.
31. Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, ii, 326–7.
32. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXVI<sup>xx</sup> 514; *Lycée*, xvi, 155, n.
33. *Mémoires secrets*, 4 January 1786, xxx, 11.
34. *Ibid.*, 31 January 1787, xxxiv, 100; Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires inédits . . .* (1825), iii, 303. Mme de Genlis gives the lower figure. Our researches in the registers of the notary of the Duc d'Orléans, maître D. A. Rouen, have not proved successful, but then the papers of this office have not been well-preserved, and there are many gaps.
35. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup> 1177 (cote 4); see *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 84. Strangely enough, a pension control for 1788/1789 evaluates the 'récompense de tous ses travaux littéraires' — excluding his pension on the *Mercure* and his salary from the Lycée — as only 1,600 *livres* and proposes to add 1,500 *livres* (A.N. : F<sup>17</sup>1212, dossier 3, n° 24).
36. *Minutier central*: Etude XLVIII<sup>xx</sup> 313. It began on 1 July 1787.
37. In 1786, he contributed to Dupaty's fund for three condemned men (letter that passed at the sale of the collection of P. Capelle, organized by Laverdet on 26 February 1852, p. 52, n° 494, and offered in Charavay's *Bulletin*, February 1859, n° 10940), and in 1787 he gave 600 *livres* for the foundation of four new hospitals (*Gazette de France*, 27 April 1787, suppl., *Merc.*, 28 April 1787, suppl. (2<sup>e</sup> liste), p. 3).
38. See Mme de Bourdic, 'Vers à m. de La Harpe qui prétendait qu'il commençait à vieillir', *Almanach des Muses*, 1790, pp. 255–6.
39. Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols (1869), iv, 430.
40. *Verdière*, xiii, 164.
41. *Révolutions de Paris*, n° x, 12–19 September 1789, p. 11.
42. *Lycée*, xi, 609, n.
43. *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 88.
44. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXVI<sup>xx</sup> 514; *Merc.*, 5 December 1789, pp. 27–9. This was to assure the continuation of La Harpe's pension of 3,000 *livres* on the paper which had been abolished with all other pensions of a similar nature in August 1789 (*Lycée*, xvi, 155, n.).
45. *Op. cit.*, ii, 220, n.
46. Préaudeau, *op. cit.*, p. 538.
47. At the time of the suppression of privileges in August 1789, the literary part of the *Mercure* was being edited by B. Imbert, with Mallet du Pan in charge of the political section. Framéry was writing articles on the Opera and the *Spectacle de Monsieur*, and Le Vacher de Charnois was still responsible for those on the Comédie française and the Comédie italienne (*Merc.*, 8 August 1789, *avertissement*). Under the new agreement

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Marmontel, Chamfort and La Harpe agreed to supply the major part of the literary material, beginning on 1 January 1790, although La Harpe himself anticipated this slightly by beginning to insert articles on 19 December 1789. Imbert continued for a while as general editor and replaced Le Vacher de Charnois on articles dealing with the Comédies française and italienne. Marmontel replaced Framéry for reviews of the Opera and the *Spectacles de Monsieur*. Panckoucke — as was his custom — had no part in the composition of the paper (*J. Paris*, 21 October 1790, suppl. n° 95). Imbert continued to announce engravings and music, but new books — announced on the cover of the paper — became the responsibility of La Harpe. To help launch the new paper, the price went up from 32 to 33 livres a year, and the literary section was doubled to 'deux feuilles d'impression' (*Merc.*, 5 December 1789, pp. 26–7). The new contributors agreed to initial their articles, Marmontel with an *M.*, Chamfort with a *C.*, and La Harpe (or rather Delaharpe) with a *D.* (*ibid.*, 9 January 1790, p. 62.)

This arrangement lasted until December 1791. There was no literary section in the issue of 13 March 1790. In October 1790, the authors of the paper were joined by Ginguéné, who signed his articles with a *G.*, from the end of July 1791 (*ibid.*, 30 July 1791, p. 191). At this time, Imbert was replaced by Framéry and Berquin (*ibid.*, 20 August 1791, p. 91). In the autumn of 1791, the heading of the paper said that it was 'composé et rédigé, quant à la partie littéraire par mm. Marmontel, de la Harpe, Chamfort, tous les trois de l'Académie française, et m. Ginguéné, et mm. Framéry et Berquin, rédacteurs'. On 7 November 1791, however, La Harpe signed an act with Panckoucke, under the terms of which he became the general editor of the paper ('Document manuscrit revêtu de la signature de La Harpe', *Vente d'A. Voisin*, January 1889, n° 184). The new *Mercure français*, 'composé par m. de La Harpe, quant à la partie littéraire, par m. Marmontel, pour les contes, et par m. Framéry, pour les spectacles', appeared on 10 December 1791.

In the troubles of August 1792, the paper appeared for one issue on 18 August as *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, and then continued from 31 August on as the *Mercure français*, 'par une société de patriotes'. The political section was taken away from Mallet du Pan and given to Garat and Lenoir-Laroche (*Merc.*, 8 September 1792, p. 35). There does not appear to have been any change in the literary section at this time. The one signed review during this period is by Delacroix (*ibid.*, 1 December 1792, pp. 27–9).

On 15 December 1792, the *Mercure* became a daily paper and the authors were named. The general editor was now Castera, who also worked on the political section with Rabaut de Saint-Etienne, Lenoir-Laroche and Garat. Marmontel still provided stories, and Framéry was still in charge of theatre reviews. The literary section was, however, now shared by La Harpe and Suard, the latter being responsible for 'la littérature anglaise et étrangère' (p. 3). Whether he actually provided articles at this time is not clear and in any case his contribution appears to have been very slight. In order to leave more room for political news and reports from the Convention nationale, literature was soon relegated to a weekly supplement, the first of which appeared on 6 January 1793. The last such supplement that we have been able to trace is that of 2 February 1793, and from 15 February on, literary articles reappeared in the body of the *Mercure* itself. In these supplements, there appeared two signed articles, one by Panckoucke (n° 6), and the other signed *C* . . . (n° 11).

The last issue of the paper as a daily was on 27 March 1793, when the falling off of receipts forced Panckoucke to revert to the former arrangement of a weekly, appearing on Saturdays. It was announced that 'la partie littéraire' was to continue to be 'composé par le citoyen Laharpe' (*Merc.*, 27 March 1793, p. 3). There was no mention of Suard. La Harpe was to remain the author and editor of the literary section up to the time of his arrest on 26 ventôse an II (16 March 1794). It is difficult to say for how long after this date articles written by him continued to appear. Under the original contract signed in November 1789, the contributors agreed to send their book reviews to the paper at least three weeks before the date of publication. In addition, although published on a Saturday, it was printed on the preceding Wednesday (*ibid.*, 30 January 1790, p. 313). The last positively identifiable article appeared on 22 March 1794. The first ensuing issue without any book reviews is that of 26 April (7 floréal), but internal evidence excludes all intervening reviews except one in the issue of 29 March (9 germinal), pp. 196–9.

48. See part of a letter to Beaumarchais published in the *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 40 (1933), 464.

## Notes to Chapter V, continued

49. *Todd 1*, p. 246.
50. *Brenner*, 4792.
51. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup>4759.
52. *Verdière*, XIII, 150–1.
53. *Ibid.*, v, 341–2.
54. *Adresse des auteurs dramatiques à l'Assemblée nationale . . .* ([Paris, 1790]).
55. *Observations pour les comédiens français* (1790).
56. *Défense des Comédiens français* ([s.l.n.d.]).
57. A.N. : F<sup>17</sup> 1350, dossier 2, n° 13; see *Chronique de Paris*, 17 October 1790, p. 1158.
58. *Spectateur national et le Modérateur*, 26 August 1790, p. 345.
59. *Moniteur*, 15 January 1791, réimp., vii, 116–20.
60. *Ibid.*, 21 July 1791, réimp., ix, 175.
61. By passing a notarial act before maître D. A. Rouen. Unfortunately, this and two further acts of association passed on 7 June and 30 July 1791 have since disappeared from the minutes of maître Rouen's office. However, the eighty-seven signatures on a power of attorney passed on 20 April 1792 show that most of the important dramatists of the time were members of the association (*Minutier central*: Étude LXXI<sup>x</sup>109). Other documents showing La Harpe's interest in the association are kept in the library of the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs dramatiques, — *Registres de Perception, &c.*
62. *Moniteur*, 1 September 1792, réimp., xiii, 574.
63. La Harpe brought out a *Réponse aux observations pour les Comédiens français* ([s.d.]). He also signed Lemierre's *Réponse à la pétition des directeurs de spectacles* (1791), Beaumarchais's *Pétition à l'Assemblée nationale contre l'usurpation des propriétés des auteurs par des directeurs de spectacles* (1791), Sedaine's *Pétition adressée à l'Assemblée nationale . . . sur la représentation en France des pièces françaises traduites en langue étrangère* ([s.d.]) and the manuscript draft of Chamfort's *Pétition à l'Assemblée nationale des Auteurs dramatiques, le 18 septembre 1792* (A.N. : F<sup>17</sup> 1001, n° 39), printed without signatures in the *Moniteur*, 14 October 1792, p. 1222, réimp., xiv, 199.
64. *Ibid.*, 3 September 1793, réimp., xvii, 549.
65. *J. Paris*, 15 May 1788, p. 593; *Merc.*, 24 May 1788, p. 179.
66. *Correspondance littéraire*, xv, 446.
67. *Séance extraordinaire . . .* (1789), p. 7.
68. Fontanes, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
69. *Merc.*, 14 July 1792, p. 46; see *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), II, 102–3.
70. A.N. : AA.12, n° 521; see Lacroix, *op. cit.*, v, 15–16. The committee finally recommended the Abbé Sicard.
71. *Chronique de Paris*, 1 August 1790, pp. 848–50.
72. *Moniteur*, 17 August 1790, réimp., v, 409.
73. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1790, réimp., v, 439–40.
74. La Harpe, Marmontel, the Maréchal de Beauvau, Suard, and Montesquieu-Fezensac were appointed for this purpose on 27 August, and reported back on 6 September (*Registres*). La Harpe published his part of the report, a 'Précis sur l'objet, les statuts et les travaux de l'Académie française' in the *Merc.*, 16 and 23 October 1790, pp. 107–19, 139–55.
75. *Verdière*, XIII, 227–8.
76. *J. Paris*, 26 May 1791, p. 587.
77. *Des Académies* (1791).
78. *Verdière*, XIII, 121.
79. 'Discours sur l'état des lettres . . .' (*Lycée*, IV, 1–78).
80. *J. Paris*, 26 August 1791, pp. 973–4.
81. *Merc.*, 23 October 1790, p. 151.
82. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1790, p. 97.
83. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1792, p. 66.
84. Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, 6 vols (1889), I, pp. lvii, 409–20.
85. *Lycée*, XIV, 423–4.
86. *Mémorial*, n° 55 (suppl.).
87. *Discours sur la liberté du théâtre, prononcé le 17 décembre 1790* ([Paris, 1790]).
88. *Merc.*, 18 December 1790, p. 92, 23 April 1791, p. 147, n.
89. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1791, pp. 106–7, n.; *Mémorial*, *loc. cit.*
90. *Chronique de Paris*, 15 May 1791, pp. 537–8.
91. *J. Paris*, 12 July 1791, p. 775.



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92. *Merc.*, 30 July 1791, p. 189.
93. In scene 8 (*Chronique de Paris*, 11 July 1791, p. 773). Despite what is claimed by Peignot, op. cit., p. 82, this tirade is retained in all subsequent editions of the play.
94. *J. Paris*, 12 December 1791, p. 1410.
95. *Chronique de Paris*, 8 May 1792, p. 515.
96. *Ibid.*, 11 May 1792, p. 526; *J. Paris*, 14 May 1792, p. 546.
97. *Moniteur*, 6 December 1789, réimp., II, 316–17.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Chronique de Paris*, 27 March 1790, pp. 342–3.
100. *Biographie universelle*, IV, 581 (article by Du Rozoir).
101. *Chronique de Paris*, 13 September 1790, p. 1021.
102. *Minutier central*: Etude L<sup>xx</sup>756.
103. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 4.
104. *Ibid.*, f. 9.
105. *Minutier central*: Etude L<sup>xx</sup> 756.
106. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 13.
107. *Ibid.*, 27 December 1790, 7 February 1791, ff. 14, 20.
108. *Ibid.*, 30 December 1790, f. 17.
109. *Moniteur*, 14 January 1791, réimp., VII, 112.
110. *J. Paris*, 25 November 1789, p. 1533.
111. Lacroix, op. cit., VI, 346.
112. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 21.
113. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1791, f. 29. There is no mention of a literature course in the notice announcing the second half of the session from 2 May to 31 July (*J. Paris*, 30 April 1791 (feuille indicative des spectacles) ).
114. *Minutier central*: Etude XLVIII<sup>xx</sup>344. It began on 1 July 1791.
115. *Chronique de Paris*, 19 November 1791, p. 1302.
116. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup>4759.
117. He is last recorded as living in the rue Guénégaud on 19 January 1791 (*Minutier central*: Etude XLVIII<sup>xx</sup>344).
118. *Registre des Assemblées*, 22 October 1791, f. 33.
119. *J. Paris*, 16 November 1791, suppl. n° 115; *Chronique de Paris*, 19 November 1791, pp. 1301–2. He planned to give lessons on Thursdays and Saturdays from 12 noon to 2 p.m., starting on 1 December and finishing at the end of April 1792.
120. See supra., n. 47.
121. Florian, op. cit., p. 216.
122. The last letter dates from December 1791.
123. *Todd I*, pp. 314–15.
124. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXXIII<sup>xx</sup> 661.
125. Collated with the above.
126. *Todd I*, p. 314.
127. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 44.
128. *Ibid.*, f. 45.
129. Receipt offered in Charavay's *Catalogue*, December 1967, p. 35, n° 32156.
130. *La Quotidienne*, 7 December 1792, p. 3.
131. *Esprit des Journaux*, September 1792, p. 395.
132. *Merc.*, 31 August 1792, pp. 76, 78–9.
133. *Ibid.*, 12 January 1793, suppl.
134. (Paris, [s.d.]).
135. *Hymne à la liberté*, 93–7.
136. *Ibid.*, 176–81.
137. *Merc.*, 8 December 1792, pp. 40–1.
138. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1793, p. 220.
139. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1793, p. 131.
140. *Ibid.*, 1 March 1794, p. 9.
141. *Ibid.*, 15 February 1794, pp. 284–7.
142. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1793, p. 220.
143. *Verdière*, v, 448–50.
144. *Merc.*, 22 June 1793, p. 343.
145. *Correspondance littéraire*, v, 416.
146. *Merc.*, 25 ventôse an II (15 March 1794), pp. 101–2.

## Notes to Chapter V, continued

147. Archives de la Seine: V.10.E (article 4); *Petites Affiches*, 1 April 1793, p. 1404.
148. Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi* (1885), v, 126. La Harpe appears to have sought a divorce as soon as it became legal. A copy of his wedding contract was drawn up on 18 December 1792 (*Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup> 1018).
149. *Minutier central*: Etude XCI<sup>xx</sup> 1301.
150. *Ibid.*
151. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup> 4759; see *Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1176.
152. (Paris, 1793.) At the end of the volume he inserted a declaration of property, signed on 16 May 1793 (*Minutier central*: Etude XXXVI<sup>xx</sup>620).
153. *Merc.*, 1 June 1793, pp. 195–201.
154. *La Quotidienne*, 16 August 1793, p. 891; *Chronique de Paris*, 16 August 1793, p. 3.
155. *Verdière*, III, 387–8.
156. *La Prise de Toulon*, refrain.
157. J. Guillaume, *Procès-verbaux du comité d'instruction publique de la Convention nationale*, 7 vols (1891), II, 829–32.
158. *J. Paris*, 5 frimaire an II (25 November 1793), p. 1323.
159. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1793, p. 1065.
160. *Ibid.*, 7 frimaire an II (27 November 1793), p. 1332.
161. *Registres*.
162. *Merc.*, 14 July 1792, pp. 46–8.
163. *Registres*.
164. *Rapport et projet de décret* ([s.d.]), p. 2.
165. A.N. : F<sup>17</sup> 1095, dossier 2.
166. *Registre des Assemblées*, 21 November 1792, f. 48.
167. *Ibid.*,
168. *J. Paris*, 30 November 1792 (feuille indicative des spectacles), 27 April 1793, p. 470; *Chronique de Paris*, 8 December 1792, pp. 1371–2.
169. *Supra*, n. 134.
170. *Magasin encyclopédique*, n° 1 (1792), pp. 5–7; see *Registre des Assemblées*, 31 October 1792, f. 45.
171. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1793, ff. 52–3.
172. *Ibid.*, 17 March 1793, f. 53.
173. *Ibid.*, 24 March 1793, f. 54.
174. *Ibid.* He was finally paid 1,800 livres for the session (*ibid.*, 2 August 1793, f. 59).
175. *Chronique de Paris*, 12 April 1793, p. 4; *J. Paris*, 27 April 1793, p. 470.
176. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 57.
177. *Ibid.*, f. 60.
178. *Ibid.*, ff. 61–2.
179. *Ibid.*, ff. 63–6.
180. *Ibid.*
181. *Lycée*, VIII, 7–8, n.
182. *Mémorial*, n° 52, pp. 2–3.
183. *Op. cit.*, III, 211.
184. *Lycée*, XIV, 403.
185. *Merc.*, 29 June 1793, pp. 390–1.
186. *La Quotidienne*, 2 October 1793, p. 1058.
187. *J. Paris*, 12 germinal an II (1 April 1794), pp. 1841–4.
188. Archives historiques de la police: A<sup>A</sup>16 Carton 7, n° 579.
189. *J. Paris*, 1 germinal an II (21 March 1794), p. 1800.
190. *Ibid.*, 25 germinal an II (14 April 1794), p. 1890.
191. *Ibid.*
192. Archives historiques de la police: A<sup>A</sup> 28 Carton 18, n° 101.
193. *J. Paris*, 3 floréal an II (22 April 1794), p. 1927.
194. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup> 4759.
195. It is difficult to say how much trust can be placed in a description of La Harpe in prison given in a 'Souvenir de la Révolution raconté à ses enfants par la marquise de XXX', *Annales politiques et littéraires*, 8 May 1898, pp. 291–2. The description rings fairly true, but makes the mistake of placing La Harpe and his fellow prisoners in the *maison de santé* run by Belhomme in the rue de Charonne, and with which he had no connexion (*Registre d'Ecroux*, Archives historiques de la police: A<sup>B</sup>316).
196. *Lycée*, XIV, 403, see *ibid.*, VIII, 17.

## Notes to Chapter V, continued

197. *Ibid.*, xiv, 403.
198. *Révolution française*, 62 (January/June 1912), 546–9. This, or a similar letter, was found among Robespierre's papers after his death, but, according to J. L. Laya, Courtois, who was responsible for these papers, 'eut la faiblesse de la rendre à La Harpe' (quoted by Ravenal, *Bibliographie de la France*, 14 December 1833, pp. 3–4). Compare Garat, *op. cit.*, II, 339.
199. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup> 4759.
200. See the two letters from La Harpe reproduced in facsimile at the beginning of Gail's *Observations sur les quatre dernières fables de La Fontaine* (1821); *Biographie universelle*, xv, 366; Boulard, *Lettre au Moniteur* (1814), p. 11.
201. *Lycée*, xv, 82.
202. *Verdière*, v, 565.
203. *Ibid.*
204. *Ibid.*, xvi, 207–8.
205. Préaudeau, *op. cit.*, pp. 553–4.
206. Quoted by Petitot, *op. cit.*, pp. liv–vi.

## Notes to Chapter VI

1. Although there is no positive proof that Mme de Clermont-Tonnerre was the main instrument in bringing La Harpe to Christianity, his later devotion to her makes this more than likely (Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, II, 299–300; Frénilly, *op. cit.*, p. 91). We have found no confirmation for Meister's claim that he was converted by the Marquise de Hautefort (*Souvenirs de mon dernier voyage à Paris* (1910), pp. 97–8).
2. *Le Psautier en Français, traduction nouvelle* (an vi [1798]).
3. A.N. : F<sup>7</sup> 4759.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Jovicevich 1*, pp. 145–6 (for a variety of reasons we are convinced that the letter in question dates from 1794 and not 1802).
6. 'Je n'ai pas cru devoir continuer un travail ingrat et périlleux' (letter to Grégoire which passed at the sale of the collection of J. B. Lamoureux, organized by Laverdet on 25 January 1855, p. 89, n° 527).

In 1795, he was named as a collaborator in the *Magasin encyclopédique*, but as he himself pointed out (*Discours sur l'état actuel des lettres* (an v), *p.s.*, p. 70) his actual contribution only consisted in his sending part of his translation of canto X of the *Pharsalia* (*Magasin encyclopédique*, 1 (1795), 267–70).

We have been unable to discover why the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale names La Harpe as an editor of *Le Moniteur* and of *La Quotidienne*. Although he possessed all the issues of *Le Moniteur* from 1 June 1792 to 31 December 1796 (*Cat.* 811), the only articles bearing his name were all reprinted from the *Mercur*. His contributions to *La Quotidienne* consist of signed letters to the editors, although this paper was written by men sharing his political outlook and does contain several articles defending him.

7. *Aulard 1*, I, 38–9.
8. *Ibid.*, I, 294–5.
9. *Ibid.*, I, 314; see *J. Paris*, 9 nivôse an III (29 December 1794), pp. 401–2.
10. *Aulard 1*, I, 350.
11. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, v, 101.
12. (Paris, [s.d.]).
13. *Chant des Triomphes*, 91–4.
14. *Aulard 1*, I, 328.
15. *Registre des Assemblées*, 27 thermidor an II (14 August 1794), f. 69.
16. Under the law of 25 vendémiaire an III (16 October 1794) all such organizations had to lodge a list of their members with the civil committee of their Section. The Lycée's list is in the *Procès-verbaux du comité civil de la Butte-des-Moulins* (B.N. : n.a.fr. 2676, f. 66).
17. Boissy d'Anglas, *Rapport sur le Lycée républicain* (an III), p. 5; see *Moniteur*, 20, 21 brumaire an III (10, 11 November 1794), réimp., xxII, 457, 466–8.
18. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 69.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, f. 72.
21. *Ibid.*, 12 frimaire an II (2 December 1793), f. 64.

## Notes to Chapter VI, continued

22. Ibid., 8 frimaire an III (28 November 1793), f. 72.
23. Ibid.
24. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Hôtel de Ville: *Registre de l'Etat civil*, 21 brumaire an III (11 November 1794). Some have suggested that she threw herself down a well (Saint-Surin, 'Vie de La Harpe', *Verdière*, I, p. lxxvii), but the death certificate merely states that the officials found that she had died 'hier à six heures du soir en la maison du citoyen Legras, rue de l'Unité, laquelle était âgée de cinquante ans.'
25. Guillaume, op. cit., v, 359, 384. On 13 August 1795, the Comité d'Instruction publique considered a letter from La Harpe in which he requested a continuation of this pension, and this was granted on 15 (ibid., vi, 539–40, 545).
26. He was granted an advance of 1,200 livres on 25 April 1795 (*Registre du comité*, 6 floréal an III, f. 2) and was paid the rest on 23 August (*Registre des Assemblées*, 6 fructidor an III, f. 92).
27. E. Creuzet, 'Histoire seigneuriale, civile et paroissiale de Saintry', *Mémoires et documents de la Société historique et archéologique de Corbeil et d'Etampes*, 6 (1907), 134.
28. Frénilly, op. cit., p. 91.
29. Mme Récamier, *Souvenirs et Correspondance tirés des papiers de mme Récamier*, par mme C. Lenormant, quatrième édition (1873), I, 9–10, 53.
30. 'De la guerre déclarée par les tyrans révolutionnaires, à la raison, à la morale, aux lettres et aux arts' (*Lycée*, VIII, 1–40).
31. *Décade philosophique*, 20 nivôse an III (9 January 1795), pp. 100–1; *J. Paris*, 13 nivôse an III (12 January 1795), p. 457.
32. *Programme du Lycée républicain* (an III), p. 10.
33. *J. Paris*, 1 pluviôse an III (20 January 1795), pp. 487–8.
34. Guillaume, op. cit., v, 369, 395, 427, 684.
35. *Merc.*, 5 ventôse an III (23 February 1795), pp. 217–9.
36. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), IV, 201–22.
37. *J. Paris*, 14 prairial an III (2 June 1795), pp. 1027–8.
38. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), II, 113–15.
39. *Verdière*, v, 434–5.
40. *La Liberté de la Presse défendue par La Harpe, contre Chénier* (an III).
41. *J. Paris*, 23 floréal an III (12 May 1795), p. 4.
42. *Moniteur*, 10 fructidor an III (27 August 1795), réimp., xxv, 560–1.
43. Ibid., 16, 17 fructidor (2, 3 September), réimp., xxv, 624, 629–32.
44. *Verdière*, v, 418, 457–8.
45. *Le Salut public, ou la vérité dite à la Convention par un homme libre* (an III), and *Oui ou Non*, subtitled: 'Dialogue entre un Etranger appelé le Sens commun et un homme de bonne foi' (Paris, 9 fructidor an III (27 August 1795)).
46. *Verdière*, v, 468.
47. Ibid., v, 473.
48. *Moniteur*, 24 fructidor an III (10 September 1795), réimp., xxv, 686.
49. Ibid., 25 fructidor (11 September), réimp., xxv, 695.
50. *Aulard I*, II, 229–30.
51. *Acte de Garantie pour la liberté individuelle, la sûreté du domicile, et la liberté de la presse* (an III).
52. *Verdière*, v, 441; see P. L. Lacroix, *Mémoires sur les journées révolutionnaires et les coups d'état*, 2 vols (1875), I, 337.
53. *La Quotidienne*, 25 fructidor an III (11 September, 1795) pp. 2–3.
54. *Proclamation de la section de la Butte-des-Moulins* (an III).
55. *Aulard I*, II, 223.
56. Ibid., II, 246.
57. *Extrait du Procès verbal de l'assemblée générale de la Butte-des-Moulins* ([an IV]).
58. *Moniteur*, 24 fructidor an III (10 September 1795), réimp., xxv, 683–5.
59. Ibid., 2 and 3 vendémiaire an IV (24 and 25 September 1795), réimp., xxvi, 14–16, 18–19.
60. Ibid., réimp., xxvi, 23–4.
61. Ibid., 4 vendémiaire (26 September), réimp., xxvi, 31–2.
62. *Sections de Paris, prenez-y garde! discours prononcé dans la section de la Butte-des-Moulins* (Paris, 1795).
63. 'Extrait des registres de l'assemblée primaire de la section de la Butte-des-Moulins . . .' (*Bibl. hist.*, ms. 811, ff. 40–6).
64. *J. Paris*, 5 vendémiaire an IV (27 September 1795), p. 2.

## Notes to Chapter VI, continued

65. See letter to J. D. Antoine offered in the *Revue des Autographes*, May 1890, p. 7, n° 94.
66. *La Quotidienne*, 10 vendémiaire an iv (2 October 1795), p. 4, 11 vendémiaire an iv (3 October 1795), p. 4.
67. *Courrier universel ou l'Echo de Paris*, 13 vendémiaire an iv (5 October 1795), p. 1.
68. *Aulard*, I ii, 291–2.
69. *Todd I*, pp. 308–9.
70. *Aulard I*, ii, 292.
71. *Todd I*, p. 309.
72. H. Zivy, *Le Treize Vendémiaire an IV* (1898), p. 52.
73. *Todd I*, loc. cit.
74. *Aulard I*, ii, 302.
75. P. Duviquet, *Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de feu mr. A. M. H. Boulard* (1828), p. 11.
76. *J. Paris*, 25 August 1811, pp. 1696–7.
77. A.N.: F7130, 7151.
78. E. L. H. de Launay, comte d'Antraigues, *Corps législatif. Pièces trouvées à Venise dans le porte-feuille d'Antraigues et écrites entièrement de sa main* (an v).
79. A. Debidour, *Recueil des Actes du Directoire exécutif*, 3 vols (1910), I, 333.
80. A.N.: F7130.
81. A.N.: F72200.<sup>307</sup>
82. A.N.: F7130.
83. *J. Paris*, 22 germinal an iv (11 April 1796), p. 807.
84. *Ibid.*, 25, 29, 30 germinal (14, 18, 19 April), pp. 818, 835–6, 839.
85. *L'Esprit de la Révolution, ou commentaire historique sur la langue révolutionnaire*, a form of dictionary of *phénomènes* cast up by the Revolution, it was to have contained, among other things, articles on *Les Assemblées*, *Le Calendrier républicain*, *La Montagne*, *Le Panthéon de la Révolution*, the meaning of the word *Révolution*, *Le Sans-Culottisme*, *Les Sociétés populaires* such as the *Jacobins* and the *Cordeliers* and *La Théorie du Mensonge* (*Lycée*, xiv, 424, n., 433, 451, 454; *Verdière*, v, 500, n.). This grew out of the series of lectures that he gave at the beginning of 1795 in which he attempted to describe the breaking up of society that resulted from *tutoiement* and the misuse of words such as *liberté*, *égalité* and *droits de l'homme* (*Verdière*, v, 663). His rallying call was: 'Anéantissons la tyrannie des mots pour rétablir le règne des choses' (*Lycée*, II, 462). This commentary was later abandoned and parts used in other works.
86. See *Réfutation du Livre de l'Esprit*, 2<sup>e</sup> édition (1797), p. i.
87. *Minutier central: Etude LXXXIII<sup>xx</sup>673*.
88. First published in the *Œuvres complètes de Jean Racine* (1807), it contains a preface, a life of Racine and La Harpe's *éloge* of 1772 as well as commentary and a preface for each play, plus some notes on Racine's poetry. Finally published by Panckoucke's son-in-law, H. Agasse, the work was revised by G. Garnier.  
The editor of Voltaire's works, J. J. M. Decroix, later published a so-called *Commentaire sur le Théâtre de Voltaire* (1814), based on notes written by La Harpe on a copy of Voltaire's theatre found at Ferney following the latter's death. These notes appear to have been in the hands of Panckoucke in 1795 — when he announced his intention of bringing out such a commentary (*Nouvelle grammaire raisonnée, à l'usage d'une jeune personne*, 3<sup>e</sup> mille (an III) p. xiii) — and to have then passed into the hands of Agasse (see *Bengesco*, iv, 104). Whether La Harpe himself ever thought of publishing this work is difficult to say, although he was said to be working on it in January 1780 while preparing his *Eloge de Voltaire* (*Correspondance littéraire*, XII, 374).
89. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 69–70.
90. *J. Paris*, 29 germinal an iv (18 April 1796), pp. 835–6.
91. A.N.: F76130.
92. Debidour, op. cit., III, 44.
93. Meister, op. cit., pp. 103–5. According to Daunou, Chénier publicly tore up the warrant against La Harpe at the beginning of October 1796 (op. cit., p. xli). We have not been able to confirm this.
94. A.N.: F7151.
95. *Todd I*, pp. 308–9.
96. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 113.
97. *Ibid.*, f. 114; see Sainte-Beuve, op. cit., x, 275.
98. *Registre des Assemblées*, f. 114.
99. A.N.: F7151.

## Notes to Chapter VI, continued

100. *Ibid.* The founders of the Lycée were so sure of the outcome that on 5 November (15 brumaire) they decided to print La Harpe's name in the programme and invited him to prepare something for the opening (*Registre des Assemblées*, f. 114).
101. *La Quotidienne*, 29 brumaire an v (19 November 1796), p. 4.
102. *Lycée*, iv, 1–78.
103. *Ibid.*, iv, 22–3.
104. *Ibid.*, iv, 78.
105. *Nouvelles politiques*, 13 frimaire an v (3 December 1796), pp. 290–1.
106. *Aulard I*, iii, 607–8.
107. *La Quotidienne*, 5 nivôse an v (25 December 1796), pp. 2–3.
108. *Ibid.*, 20 frimaire an v (10 December 1796), p. 1.
109. *Aulard I*, iv, 13; compare Archives de la Seine: VD\*354.
110. *Lycée*, xv, 285.
111. (Paris, an v–1797). *La Quotidienne*, 9 ventôse an v (27 February 1797), p. 4. Based on the commentary on Revolutionary language (*supra.*, n. 85).
112. *J. Paris*, 2 germinal an v (22 March 1797), p. 733.
113. *Ibid.*, 10 floréal an v (19 April 1797), p. 890; compare *Aulard I*, iv, 110.
114. *La Quotidienne*, 14 germinal an v (3 April 1797), p. 3, 17 floréal an v (6 May 1797), pp. 2–3.
115. *Réfutation du livre de l'Esprit . . .* (Paris, an v–1797). *La Quotidienne*, 18 floréal an v (7 May 1797), p. 3.
116. When the paper got into trouble under the *coup d'état* of *Fructidor an V*, Fontanes tried to make out that 'il n'était ni auteur ni rédacteur du *Mémorial*, mais seulement coopérateur, et qu'il se bornait à insérer des articles de littérature' (A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>4286, dossier 22, n° 1). In fact, the work seems to have been shared fairly evenly, although La Harpe was named by the postal authorities as the main author of the paper, and thus, probably, its main editor (*ibid.*). La Harpe signed his articles *L. H.*
117. *Mémorial*, prospectus.
118. *Ibid.*, n° 4, 32.
119. *Ibid.*, n° 29, 52.
120. *Ibid.*, n° 6, p. 1.
121. *Ibid.*, n° 61, 62.
122. *Ibid.*, n° 86.
123. *Programme du Lycée républicain* (an v).
124. *Magasin encyclopédique*, 2<sup>e</sup> année (an v), v, 281–7; *Décade philosophique*, 30 nivôse an v (19 January 1797), xii, 176–7. This establishment grew out of the Club des Etrangers which was founded on 1 November 1790 (*Chronique de Paris*, 30 October 1790, p. 1216). The Lycée des Etrangers became the Lycée de Paris while still at the Hôtel de Marbeuf in November 1797 (*Décade philosophique*, 30 brumaire an vi (20 November 1797), xix, 370). In January 1800, it combined with the Société de la maison de Mercy and moved to the latter's address in the boulevard Montmartre (*Petites Affiches*, 2 pluviôse an viii (22 January 1800), p. 1949). It remained there for five months, before moving to the rue du Hasard (rue Thérèse) (*Décade philosophique*, 30 prairial an viii (19 June 1800), xxv, 564–5). In 1802, it became the Athénée des Etrangers (*J. Paris*, 15 floréal an x (5 May 1802), p. 1379) and under the Empire it moved to the rue Neuve Saint-Eustache (rue d'Aboukir) (Hillairet, *op. cit.*, i, 65).
- This complicated history needs to be traced carefully as La Harpe's links with the institution have been over-stressed. He does not appear to have taught there before or after 1797. He was out of Paris in 1798 and 1799, and by 1800 proper literature courses had been replaced by readings on the seventh day of every *décade* and by special lectures on the ninth. After the death of Panckoucke, the director of the Lycée de Paris, Lebrun, also became proprietor of the *Moniteur* and kept its readers informed of the programme of his Lycée (*Moniteur*, 22 fructidor an viii (9 September 1800), p. 1424, &c.). In addition, from 4 January 1798 (15 nivôse an vi) to 6 March 1801 (15 ventôse an ix), pieces read at the literature meetings were published in the *Veillée des Muses*. There is no mention of La Harpe in either Lebrun's notices or in the latter publication, and it is extremely unlikely that he ever spoke at this Lycée again.
125. *J. Paris*, 23 floréal an v (12 May 1797), p. 942. For a description of this establishment, see *Aulard I*, iv, 27.
126. *Ibid.*, iv, 300.
127. *Mémorial*, n° 19, p. 2.

## Notes to Chapter VI, continued

128. *Registre des Assemblées*, 28 prairial an v (16 June 1797), f. 121.
129. A. Douarche, *Les Tribunaux civils pendant la Révolution*, 2 vols (1907), II, 435–6. Proceedings were started on 6 May 1797 (17 floréal an v), and the pirated edition was described in official police documents as consisting of ‘135 p. in-8° petit romain et petit texte’ (Archives de la Seine: D.12 U<sup>1</sup> art. 20). The decision in Migneret’s and La Harpe’s favour was given on 31 August (14 fructidor).
130. Douarche, op. cit., II, 418–19.
131. Archives de la Seine: D.12 U<sup>1</sup> art. 20.
132. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1149. His lease began on 1 April (letter to Agasse of 23 March 1797) (B.N.: Rothschild. A.XVIII.345).
133. Chateaubriand, op. cit., II, 583–4.
134. Born at Le Vigan (Gard), the daughter of Alexandre de Hatte de Longuerue, ‘ancien officier aux Gardes françaises’ and Marie-Jeanne La Cour (*Minutier central*: Etude LXVIII<sup>xx</sup>905).
135. Her cousin, Suzanne-Marie La Cour, was the wife of Pierre Lecointe, an appeals court judge (*Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1149), and Madame P. Cavailler of the Archives de Seine et Marne in Melun has kindly supplied us with the following note from the Collection Lhuillier on the girl’s brother: ‘Le Marquis Gabriel-François Xavier ou Félix né le 17 février 1777 ou 1778 près de Rebais (peut-être à Saint-Cyr) fut élève de l’école militaire de Rebais, servit comme lieutenant des guides-interprètes et devint adjoint à l’Etat major de la Grande Armée, aide de camp et major-adjoint général. En 1813, célibataire, il revint habiter le canton de Rebais, fut président de ce canton pendant les élections et adjoint au maire de Rebais. Il fut fait colonel à la bataille de Montereau en 1814; il fut décoré de la Légion d’honneur et possédait 6,000 livres de revenus. En 1817, il était électeur à Saint-Cyr-les-Rebais.’
136. Mme Récamier, op. cit., I, 60–3.
137. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1149.
138. Archives de la Seine: V.10.E (article 4). Some doubt on this date is cast by the fact that the *état civil* in Rebais says 31 July (13 thermidor), which is, incidentally, the date of the recording of the marriage contract in Paris.
139. Mme Récamier, loc. cit.
140. Ibid.
141. *Correspondance générale de Sainte-Beuve*, publiée par J. Bonnerot (Toulouse, 1935— ), n° 2515B. One can imagine the delight that this rupture caused the scandal-mongers. Gossip had it that after leaving La Harpe ‘[elle] se fit publiquement entretenir par le banquier espagnol Hervas’ (J. Turquan, *Le Monde et le demi-monde sous le consulat et l’empire* (1896), p. 126). There appears to be some truth in this. By the time of her death, she was the widow of Hervas, the Spanish minister in Paris, but we have been unable to find any documents concerning her second marriage. She had a son by Hervas, Charles-Joseph-Adolphe de Hervas — born in 1799 or 1800 —, who became a cavalry captain in the French army (*Minutier central*: Etude LXVIII<sup>xx</sup>905). In notarial acts passed in 1805 and 1806, she is referred to either as being divorced from La Harpe, or even as his widow, and there is no mention of Hervas (*Minutier central*: Etude XV<sup>xx</sup>1191, Etude XVI<sup>xx</sup> 960). Following Hervas to Spain, she returned to France at his death and settled at Lizy-sur-Ourcq, thirty-four kilometres from Rebais. In the autumn of 1834, aged fifty-nine, she went to Paris for a cure at the Tivoli Baths in the rue Saint-Lazare, where she died at 6 a.m. on 22 October (Archives de la Seine: *Fichier de l’Etat civil*).
142. *Aulard I*, IV, 316; *J. Paris*, 21 fructidor an v (7 September 1797), p. 1444.
143. Peignot, op. cit., p. 28. Earlier in the year, Richer-Sérizy had publicly thanked an anonymous correspondent in Dôle, who had written defending him (*Accusateur public*, n° XXVIII, p. 54). Was it this that incited him to go in this direction?
- Peignot only refers to the host in La Borde as *Monsieur G* . . . However, the local archivist in Saint-Aubin, Monsieur F. Rabant, has kindly supplied me with evidence which shows that one of the three farms in the commune, belonging to the Hôtel-Dieu in Dôle, was leased in the eighteenth century to a family called Girard. Much of the mystery surrounding La Harpe’s movements at this time could be cleared up if it were possible to see the text of a letter that he wrote to Agasse on 12 September 1797 and which passed at the sale of letters from the *Cabinet du Chevalier R* . . . y, organized by Charavay on 30 November 1863, n° 285, and was offered in Charavay’s *Bulletin*, August 1875, n° 27150.
144. *J. Paris*, 23 brumaire an v (13 November 1797), p. 215.

*Notes to Chapter VI, continued*

145. An anonymous informer told the police that La Harpe was being hidden by Mme de Clermont-Tonnerre in her house, Champlatreux, at Saintry, near Corbeil. A search warrant was issued on 3 November (13 brumaire); the house was searched without success on 6 (16 brumaire) (A.N. : F<sup>7</sup>6311).
146. A picture of the house is given in Champin and Regnier's *Habitations de personages célèbres*, plate n° XXIII. Madame Cavailler of the Archives de Seine et Marne — to whom we are already indebted for information concerning the brother of Mlle de Hatte de Longuerue — possesses a post-card taken from this plate and which gives the address. The Bézard family was a large one, and we have found that many people bearing this name lived in the same street (Archives de Seine-et-Oise: *Tables décennales*).

*Notes to Chapter VII*

1. *Todd 1*, p. 315.
2. Under article II of the decree of deportation, the property of those to be deported was sequestrated. On 15 February 1798, the money awarded to La Harpe when he and other writers sued Tolozé for performing plays without their permission was transferred to the Bureau du Domaine national (Douarche, op. cit., II, 463). His property was finally confiscated under a law passed on 16 June 1799 (28 prairial an VII) and by a decree from the Directoire on 2 September 1799 (12 fructidor an VII), ratified on the 6th (16 fructidor) (*Aulard 1*, v, 711–13; *Moniteur*, 18 fructidor an VII (8 September 1799), réimp., xxix, 795).
3. See the *Avertissement de l'éditeur*.
4. *Jovicevich 2*, pp. 224–5.
5. Letter to Agasse that passed at the sale of the *Cabinet du chevalier R . . . y*, organized by Charavay on 30 November 1863, n° 285, and at the E. Charavay sale of 24 April 1886, n° 576 (2).
6. *J. Paris*, 4 prairial an VII (24 May 1799), p. 1070.
7. Which was to form the final two volumes of the *Lycée*, published in 1805.
8. At the beginning of May 1797, he had asked the founders of the Lycée to tell him whether he could count on teaching there during the following session as he still had between forty and fifty lessons to give on the subject and preferred to give these lessons before allowing them to be printed (*Registre des Assemblées*, 15 floréal, 15 prairial an v (4 May, 3 June 1797), ff. 119–20). Two days before the *coup d'état*, on 2 September (16 fructidor), it had been decided that, during the following session, La Harpe would give a course on eighteenth-century philosophy, while the normal literature course would be entrusted to his companion on *Le Mémorial*, Fontanes (*ibid.*, f. 125).
9. Begun by July 1797 (*Mémorial*, n° 55, suppl.), only the first part of this work was ever completed. As far as can be ascertained, it was to have been divided into three parts or books. In book one, under the theme of 'la vérité de la révélation apportée par l'Homme-Dieu' (*Verdière*, xvi, 76), La Harpe tries to trace God's action on Earth. The second book was to have dealt with Religion on a spiritual plane, with a survey of the characteristics 'de l'Esprit et de ses mystères' (*ibid.*, xvi, 81), with chapters on redemption, faith, passion, and the lives of the Saints (*ibid.*, xvi, 59, 81, 167, n., 193–4, n., 353, 338, n.; *Lycée*, xv, 235, n.). The final book — almost certainly based on fragments of La Harpe's abortive commentary on the Revolution — was to deal with the question of the Church and society. It was to have a chapter on the problems of public worship (*ibid.*, xvi, 40, 222, 230, n.) and another on *phénomènes de démence* (*ibid.*, xv, 489, xvi, 4, n.; *Verdière*, xvi, 34, 66, n., 130). The footnote in the *Lycée*, xvi, 267, placing this chapter in 'la cinquième partie' of the work is surely an editorial gloss. The *apologie* was to end on the general idea of the power of Providence (*Verdière*, xvi, 8–9, 116, n.; *Lycée*, xv, 56).
10. *Verdière*, v, 673.
11. *Le Triomphe de la Religion, ou le Roi Martyr* (1814). Published by A. M. H. Boulard.
12. Mme Récamier, op. cit., I, 58–9.
13. *Verdière*, v, 679–80.
14. The law was proposed in the legislature on 24 December (3 nivôse) and followed by a decree from the Consulate on 30 (9 nivôse). It was ratified on 3 January 1800 (13 nivôse an VIII) (*J. Paris*, 13, 15 nivôse an VIII (3, 5 January 1800), pp. 465, 471).
15. *Ibid.*, 29 brumaire an VIII (20 November 1799), p. 274 (letter from Petitot).
16. *Jovicevich 1*, pp. 81–3.
17. *Registre du comité*, 27 nivôse an VIII (17 January 1800), ff. 33–4.



## Notes to Chapter VII, continued

18. He was staying at Champlatreux in 1797, when the police raided it while looking for La Harpe (A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311).
19. C. Hill, *Mary Edgeworth and her circle in the days of Buonaparte and the Bourbons* (1910), pp. 25–6. There was a kitchen on the ground floor and three rooms on the first floor, all facing the courtyard (*Minutier central*: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1177).
20. *Aulard 2*, I, 180.
21. *Registre des Assemblées*, 17 nivôse an VIII (7 January 1800), f. 150; *Registre du Comité*, 19 nivôse an VIII (9 January 1800), f. 33.
22. *Ibid.*, 7 pluviôse an VIII (27 January 1800), f. 34.
23. *Ibid.*, 27 pluviôse an VIII (16 February 1800), f. 35.
24. *Aulard 2*, I, 178–9; *Clef du Cabinet*, 8, 16 ventôse an VIII (27 February, 7 March 1800), p. 9465, &c.
25. Mme Récamier, op. cit., I, 54.
26. *Journal des débats*, 8 floréal an VIII (28 April 1800), pp. 3–4; Frénilly, op. cit., pp. 237–8.
27. *Registre des Assemblées*, 16 germinal an VIII (6 April 1800), f. 151.
28. *Jovicevich I*, p. 89.
29. *Clef du Cabinet*, 5 ventôse an VIII (24 February 1800), p. 9441; *Aulard 2*, I, 178–9.
30. *Journal typographique et bibliographique*, 15 thermidor an VIII (4 August 1800), III, 337–8.
31. Bourlet de Vauxcelles, op. cit., passim.
32. While La Harpe was in prison, the paper started to appear every five days on the *quintidi* and the *décidi* of every *décade* (*Merc.*, 5 prairial an II (24 May 1794), pp. 137–8). In January 1795, the literary section was ‘confiée aux soins d’une société de gens de lettres’ (*ibid.*, 5 pluviôse an III (24 January 1795), p. 3). Transferred from Panckoucke to Agasse on 6 pluviôse an II (25 January 1794) (*Minutier central*: Etude LXXXIII<sup>xx</sup>673), the *Mercure français* continued until 30 pluviôse an VII (18 February 1799), but then disappeared in deference to the *Mercure de France, journal politique, littéraire et dramatique, par une société de gens de lettres*, founded by Cailleau. Thirty numbers of this short-lived publication appeared from 10 pluviôse to 30 fructidor an VII (30 January–16 September 1799). It was replaced on 1 messidor an VIII (20 June 1800) by the *Mercure de France, littéraire et politique*, printed by Didot and edited by Fontanes.
33. *Aulard 2*, I, 361, 379. In a police report of 10 prairial an VIII (20 May 1800), La Harpe is named as a collaborator in the Abbé Guillon’s *Recueil de morale et de littérature anti-philosophique*, part of the *Politique chrétienne de l’an 1800* (*ibid.*, I, 375–6). We are unable to confirm this as we have only seen pages 241–300 and the index of this work (B.N.: 8° Lb<sup>43</sup>443).
34. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 91–3; *Merc.*, 1 messidor an VIII (20 June 1800), I, 3–5.
35. *Ibid.*, I, 16 messidor an VIII (20 June, 6 July 1800), I, 5–12, 81–5; 16 vendémiaire, 1 brumaire an IX (8, 23 October 1800), II, 81–6, 161–4; 20 frimaire, 4, 18 nivôse an XI (12, 26 December 1802, 9 January 1803), X, 529–36, XI, 1–4, 97–102.
36. M. L. C. Nisard, *Mémoires et correspondance historiques et littéraires inédits* (1858), pp. 292–3; see *Clef du Cabinet*, 10 messidor an VIII (29 June 1800), p. 7; 11 messidor an VIII (30 June 1800), p. 6.
37. *Décade philosophique*, 20 messidor an VIII (9 July 1800), xxvi, 118–19; *Moniteur*, 18 thermidor an VIII (6 August 1800), p. 1284.
38. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 95–102; *Merc.*, 2 fructidor an XI (20 August 1803), pp. 416, 419; *Lycée*, XI, 261, n. For two independent accounts of a prank by young people staying at Clichy, which misfired, and proved the sincerity of La Harpe’s conversion, see Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi* (1885), V, 137–8, and Rouchon, ‘Une communication sur une aventure de La Harpe chez Mme Récamier’, *Journal des débats*, 17 January 1927, p. 3 (taken from the papers of J. L. A. Coste).
39. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 103–4, 107.
40. He was first approached by the Lycée at the end of May (*Registre du Comité*, 6 prairial an VIII (26 May 1800), f. 39), but no decision had been taken by 31 July (12 thermidor) (*ibid.*, f. 42). La Harpe then wrote and offered to give one class per *décade* for four months and these terms were accepted on 20 August (2 fructidor) (*ibid.*, f. 42).
41. *Discours prononcé par le cn Laharpe à l’ouverture du Lycée* (an IX).
42. *Décade philosophique*, 10 frimaire an IX (1 December 1800), xxvii, 436–7.
43. *J. Paris*, 30 brumaire, 3 frimaire an IX (20, 24 November 1800), pp. 360–1, 380.
44. *Jovicevich I*, pp. 105–6; *J. Paris*, 27 brumaire an IX (18 November 1800), p. 339.
45. *Décade philosophique*, 10 pluviôse an IX (31 January 1801), xxviii, 240–1.

## Notes to Chapter VII, continued

46. *Registre des Assemblées*, 17 germinal an ix (7 April 1801), f. 161. La Harpe then expressed his willingness to continue during the next session (*Registre du Comité*, 5 floréal an ix (25 April 1801), f. 49). The session brought him 2,400 francs, most of it paid in advance (*ibid.*, 27 prairial an ix (16 June 1801), f. 51).
47. *Merc.*, 16 fructidor an viii (3 September 1800), p. 435; *Journal des débats*, 11 fructidor an viii (29 August 1800), p. 3, 5 brumaire an ix (27 October 1800), p. 3.
48. Publication was promised for 9 floréal an ix (29 April 1801) (*Journal des débats*, 5 floréal an ix (25 April 1801), p. 2). Publication announced: *J. Paris*, 15 floréal an ix (5 May 1801), p. 1359.
49. p. 1437.
50. *Ibid.*, 8 prairial an ix (28 May 1801), pp. 1496–7.
51. Colnet du Ravel, *Correspondance turque* (1801), p. 75.
52. *J. Paris*, 30 prairial an ix (19 June 1801), p. 1628.
53. *Aulard 2*, II, 353–4, 360.
54. *Journal typographique et bibliographique*, 8 ventôse an x (27 February 1802), v, 163.
55. *Réponse d'un solitaire de la Trappe, Vers à m. de Voltaire pour le jour de Saint-François*, and *Le Couvent des Camaldules*.
56. *Jovicevich 1*, p. 115.
57. *Clef du Cabinet*, 17 messidor an ix (7 July 1801), p. 8.
58. *J. Paris*, 26 floréal an ix (16 May 1801), p. 1424.
59. Chateaubriand, *Œuvres complètes*, publiées par Sainte-Beuve, 12 vols (1861), II, 713–4, n.
60. *Jovicevich 1*, pp. 115–7, 121–2.
61. *Registre du Comité*, 7 messidor an ix (26 June 1801), f. 52.
62. Mme Récamier, *op. cit.*, I, 54.
63. *Todd 1*, pp. 314–6.
64. *Minutier central*: Etude LXXXIII<sup>xx</sup>661.
65. *Todd 1*, loc. cit.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Registre du Comité*, 13 brumaire an x (4 November 1801), f. 55.
68. *Ibid.*, 23 brumaire an x (14 November 1801), f. 55.
69. *J. Paris*, 3 frimaire an x (24 November 1801), pp. 374–6.
70. *Ibid.*, 28 frimaire, 18 nivôse an x (17 December 1801, 9 January 1802), pp. 524–5, 644.
71. Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires inédits* . . . (1825), v, 120–1.
72. Mme Récamier, *op. cit.*, I, 68.
73. *Moniteur*, 10 ventôse an x (1 March 1802), p. 639.
74. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.
75. *Registre du Comité*, 7 ventôse an x (26 February 1802), f. 59.
76. *Ibid.*
77. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.
78. *Jovicevich 1*, pp. 139–42.
79. *Amateur des Autographes*, 38 (1905), 235–6.
80. *Aulard 2*, II, 760, 764.
81. Mme de Genlis, *op. cit.*, v, 121.
82. *Moniteur*, 10 ventôse an x (1 March 1802), p. 639; compare *J. Paris*, 11 ventôse an x (2 March 1802), p. 967; *Aulard 2*, II, 762–3.
83. See *supra.*, n. 11.
84. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.
85. *Ibid.*
86. Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains* (1869), II, 14; *Moland*, I, p. ix.
87. *Jovicevich 1*, p. 132.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 135–8.
89. *Merc.*, 2 fructidor an xi (20 August 1803), XIII, 419.
90. *Ibid.*, 15 nivôse an XIII (5 January 1805), XIX, 129.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *J. Paris*, 20, 24 thermidor an x (8, 11 August 1802), pp. 1995, 2020; *Aulard 2*, III, 167, 194.
93. *Merc.*, loc. cit.
94. The revised text was published in 1804.
95. J. Delort, *Mes Voyages aux environs de Paris*, 2 vols (1821), I, 167–70.
96. *Jovicevich 1*, p. 141.
97. See the letters to Cartron, the Laborde family's lawyer, of 16 prairial and 5 nivôse an x

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- (5 June and 26 December 1802), which passed at the Charon sales of 3 February 1845, p. 42, n° 261, 14 May 1845, p. 27, n° 185 and 22 March 1847, p. 25, n° 227.
98. *Jovicevich 1*, p. 128.
  99. *Todd 1*, p. 316.
  100. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.
  101. *Todd 1*, p. 317.
  102. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.
  103. *J. Paris*, 24 thermidor an x (11 August 1802), p. 2020, *Aulard 2*, III, 200.
  104. *Minutier central: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1177*.
  105. *Ibid.*
  106. *Minutier central: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1176*.
  107. *Todd 1*, pp. 314–5, 318.
  108. *Merc.*, 24 vendémiaire an xi (17 October 1802), x, 149, n.
  109. *Aulard 2*, III, 596.
  110. *Merc.*, 15 nivôse an XIII (5 January 1805), XIX, 126.
  111. Hill, op. cit., pp. 25–6. A picture of the scene — ‘d’après un dessin fait par une jeune Anglaise’ — has been reproduced in Lavater and Maygrier’s *L’Art de connaître les hommes par la physionomie*, 10 vols (1820), VI, 255 (plate n° 345).
  112. *Correspondance générale de Chateaubriand*, publiée par L. Thomas, 5 vols (1912), I, 66–7.
  113. Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d’outre-tombe*, publiés par E. Biré, 6 vols (1899), II, 327–8; see Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi* (1885), v, 144.
  114. Peignot, op. cit., p. 154. These baths were set up under a decree from the Faculty of Médecine on 21 January 1783 (*J. Paris*, 26 August 1783, p. 983). For descriptions of them, see letters from Albert in the *J. Paris*, 8 March 1784, p. 307, 19 July 1786, pp. 830–1, 2 nivôse an VIII (23 December 1799), pp. 421–2.
  115. J. F. Reichardt, *Un hiver à Paris sous le consulat . . . , d’après les lettres de J. F. Reichardt*, par A. Laquainte (1896), p. 289.
  116. *Aulard 2*, III, 602.
  117. *Ibid.*, III, 606–7.
  118. Franquet de Franqueville, *Le Premier Siècle de l’Institut de France*, 2 vols (1895), I, 138; Reichardt, op. cit., pp. 289–92. For earlier attempts to get La Harpe elected, see *La Quotidienne (Bulletin politique)*, 13 germinal an IV (2 April 1796); *Moniteur*, 26 fructidor an VII (16 September 1799), p. 1444.
  119. *Minutier central: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1176*.
  120. *Ibid.* Both La Harpe’s will and codicil were reproduced in part in the *J. Paris*, 24 pluviôse an XI (13 February 1803), p. 906. See Petitot, op. cit., pp. lxi–lxii, &c.  
 Naming Boulard as his executor, La Harpe left 200 francs to the poor of his parish, a year’s wages to his cook, Jeannette, 1,000 francs to his former servant, Dupuis. As he had no proper lease with d’Espinasse and had only paid 400 francs a year in rent (*Minutier central: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1177*), he wanted the latter to claim the price of a proper lease and take whatever objects he pleased. He thanked Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre and her new husband, the Marquis de Talaru, for their care of him during his illness. He thanked his doctors, Malouet and Portal. He asked to be remembered to Fontanes, Chateaubriand, Courtivron, Chavanot (not Chabannes as has often been printed), Récamier, Hérain, Liénard, Migneret and Agasse.  
 His two main heirs were his friend in need, Madame Minut, — to whom he left 6,000 francs — and his only surviving close relative, Magdeleine Cretin, the daughter of his sister, Thérèse, and the widow of a certain François Bertrand. She inherited what remained. In spite of his poverty, La Harpe had had to support her for some time (*Todd 1*, p. 315). Boulard drew up the inventory of La Harpe’s effects on 8 March 1803 (17 ventôse an XI) (*Minutier central: Etude LXXIII<sup>xx</sup>1177*) and on 27 June (8 messidor) was entrusted with a Procuration académique for 104 francs due to La Harpe as a member of the Institute (Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France: MS. 3815). The sale of his library on 20 June (1 messidor) fetched 4,150 francs. In all, he left 12,712 francs 78 centimes (Archives de la Seine: DQ.7/1.788). Agasse later helped Madame Bertrand with an additional annuity (*Aulard 2*, III, 822).  
 Because of the paternal tone of letters to her (see *Jovicevich 1*, pp. 97, 99–100), a certain Mme Eliza Ledhuy has been referred to as La Harpe’s daughter (Nauroy, *Le Curieux*, 1 (1883), 52–3; *L’intermédiaire des Chercheurs*, 29 (20 April 1899), col. 564, &c.). This is not true. She was born on 18 May 1776, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste

## Notes to Chapter VII, continued

Jacques Sourdeau, secretary to the 'audiercier de France, censeur général du Sceau' and his wife, née Elisabeth Sébastienne Charlotte de Beauche (Archives de la Seine: *Fichier de l'Etat civil*), Elisabeth Anne married Antoine Michel Philippe Ledhuy on 5 ventôse an iv (24 February 1796) (*ibid.*). Ledhuy was a financier who also had literary pretensions. There is a poem by him in the *J. Paris*, 30 October 1799 (8 brumaire an viii), p. 180. In 1806, he published a collection of poems under the title of *Souvenirs de m. L\*\*\**, which he dedicated to his wife, Eliza, and from which we learn that the couple were friends of Andrieux, and that they had a son called Edouard and a daughter, named Eliza after her mother.

La Harpe undoubtedly met Mme Ledhuy through Mme Récamier. Antoine Ledhuy was probably a colleague of Jacques Récamier, and at one time both families lived at n° 19, rue du Mail (as can be seen from entries in the register of Ledhuy's and Récamier's notary (*Minutier central: Etude LXXXIII<sup>xx</sup> Répertoire 10*)).

121. Reichardt, *op. cit.*, p. 319; *Aulard 2*, iii, 634; *J. Paris*, 18 pluviôse an xi (7 February 1803), p. 869.
122. *Moniteur*, 27 pluviôse an xi (16 February 1803), p. 594; *Merc.*, 30 pluviôse an xi (20 February 1803), xi, 392.
123. Reichardt, *op. cit.*, p. 343; Mme de Cazenove d'Arlens, *Deux mois à Paris et à Lyon sous le consulat* (1903), p. 4.
124. *Journal des débats*, 23 pluviôse an xi (12 February 1803), p. 3; compare *J. Paris*, 24 pluviôse (13 February), p. 906; *Aulard 2*, iii, 653. La Harpe's death certificate — destroyed in 1871 — was reproduced in *Le Curieux*, 1 December 1883, i, 52–3.
125. *Aulard 2*, iii, 665.
126. *Merc.*, 30 pluviôse an xi (20 February 1803), xi, 389–92.
127. *Moniteur*, 27 pluviôse an xi (16 February 1803), p. 594; *Merc.*, 30 pluviôse an xi (20 February 1803), xi, 392.
128. *Aulard 2*, iii, 655.
129. *Ibid.*, iii, 656–8.
130. *J. Paris*, 25 August 1811, pp. 1696–7 (letter from Boulard).
131. *La Quotidienne*, 29 December 1838, p. 2, 30 December 1838, p. 2.
132. Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, ii, 329. We have been unable to find La Harpe's name on any of the lists of permanent concessions in the Père Lachaise. The authorities have also been unable to help us. Although he was reburied in style, it is more than likely that what remains of his body now lies in a common grave.

## Notes to Chapter VIII

1. Pougens, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
2. *Ibid.*
3. G. Merlet, *Tableau de la littérature française*, 3 vols (1883), iii, 11.
4. *Année littéraire*, 1759, vi, 92–3.
5. *Ibid.*, 1776, vi, 261.
6. *Verdière*, xiv, 5–6; compare *ibid.*, xiv, 60, 440, xv, 274, 257; *Lycée*, i, 33, iv, 113–14, 161–4, xii, 321; *Le Poète*, 87–92, *Sur les Grecs*, 149–50; *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 165–90. Compare *Moland*, xxii, 165; *Marmontel*, xii, 30, 33, 568, 570.
7. *Verdière*, xiv, 125.
8. *Ibid.*, xiv, 18; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 64.
9. *Pissot*, v, 118.
10. *Mélanges*, p. 54.
11. *Lycée*, vi, 187–93, 223; compare *Moland*, xvii, 429–30; *Marmontel*, xii, 251.
12. *Moland*, xxviii, 338; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 67.
13. *Moland*, xiv, 550, xix, 61–4, xxiii, 52–3.
14. *Pissot*, v, 411–15; compare *les Talents des Femmes*, 361–73.
15. *Moland*, xiv, 137; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 55–6.
16. *Lycée*, vi, 57–8; *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, 37–44; compare *Moland*, xiv, 550, xxxii, 73.
17. *Lycée*, vi, 209–10; *Épître au Tasse*, 218–22; compare *Moland*, ix, 442, xviii, 285; *Marmontel*, xii, 59.
18. *Lycée*, i, 131–2, ix, 366–7, xi, 150; compare *Moland*, xvii, 557–9.
19. *Lycée*, vii, 329; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), i, 186.
20. *Lycée*, v, 256, 341, xi, 193, 301; compare *Best.*, 2567; *Marmontel*, xii, 77.

## Notes to Chapter VIII, continued

21. *Verdière*, xiv, 164–5, 183, 342; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), iv, 339.
22. J. B. Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, 2 vols (1719), II, 366–7.
23. *Lycée*, x, 211, xi, 59.
24. *Ibid.*, I, 44, II, 249; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 60, 554–5, 562.
25. *Lycée*, VIII, 69, 79, 94–5; compare *Moland*, XXII, 150.
26. *Lycée*, II, 189–90.
27. *Ibid.*, I, 39, IV, 330–1, VII, 110, IX, 418, XIII, 31, 94, *Verdière*, XIV, 312–3; compare *Moland*, VIII, 314; *Best.*, 1935.
28. *Lycée*, I, 231, III (2), 215, V, 252–3, 332, VIII, 67, 73, IX, 417, XI, 75, XIII, 203, 220; *Best.*, 16692; *Verdière*, XIV, 229, 336, XV, 339; compare *Moland*, XIX, 278, XXXII, 212; *Marmontel*, XII, 58–9, 550.
29. *Verdière*, XIV, 155.
30. *Lycée*, IV, 61, 333, 416–7, 420, V, 437, VI, 218–19, VIII, 363, IX, 38, 40, 304; *Pissot*, V, 284.
31. *Lycée*, I, 41–2, VI, 114; compare *Moland*, XXXI, 178.
32. *Ibid.*, XIX, 270, 278; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 1–5.
33. *Verdière*, II, 463.
34. *Moland*, II, 48; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 25.
35. *Moland*, VIII, 305–7, 318; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 10.
36. *Diderot*, VIII, 439–41.
37. *Lycée*, XII, 18, 509.
38. *Marmontel*, XIII, 303–4, 309.
39. *Lycée*, I, 7, x, 110.
40. *Ibid.*, III (1), 157.
41. *Ibid.*, I, 76, V, 161, XI, 74, XIII, 76; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 550.
42. *Lycée*, I, 34, II, 251, 328–9, VI, 272–3, IX, 9, x, 150, XI, 238, XIV, 3, 28–9.
43. *Ibid.*, I, 1–2, 33, VII, 329; *Sur le génie*, 42–8; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 568.
44. *Lycée*, I, 7, II, 225, 313–14, IX, 169.
45. *Ibid.*, III (1), 179–80.
46. *Ibid.*, I, 17, XIII, 33.
47. *Ibid.*, I, 4, II, 250, 425, VIII, 429, 443.
48. *Ibid.*, II, 252.
49. *Ibid.*, I, 60–2.
50. *Diderot*, VII, 103.
51. *Lycée*, I, 89, VIII, 109–10, 347–8.
52. *Ibid.*, II, 255–6, XII, 15, 53; *Verdière*, XIV, 340.
53. *Lycée*, VI, 326, IX, 214, XI, 63–4.
54. *Moland*, VIII, 309.
55. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), II, 112–13.
56. *Lycée*, XII, 237–8, 535; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 9, I, 421.
57. *Lycée*, II, 402, IV, 403–4, 437, VI, 223, 237, XIII, 144, n.
58. *Ibid.*, XIII, 15; *Le Poète*, 124; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 32.
59. *Lycée*, II, 44–5, VIII, 225, XIII, 28, XIV, 151.
60. *Ibid.*, II, 152–3, XII, 444; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 394.
61. *Diderot*, VII, 308–10; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 143–5.
62. *Lycée*, VI, 336, XII, 276–7, 316–17.
63. *Ibid.*, VII, 253, 280–1, XIII, 82.
64. *Ibid.*, VIII, 228; *Épître à Schowalow*, 377–80, 415.
65. *Lycée*, III (1), 184–8.
66. *Ibid.*, IX, 109.
67. *Ibid.*, x, 425.
68. *Ibid.*, XI, 371–2.
69. *Ibid.*, I, 87, III (2), 206–7.
70. *Ibid.*, I, 62, *Le Poète*, 49–72.
71. *Ibid.*, 25–48; *Lycée*, I, 212–13, 219, II, 122.
72. *Diderot*, VII, 309.
73. *Lycée*, I, 59, 83–4, II, 56–7, VI, 395–6; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 18, n° 28, II, 263, III, 164–5; *Le Mémorial*, n° 27, p. 2; *Épître à Schowalow*, 228–55; *Le Poète*, 184; *Les Talents des Femmes*, 172–3; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 30–1, 33, XIII, 187–9, 223.
74. *Lycée*, IV, 211–13; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 297, 353–5.
75. *Lycée*, I, 18–21.
76. *Ibid.*, I, 15–16, XIV, 28–9; *Épître à Schowalow*, 309–38.

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77. *Lycée*, I, 38.
78. *Ibid.*, I, 75–6.
79. *Ibid.*, XI, 316.
80. *Ibid.*, VIII, 310–13.
81. *Ibid.*, IV, 54.
82. *Moland*, XVII, 186.
83. *Lycée*, VIII, 307, XI, 579, XII, 148, XIII, 231.
84. *Ibid.*, XI, 482.
85. *Ibid.*, XI, 338–9 (discussing Destouches).
86. *Ibid.*, I, 35–6, VIII, 222, XI, 188.
87. *Ibid.*, I, 22–3.
88. *Ibid.*, IV, 270–1, 322, VIII, 144–5, 399, IX, 44, 214, X, 418, XII, 451, XIV, 73.
89. *Ibid.*, XI, 573.
90. *Ibid.*, X, 300.
91. *Le Poète*, 21; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 298.
92. *Lycée*, V, 270–1; *Le Poète*, 95–100.
93. *Lycée*, I, 26.
94. *Ibid.*, I, 24, 29.
95. *Ibid.*, IX, 295.
96. *Ibid.*, III (1), 67, XII, 137, XIII, 63–4; *Les Prétentions*, 39–41.
97. *Lycée*, XI, 310–11, 428, XII, 43, 130, n., 263–4; *Pissot*, V, 28; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 9, I, 419; compare *Moland*, III, 443.
98. *Lycée*, I, 377–8.
99. *Ibid.*, XII, 144, 197, 208; *Épître à Schowalow*, 308; compare Boileau, *Art Poétique*, III, 401–2; *Moland*, V, 9–10.
100. *Lycée*, XI, 633, XII, 72, 529; *Pissot*, VI, 473; *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 22, II, 456.
101. *Lycée*, IX, 320, XII, 415.
102. *Ibid.*, IX, 326–7; *Pissot*, V, 119.
103. *Lycée*, II, 402, 426–7, XII, 415.
104. *Ibid.*, I, 30.
105. *Ibid.*, V, 245.
106. *Ibid.*, XII, 198–9, XIII, 15.
107. *Ibid.*, XII, 147–8; *L'Ombre de Duclos*, 439–45.
108. *Ibid.*, 52; *Lycée*, XII, 160.
109. *Ibid.*, XI, 290.
110. *Ibid.*, VIII, 451–2, XI, 652, XII, 178, 181, XIII, 1, 82–3.
111. *Ibid.*, I, 30, VIII, 203, 450, XI, 502.
112. *Ibid.*, I, 2–3, III (1), 157, VII, 2, IX, 9, X, 9, 337, XI, 14.
113. *Best.*, 2845, 2869.
114. *Lycée*, I, 31.
115. *Ibid.*, II, 72.
116. *Ibid.*, XIII, 156.
117. *Ibid.*, II, 268–9, IV, 77, XII, 146–7; compare *Moland*, VIII, 307–9, 312; *Marmontel*, XII, 18, 54–5.
118. *Lycée*, I, 314.
119. *Ibid.*, XV, 30.
120. *Ibid.*, XII, 154; compare *ibid.*, III (1), 23, 209.
121. *Ibid.*, VII, 279.
122. *Moland*, XIV, 155–7.
123. *Lycée*, II, 441–2.
124. *Ibid.*, III (1), 319.
125. *Ibid.*, XII, 151–2.
126. *Ibid.*, I, 133, II, 41, 148, 157–9, 230–1, 272, 278, 346, 397, III (1), 225–6; *Sur les Grecs*, 92–7.
127. *Lycée*, XIII, 3.
128. *Ibid.*, IV, 6–7.
129. *Ibid.*, III (1), 226–7.
130. *Ibid.*, VIII, 373.
131. *Ibid.*, XIII, 12–13.
132. *Ibid.*, XII, 2–3.
133. *Ibid.*, XI, 476, XII, 265.

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134. *Ibid.*, XII, 16; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 70–1.  
 135. *Moland*, XVIII, 200.  
 136. *Lycée*, V, 227.  
 137. *Verdière*, IV, 123.  
 138. *Lycée*, I, 54; compare *Moland*, XIV, 553; *Marmontel*, XII, 245–6.  
 139. *Lycée*, I, 330, III (1), 176–80, IV, 5, V, 235, XIII, 108; compare *Moland*, XXV, 457.  
 140. *Lycée*, IV, 58; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 44–5.  
 141. *Lycée*, IV, 65, XII, 151–2.  
 142. *Ibid.*, III (2), 160; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 247–8.  
 143. *Lycée*, III (1), 172–3, IV, 1–2, 46–7; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 15.  
 144. *Lycée*, XIII, 108–9; *Merc.*, January 1771, II, 149–50.  
 145. *Lycée*, I, 257–8, 310–11, IV, 45–6, VIII, 117; *Verdière*, XV, 357; compare *Moland*, XVII, 235; *Marmontel*, XII, 61.  
 146. *Lycée*, I, 241–2, III (1), 48, III (2), 221–2, XII, 95; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 251–2.  
 147. *Lycée*, II, 268–9, III (1), 115, XIII, 101.  
 148. *Ibid.*, XIII, 102; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 252–3.  
 149. *Lycée*, XIII, 100.  
 150. *Ibid.*, compare *Moland*, XXVIII, 328–9; *Marmontel*, XII, 56–7, 250–1.  
 151. *Lycée*, II, 87–8, V, 235, X, 210, XIII, 100; compare *Moland*, XIV, 105, XVII, 234, 405; *Marmontel*, XII, 53, 55, 62, 250.  
 152. *Lycée*, I, 166.  
 153. *Ibid.*, XI, 79.  
 154. *Ibid.*, XI, 151.  
 155. *Ibid.*, I, 132, VIII, 383, 387–8, 444, XIII, 285–6; *Verdière*, XIV, 150–1, XV, 257; *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, 165–88; compare *Moland*, XVIII, 554; *Marmontel*, XII, 100–1.  
 156. *Lycée*, II, 169, VII, 224.  
 157. *Ibid.*, II, 231, 310–14, 379, III (2), 164, IV, 68, V, 157, 235, VI, 200–1, VIII, 151, XI, 219, 348, XIV, 98; *Verdière*, XV, 257; *Le Mémorial*, n° 4, p. 2; compare Boileau, *Art poétique*, I, 175–82; *Moland*, XX, 437; *Marmontel*, XII, 79, 148, 220–5.  
 158. *Lycée*, I, 130, 142, II, 331; compare *Moland*, XX, 567.  
 159. *Lycée*, VIII, 342–3; *Verdière*, XI, 450–1.  
 160. *Lycée*, VI, 358, X, 158–9; compare *Moland*, XVIII, 510.  
 161. *Lycée*, IX, 215.  
 162. *Ibid.*, IX, 17, XII, 53, 296.  
 163. *Ibid.*, II, 331, VII, 75, VIII, 133.  
 164. *Ibid.*, VII, 326; *Verdière*, XIV, 23; *Merc.*, March 1773, p. 121.  
 165. *Lycée*, III (2), 164, V, 139, 273, VI, 126, VIII, 118, 357, 441, XI, 78–80, XIII, 114; *Verdière*, XI, 405–6, XIV, 8; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 89; Boileau, *Art poétique*, I, 147–54.  
 166. *Lycée*, III (1), 214–15, XI, 28.  
 167. *Ibid.*, II, 302–3, 308–9, 333.  
 168. *Ibid.*, I, 126, 173–4, 319–20, II, 50–3, 319–21; compare *Moland*, XIV, 555.  
 169. *Lycée*, II, 91–2, VI, 246; *Verdière*, XIV, 411–12; compare *Moland*, XIX, 8, XXII, 264; *Marmontel*, XIII, 225.  
 170. *Lycée*, II, 62, 329; compare Boileau, *Art poétique*, I, 79–102; *Moland*, XIX, 5, XXII, 166; *Marmontel*, XII, 8.  
 171. *Lycée*, II, 62; compare Boileau, *Art poétique*, I, 150–62.  
 172. *Lycée*, IV, 116.  
 173. *Ibid.*, II, 320–1; *Verdière*, XIV, 59, XV, 345.  
 174. *Lycée*, II, 321, 325, VII, 104, VIII, 130–1; *Verdière*, XIV, 59, 89, XV, 107; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 9, I, 430; *Épître à Schowalow*, 282–3.  
 175. *Lycée*, II, 322; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 179.  
 176. *Lycée*, II, 330, IV, 164–5, 172, VIII, 108–9, 153–4, IX, 31–2, 121, 156, XIV, 96–7.  
 177. *Ibid.*, I, 124, IV, 168, VIII, 274–5.  
 178. *Ibid.*, IV, 169–70.  
 179. *Ibid.*, VI, 244–5; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 90, 553–4.  
 180. *Lycée*, VI, 344, IX, 116; *Verdière*, XV, 156.  
 181. *Lycée*, XI, 318; compare *Moland*, XIX, 140; *Marmontel*, XII, 7–9.  
 182. *Lycée*, I, 143, 152, II, 174, 327–8, XI, 99, XIII, 114; compare *Moland*, XIX, 184; *Best.*, 18267; Boileau, *Art poétique*, I, 141–6.  
 183. *Lycée*, III (2), 253.

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184. *Ibid.*, II, 316; *J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 10, I, 457.  
 185. *Lycée*, II, 318.  
 186. *Ibid.*, X, 334, XIII, 381.  
 187. *Ibid.*, XIV, 141–2.  
 188. *Ibid.*, XIII, 361.  
 189. *Ibid.*, I, 123, IV, 173, VII, 412, XIII, 346, *Verdière*, XI, 320, XIV, 14–15; compare *Marmontel*, XIII, 221, 225–6.  
 190. *Best.*, 16522.  
 191. *Best.*, 11047.  
 192. *Best.*, 11053.  
 193. *Best.*, 11126.  
 194. *Best.*, 12875, 13034.  
 195. *Best.*, 16875, 17052, 17081, 17102, 18280, 18635.  
 196. *Best.*, 11943, 12004, 13051, 13053, 14575, 14726, 15523, 15651, 18314, 19182, 19474; *Moland*, VII, 243, X, 408–10.  
 197. *Best.*, 19541.  
 198. *Best.*, 13188.  
 199. *Best.*, 18997.  
 200. *Best.*, 14192.  
 201. *BV*, 2425.  
 202. *BV*, 2426; compare *Best.*, 16566, 18993.  
 203. *Best.*, 14726.  
 204. *Best.*, 16751.  
 205. *Best.*, 16986.  
 206. *Best.*, 18635; compare *Best.*, 16652, 17102, 17685, 18121, 18484, 18576, 18934, 19674, 19703.  
 207. *Best.*, 19674.  
 208. *Merc.*, April 1772, I, 101–50.  
 209. *J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 12, I, 562–5.  
 210. *Ibid.*, 1776 n° 33, III, 405–6.  
 211. *Ibid.*  
 212. *Ibid.*  
 213. *Ibid.*, 1777 n° 14, II, 74–6.  
 214. *Ibid.*, 1777 n° 21, II, 397–403.  
 215. *Bengesco*, 1868.  
 216. *Correspondance littéraire*, XI, 299.  
 217. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 36 — 1778 n° 17.  
 218. *Merc.*, 5 October 1778, pp. 7–28.  
 219. *Ibid.*, May 1775, p. 70.  
 220. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1778, p. 179; see *J. Paris*, 11 July 1778, pp. 766–7.  
 221. *Verdière*, XV, 36; compare *Best.*, 16692; *Lycée*, II, 303–4, XI, 106, 555, 674, XII, 42.  
 222. *Verdière*, XIV, 114.  
 223. *Ibid.*, XV, 256.  
 224. *Pissot*, VI, 82; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 185.  
 225. *Merc.*, February 1774, p. 53; compare *Verdière*, XIV, 1.  
 226. *Mémoires secrets*, 19 April 1770, XIX, 172.  
 227. *Année littéraire*, 1776, VI, 261, 265.  
 228. *Précis et consultation dans la cause entre S. N. H. Linguet et C. J. Panckoucke* (1787), p. 8.  
 229. *Ibid.*  
 230. *Verdière*, XV, 116.  
 231. *Best.*, 19348.  
 232. *Best.*, 19404.  
 233. *Merc.*, February 1771, pp. 124–34.  
 234. *Ibid.*, August 1771, p. 146.  
 235. *Ibid.*, October 1775, II, 131–53.  
 236. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 26, III, 99.  
 237. *Merc.*, 15, 25 July 1778, pp. 189–91, 309–11; 5, 15, 25 August 1778, pp. 67–9, 154–7, 283–304; 5 September 1778, pp. 24–47; 15 February 1779, pp. 162–5; 15 March 1779, pp. 185–6; 14 April 1792, pp. 40–53; 12 January 1793, suppl., pp. 1–3; 1 June 1793, pp. 195–201.



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238. *Ibid.*, July 1772, I, 93–107; November 1775, pp. 192–209; 15 July 1778, pp. 178–85; 1 January 1780, pp. 39–40; 3 April 1784, pp. 25–31; 20 February 1790, pp. 109–14; *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 33, III, 443–54; *Mémorial*, n° 4, 32, 52, 55, &c.
239. 1789, VIII, 316.
240. *Merc.*, March 1773, p. 140; *Verdière*, XIV, 3–4.
241. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 30, III, 30; compare *Verdière*, x, 162–3.
242. *Pissot*, v, 127.
243. *Année littéraire*, 1771, II, 43–8, III, 25–7, 1773, I, 18–50.
244. *Ibid.*, 1771, I, 247.
245. *Ibid.*, 1777, III, 264.
246. *Lettre au Roi* ([s.l.n.d.]), p. 15.
247. *Nouvelles observations critiques* . . . (Amsterdam, 1772), p. 18.
248. *Merc.*, November 1768, p. 152.
249. *Ibid.*, December 1770, p. 127.
250. *Ibid.*, January 1773, II, 106–15.
251. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 31, III, 337–54.
252. *Moland*, VII, 335.
253. *Best.*, 14389.
254. *Moland*, I, 120; compare *Best.*, 16073.
255. *Moland*, XXVIII, 473.
256. *Ibid.*, XLVIII, 340, n.
257. (Genève, 1771).
258. *Jovicevich I*, p. 21. This letter dates from December 1770, although the manuscript bears in another hand '1773'.
259. *Best.*, 15959, 15966.
260. *Best.*, 14546.
261. *Merc.*, May 1769, pp. 68–85.
262. pp. 81–121.
263. *Verdière*, XIV, 115; *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 203–4; *Réponse d'Horace*, 37–44; *L'Ombre de Duclos*, 269–307.
264. *Verdière*, XIV, 129.
265. *Ibid.*, XIV, 140.
266. *Ibid.*, XIV, 146.
267. *Réponse de Boileau à Voltaire* (1772).
268. *Merc.*, April 1772, I, 159.
269. *Best.*, 16647.
270. (Amsterdam, 1772).
271. *Verdière*, XIV, 179–80.
272. *Ibid.*, XV, 171.
273. *Biographie universelle*, VIII, 409 (art. by G. La Madeleine).
274. *Tableau annuel de la littérature*, I, 131–87, II, 47–72, III, 27–64.
275. *Merc.*, February 1771, p. 134; compare *Verdière*, x, 290–1.
276. *Ibid.*, XIV, 234.
277. *Ibid.*
278. *Ibid.*, XV, 98.
279. Daunou, op. cit., p. xx.
280. *Verdière*, XIV, 319.
281. See Part I, chapter II.
282. *Merc.*, July 1771, I, 108.
283. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
284. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
285. *Merc.*, December 1772, pp. 140–7.
286. *Verdière*, XIV, 231–2.
287. *Ibid.*, XIV, 419.
288. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 36, III, 588–94.
289. (1777), pp. i–xvi.
290. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 33, III, 443–54; *Année littéraire*, 1776, IV, 269–79, VI, 73–103.
291. *Ibid.*, 1776, VI, 261–6.
292. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 3, I, 133–55.
293. *Ibid.*, 1777 n° 7, I, 327–32.
294. *Ibid.*, 1777 n° 9, I, 430.

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295. *Verdière*, vii, 347.  
 296. *Ibid.*, xv, 108, 130.  
 297. *Ibid.*, xv, 109.  
 298. *Ibid.*, xv, 102.  
 299. *Ibid.*, xiv, 59, 89.  
 300. *Correspondance littéraire*, ix, 197–8.  
 301. *Pissot*, i, 263.  
 302. A. V. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, 4 vols (1833), i, 202–5; *Journal général de l'Imprimerie*, 26 February 1820, pp. 115–16.  
 303. *Verdière*, x, p. i.  
 304. *Jovicevich I*, p. 121.  
 305. Soviet Academy of Sciences, Leningrad.  
 306. *Verdière*, x, pp. xv–xvi.  
 307. *Ibid.*, xi, 389.  
 308. *Ibid.*, x, 440–1, n.  
 309. *Ibid.*, x, pp. xvi–xviii.  
 310. *Merc.*, 11 February 1792, pp. 49–55; 10, 17 March 1792, pp. 55–8, 66–79.  
 311. *Verdière*, xi, 176, 189–90, 192.  
 312. *Ibid.*, xi, 482–3.  
 313. *Ibid.*, x, p. ix.  
 314. *Ibid.*, x, 95, xi, 26.  
 315. Letters i, ix, xvi, cclv, cclxvii.  
 316. Letters xviii, xix, cxlix.  
 317. Letters lxxiv, ccxli.  
 318. Letters lxvii, lxviii.  
 319. Letter clxv.  
 320. Letters lxvii, lxviii.  
 321. Letters lxxxii–lxxxvi.  
 322. Letters lxxxvii–lxxxviii.  
 323. Letters lx, lxvi, xciv, c, clxxv, clxxviii, cc.  
 324. Letters xvi, xxv, xxx, xxxiv, lvii, lxix, lxx, cix, cxiii, cxiv, cxv, cxxxii, cxc, cxciii.  
 325. Letters li, lxxxviii, ci, cxxiv.  
 326. Letters lkv, cx, cxi, cxli.  
 327. Letters cxii, cxxxiv, clxxiv, ccxxx.  
 328. Letters v, viii.  
 329. Letters cxxviii, clvi, clxxxi, cci, ccxxii, ccxxxi, ccxxxiii, ccxlvii, ccxlviii, cclvi, cclxii, cclxxii, cclxxiv, cclxxv, cclxxxiv, cclxxxvii, ccxcix.  
 330. Letters xiii, xxv, xxxvi, xliii, xlvi, liii, lxvi, lxxvi, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xcvi, cxvi, cxxi, cxxvii, cxxx, cxxxi, cxxxv, cxxxviii, cxliv, cxlv, ccxciv.  
 331. Letters ii, iv, v, viii, x, xvi, xvii, xxii, xxiv, lv, lvi, lvii, lxxxix, ccxcvi.  
 332. *Verdière*, xi, 403.  
 333. *Le Goût de Voltaire* (1938), p. 430.  
 334. M. J. Chénier, *op. cit.*, p. clxxxviii.  
 335. *L'Évolution des genres dans l'histoire de la littérature ... Tome I: L'évolution de la critique ...* (1890), p. 163.  
 336. *Lycée*, i, pp. iv–v.  
 337. *Ibid.*, i, p. iv.  
 338. (1726–1728).  
 339. (Amsterdam, 1759).  
 340. (1740–56).  
 341. (1727–45).  
 342. (1717–86).  
 343. (1787).  
 344. See *Best.*, 1935.  
 345. *Lycée*, i, pp. vi–vii, ii, 227.  
 346. *Ibid.*, i, 310–498.  
 347. *Ibid.*, vi, 94–183.  
 348. *Ibid.*, i, 260–99.  
 349. *Ibid.*, i, 134–85, iii (1), 292 &c., iii (2), 105–59, viii, 322–35.  
 350. *Ibid.*, ii, 189–218, 466 &c., vii, 297–321, xii, 146–262, xiv, 235–71.  
 351. *Ibid.*, iv, 81–183, vi, 17–40.

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352. *Ibid.*, xi, 427–50, 469–80.  
 353. *Ibid.*, xii, 546–666.  
 354. *Ibid.*, i, 422–47.  
 355. *Ibid.*, i, pp. vi–vii, ii, 227.  
 356. In the edition of the *Lycée* by Buchon, published in 1825, an attempt has been made to fill in the gaps in La Harpe's knowledge with notes and chapters by other writers.  
 357. *Les quatre poétiques d'Aristote, d'Horace, de Vida, de Despréaux* (1771). (*Cat.* 279).  
 358. He did not possess a copy of Dacier's translation at his death.  
 359. *Lycée*, i, 186–299.  
 360. *Ibid.*, iii (2), 105–347.  
 361. *Ibid.*, v, 122, 128–30, xii, 568, xiii, 50.  
 362. *Ibid.*, viii, 423.  
 363. *Ibid.*, x, 358, xi, 22–3.  
 364. See the letter that passed at the E. Charavay sale of 21 January 1888, n° 105. The only manuscript of the *Lycée* dating from before the Revolution that we have seen is that of the *Introduction*, sent by La Harpe to Shuvalov (*Soviet Academy of Sciences*). It shows that there was considerable revision. Among passages suppressed is a defence of *la philosophie* as the guardian of the arts. In the final version, praise of Voltaire as 'l'esprit le plus poétique et le plus philosophique dans son siècle' is replaced by a refusal to evaluate the latter's influence 'soit en bien, soit en mal' (*Lycée*, i, 12). In his original plan, La Harpe gave his first lectures on a review of the judgements of Aristotle, Quintilian, Horace and Boileau.  
 365. *Ibid.*, xiv, 26–7.  
 366. *Ibid.*, xiii, 302, 308–9, xiv, 68–9.  
 367. *Ibid.*, ii, 276–7, 368, 407–8, 442, 463–5, iii (1), 190–1, 193, 210, 212–14, iv, 18–19, 23–5, 37, 44–5, xi, 506, 521, 541–2, xii, 154.  
 368. Much of this part of the *Lycée* is published from fragments found among La Harpe's papers at his death. Among chapters that failed to appear were those on Voltaire and Mably (*Lycée*, xv, 51, xvi, 38). Some idea of what La Harpe said about Voltaire in the session of 1789/1790 can be got from an article in the *Mercure*, 14 July 1792, pp. 42–3. He quoted from what he had said about Montesquieu in December 1788 in the *Mercure*, 10 March 1792, pp. 50–4. The completed chapters are printed as they were given in the session of 1796/1797, except for minor changes carried out in 1799 (*Lycée*, xv, 16–17, 270, xvi, 171, n.). Surprisingly, the section on posthumous works by Diderot failed to appear, although part of it was printed in *Le Mémorial*, n° 27, pp. 2–3.  
 369. 'Examen de plusieurs assertions, &c.'  
 370. For instance, he places Boccaccio and Petrarch at the time of the fall of Constantinople (*Lycée*, iv, 33–4) and he dates some lines by Voltaire out of their context (*ibid.*, xiii, 327). See *J. Paris*, 18 August 1811, pp. 1649–50 (letter from Delacroix). Beuchot (*Moland*, xxxix, 17) points out that La Harpe is wrong to say that Voltaire went to Bayreuth in 1756 (*Lycée*, viii, 209), &c.  
 371. *J. Paris*, 25 August 1811, pp. 1696–7 (letter from Boulard). The only manuscript used by Agasse that we have seen is that of the chapter on Diderot (Pierpoint-Morgan Library, New York: MS. V.12.A). It differs little from the published text, and it is La Harpe himself who appears to have done all the correcting, cutting out some unkind references to M. J. Chénier.  
 372. Death stopped him from dealing with lighter verse genres in the eighteenth century, and in prose he only completed chapters on contemporary oratory and novels. One can only guess as to how he would have completed the work, but among chapters that did fail to appear there was a section on Marmontel's *contes moraux* (*Lycée*, xii, 347, n.), a study of the quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns (*ibid.*, vii, 335), of post-revolutionary literature (*ibid.*, xii, 503, n.) and an article on changes in the Parisian stage (*ibid.*, xii, 269, n.). He had planned a chapter on translation (*Jovicevich I*, pp. 143–4). In criticism, he was to have discussed Pierre Clément's *Cinq Années littéraires* (*Lycée*, xvi, 87, n.) and Voltaire's correspondence (*ibid.*, xvi, 38, n.). For some idea of what La Harpe would have said about Voltaire as a critic, see *Verdière*, ix, 38, n. He had also planned to discuss the latter's *Essai sur les mœurs* in a projected chapter on history (*Lycée*, xvi, 168–9).  
 373. In the edition published by Lefèvre in 1816, xii, 397 &c.  
 374. *Lycée*, xiii, 414–48.  
 375. *Ibid.*, i, 138.  
 376. *Ibid.*, viii, 304–34.

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377. *Ibid.*, I, pp. vii–viii.  
 378. *Ibid.*, XI, 589, n.  
 379. *Ibid.*, XIII, 102.  
 380. *Ibid.*, III (1), 183, XI, 320.  
 381. *Ibid.*, V, 126, X, 179.  
 382. *Ibid.*, II, 340–3.  
 383. *Ibid.*, II, 129–30, XII, 522, n.  
 384. *Ibid.*, I, p. i, 45.  
 385. M. J. Chénier, *op. cit.*, *passim*.  
 386. *Œuvres complètes* . . . , publiées sous la direction de Paul Arbelet et d'Edouard Champion, 32 vols (1914–37), X, 123.  
 387. *Lycée*, I, 75, II, 252–3, &c.  
 388. Mme de Staël, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, publié par Paul van Tieghem (Genève, 1959), pp. 17–18.  
 389. Mme de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, nouvelle édition publiée d'après les manuscrits et les éditions originales . . . par la comtesse Jean de Pange avec le concours de Mlle Simone Balayé, 5 vols (1958), II, 220–1.  
 390. *Ibid.*, II, 140.  
 391. See *De la littérature* . . . (1959), pp. 17–18.  
 392. *Correspondance* . . . , 10 vols (1933), I, 72–3.  
 393. *Journal d'Italie* (1911), p. 181.  
 394. *Correspondance* . . . , I, 206.  
 395. *Œuvres complètes* . . . , IV, 103.  
 396. *Ibid.*, IV, 260–1.  
 397. *Ibid.*, X, 123.  
 398. *Ibid.*, IV, 263–4.  
 399. *Ibid.*, X, 142–3.  
 400. *Ibid.*, IV, 264–5.  
 401. *Causeries du lundi* (1885), V, 119.

*Notes to Chapter IX*

1. *Lancaster* 2, p. 50.  
 2. *Lycée*, VIII, 472; *Verdière*, I, 16, V, 177–8; *Eptre à Schowalow*, 353–70.  
 3. *Verdière*, IV, 353; *Vers à Lekain*, 27.  
 4. *Lycée*, IX, 240–1; *Verdière*, IV, 339.  
 5. *Lycée*, XI, 309; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 72.  
 6. *Lycée*, XI, 152–3.  
 7. *Ibid.*  
 8. *Verdière*, V, 275; compare *ibid.*, X, 295, 353, XV, 58.  
 9. *Ibid.*, IV, 159; *Lycée*, XII, 205–6, 209.  
 10. *Ibid.*, I, 74, IV, 320, X, 345–6, XII, 417; *Verdière*, X, 402, XIV, 369; compare *Moland*, VII, 485, XXII, 148–9; *Marmontel*, XII, 494.  
 11. *Lycée*, I, 315–16; *Verdière*, II, 34–5, IV, 159; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 9, I, 419; *Ombre de Duclos*, 439–85.  
 12. *Verdière*, II, 9.  
 13. *Ibid.*, IV, 184, 344, XIV, 256; *Lycée*, I, 78–9, IX, 173–4, X, 200, 304, 366, 437.  
 14. *Ibid.*, X, 391, XI, 302, 681; *Verdière*, I, 16–17; compare *Moland*, II, 320–1, V, 496.  
 15. *Lycée*, I, 21, IX, 82, 106, 408, X, 151, 341, XI, 33, XII, 404, XIII, 432.  
 16. *Ibid.*, IX, 390.  
 17. *Ibid.*, I, 21, IX, 57.  
 18. *Verdière*, II, 16.  
 19. *Ibid.*, II, 18–19; *Lycée*, XI, 479; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 18, II, 263.  
 20. *Verdière*, II, 18; *Lycée*, XI, 478–9.  
 21. *Ibid.*, IX, 315.  
 22. *Ibid.*, IX, 317.  
 23. *Ibid.*, IX, 368–9, XI, 242–3.  
 24. *Verdière*, X, 117.  
 25. *Lycée*, IX, 35, 276, X, 175, XI, 125, 258–9, 263–5, XII, 488; compare *Moland*, II, 162–3.  
 26. *Lycée*, IX, 402.  
 27. *Ibid.*, IX, 169–70, 188.

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28. *Ibid.*, x, 200.
29. *Ibid.*, ix, 206–7, 397–8, 427, x, 398, xi, 21, 179, 286–7, xii, 452–3, xiii, 430; *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), ii, 18.
30. *Moland*, ii, 542, vii, 435–6.
31. *Brenner*, 3582.
32. *Moland*, xii, 206.
33. *Ibid.*, xii, 210.
34. *Brenner*, 4221.
35. *Verdière*, i, 14.
36. (Amsterdam, 1740), ii, 40–1, 130–3, iii, 26, 30, 57–63, &c.
37. (London, 1762), ii, 392–4.
38. (La Haye, 1724), iv, 218–25. (*Cat.* 1004).
39. (1762), ii, 494–5, iii, 5–9. (*Cat.* 1005).
40. As we mentioned in our introduction, useful summaries of the plots of La Harpe's tragedies are given by Professor Lancaster.
41. *Abrégé chronologique* (1668), i, 9–10. La Harpe had a copy of the Amsterdam 1701 edition (*Cat.* 891) and he may have consulted the work at Ferney (*BV*, 2445).
42. *Brenner*, 4229.
43. *Brenner*, 9949.
44. See *Todd* 2, pp. 152–3.
45. (1751), i, 192–346, ii, 1–240. (*Cat.* 1012.)
46. (Amsterdam, 1753), ii, 44 &c. (*Cat.* 806).
47. *Brenner*, 9315.
48. *Brenner*, 5645, 5655.
49. *Verdière*, i, 278, n.
50. *Brenner*, 8766. (*Cat.* 472).
51. Gasch, op. cit., p. 33.
52. *Verdière*, i, 254, n.
53. *Moland*, xvi, 472–625.
54. (Berlin, 1773), passim. (*Cat.* 1026).
55. (1770), iv, 88, 155.
56. (Amsterdam, 1771), pp. 2–18. (*Cat.* 1025).
57. *Les Caprices de la Fortune* (Liège, 1773), pp. 5–6.
58. (1760), pp. 139–369. (*Cat.* 1028).
59. *Verdière*, i, 293.
60. *Ibid.*, i, 294.
61. *Ibid.*, ii, 301; *J. Paris*, 10 December 1781, pp. 1385–6.
62. *Moland*, xi, 535–8.
63. (1764), passim. (*Cat.* 885).
64. *Verdière*, xii, 43, n.
65. *Brenner*, 8323.
66. *Brenner*, 5000.
67. *Verdière*, ii, 121.
68. *J. Paris*, 12 July 1778, pp. 770–1.
69. *Lancaster* 2, p. 35.
70. Gasch, op. cit., p. 37.
71. (1750), iii, 94–114. (*Cat.* 1040).
72. (1753). See *Année littéraire*, 1754, iii, 16–17.
73. *BV*, 1626.
74. (1697), pp. 388–9.
75. *Moland*, xi, 215. See *Année littéraire*, 1783, iv, 344–5.
76. *Verdière*, ii, 118.
77. *Todd* 2, p. 159.
78. *Verdière*, ii, 398.
79. *Lycée*, i, 426–8.
80. *Le Théâtre des Grecs* (1763), p. 173.
81. *Pissot*, i, 270.
82. *Lycée*, i, 424.
83. *Brenner*, 4840.
84. *Verdière*, ii, 390; *Merc.*, January 1771, ii, 149.
85. *Lycée*, xi, 235; compare *Verdière*, xv, 42.

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86. *Lycée*, I, 430.
87. *Ibid.*, I, 469; *Pissot*, I, 330.
88. *Verdière*, II, 651; see Peignot, op. cit., p. 93, n.
89. *Le Grand Timoléon de Corinthe* (1642).
90. *Brenner*, 3768.
91. xv, 10.
92. xiv, 1.
93. *Verdière*, II, 464–8.
94. II, 33–40.
95. *Histoire des Révolutions de la République romaine*, 3 vols (1752), I, 143–239. (*Cat.* 815).
96. 8 vols (1752), I, 270–311. (Edition of 1769 (*Cat.* 859)).
97. III, 44–51, 57–8.
98. Op. cit., II, 57–95.
99. Op. cit., I, 414–29.
100. *Verdière*, II, 545.
101. *Lycée*, IX, 99, 172, 336, 373.
102. *Ibid.*, IV, 405.
103. *Ibid.*, IV, 204.
104. *Ibid.*, II, 252–3; compare *Moland*, II, 48–9.
105. *Lycée*, VIII, 239.
106. *Ibid.*, X, 5.
107. *Ibid.*, IX, 35; *Verdière*, II, 463; compare *Moland*, II, 50.
108. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 22, II, 452; *Verdière*, X, 347, XI, 77, XII, 432.
109. *Moland*, II, 49.
110. *Verdière*, II, 462–3.
111. *Lycée*, IV, 272–3, IX, 52–3, 163, X, 350, XII, 505, 529; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 116.
112. *Lycée*, X, 29.
113. *Ibid.*, IV, 284–5, 297, X, 147–8.
114. *Ibid.*, I, 419.
115. *Ibid.*, IV, 248, 449, X, 10–11, 319; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 119.
116. *Lycée*, X, 316.
117. *Ibid.*, IX, 230.
118. *Ibid.*, X, 216.
119. *Ibid.*, IX, 182–3.
120. *Ibid.*, IX, 197; *Verdière*, I, 20.
121. *Lycée*, IX, 300.
122. *Ibid.*, I, 497–8, IX, 32–3, 262, 277, X, 2–3, 164; *Verdière*, I, 17–18, IV, 126; *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), II, 7–11; compare *Moland*, V, 87.
123. *Lycée*, IV, 315–16; compare *Moland*, II, 49.
124. *Lycée*, IX, 59; *Verdière*, IV, 124, XV, 285.
125. *Lycée*, I, 415, IX, 443, XI, 36.
126. *Ibid.*, IX, 349.
127. *Ibid.*, IV, 389–90; *Verdière*, IV, 138–9.
128. *Lycée*, IV, 236.
129. *Ibid.*, IV, 291–2.
130. *Pissot*, V, 28; *Verdière*, XV, 142.
131. *Lycée*, IV, 305, 346–7, IX, 414, X, 79, XI, 306, XII, 131; *Merc.*, 5 July 1778, p. 68; *Verdière*, IV, 173; *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), I, 279.
132. *Lycée*, IX, 59–60, XI, 34.
133. *Ibid.*, X, 165–6; *Verdière*, I, 20–1; compare *Moland*, XXXI, 178.
134. *Lycée*, I, 13–14, 464, XI, 253–4, 430–1; *Verdière*, XIV, 474.
135. *Ibid.*, IV, 126; *Lycée*, IX, 324, XI, 31, XIII, 439.
136. *Ibid.*, X, 187.
137. *Ibid.*, XI, 156–7; *Verdière*, XIV, 266.
138. *Ibid.*, IV, 337; *Lycée*, XI, 249–50.
139. *Ibid.*, I, 87–8, 376–7, IV, 195, 341, 343–4, 346, V, 234–6, 272, IX, 3, 51, 148, 150, 153–4; *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), I, 280; compare *Moland*, II, 322–4, V, 6–9, 82–6, VII, 103, XXII, 155–6.
140. *Lycée*, IX, 319, X, 400; compare *Moland*, V, 207, 209.
141. *Verdière*, IV, 355, *Lycée*, XI, 18.
142. *Ibid.*, XII, 195, 305; *Pissot*, V, 93, VI, 513; *Verdière*, IV, 344; compare *Moland*, VII, 103–4.

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143. *Lycée*, ix, 364–5, x, 99.
144. *Ibid.*, ix, 366.
145. *Pissot*, v, 94.
146. *Verdière*, i, 17.
147. *Lycée*, xiii, 438.
148. *Ibid.*, ix, 323–4.
149. *Ibid.*, v, 344; *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), ii, 16.
150. *Lycée*, x, 322.
151. *Correspondance littéraire*, v, 406.
152. *Année littéraire*, 1763, viii, 87.
153. *The Earl of Warwick* (1766), p. 66.
154. *Mémoires secrets*, 2 August 1764, ii, 79–80.
155. *Verdière*, ii, 467–8.
156. *Ibid.*, ii, 619.
157. *Correspondance littéraire*, vi, 356.
158. *Mémoires secrets*, 15 August 1765, ii, 221–2.
159. Collé, op. cit., iii, 40.
160. *Merc.*, September 1765, p. 176.
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Ibid.*
163. *Verdière*, iii, 464–5.
164. *Todd 2*, pp. 153–5.
165. *Verdière*, ii, 620.
166. *Ibid.*, ii, 114.
167. *J. Paris*, 15 July 1778, p. 783.
168. A detailed synopsis of the play as first performed is to be found in the *Journal encyclopédique*, September 1778, vi, 308–19.
169. *Ibid.*
170. *Merc.*, 25 July 1778, pp. 310–11.
171. *Verdière*, ii, 123.
172. *J. Paris*, 17 July 1778, p. 791.
173. *Verdière*, ii, 119.
174. See *Todd 2*, pp. 161–2.
175. *Verdière*, i, 293.
176. *Suard 1*, pp. 229–30.
177. *Merc.*, July 1781, pp. 22–3; *Correspondance secrète*, 25 November 1775, ii, 250.
178. *Merc.*, 31 May 1783, p. 228; *Année littéraire*, 1783, iv, 91.
179. *J. Paris*, 28 November 1781.
180. *Todd 1*, p. 276.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 321.
182. *Moland*, ii, 29.
183. *Lycée*, ix, 5; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 120.
184. *Lycée*, i, 423.
185. *Moland*, ii, 42–3.
186. *Lycée*, i, 437; *Verdière*, ii, 399–400.
187. *Lycée*, i, 443.
188. *Verdière*, ii, 398–9.
189. *Lycée*, i, 423; compare Sophocles, 539–627.
190. *Examen de Philoctète* (1813), p. 149.
191. *Brenner*, 7118.
192. *Verdière*, ii, 468–9.
193. *Ibid.*, ii, 457.
194. Compare *Timoléon*, iii. 4 and *Coriolan*, v. 3.
195. *Verdière*, ii, 620.
196. *Todd 1*, pp. 325–7.
197. *J. Paris*, 12 July 1786, pp. 803–4.
198. *Todd 1*, pp. 323–5.
199. *Verdière*, ii, 546.
200. *Ibid.*, i, 18, iv, 349; *Lycée*, i, 79; compare *Moland*, ii, 165–6, 322.
201. *Lycée*, i, 79.
202. *Ibid.*, x, 299–300; *Verdière*, iv, 126–7.

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203. *Ibid.*, i, 21–2; *Lycée*, i, 317–18.  
 204. *Ibid.*, ix, 266; *Verdière*, iv, 130–1.  
 205. *Lycée*, xii, 491.  
 206. *Ibid.*, ix, 37.  
 207. *Ibid.*, iv, 351.  
 208. *Ibid.*, i, 195, 366–7.  
 209. *Verdière*, i, 17.  
 210. *Ibid.*  
 211. *Année littéraire*, 1763, viii, 116–18.  
 212. *Todd 2*, pp. 155–6.  
 213. *Merc.*, September 1765, p. 176.  
 214. *Correspondance littéraire*, vi, 340.  
 215. *Ibid.*, xii, 124.  
 216. *Moland*, vi, 489.  
 217. *Ibid.*, xi, 54.  
 218. See *Todd 2*, p. 160..  
 219. *Verdière*, v, 437, 465.  
 220. *Aulard 1*, i, 38–9.  
 221. *Ibid.*, i, 47.  
 222. A. F. Villemain, *Cours de littérature française. Tableau du dix-huitième siècle*, 4 vols (1838), ii, 34–5.  
 223. *Lycée*, xi, 469, xii, 205–6, 209; *Verdière*, ii, 16–17.  
 224. *Ibid.*, x, 57–9.  
 225. *Ibid.*, xv, 141.  
 226. *Ibid.*, ii, 17; *Lycée*, xi, 428–9; compare *Moland*, v, 6.  
 227. *Lycée*, xi, 429–30.  
 228. *Ibid.*, xi, 429.  
 229. *Ibid.*, xi, 480.  
 230. *Ibid.*, xi, 431.  
 231. *Verdière*, xv, 140; *Lycée*, xi, 443–4.  
 232. *Ibid.*, xi, 478.  
 233. *Verdière*, x, 55.  
 234. *Lycée*, xi, 444–5.  
 235. *Ibid.*, xi, 430.  
 236. *Ibid.*, xi, 479.  
 237. *Ibid.*, xii, 339.  
 238. *Verdière*, x, 57–60, 177.  
 239. (London, 1731). La Harpe possessed Pierre Clément's translation of 1751 (*Cat.* 515).  
 240. F. Gaiffe, *Le Drame en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1910), pp. 53–6; L. M. Price, 'George Barnwell abroad', *Comparative Literature*, 2 (1950), 126–56.  
 241. *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 458.  
 242. 1770, i, 145–84.  
 243. *Lycée*, xi, 446–50.  
 244. *Le Goût de bien des Gens, ou recueil de contes, tant en vers qu'en prose*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1769), iii, 1–49. (*Cat.* 541).  
 245. 21 May 1750, iii, 106–12.  
 246. La Harpe was, of course, on fairly close terms with Diderot from 1757 to 1764. We can therefore presume that he knew at least something about the latter's *La Religieuse*.  
 247. *Les Illustres Françaises, histoires véritables . . .*, nouvelle édition, augmentée, 3 vols (Utrecht, 1737), i, 141–89.  
 248. *Brenner*, 3162.  
 249. *Mémoires inédits . . .* (1825), ii, 21.  
 250. *Verdière*, i, 164.  
 251. *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 475.  
 252. Gaiffe, op. cit., p. 313.  
 253. *Verdière*, i, 164.  
 254. For a detailed study of these changes, see Pitou, op. cit. He does not mention an unusual edition of this play published by J. N. Duchesne: *L'École des Pères ou Mélanie, drame en trois actes et en vers, corrigé par l'auteur* (1774), of which there is a copy in the Arsenal (Rf.10.981). In this edition, the scene is changed from the convent to M. Faublas' own house, and the wise priest is replaced by Aristé, 'ami de m. et mme de Faublas, homme



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- érudit et pieux.' These changes — not found elsewhere — contradict La Harpe's own statement that all editions from 1770 to 1778 were based on the first (*Merc.*, 14 April 1792, pp. 40–1).
255. *Best.*, 15200.  
 256. *Best.*, 15213.  
 257. *Correspondance littéraire*, viii, 461.  
 258. *Verdière*, ii, 15.  
 259. *Ibid.*, ii, 13.  
 260. *Brenner*, 3827.  
 261. *Brenner*, 2911.  
 262. *Brenner*, 9055.  
 263. *Merc.*, February 1774, p. 59.  
 264. iv.3. Voltaire is no more adventurous in his imitation of the scene in *Mahomet*, iv.4, when Zopire is stabbed 'derrière l'autel'.  
 265. *Verdière*, ii, 11.  
 266. *Ibid.*, xv, 218–19; *Lycée*, xi, 327; compare *Moland*, ii, 539.  
 267. *Verdière*, v, 65–6.  
 268. *Lycée*, xi, 315.  
 269. *Ibid.*, xi, 312–14.  
 270. *Ibid.*, xi, 320–1.  
 271. *Ibid.*, xi, 324.  
 272. *Ibid.*, xi, 643.  
 273. *Ibid.*, v, 402–3.  
 274. *Ibid.*, xi, 353; *Verdière*, xiv, 419.  
 275. *Lycée*, xi, 418.  
 276. *Ibid.*, v, 405; compare *Merc.*, 17 September 1791, pp. 103–4.  
 277. *Lycée*, vi, 39, xi, 352; *Verdière*, xiv, 419, xv, 152.  
 278. *Lycée*, v, 382, 429, xi, 364–5, 664–5.  
 279. *Ibid.*, v, 403; compare *ibid.*, xii, 336.  
 280. *Ibid.*, v, 438.  
 281. *Ibid.*, v, 473.  
 282. *Ibid.*, xi, 639–40.  
 283. *Ibid.*, xi, 384.  
 284. *Art poétique*, iii, 403–4.  
 285. *Lycée*, xi, 407–8, 638–9, xii, 307.  
 286. *Ibid.*, ii, 1–2, 8, v, 421, 423, xi, 327, 468, 626.  
 287. *Art poétique*, iii, 391–400.  
 288. *Lycée*, ii, 51–2, v, 404, 451.  
 289. *Ibid.*, v, 403–4, 458, xi, 323; *Pissot*, v, 162.  
 290. *Lycée*, xi, 396–8.  
 291. *Ibid.*, ii, 66.  
 292. *Ibid.*, xi, 325–6.  
 293. *Ibid.*, iv, 68.  
 294. *Ibid.*, xii, 273; *Merc.*, 31 July 1779, pp. 334–5; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 491.  
 295. *Lycée*, v, 405.  
 296. *Ibid.*, v, 453.  
 297. *Ibid.*, xii, 553–4.  
 298. *Ibid.*, xi, 413.  
 299. *Ibid.*, xi, 415–16, 460–1.  
 300. *Ibid.*, v, 461.  
 301. *Brenner*, 3051.  
 302. *Brenner*, 8158.  
 303. *Verdière*, xv, 216.  
 304. *Brenner*, 7454.  
 305. *Brenner*, 4680.  
 306. GaiFFE, op. cit., p. 135, n.2.  
 307. *Verdière*, xiv, 298, xv, 151; *Lycée*, xi, 349.  
 308. *Brenner*, 9598.  
 309. *Brenner*, 4242.  
 310. *Année littéraire*, 1782, iii, 36–9.  
 311. *Correspondance littéraire*, xiii, 120; see *Mémoires secrets*, 27 April 1782, xx, 207–8.

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312. *Commentaire sur Racine* (1807), II, 179.
313. *Lycée*, VI, 57–8, XII, 1–2, 208; *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, 42–4 (which is a parody of Boileau, *Satires*, X, 141–2); see *Best.*, 12914; *Moland*, X, 287.
314. *Verdière*, IV, 119–20; *Lycée*, VI, 52, XII, 205, 231–2.
315. *Ibid.*, XII, 206–8.
316. *Ibid.*, VI, 63.
317. *Ibid.*, VI, 82, XII, 211–12.
318. *Ibid.*, XII, 213–14.
319. *Ibid.*, XII, 221.
320. *Brenner*, 7743. Nothing is known about the circumstances surrounding the composition of either this or *Aboucassem*, *drame lyrique* (*Brenner*, 7727), the manuscripts of which were in the possession of Migneret in 1803 (*Cat.* p. viii). We suspect that both works date from before the music quarrel, when La Harpe really studied the problems of opera for the first time. A possible but only tentative clue to the dating of *La Vengeance d'Achille* lies in its being based on the *Iliad*. In August 1775, the Académie française announced that the prize for poetry for 1776 was to be given for a translation of between two and four hundred alexandrines of any passage from Homer's poem (*Merc.*, September 1775, p. 172). Although La Harpe declared at that time his intention of no longer entering such competitions (*Verdière*, X, 209; *Mémoires secrets*, 19 July 1776, IX, 168), it seems fairly likely that he at least started work on such a translation, following his double success at the Academy. He was not elected to the institution until May 1776. Thirty-five alexandrines translated from the *Iliad* appear in the *Lycée*, I, 232, 246–8, and it is improbable that they were composed for this last-named work. It would be interesting to see whether any of these lines appear in his opera. In his synopsis of the work, Petitot insists that many passages closely follow Homer's text, but, from what he quotes, we can see that La Harpe also adopted free verse (*Verdière*, II, 661–6). By 1777, in any case, La Harpe was convinced that Homer could only be translated in short passages (*ibid.*, XV, 360).
- He was to claim to have declined an offer from Grétry to work with him on a comic opera, when the latter visited Ferney in 1767 (*Lycée*, XII, 130, n.). One may wonder, however, whether it was not then that La Harpe turned to *Aboucassem*, referring as a source to the copy of Galland's translation of the Arabian nights in Voltaire's library (*BV*, 2457).
321. *Brenner*, 10113.
322. *Lycée*, VI, 74.
323. *Ibid.*, VII, 309; *Pissot*, IV, 383.
324. *Lycée*, XII, 409.
325. *Op. cit.*, II, 322.
326. *Affiches de Province*, 21 March 1770, p. 48.
327. Zurich, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–1.
328. Mme de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, nouvelle édition publiée . . . par la comtesse J. de Pange avec le concours de Mlle S. Balayé, 5 vols (1958), III, 212, n.
329. Morellet, *Observations critiques* (1801), pp. 32–3.
330. *Œuvres de Chateaubriand* . . . , II, 183.
332. *Merc.*, 5 September 1778, p. 45.
332. *Verdière*, XIV, 246–7.

## Notes to Chapter X

1. *Verdière*, XIV, 6; *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 48.
2. *Épître à Schowalow*, 336–8.
3. *Le Poète*, 87.
4. *Verdière*, XV, 329; *Lycée*, XIII, 5–6; compare *Moland*, II, 56, 313.
5. *Le Poète*, 95.
6. *Ibid.*, 88–91.
7. *Lycée*, III (1), 171, IV, 105–6; *Épître à Schowalow*, 293–4; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 21–2.
8. *Verdière*, XIV, 356–7; *Lycée*, IV, 64–5, 119–23; compare *Moland*, XIV, 540; *Marmontel*, XII, 46.
9. *Lycée*, I, 66–7, 194.
10. *Ibid.*, I, 157, 195, VIII, 308, 310, XIII, 5–6; compare *Moland*, II, 55; *Marmontel*, XII, 359.
11. *Lycée*, VIII, 308; compare *Moland*, X, 412.

## Notes to Chapter X, continued

12. *Lycée*, viii, 430–1, xii, 37, 243; compare *Moland*, viii, 577.
13. *Lycée*, i, 165, iv, 82–3, vi, 82–3, vi, 103–4; compare *Moland*, ii, 54, 312.
14. *Lycée*, i, 130; compare *Moland*, ii, 54.
15. *Lycée*, i, 10, vi, 192–3, 235, xiii, 43–4, 113–14.
16. *Ibid.*, ii, 98–9.
17. *Ibid.*, vi, 247.
18. *Ibid.*, xiii, 16.
19. *Ibid.*, i, 307.
20. *Ibid.*, i, 371–2.
21. *Ibid.*, vi, 95–6.
22. *Ibid.*, vi, 183, 197, 384.
23. *Ibid.*, ii, 100.
24. *Les Prétentions*, 20–38; compare *L'Ombre de Duclos*, 34 &c.; *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 191–208; *Sur la Sensibilité*, 31–49, &c.
25. *Lycée*, vi, 198.
26. *Ibid.*, vi, 155.
27. *Ibid.*, iv, 95.
28. *Ibid.*, ii, 183.
29. See *Le Poète*, *Conseils à un jeune poète*, *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, *Épître à Schowalow sur les effets de la nature et la poésie descriptive*, *L'Impromptu de campagne*, (*Deuxième*) *Épître à Zélis*, *Vers adressés à Lekain*, *Réponse à des vers de Schowalow sur la paresse*, &c.
30. See *L'Ombre de Duclos*, *Les Prétentions*, etc.
31. *Les Talents des Femmes*, 59–60, 215–16, *Le Philosophe*, 11–23, *Des Talents*, 1, 22 &c., *Sur le Luxe*, 16, 107–8, *Sur les Grecs*, 183–4, *Vers adressés au Grand-duc de Russie*, 57, *Ode au prince de Condé*, 80–4, *L'homme de lettres*, 199–267.
32. *Sur le génie*, 33–47, 67–136, *Que les fautes des grands hommes tiennent à leur caractère*, 113–24, *Le Poète*, 219–56, *Des Talents*, 104–74, *Sur les Grecs*, 114–18, *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 146–64, *Réponse d'Horace*, 70–80, *Épître au Tasse*, 184–222, *Ode au prince de Condé*, passim, *Ode à la Gloire*, passim, *L'homme de lettres*, 63–79, *Sur l'imagination*, 114–33, *Réponse à des vers de m.D.P.*, passim, &c.
33. *Sur le génie*, 34–7, *Le Poète*, 129–38, 199–217, *Le Portrait du Sage*, 156–213, *Le Philosophe*, 125–204, *Sur l'Indifférence*, 78–112, *Sur le malheur*, 76–102, *Sur les préjugés et les injustices littéraires*, 199–216, *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 171–2, *Réponse d'Horace*, 167–71, *Épître au Tasse*, 29–30, 109–24, 171–4, *Ode au prince de Condé*, 67–72, *La Gloire*, 11–20, 51–60, *L'homme de lettres*, 24–62, 93–198, *Sur l'imagination*, 71–95, &c.
34. *Verdière*, xiv, 137.
35. *Ibid.*, xiv, 170; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 66.
36. *Sur la Sensibilité*, 2.
37. The choice of subject was left to La Harpe (*Registres*, 25 August 1765, 1770, 1771, 1772). The only exception was *Sur le Luxe* (*ibid.*, 25 August 1769), which La Harpe did not finish (*Verdière*, iii, 262).
38. *Correspondance littéraire*, ix, 387.
39. *Année littéraire*, 1775, v, 355–9.
40. *La Bibliothèque bleue, entièrement refondue et considérablement augmentée*, 3 vols (Liège, 1787), Part I.
41. (1713), pp. 152–9.
42. *Lycée*, vi, 354, xiii, 378.
43. *Verdière*, iii, 171, xi, 259.
44. *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 33–42.
45. *Lycée*, xiii, 158.
46. *Ibid.*, vi, 95–6, 239.
47. *Ibid.*, vi, 158; compare Boileau, *Art poétique*, i, 96.
48. *Lycée*, vi, 235; compare *Moland*, x, 441–7; *Best.*, 10881, 10958, 16915.
49. *Lycée*, ii, 161.
50. *Ibid.*, ii, 114.
51. *Merc.*, July 1771, i, 121–3.
52. *Mélanges*, pp. 37–42, 54; *Verdière*, iii, 461–2, &c.
53. *Mélanges*, pp. 46–8; *Verdière*, iii, 456–8, 466–7.
54. *Lycée*, vi, 230.
55. *Couplets à mme P\*\*\*, qui dansait au bal*, 9–16.

## Notes to Chapter X, continued

56. See *A mme de \*\*\**, pour la fête de Sainte-Madeleine, 16–20.
57. *Verdière*, III, 510–11.
58. *Œuvres* (1869), p. 342.
59. *Le Poète*, 107.
60. *Les Talents des Femmes*, 390–1.
61. *Lycée*, VI, 433.
62. *Ibid.*, II, 188; compare *Marmontel*, XIII, 230.
63. *Lycée*, IV, 84.
64. *Ibid.*, XIII, 159.
65. *Ibid.*, X, 384.
66. *Ibid.*, IV, 86.
67. P. Martinon, *Les Strophes* (1912), pp. 212–19.
68. *Lycée*, XIII, 234.
69. Martinon, op. cit., p. 270.
70. *Lycée*, II, 100, 118–19.
71. *Ibid.*, II, 105–6.
72. *Ibid.*, XIII, 130.
73. *Ibid.*, II, 100, VI, 328.
74. *Ibid.*, VI, 139, XIII, 235.
75. *Art poétique*, II, 72.
76. *Lycée*, VI, 112–13.
77. *Ibid.*, II, 89, VI, 95–6, 127, VIII, 422.
78. *Ibid.*, XIII, 117.
79. *Ibid.*, XIII, 119, 287.
80. *Carmina*, IV, II.
81. *Lycée*, II, 91, n.
82. *Merc.*, 14 April 1792, pp. 42–3.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–7.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*, 48.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Lycée*, I, 261, VI, 298.
88. *Ibid.*, IV, 150–1.
89. *Ibid.*, IV, 159.
90. *Ibid.*, I, 186–7.
91. *Ibid.*, I, 189–90; compare *Moland*, VIII, 336.
92. *Lycée*, I, 193–4, VIII, 185.
93. *Ibid.*, VIII, 185.
94. *Délivrance de Salerne*, 1–6.
95. *Moland*, VIII, 362.
96. *Lycée*, I, 187–8.
97. *Ibid.*, I, 188; compare *Marmontel*, XIII, 348.
98. Le Bossu, *Traité sur le poème épique*, 2 vols (1675), I, 14, 51.
99. *Lycée*, I, 202, IV, 155.
100. *Ibid.*, VIII, 191–2, 198–9.
101. *Ibid.*, I, 204.
102. *Ibid.*, IX, 342.
103. *Ibid.*, I, 225, 235, 255–6; *Verdière*, XV, 360–1; compare *Moland*, VIII, 324–5; *Marmontel*, XII, 38–9, XIII, 347–8.
104. *Épître à Schowalow*, 390–412; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 10–14.
105. *Lycée*, IV, 150.
106. *Verdière*, VIII, 15.
107. *Ibid.*, XV, 358; *Lycée*, I, 215, 236; compare *Moland*, VIII, 340.
108. *Lycée*, VIII, 49, 51.
109. *Ibid.*, VIII, 50.
110. *Ibid.*, VIII, 56.
111. *Verdière*, VIII, 481.
112. *Ibid.*, V, 675; *Lycée*, VIII, 55; compare *Moland*, VIII, 340; *Marmontel*, XII, 62.
113. *Épître au Tasse*, 45–7, 71–84.
114. *Verdière*, VIII, 450; compare *Marmontel*, XII, 43–4.
115. *Journal encyclopédique*, December 1759, VIII, 128.

## Notes to Chapter X, continued

116. *Verdière*, III, 389.  
 117. E. Audra, *L'Influence française dans l'œuvre de Pope* (1931), p. 399.  
 118. Dorat, 'Apologie de l'héroïde', *Collection des Heroïdes* (Leipzig, 1769), I, 143.  
 119. *Mélanges*, pp. 127–53.  
 120. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–3.  
 121. *Verdière*, III, 389.  
 122. *Lycée*, VIII, 58.  
 123. *Merc.*, 5 January 1779, p. 13; see *Épître à Schowalow*, 400; compare Boileau, *Art poétique*, III, 193; *Marmontel*, XIII, 255–6.  
 124. *Correspondance générale de Chateaubriand . . .*, I, 25.  
 125. *Lycée*, I, 197–8.  
 126. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>6311.  
 127. It is difficult to see how the poem was then to have progressed, although, as the title suggests, it was to have ended with the death of Louis XVI. La Harpe's friend, Boulard, does provide one supplementary detail: 'Dans un de ces derniers chants, Cécile, dont il est parlé dans le premier, devait retrouver dans la prison et sur l'échafaud son amant qui, depuis leur séparation, était devenu révolutionnaire et irreligieux, et qu'elle devait ramener à la vertu' (*Lettre au Moniteur* (1814), p. 3).  
 128. *Verdière*, v, 489–90, n.  
 129. *Lycée*, VIII, 70.  
 130. *Ibid.*, VIII, 116.  
 131. *Ibid.*, VIII, 330–1; compare *Marmontel*, XIII, 126–7.  
 132. *Lycée*, VIII, 54–5; *Verdière*, VIII, 481.  
 133. *Ibid.*, XIV, 14–15; *Lycée*, VIII, 87, 99, 103, 105.  
 134. Naves, *op. cit.*, pp. 472–9.  
 135. *Verdière*, III, 390.  
 136. *Caton à César*, 7.  
 137. *Elisabeth de France*, 61–2; compare *Andromaque*, 1299–1300, *Mithridate*, 697–8.  
 138. *Annibal à Flaminius*, 39–40; compare *Andromaque*, 1486.  
 139. Compare *Aeneid*, IV, 667–8.  
 140. *Annibal à Flaminius*, 94; compare *Aeneid*, II, 586–7.  
 141. *Caton à César*, 43–4; compare *Georgics*, I, 480.  
 142. *Paradise Lost*, I, 6.  
 143. *Jerusalemme*, I, st. ii.  
 144. *Triomphe*, v, 59–61; compare *Aeneid*, VI, 577–9.  
 145. *Triomphe*, v, 97–8; compare *Aeneid*, VI, 256.  
 146. *Triomphe*, v, 71; compare *Paradise Lost*, I, 210.  
 147. *Triomphe*, v, 315–16; *Paradise Lost*, I, 619.  
 148. *Triomphe*, IV, 20–1; compare *Aeneid*, VI, 734.  
 149. *Épître au Tasse*, 60–1; compare *Aeneid*, VIII, 702–3.  
 150. *Sur l'Imagination*, 36–7; compare *Aeneid*, VI, 847–8; *La Henriade*, VII, 370.  
 151. *Hymne à la liberté*, 27; compare *Aeneid*, XII, 663–4.  
 152. *Épître à Zélis*, 82–9; compare *Aeneid*, VI, 557–8.  
 153. *Ode sur la navigation*, 50–4; compare *Aeneid*, III, 196–9.  
 154. *Le Poète*, 117; compare *Art poétique*, IV, 88.  
 155. *Conseils à un jeune poète*, 106; compare *Épître à Racine*, 49–50.  
 156. *Sur le Luxe*, 139; compare *Britannicus*, 1314.  
 157. *Réponse d'Horace*, 171; compare *Andromaque*, 1638.  
 158. *La Délivrance de Salerne*, 143–4; compare *La Henriade*, VII, 433–4.  
 159. *Que le caractère des grands hommes &c.*, 93–6; compare *La Henriade*, VI, 209–12.  
 160. *Les Prétentions*, 46; compare *Moland*, x, 108.  
 161. *Sur les Grecs*, 98; compare *Moland*, x, 435.  
 162. *Sur les Grecs*, 188; compare *Moland*, *loc. cit.*  
 163. *Le Philosophe*, 195–7; compare *Moland*, x, 164.  
 164. *L'Homme de lettres*, 19, 34, 46, 149.  
 165. i.e. désert immense, ouvrage immense, aveugle désespoir, séjour épouvantable, aspect coupable, horrible nuit, spectre horrible, demeure affreuse, colosse effroyable, front redoutable, lamentable histoire, &c. (*Sur le Malheur*).  
 166. There is antithesis in the movement of the sentences themselves as in:  
     Je rougissais pour le coupable,  
     Je gémissais sur l'opprimé (*Sur l'Indifférence*, 54–5).

## Notes to Chapter X, continued

- There is frequent opposition between the noun and its adjective: fange fécond, illustre fardeau, trône brisé (*Sur le Génie*), and in the rhymes we find: berceau / tombeau, génie / envie, souveraine / chaîne, instruire / détruire, héros / fléaux, insolente / brillante, &c., (*ibid.*).
167. Atlas / pas, &c. (*Sur l'Imagination*).
168. His favourite rhymes are notably: carrière / barrière, gloire / victoire, alarmes / larmes, victimes / crimes, loi / moi, &c.
169. i.e. cieux / heureux, vertus / tissus, trahi / puni, serein / chagrin, amitié / humilité, penchants / tyrans, Memphis / Osiris, regret / fait, toi / moi, Dieux / lieux, mortels / paternels, &c. (*Sur la Sensibilité*).
170. *Lycée*, vi, 253; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 354.
171. *Lycée*, iv, 87.
172. *Ibid.*, vi, 103–4.
173. *Ibid.*, vi, 253; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 173.
174. *Lycée*, iv, 110–11, 113–15, viii, 435.
175. *Ibid.*, iv, 111–12; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 171, 173–4.
176. *Lycée*, iv, 103, vi, 357.
177. *Ibid.*, vi, 163, xi, 13–14.
178. *L'Homme de lettres, Lettre à M.\*\*\*, Impromptu à Mme L. C. D. M., L'Ombre de Duclos, Tangu et Félimé*.
179. *Lycée*, viii, 260, 263.
180. *Les Trois Louises, Romance* ('D'une amante abandonné').
181. *Sur une ancienne musette, Le Ruisseau*.
182. *L'Amour timide*.
183. *Lycée*, iv, 88–9, vi, 103–4.
184. *Ibid.*, iv, 126, xii, 113; compare *Marmontel*, xii, 172.
185. *Couplets pour mme la duchesse de Chartres, Daphné &c., Couplets pour mme de P\*\*\*, qui dansait au bal*.
186. *Vers à mme la duchesse de Grammont qui revenait des eaux*.
187. *Vers à mme d'Aguesseau de Fresne*, 6–8; compare *Moland*, x, 408–10, xiv, 550; *Marmontel*, xii, 58.
188. *Le Poète*, 124.
189. *Sur le Luxe*, 134–6; compare *Sur l'Indifférence*, 116–22.
190. *Correspondance littéraire*, ix, 387.
191. *Des Talents*, 39–58, *Les Talents des femmes*, 215–69, *Vers à mme de Genlis, sur une représentation de ses comédies*.
192. *Épître à Schowalow*, 378.
193. *Lycée*, vi, 363.
194. *Épître à Schowalow*, 274; compare *Marmontel*, xiii, 116–18.
195. *Épître à Schowalow*, 240–5.
196. *Lycée*, ii, 121; compare *Marmontel*, xiii, 206.
197. *Lycée*, ii, 122, vi, 398.
198. *Carmina*, iii, xiii.
199. *Les Talents des femmes*, 213–14; compare *L'Impromptu de campagne, A mme de Genlis à son retour de la campagne*.
200. *Épître XI*.
201. *A mes amis*, 11–12; compare *Épître à Schowalow*, 58–60.
202. *La Navigation*, 57–60, *Le Philosophe des Alpes*, 34–78.
203. *A m. de \*\*\*, en lui envoyant les œuvres de Gessner*.
204. *Épître à Schowalow*, 247.
205. *Ibid.*, 200–1; compare *Le Philosophe des Alpes*, 85–90.
206. *Rousseau*, i, 349–54.
207. *Le Philosophe des Alpes*, passim, *Le Malheur*, 17–24, *Aux Mânes de Voltaire*, 309–24; compare *Verdière*, iv, 195–7.
208. *Réponse à des vers de mme de Bourdic*, 9–26.
209. See *Épître à Schowalow*, 138–49.

## Notes to Chapter XI

1. *Lycée*, xvi, 390–1.
2. *Ibid.*, i, 130, 139, 158–9, 166.

## Notes to Chapter XI, continued

3. *Ibid.*, I, 152.
4. *Ibid.*, I, 135, 157, 159.
5. *Ibid.*, I, 130, 158–9.
6. *Ibid.*, I, 156.
7. *Ibid.*, I, 146, 160–2, v, 94, vi, 344.
8. *Ibid.*, I, 149–52, 165.
9. *Ibid.*, I, 146, 165.
10. *Ibid.*, I, 144, 152–3, 165, iv, 107.
11. *Ibid.*, I, 154–5.
12. *Ibid.*, I, 134.
13. *Verdière*, xv, 27.
14. *Merc.*, January 1771, II, 151; compare *Lycée*, VII, 328–9.
15. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 20, II, 353; *Verdière*, x, 442.
16. *Ibid.*, XIV, 40.
17. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 8, I, 373.
18. *Lycée*, I, 180.
19. *Ibid.*, I, 116, 214, 277–84, II, 8–13, 21–3, 25–9, 31–2, 34, 38–40, 59–60, 62–5, 68, v, 91–2, VIII, 279–80, 282–3, 285–6, 287–8, 292.
20. *J. Pol.*, 1776 n° 26, III, 92; compare *Verdière*, XIV, 357; *Lycée*, I, 177–8; *Merc.*, 6 October 1792, p. 32; compare *Moland*, VIII, 435–6.
21. *Verdière*, XIV, 28.
22. *Ibid.*, XIV, 124.
23. *Lycée*, I, 180–1.
24. *Ibid.*, VII, 328; compare *Verdière*, XIV, 28, 289; *Merc.*, 15 May 1779, p. 158.
25. *Ibid.*, July 1772, II, 126; *Lycée*, I, 171–2, 181, 183, VII, 328; compare *Moland*, XXII, 165, 176.
26. *Lycée*, I, 172; *Verdière*, xv, 278–9, 342.
27. *Ibid.*, XIV, 124; *Lycée*, loc. cit.
28. *Ibid.*, I, 175–6, II, 4; *Verdière*, XIV, 118; *Pissot*, VI, 49.
29. *Verdière*, XIV, 124.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*; compare *Pissot*, IV, 162–3; *Moland*, XXII, 152.
32. *Verdière*, II, 385–6.
33. *Pissot*, I, 310; compare *Lycée*, I, 420–1.
34. In our translations we attempt to be more literal and explanatory than elegant.
35. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 36, III, 521.
36. *Pissot*, I, 314; *Lycée*, I, 369.
37. *Pissot*, I, 315.
38. *Lycée*, I, 371.
39. *Op. cit.*, p. 150.
40. *Lycée*, II, 212.
41. *Moland*, XIV, 102.
42. *Pissot*, IV, 164, n.
43. *Lycée*, II, 110.
44. *Marmontel*, x, 447–8; compare *ibid.*, XII, 568.
45. See *Merc.*, July 1766, I, 135–45, &c.
46. *Mélanges*, p. 109; *Lycée*, I, 275.
47. *Marmontel*, XII, 129.
48. *Lycée*, I, 193.
49. *Mélanges*, loc. cit.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Lycée*, I, 275–6.
52. *Verdière*, VI, 216–17, n.; *Le Poète*, 190–1.
53. *Lycée*, I, 291, 297–8; *Mélanges*, p. 122.
54. *Lycée*, I, 274; compare *Moland*, XVIII, 572.
55. *Lycée*, I, 275, 298.
56. *Ibid.*, II, 164; compare *Moland*, VIII, 326.
57. *Lycée*, I, 287.
58. *Best.*, 19064.
59. *Mélanges*, p. 122; compare *Moland*, VIII, 327.
60. *Lycée*, I, 290–1.

## Notes to Chapter XI, continued

61. *Ibid.*, I, 287.
62. Compare his final version, II, 198–207 with Lucan, II, 255–69.
63. *Mélanges*, p. 145.
64. Compare La Harpe, I, 18, and Lucan, I, 15.
65. Compare La Harpe, I, 79, and Lucan, I, 122.
66. *Verdière*, VIII, 624.
67. *Ibid.*, VIII, 625, n.
68. (Leide, 1658), p. 87.
69. *Lycée*, I, 4; compare *Moland*, VIII, 345.
70. *Op. cit.*, p. 60 ('ces yeux enfoncés').
71. *Merc.*, 16 messidor an VIII (6 July 1800), I, 87.
72. *Ibid.*, 1 messidor an VIII (20 June 1800), I, 5.
73. *Ibid.*, I, 4.
74. As far as modern languages were concerned, he claimed that he could read Italian and English (*Lycée*, I, 167), although Mme de Genlis says that she managed to make him admit that he did not know a word of the latter (*op. cit.*, III, 193). In any case, in translating Tasso, he probably consulted the translations by Baour-Lormian, Lebrun, and Panckoucke (*Cat.* 407, 405, 406).
75. *Merc.*, 1 messidor an VIII (20 June 1800), I, 5.
76. *Verdière*, VIII, 385.
77. *Ibid.*, VIII, 450.
78. *Ibid.*, VIII, 409–10.
79. *Ibid.*, VIII, 349–50.
80. *Merc.*, loc. cit.
81. *Verdière*, VIII, 440.
82. *Ibid.*, VIII, 439–40.
83. *Ibid.*, VIII, 441.
84. *Ibid.*, VIII, 440.
85. *Ibid.*, VIII, 349.
86. As translated by La Harpe in his notes (*ibid.*).
87. *Ibid.*, VIII, 383.
88. *Ibid.*, VIII, 382.
89. *Ibid.*, VIII, 439.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*, VIII, 384.
92. *Ibid.*, V, 673.
93. *Correspondance littéraire*, IX, 243.
94. See Part I, chapter III, n. 178.
95. *Mélanges*, pp. 109–14; *Lycée*, I, 277–84.
96. *Ibid.*, I, 276.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*, I, 277.
99. *Ibid.*, I, 278.
100. *Verdière*, VI, 58.
101. *Lycée*, III (1), 331–2.
102. *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 1, I, 43–8.
103. *Année littéraire*, 1776, VIII, 51–63.
104. *Pissot*, IV, 354.
105. *Lycée*, II, 480.
106. *Pissot*, IV, 353; *Lycée*, II, 493.
107. *Année littéraire*, 1776, VIII, 63.
108. *BV*, 3219.
109. *Correspondance littéraire*, IX, 245.
110. *Année littéraire*, 1770, VI, 284–5, 1771, I, 3–39, 145–72; *Journal des Savants*, October 1771, pp. 682–95, &c.
111. (1770), I, 504.
112. *Verdière*, VII, 13.
113. *Ibid.*, VI, 93.
114. *Ibid.*, VI, 115.
115. *Ibid.*, VI, 197.
116. *Ibid.*, VII, 451.



*Notes to Chapter XI, continued*

117. *Ibid.*, vi, 7.
118. See C. B. Hase, *C. S. T. Duodecim Caesaris* (1828), pp. 1–11.
119. Under the name of M. Orphelot de la Pause (1771).
120. *Verdière*, vii, 444–5.
121. The first exception is the description of Caesar at the court of the King of Bithynia (49) when 'l'auteur rapporte des atrocités dégoûtantes qu'on ne peut traduire honnêtement, et qui toutes signifient la même chose' (*ibid.*, vi, 136, n.). He also avoids the last sentence of Augustus (82), with its 'mouvement alternatif des pieds et des mains, exprimé par le mot *jactaret*' (*ibid.*, vi, 330–1, n. 2).
122. *Correspondance littéraire*, ix, 245.
123. *Verdière*, vii, 420.
124. *Journal encyclopédique*, 1771, iii, 14.
125. *Journal des Savants*, October 1771, p. 694.
126. (1805), i, 99, 117, 125, 137, 197, 201, 205, ii, 121, 141, 147, 149, 155, 247, 251, 259, 309, 321, 563, 565. *Verdière* adopts some but not all of these changes, and does so without acknowledgement (vi, 177, 181, 183, vii, 41).
127. We have found twenty-three reprintings in one form or another of this translation between 1770 and 1961. It was further revised in 1862 by J. R. T. Cabaret-Dupaty, and it has also appeared in another revised version under the title of *Rome galante sous les douze Césars*, &c.
128. *Verdière*, ix, 14.
129. *Ibid.*, ix, 15–16.
130. *Ibid.*, ix, 6.
131. (1785).
132. *Verdière*, ix, 14.
133. *Ibid.*, ix, 7, 83, n.; *Lycée*, xiii, 176.
134. *Verdière*, ix, 8.
135. *Ibid.*, ix, 8–10.
136. *Ibid.*, ix, 14.
137. *Ibid.*, ix, 24.
138. *Op. cit.*, i, 2.
139. We have found ten editions of this work.

*Notes to Chapter XII*

1. *Verdière*, iv, 378–9, v, 30, 34, 53, xiv, 90–1.
2. *Ibid.*, vi, 61–2.
3. *Ibid.*, xiii, 99, 119–20; *Merc.*, 7 April 1792, pp. 25–6.
4. *Verdière*, iv, 34–5, v, 40–1, 304; *Merc.*, 20 June 1790, pp. 132–3; compare *Moland*, xiv, 165, 538–9, xxii, 116–17; *Best.*, 12362.
5. *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 90.
6. *Verdière*, xv, 334.
7. *Merc.*, February 1775, p. 144.
8. *Ibid.*, 7 August 1790, p. 37; compare *Moland*, xviii, 61–3.
9. *Merc.*, 10 March 1792, p. 45, 9 June 1792, pp. 45–6, 28 July 1792, p. 99, 27 October 1792, pp. 105–6, *Verdière*, iv, 94–6.
10. *Merc.*, 25 February 1792, p. 90.
11. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1790, p. 182; compare *Moland*, xxii, 131; *Best.*, 1094, 3683.
12. *Merc.*, 24 July 1790, pp. 181–2; 10 September 1791, pp. 77–8; compare *Moland*, xvii, 139, 142, 153, 165, xxi, 121, xxii, 122, 124.
13. *Lycée*, xvi, 400; *Merc.*, 10 September 1791, p. 78; compare *Moland*, xx, 117.
14. *Merc.*, 8 October 1791, p. 69; compare *Moland*, xx, 115–17.
15. *Verdière*, v, 30–1; compare *Moland*, xvii, 177.
16. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 34; compare *Moland*, xxi, 16, xxii, 34.
17. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 38; compare *Moland*, xiv, 175, xviii, 168.
18. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 27; 10 March 1792, pp. 44–5, 14 July 1792, p. 41; 23 November 1793, p. 132; compare *Moland*, xvii, 26.
19. *Merc.*, 4 August 1792, p. 33.
20. *Verdière*, iv, 44–6, v, 29; compare *Moland*, xiv, 161, xxii, 102, &c.
21. *Merc.*, 4 August 1792, p. 33.
22. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1792, p. 44; compare *Moland*, xxii, 85–6, 93.

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23. *Merc.*, 5 June 1790, pp. 43–4; 19 November 1792, p. 23; 8 December 1792, pp. 52–3; 1 February 1794, p. 199.
24. *Verdière*, v, 174.
25. *Merc.*, 18 February 1792, p. 75; compare *Moland*, xx, 292–3.
26. *Merc.*, 23 January 1790, p. 160; 8 May 1790, pp. 66–7.
27. *Ibid.*, 19 November 1791, pp. 82–93.
28. *Ibid.*, 25 February 1792, p. 97.
29. *Ibid.*, 18, 25 February 1792, pp. 68–70, 91–3; compare *Moland*, xvii, 25.
30. *Merc.*, 18 February 1792, pp. 67–8; 21 April 1792, p. 79; compare *Montesquieu*, pp. 77–8.
31. *Merc.*, 18 February 1792, pp. 71–2.
32. *Ibid.*, 25 February 1792, p. 103; 2 February 1793, suppl. to n° 33, p. 6; compare *Moland*, xvii, 61–3, xviii, 84, 158.
33. *Merc.*, 10 March 1792, p. 43; 23 November 1793 (3 frimaire an ii), p. 136; compare *Moland*, xviii, 81, xx, 341.
34. *Merc.*, 10 March 1792, p. 42.
35. *Verdière*, v, 582, n., xvi, 131, n.
36. *Ibid.*, xvi, 37; *Lycée*, xv, 15.
37. *Verdière*, x, p. xvii.
38. *Ibid.*, v, 575.
39. *Ibid.*, v, 522.
40. *Ibid.*, v, 575.
41. *Lycée*, xvi, 296; compare *Verdière*, xvi, 142–3, 167–72.
42. *Lycée*, iii (2), 146–7, iv, 24–5, 37.
43. *Ibid.*, iv, 37; *Verdière*, xvi, 227, 232.
44. *Lycée*, xv, 245.
45. *Ibid.*, x, 296; *Verdière*, v, 482–4, 584, xvi, 100, 106–7, 127.
46. *Ibid.*, xvi, 4, 28, 130.
47. *Lycée*, xii, 352, xiii, 3; *Verdière*, v, 481, n.
48. *Ibid.*, v, 481, n., 508–9, 567, 570, 597, xvi, 28–9, 101; *Lycée*, i, 45, xiii, 59–60.
49. *Verdière*, xvi, 21.
50. *Ibid.*, xvi, 50, n.
51. *Ibid.*, ix, 38–9.
52. *Ibid.*, xvi, 86.
53. *Ibid.*, ix, 27, xvi, 92–3, 177.
54. *Lycée*, xv, 113.
55. *Ibid.*, xiv, 69.
56. *Verdière*, xvi, 64, 175.
57. *Ibid.*, xvi, 23.
58. *Ibid.*, xvi, 64.
59. *Ibid.*, xvi, 57, 59–60; *Lycée*, vii, 212.
60. *Verdière*, xvi, 63.
61. *Ibid.*, v, 522, xvi, 49–50; *Lycée*, vii, 192–3, 204, xvi, 128, n., 327, 338.
62. *Ibid.*, vii, 194.
63. *Ibid.*, xv, 401.
64. *Ibid.*, xv, 407; compare *Moland*, xviii, 126–7.
65. *Verdière*, i, p. cx, xvi, 7–8.
66. *Ibid.*, v, 482, 511, 522–4, 641–2, 677–80, xvi, 34, 242.
67. *Ibid.*, v, 507, 528, 622–5; *Lycée*, iii (1), 223–4, xv, 52, 292.
68. *Ibid.*, iv, 30–1; *Verdière*, v, 477–8, 480–1, xvi, 19, 100.
69. *Ibid.*, xvi, 5; compare *Moland*, xvii, 474–6, xviii, 63–4.
70. *Verdière*, xvi, 24, 28–9.
71. *Ibid.*, v, 540–3; *Lycée*, iii (1), 222.
72. *Ibid.*, xvi, 189; *Verdière*, v, 512; *Jovicevich I*, p. 131.
73. *Verdière*, v, 479, xvi, 122–3.
74. *Ibid.*, v, 347; compare *Moland*, xxii, 95; *Montesquieu*, p. 708.
75. *Verdière*, xvi, 10, 112–16, 121, 141, 195–7.
76. *Ibid.*, xvi, 11.
77. Mme Récamier, op. cit., i, 60.
78. *Lycée*, xii, 432.
79. *Verdière*, v, 488–9, 506, 524–6, 561–2, 571–2, 584, 593–6, 606–22, 627, 642–3; *Le Mémorial*, n°s. 61–2, 80–1, 83, 91, 95–6, 104.

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80. *Amateur des Autographes*, 38 (1905), 235.
81. Mme Récamier, op. cit., I, 58.
82. *Jovicevich I*, p. 113.
83. *Merc.*, 26 June 1790, pp. 138–9; 23 April 1791, pp. 154–63.
84. *Ibid.*, 24 April 1790, p. 186.
85. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1791, p. 150.
86. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1789, p. 110.
87. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1791, p. 151; compare *Lycée*, xiv, 436–7; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), iv, 226.
88. *Merc.*, 23 April 1791, p. 150.
89. *Lycée*, xiv, 396.
90. *Verdière*, v, 426–7.
91. *Lycée*, xiv, 426, 433.
92. *Verdière*, v, 348–50, 362, 368–74, 411–13, 415, 430–4, 446–8, 508–9, 602–4, 638–40.
93. *Ibid.*, v, 590; compare *ibid.*, v, 366, 422–3, 493, 515–16, 522, 587–8, *Lycée*, xiv, 416–17; *Le Mémorial*, n° 91, p. 2, n° 108, p. 3; *Discours sur l'état des lettres* (an v), p. iii.
94. *Verdière*, v, 588; compare *Moland*, xiv, 210, 215.
95. *Merc.*, 26 June 1790, p. 133; 7 August 1790, pp. 27–8.
96. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1792, p. 33.
97. *Le Mémorial*, n° 55, suppl., p. 4.
98. *Merc.*, 7 August 1790, p. 28.
99. *Verdière*, x, 360; *Lycée*, xv, 50.
100. *Merc.*, 20 October 1792, p. 68.
101. *Verdière*, xii, 13–14.
102. *Merc.*, 20 October 1792, p. 80.
103. *Verdière*, x, 187; *Merc.*, 10 September 1791, p. 78; 16 June 1792, pp. 78–80.
104. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1791, pp. 186–7.
105. See *Mémoires secrets*, 15 June 1776, ix, 134; *Moland*, xxii, 127.
106. *Verdière*, xi, 296–7; *Lycée*, xvi, 370–1; *Merc.*, 14 July 1792, pp. 44–6; 27 October 1792, p. 100.
107. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1792, p. 99.
108. *Ibid.*, 14 July 1792, p. 41.
109. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1792, pp. 47–8; *Lycée*, xv, 67; compare *Rousseau*, vii, 34, 50–1, 114–15.
110. *Merc.*, 30 April 1791, p. 196.
111. *Lycée*, xvi, 362; *Merc.*, 6 March 1790, p. 23; 14 January 1792, p. 47; 13 October 1792, p. 47; compare *Moland*, xviii, 381.
112. *Lycée*, xvi, 356; compare *Moland*, xxi, 90.
113. *Merc.*, 21 January 1792, p. 66; compare *Moland*, xvii, 582; *Best.*, 3668, 3763.
114. *Verdière*, v, 161; compare *Moland*, xxi, 217.
115. *Jovicevich I*, p. 99; compare *Moland*, xxi, 90.
116. *Lycée*, xvi, 360; *Merc.*, 6 March 1790, p. 15; 14 January 1792, p. 47.
117. *Rousseau*, vii, 32, x, 19–20.
118. *Merc.*, 6 March 1790, p. 23; 14 January 1792, p. 47; compare *Moland*, xix, 378–9, xx, 15.
119. *Lycée*, xvi, 359; *Merc.*, 14 January 1792, p. 54.
120. *Lycée*, xvi, 231; compare *Moland*, xvii, 151, 178–9, xxii, 123.
121. *Rousseau*, vii, 40, 69, 98–101.
122. *Merc.*, 9 June 1792, p. 52; compare *Verdière* xvi, 6.
123. *Merc.*, 16 June 1792, p. 79; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, 174; compare *Moland*, xix, 383.
124. *Merc.*, 8 October 1791, p. 69; 24 March 1792, p. 99; *Lycée*, xiv, 421–2, 436–7, 439–40.
125. (1791), p. 2.
126. *Merc.*, 27 February 1790, p. 143.
127. (1793), p. 35; compare *Rousseau*, viii, 96–7.
128. *Merc.*, 30 January 1790, p. 199; *Verdière*, v, 352, 387, 407, 410, 605; *Lycée*, iii (1), 190–1, 215, xvi, 267.
129. *Merc.*, 19 December 1789, p. 106; 16 January 1790, pp. 101–2; 26 June 1790, p. 137; 10 July 1790, pp. 82–3; *Verdière*, v, 343–4, 351, 356–7, n., 372, 384–9, 392, 398, 404, 644; *Lycée*, xiv, 419, xv, 477.
130. *Rousseau*, vii, 47–8, viii, 9.
131. *Lycée*, ii, 276–7, xiv, 441–2, xvi, 237, 239–40, 253–4, 333–4; *Séances des Ecoles normales*

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- (1795), iv, 212–14; *Verdière*, v, 659, x, 359, xvi, 142; *Merc.*, 27 February 1790, p. 143; 6 March 1790, p. 15; 23 April 1791, p. 142.
132. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1791, p. 143; compare *Moland*, xx, 293.
133. *Rousseau*, vii, 116, &c.
134. *Merc.*, 8 May 1790, p. 66; compare *Moland*, xx, 291–2.
135. *Lycée*, xvi, 229; *Merc.*, 19 December 1789, p. 96; 23 April 1791, p. 147; 14 January 1792, p. 51.
136. *La Constitution française* (1791), p. 3.
137. *Constitution de la République française* (Bordeaux, 1795), p. 3.
138. *Merc.*, 23 April 1791, p. 150; compare *Lycée*, xiv, 419; *Verdière*, v, 392, xvi, 142–3.
139. *Merc.*, 9, 23 April 1791, pp. 91, 151; 2 June 1792, p. 28; *Lycée*, iii (1), 193; compare *Moland*, xiv, 532.
140. *Merc.*, 16 January 1790, p. 110; *Lycée*, xvi, 214.
141. *Merc.*, 23 April 1791, p. 147; *Lycée*, ii, 276.
142. *Ibid.*, xvi, 237.
143. *Ibid.*, iii (1), 213; *Verdière*, iv, 25.
144. *Ibid.*, v, 13–15; *Merc.*, 9 June 1792, p. 48; compare *Moland*, xiv, 373, 519.
145. *Merc.*, 2 June 1792, p. 27; *Verdière*, iv, 26–7; compare *Moland*, xxii, 111.
146. *Lycée*, xv, 477.
147. *Merc.*, 23 January 1790, pp. 160–1; 30 April 1791, p. 181.
148. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1792, p. 53; *Verdière*, iv, 11; compare *Moland*, xiv, 531.
149. *Lycée*, xv, 476; *Merc.*, 15 September 1792, p. 42.
150. *Verdière*, x, 153.
151. *Ibid.*, x, 141, 164.
152. *Lycée*, xv, 277–8.
153. *Verdière*, xi, 367–70.
154. *Ibid.*, xii, 248.
155. *Merc.*, 23 April 1791, p. 144; compare *Rousseau*, viii, 96.
156. *Merc.*, 19 December 1789, p. 96; 22 January 1791, p. 133.
157. *Lycée*, xiv, 452; *Verdière*, v, 356, 405.
158. *Ibid.*, v, 345–6, 393, 478, 591; *Lycée*, xiv, 442, xv, 313–14; compare *Montesquieu*, p. 602.
159. *Merc.*, 24 March 1792, p. 101; compare *Rousseau*, vii, 9–10, 275.
160. *Merc.*, 10 March 1792, p. 50.
161. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1792, pp. 54–5; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), iii, 182; compare *Moland*, xix, 295.
162. *Montesquieu*, p. 535.
163. Admittedly, he attacked Choiseul, accusing him of having had a courtier's mind, as incapable of great crimes as he was of great virtue, and claiming that his own debt to Choiseul did not deny him the right to talk about the bad as well as the good qualities of the man (*Merc.*, 28 April 1792, pp. 92–5). Elsewhere, however, he praised Choiseul's administration and his intelligence (*ibid.*, 9 January 1790, pp. 64–5; 3 July 1790, p. 43; 7 July 1792, p. 34). As for the ministers of Louis XVI, we have already seen how he admired Turgot and Necker, and, if he dismissed Maurepas as being as frivolous as he was amiable, he was only sorry that Malesherbes had been forced to return to retirement when he saw how little he could do (*ibid.*, 10 July 1790, p. 67). In the same way, he praised Montmorin as president of the Assemblée nationale and was proud to know him (*ibid.*, 9 April 1791, p. 85). If he attacked Calonne, it was because the latter attacked the Revolution (*ibid.*, pp. 85–6), and as for Brienne — to whom he had no debt —, he was to blame his stupidity as one of the main causes of the Revolution (*Lycée*, xiv, 429).
164. *Merc.*, 15 September 1792, pp. 46–7.
165. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1790, pp. 101–2; 26 June 1790, pp. 132–3; *Verdière*, xii, 84–7.
166. *Merc.*, 10 September 1791, p. 81.
167. *Lycée*, xiv, 21–2, n.
168. *Merc.*, 16 January 1790, pp. 102, 163–6; 24 April 1790, p. 181; 27 October 1790, p. 95.
169. *Ibid.*, 2, 23 June 1792, pp. 24, 98; 7 July 1792, p. 34.
170. *Verdière*, iv, 31, 62–3; *Merc.*, 23 January 1790, pp. 163–6; 26 June 1790, p. 131.
171. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1790, p. 220, &c.
172. *Verdière*, v, 159.
173. *Ibid.*, iv, 6; compare *ibid.*, iv, 22–3, 57–8, 87–8; compare *Moland*, xiv, 487, xxii, 114; *Best.*, 1094.
174. *Verdière*, iv, 21, v, 18, 160–1.

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175. *Merc.*, 17 December 1791, p. 74, 9 June 1792, p. 48; compare *Moland*, xiv, 218–19, xxi, 119.
176. *Verdière*, v, 16, 164, xi, 148; *Merc.*, 17 December 1791, p. 74; compare *Moland*, xiv, 243, 325, 440, 512–13, xviii, 72, xxii, 107.
177. *Verdière*, iv, 42, 81; *Merc.*, 8 December 1792, p. 41.
178. *Verdière*, v, 15, 59.
179. *Ibid.*, iv, 16–17.
180. *Ibid.*, iv, 14–15, 37, 77, xv, 91.
181. *Ibid.*, i, 251, v, 30.
182. *Ibid.*, iv, 87.
183. *Discours sur la liberté du théâtre* (1790), p. 8; *Merc.*, 13 November 1790, p. 72.
184. *Lycée*, xiv, 414.
185. *Merc.*, 21 August 1790, pp. 104–5; 22 September 1792, p. 66.
186. *Ibid.*, 6 March 1790, p. 30; 21 August 1790, p. 106.
187. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1792, pp. 47–8; compare *ibid.*, 14 May 1791, p. 75.
188. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1792, p. 101.
189. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1792, p. 66.
190. *Verdière*, v, 344, 347, 354, 369–70, 390, 493–4, 496–9, 502–6, 550–1, 632–3, 636.
191. *Lycée*, xv, 65; compare *Verdière*, vi, 103, n.
192. *Lycée*, xiv, 413.
193. *Ibid.*, xv, 61.
194. *Ibid.*, xv, 60–1; *Verdière*, v, 44–5; *Merc.*, 18 February 1792, p. 70.
195. *Montesquieu*, pp. 532–6.
196. *Verdière*, vi, 10–11, 370–5, 488–93, vii, 84, 279–80, 342–7, xiv, 92–104.
197. *Ibid.*, v, 353, 383–4; *Merc.*, 23 January 1790, pp. 157–8; 6 March 1790, p. 19; 24 April 1790, p. 186; 26 June 1790, p. 147; 23 April 1791, p. 181, 8 December 1792, p. 46.
198. *Montesquieu*, pp. 586–7, 617.
199. *Moland*, xxii, 103.
200. *Merc.*, 14 January 1792, p. 43.
201. *The Works of John Locke*, eleventh edition, 10 vols (1812), v, 424–39.
202. *Verdière*, v, 394; *Le Mémorial*, n° 47.
203. *Ibid.*, n° 6, 75.
204. *Rousseau*, viii, 75–6, 104–6.
205. *La Constitution française* (1791), p. 8.
206. *Merc.*, 27 February 1790, p. 135. In similar vein, if he was not entirely happy with the constitution of 1795, he at least insisted that it was workable (*Verdière*, v, 637). See *Constitution de la République française* (Bordeaux, 1795), p. 5.
207. *Merc.*, 14 May 1791, pp. 66–7; 21 January 1792, p. 73; compare *Montesquieu*, pp. 532, 534, 570, 587–8, 647.
208. *Merc.*, 2 June 1792, p. 31.
209. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1790, p. 105; 21 January 1792, pp. 71–2; 13 October 1793, pp. 55–6.
210. *Lycée*, xiv, 449–50, 452.
211. *Constitution républicaine* (1793), p. 44.
212. *Année littéraire*, 1790, i, 91–2.
213. *Merc.*, 13 February 1790, p. 64.
214. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1790, p. 156; 18 September 1790, pp. 113–14.
215. pp. 92–9, 131–52, 167–87.
216. *Rapport sur l'instruction publique* (1791).
217. *Merc.*, 21 April 1792, pp. 79–80.
218. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1792, p. 30; compare *Diderot*, iii, 415.
219. *Merc.*, 28 January 1792, p. 104; 21 April 1792, p. 79; 8 September 1792, p. 29.
220. *Op. cit.*, p. 77.
221. *Merc.*, 7, 28 July 1792, pp. 27–8, 92; *Lycée*, xvi, 143.
222. *Merc.*, 28 July 1792, pp. 93–4.
223. *Lycée*, xiv, 270; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 1, i, 42.
224. *Lycée*, xvi, 367.
225. *Ibid.*, xiv, 269; *Merc.*, 30 April 1791, p. 187; compare *Diderot*, iii, 95.
226. *Merc.*, 30 April 1791, p. 193; *Lycée*, xi, 506, xiv, 269.
227. *Ibid.*, xi 530–1; compare *Rousseau*, x, 145.
228. *Lycée*, xi, 531.
229. *Ibid.*, xv, 385–6.

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230. *Ibid.*, xi, 525.  
 231. *Rousseau*, x, 187–8, 192–4.  
 232. (Amsterdam, 1762).  
 233. *Barbier-Billard*, II, col. 36.  
 234. *Lycée*, xvi, 169–70.  
 235. *Ibid.*, xvi, 130–69.  
 236. *Ibid.*, xvi, 131.  
 237. *Ibid.*, xvi, 158.  
 238. *Rousseau*, xii, 319.  
 239. *A une mère*, 22–33.  
 240. *Rousseau*, xii, 301, 322, 351–2.  
 241. *Lycée*, II, 50, v, 268; compare *Rousseau*, xii, 343–4; *Marmontel*, xii, 197.  
 242. *Merc.*, 31 August 1792, p. 70; compare *Rousseau*, x, 42, 48.  
 243. *Lycée*, xvi, 381.  
 244. *Ibid.*, iv, 18–19, 28, xvi, 155; *Verdière*, xi, 180; *Merc.*, September 1769, pp. 177–85; *J. Pol.*, 1777 n° 25, III, 34–5.  
 245. *Lycée*, iv, 19–20; *Verdière*, vi, 17–18; *Merc.*, 4 August 1792, p. 24.  
 246. *Lycée*, xvi, 156.  
 247. *Ibid.*, xvi, 151; compare *Rousseau*, x, 178–9, 182, 237–41, xi, 127; Talleyrand, op. cit., p. 28; Crévier, op. cit., p. 17.  
 248. *Lycée*, xvi, 378; compare *Rousseau*, x, 244–5, xi, 24; *Diderot*, III, 418; Crévier, op. cit., pp. 6–7, 21–2.  
 249. *Lycée*, xvi, 380; compare *Rousseau*, x, 137.  
 250. *Ibid.*, x, 186–7.  
 251. *Lycée*, xvi, 380; compare Quintilian, I, II, 21–9; *Diderot*, III, 420; Talleyrand, op. cit., p. 86; Crévier, op. cit., pp. 219–21.  
 252. *Lycée*, xvi, 380; compare *Rousseau*, x, 166; Crévier, op. cit., pp. 71–2, 214–18.  
 253. *Lycée*, xvi, 282–3.  
 254. *Ibid.*, xvi, 143, 384; compare Talleyrand, op. cit., pp. 30, 34–40; Crévier, op. cit., pp. 18–21, 31.  
 255. See Talleyrand, op. cit., p. 40.  
 256. *Lycée*, xvi, 384.  
 257. *Ibid.*, xvi, 387.  
 258. *Ibid.*, I, 166–7, III (1), 169, xvi, 392; compare Talleyrand, op. cit., pp. 96–7.  
 259. *Diderot*, III, 421.  
 260. *Lycée*, xvi, 389; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), II, 104.  
 261. *Lycée*, xvi, 137.  
 262. *Ibid.*, I, 135–7, xvi, 401; compare Quintilian, I, pr. 4–5.  
 263. *Merc.*, 29 January 1791, p. 178.  
 264. *Ibid.*, p. 179.  
 265. *Ibid.*, p. 180.  
 266. *Apologie de la Sorbonne* ([s.l.n.d.]).  
 267. *Lettre au citoyen Laharpe sur le collègue de France* (1792).  
 268. La Chalotais, *Essai d'Education nationale* (1763), p. 71.  
 269. Talleyrand, op. cit., *Projet de décrets*, article III.  
 270. *Merc.*, 20 October 1792, p. 67.  
 271. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1789, pp. 95–111; 16, 23 January 1790, pp. 100–12, 152–67; 9, 23, 30 April 1791, pp. 84–96, 142–63, 180–97; 14, 21 May 1791, pp. 58–78, 103–13, &c.  
 272. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1792, p. 79.  
 273. *Le Mémorial*, prospectus.  
 274. *Merc.*, 9 April 1791, p. 85.  
 275. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1792, p. 78.  
 276. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1791, p. 151.  
 277. *Ibid.*, 20 March 1790, p. 87.  
 278. *Ibid.*  
 279. *Ibid.*, 17 November 1792, p. 70.  
 280. *Lycée*, xiv, 461.  
 281. *Répertoire du Théâtre français* (1803), vi, 190–1.

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1. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, 174.
2. *Lycée*, I, p. vii.
3. *Œuvres choisies de Fénelon*, 6 vols (1829), II, 163–4.
4. *Lycée*, VII, 330.
5. See Quintilian, III, III.14 — IV, 6.
6. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, 178; *Lycée*, II, 286.
7. *Ibid.*, XVI, 392.
8. *Verdière*, I, pp. lxxv–lxxxvi.
9. *Lycée*, II, 222.
10. *Ibid.*, VII, 34–5.
11. *Merc.*, 8 October 1791, pp. 54–6; *Verdière*, IV, 5.
12. *Ibid.*, XIV, 386; *Lycée*, III (1), 320–2, VII, 150–1; compare *Moland*, XIV, 158.
13. *Verdière*, IV, 32; compare *Merc.*, 14 July 1792, p. 50.
14. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1792, pp. 23–4; *Lycée*, XIV, 193.
15. *Verdière*, X, 136, 157–8; *Merc.*, 16 October 1790, pp. 110–11.
16. *Ibid.*; *Lycée*, II, 271, VII, 21; *Verdière*, X, 134.
17. *Lycée*, XV, 37, n.
18. *Verdière*, XI, 411.
19. *Lycée*, loc. cit.
20. *Verdière*, V, 57–67. One should mention here that the so-called *Eloge de Lekain* (*ibid.*, IV, 449–58) is really an obituary notice (*J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 5, I, 224–8).
21. *Verdière*, XI, 411.
22. *Lycée*, VII, 324–5; *Pissot*, VI, 143.
23. *Merc.*, 5 October 1778, p. 48.
24. *Lycée*, XIII, 353; *J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 2, I, 87; *Verdière*, IV, 105, 144–5, 227–8.
25. *Ibid.*, X, 218–19; *Merc.*, 31 July 1790, pp. 178–9.
26. *Verdière*, XIV, 349.
27. *J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 3, I, 136.
28. *Verdière*, XV, 370–1; compare *Moland*, XIV, 182, 202.
29. *Lycée*, VII, 73; compare *Verdière*, IV, 254.
30. *Lycée*, XIV, 196.
31. *Verdière*, XIII, 56, XIV, 244; compare *Moland*, XIV, 260.
32. *Verdière*, IV, 25–6, 38.
33. *Ibid.*, IV, 95.
34. *Ibid.*, IV, 226.
35. *Ibid.*, IV, 365.
36. *Lycée*, VII, 34; compare *Moland*, XIV, 158–9.
37. *Verdière*, IV, 7.
38. *Ibid.*, IV, 58.
39. *Best.*, 13550.
40. *Best.*, 13402, 13436.
41. See *Best.*, 16348.
42. *Op. cit.*, III, 222–3.
43. *Verdière*, IV, 64.
44. ‘Mémoires sur la vie de La Harpe’, *Œuvres choisies et posthumes de m. de la Harpe* (1806), I, p. xxvii.
45. *Verdière*, IV, 44–6.
46. *Ibid.*, IV, 74.
47. *Ibid.*; compare *Moland*, XVII, 175–8, XXIX, 520; *Best.*, 9214.
48. *Verdière*, IV, 95–6; compare *Moland*, XIV, 339–40.
49. *Verdière*, IV, 112.
50. *Ibid.*, IV, 106.
51. *Diderot*, XX, 35–9; *Correspondance littéraire*, IX, 383.
52. *Observations d’un théologien . . .* (Amsterdam, 1772), p. 13.
53. A.N.: AD\*998, f. 60.
54. See *Verdière*, IV, 93–4.
55. *Marmontel*, XII, 62.
56. *Best.*, 16306.
57. *Verdière*, IV, 246–7; compare *Moland*, XIV, 308, 311.
58. *Verdière*, IV, 282; compare *La Henriade*, VII, 388–90.
59. *Verdière*, IV, 265.

## Notes to Chapter XIII, continued

60. *Ibid.*, iv, 268.
61. *Ibid.*, iv, 280.
62. *Ibid.*, iv, 116.
63. *Ibid.*, iv, 222.
64. *Ibid.*, iv, 224.
65. *Ibid.*, iv, 333–5.
66. *Ibid.*, iv, 365.
67. *Ibid.*, iv, 377.
68. *Lycée*, II, 219.
69. *Ibid.*, II, 422–4.
70. Quintilian, VIII, *proæmium* 13–17.
71. *Lycée*, II, 391.
72. *Ibid.*, II, 394, 411–12.
73. *Merc.*, 4 September 1779, p. 37.
74. *Lycée*, II, 394.
75. *Ibid.*, II, 395; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, 185.
76. *Ibid.*, I, 185–6; *Lycée*, loc. cit.
77. *Ibid.*, XIV, 71.
78. *Ibid.*, XIV, 87–8.
79. *Ibid.*, XIV, 194.
80. *Verdière*, IV, 42.
81. *Ibid.*, V, 57.
82. *Ibid.*, XIV, 335.
83. See *ibid.*, IV, 14–15, 22, 42, 46.
84. See *ibid.*, IV, 87–8.
85. See *ibid.*, IV, 158, 160.
86. See *ibid.*, IV, 213, 282.
87. See *ibid.*, IV, 365.
88. *Lycée*, II, 341–2; compare Quintilian, II, XII, 4–8.
89. *Merc.*, 21 August 1790, p. 102.
90. *Lycée*, II, 294; compare Quintilian, VI, III, 2.
91. *Lycée*, VII, 2–6.
92. *Ibid.*, VII, 20.
93. *J. Pol.*, 1778 n° 10, I, 457.
94. *Lycée*, XIV, 43.
95. *Verdière*, V, 9.
96. *Ibid.*, V, 12.
97. *Ibid.*, V, 18.
98. *Ibid.*, V, 9–10.
99. *Ibid.*, V, 30.
100. *Ibid.*, V, 16.
101. *Ibid.*, V, 33.
102. *Ibid.*, V, 34.
103. *Ibid.*, V, 53.
104. *Ibid.*, V, 33.
105. *Lettre au Moniteur* (1814), p. 9.
106. *Best.*, 13550.
107. *Verdière*, V, 70.
108. *Ibid.*, XV, 38; compare *Moland*, XXII, 184–5.
109. Quintilian, I, II, 18; compare *Lycée*, II, 241–2.
110. *Verdière*, V, 71.
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*, V, 75.
113. *Ibid.*, V, 77–8.
114. *Ibid.*, V, 80.
115. *Ibid.*, V, 82.
116. This means that he only mentions the *Lettres amoureuses d'Héloïse à Abailard* (*Merc.*, November 1772, pp. 81–100) and avoids discussing other works to which he had not given such approval (*ibid.*, April 1773, I, 110–16).
117. *Verdière*, V, 85.
118. *Ibid.*, V, 87.



## Notes to Chapter XIII, continued

119. *Ibid.*, v, 89.
120. *Correspondance secrète*, 27 June 1776, III, 131.
121. *Mémoires secrets*, 21 June 1776, IX, 140.
122. See *Verdière*, v, 71.
123. *Ibid.*, XII, 35–8; compare *Correspondance littéraire*, XII, 198; *J. Paris*, 26 August 1782, p. 971.
124. *Lycée*, II, 244; compare *Correspondance littéraire*, XIV, 412.
125. *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), I, p. iii.
126. *Merc.*, 29 January 1791, p. 179.
127. *Verdière*, v, 673.
128. In the same way, the *Réfutation du livre de l'Esprit* (an v) is part of *La Philosophie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (*Lycée*, xv, 327–494). As for the *Discours sur la poésie sacrée* (1822), it is merely a separate printing of the preface to La Harpe's psalter.
129. *Lycée*, IV, 1–78.
130. *Ibid.*, VIII, 1–40.
131. *Ibid.*, VIII, 1, n.
132. *Ibid.*, VIII, 24.
133. *Ibid.*, VIII, 37–8.
134. *Ibid.*, III (1), 168; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), II, 103.
135. *Ibid.*, I, 170; *Verdière*, xv, 8; *Merc.*, 21 August 1790, pp. 95–6.
136. *Lycée*, II, 271–2.
137. *Merc.*, 19 December 1789, p. 100.
138. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–111.
139. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–5; compare 21 August 1790, p. 102.
140. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1789, pp. 106–7.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
142. *Verdière*, v, 305.
143. *Discours sur la liberté du théâtre* (1790) p. 3.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
145. A.N.: F<sup>7</sup>4759.
146. See *La Quotidienne*, 15 pluviôse an III (2 February 1795), pp. 434–5; 23–26 germinal an III (12–15 April 1795); *J. Paris*, 6 ventôse an III (24 February 1795), pp. 629–30, &c.
147. See Part 1, chapter VI, n. 85.
148. *Verdière*, v, 490, n.; compare *Lycée*, XIV, 508.
149. *Verdière*, v, 489–90, n.
150. *Ibid.*, v, 424, 500–1, n.
151. *Ibid.*, v, 418.
152. *Le Mémorial*, n° 4, p. 2.
153. *Verdière*, v, 352.
154. *Ibid.*, v, 511, n., 658–9; *Lycée*, XIV, 421, 438; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), IV, 211.
155. *Verdière*, v, 348.
156. *Ibid.*, v, 368.
157. *Ibid.*, v, 419, 494, 590, n.; *Lycée*, XIV, 459.
158. *Ibid.*, IV, 25, XIV, 453; *Verdière*, v, 491.
159. *Ibid.*, v, 484; *Lycée*, XIV, 80.
160. *Ibid.*, II, 368; compare *ibid.*, XIV, 420; *Verdière*, v, 588–9.
161. *Ibid.*, v, 384.
162. *Ibid.*, v, 389.

## Notes to Chapter XIV

1. *Lycée*, II, 440; *Séances des Ecoles normales* (1795), III, 201.
2. *Verdière*, v, 166.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Merc.*, 14 April 1792, p. 48. Suard had a copy of it by 26 July 1774 (*Suard I*, p. 192), and it was first printed in 1777 (*Yverdon, III*, 131–40).
5. *Verdière*, v, 167.
6. *Ibid.*, v, 170.
7. *Ibid.*, v, 174.
8. *Ibid.*, v, 367; compare *Moland*, XXI, 410.
9. *Verdière*, v, 366.

## Notes to Chapter XIV, continued

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., v, 367.
12. Ibid., v, 372.
13. Ibid., v, 381.
14. *Causeries du lundi* (1885), v, 139–43.
15. *Verdière*, I, pp. civ–cv.
16. Ibid., I, p. cvii.
17. Ibid., I, p. cx.
18. A manuscript of this *prédiction* or *prophétie de Cazotte* is preserved in the Arsenal: Rondel MS. 307. The work was first published in the *Œuvres choisies et posthumes de m. de La Harpe* (1806), I, pp. lxii–lxviii. By design or by accident, Petitot omitted the final paragraph in which La Harpe wrote ‘comme la prophétie n’est que supposée’. This omission was first pointed out in the *Journal général de l’imprimerie*, 28 June 1817, pp. 382–3. In the meantime, it had given rise to a great deal of speculation. The baronne d’Oberkirch, for instance, insists that the work was written before the Revolution and is indeed a true prophecy (*Mémoires . . .*, publiés par le comte de Montbrison, 2 vols (1853), II, 397). The lines by Diderot, quoted in the work, would seem to indicate that it dates from after 1796, as it is unlikely that La Harpe would have known them before they were published in the *Décade philosophique*, 30 fructidor an IV (16 September 1796), p. 555. The first complete edition is that in *Verdière*, I, pp. ciii–cx. (1790).
19. (1790).
20. In a note at the beginning of his reply (*Verdière*, v, 343), La Harpe admitted using the summary report of the proceedings of 12 floréal published in the *J. Paris*, 13 floréal an III (2 May 1795), p. 902, and not waiting for the fuller report in the *Moniteur*, 15 and 16 floréal (4 and 5 May), réimp., xxiv, 359–60, 361–5.
21. *Verdière*, v, 348.
22. Ibid., v, 344.
23. Ibid., v, 408–10.
24. Ibid., v, 424.
25. Ibid., v, 444.
26. Ibid., v, 415.
27. See *ibid.*, v, 344.
28. Ibid., v, 421–2.
29. He published a ‘réponse à l’écrit du citoyen Laharpe que je n’ai point lu’ in *La Sentinelle*, 23 fructidor an III (9 September 1795), pp. 314–5, which in its turn brought a reply from La Harpe (*Verdière*, v, 467–71).
30. Ibid., v, 472.
31. See Part I, chapter VI, n. 111.
32. *Le Mémorial*, no. 80, p. 3.
33. *Verdière*, v, 490, n.
34. See Part I, chapter VII, n. 9.
35. *Verdière*, xvi, 57, n., 62.
36. Ibid., xvi, 3.
37. Ibid., xvi, 38–44, 245.
38. Ibid., xvi, 39.
39. Ibid., xvi, 44.
40. Ibid., xvi, 261.
41. Ibid., xvi, 293.
42. See *ibid.*, xvi, 315.
43. *Correspondance générale de Chateaubriand . . .*, I, 16.
44. *Verdière*, xvi, 201.
45. Ibid., xvi, 36.
46. *Lycée*, xvi, 842. We prefer to quote this version rather than the less concise passage on the same subject in *Verdière*, xvi, 320. The latter version appears less spontaneous.

## Notes to Conclusion

1. *Histoire de la poésie française de la Renaissance au Romantisme*, 11 vols (1935), IX, 212–14.
2. *Lectures and notes on Shakspeare* (1883), p. 36.
3. *Discours et mélanges littéraires* (1823), p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 67.
5. Ibid., p. 69.

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DQ.7/1.788 and 3.444 = Déclarations des mutations après décès du 22 thermidor an xi, et du 22 avril 1835.

V.10.E (art. 4) = Table décennale filiative des mariages célébrés à Paris de 1793 à 1802.

VD\*354 = Rapport général de la surveillance, du 19 mars 1797.

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A<sup>A</sup>16 Carton 7 n° 579 = Mandat d'arrêt du 26 ventôse an ii.

A<sup>A</sup>28 Carton 18 n° 101 = Mandat de transfert du 24 germinal an ii.

A<sup>B</sup>316 = Registre d'écrous des détenus de la maison de santé du citoyen Belhomme, rue de Charonne, du 25 frimaire an ii au 19 pluviôse an iii.

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F<sup>7</sup>4286 dossier 22 n° 1 = Suppression des journaux, le 18 fructidor an v.

F<sup>7</sup>4759 = Papiers du comité de sûreté générale (série alphabétique).

F<sup>7</sup>6311 = Affaires, an v-1830.

F<sup>7</sup>7130 = Affaires politiques.

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F<sup>7</sup>2200<sup>307</sup> = Fichier de la police.

F<sup>17</sup>1001 n° 39 = Réclamation des auteurs dramatiques.

F<sup>17</sup>1095 dossier 2 = Réclamation des membres de la ci-devant Académie française.

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F<sup>17</sup>1350 dossier 2 n° 13 = Pétition des auteurs dramatiques (signée: Parisau, etc.).

H<sup>3</sup>2819 = Comptes du collège d'Harcourt, 1755-6.

O<sup>1</sup>679 n° 195-7 = Extraordinaire des Menus Plaisirs — pensions.

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V<sup>1</sup>439, 444 = Nominations.

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