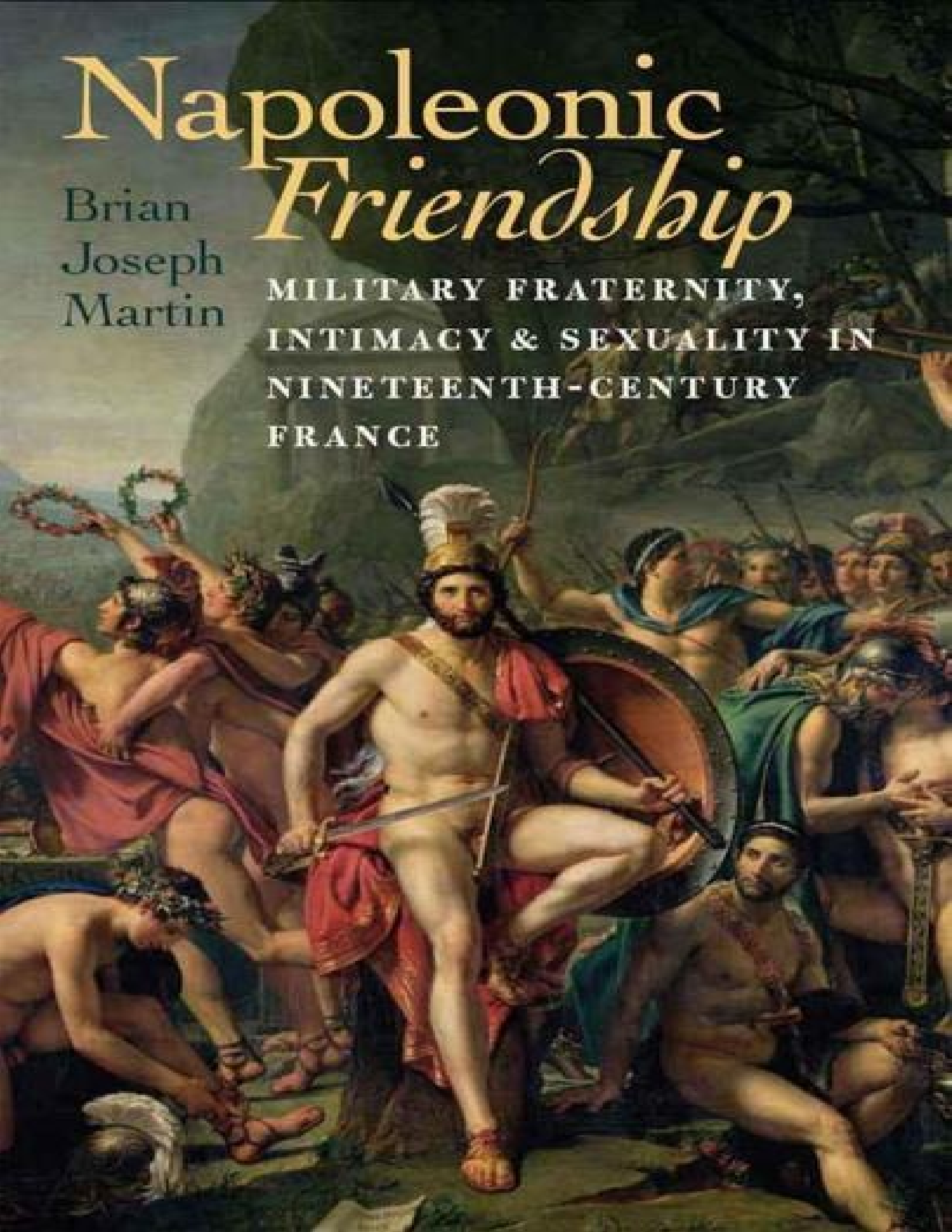


Napoleonic *Friendship*

Brian
Joseph
Martin

MILITARY FRATERNITY,
INTIMACY & SEXUALITY IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
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Napoleonic

Friendship



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FRANCE**

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My heart was as empty as a lover who has lost the object of his passion ... But now I am like a lover who has rediscovered his desire; I offer my body to support His Majesty. Long live the Emperor!



SOLDIER JEAN BORDENAVE
(1815)

I set out to look for one of my friends, the one with whom I was most intimately linked, the one with whom I had never counted debts; our purses were one and the same.



SERGEANT FRANÇOIS BOURGOGNE
(1835)

This fraternity of peril had strengthened friendship for some and created new friendships for others. Friendship that forms on the field of battle is one of lasting duration.



CAPTAIN ELZÉAR BLAZE
(1837)

I loved him, my brave comrade, and would not leave him to the enemy.



CAPTAIN JEAN-ROCH COIGNET
(1851)

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Gays in the Military

Amid the early debates on what came to be known as “Gays in the Military,” General Colin Powell was invited to be the honorary commencement speaker at Harvard University in June 1993. Many graduating students were angered by the university’s decision to invite the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was opposed to President Bill Clinton’s early proposal to allow gay and lesbian soldiers to serve openly in the American armed forces. Barely two months after an historic lesbian, gay, and bisexual march on Washington, D.C., in April 1993, when hundreds of thousands of queer people from all over the nation asked the newly inaugurated president to live up to his campaign promises and fight for their civil rights, many Harvard students felt that General Powell’s position represented institutional homophobia in the military and viewed his commencement address as an insulting way to mark the culmination of their college careers.

In the spring days leading up to the event, the Harvard-Radcliffe Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Student Association quickly organized a protest for the graduation ceremony that was intended to express its opposition to the ban on gays in the military while not disrupting the commencement exercises for those students and families gathered from across the globe to celebrate many years of study, sacrifice, and hard work. Festive pink balloons marked with slogans such as “Lift the Ban” were distributed to willing faculty and students marching in the procession. Hundreds of student mortarboards were covered with pink protest stickers. Academic robes were adorned with protest pins on which the American flag’s white stars had been replaced with pink triangles. And at the moment during the morning exercises when General Powell was to be presented with his honorary degree, graduating students were asked to stand on their folding chairs, turn their backs to the honoree, and hold up opposition posters for the gathered families, alumni, and journalists sitting in the rows behind, under the lush green trees in Harvard Yard.

The protest was a great success. Rather than attempting to block the procession or drown out the speaker, the protesters succeeded in conveying a clear message with their festive balloons and colorful posters, and in drawing the attention of the media. That week, prominent articles appeared in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, and *Los Angeles Times* describing the event as one of many across the nation that spring where Americans spoke out against the discriminatory military policy that was later known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue.”¹

That June day in 1993 also marked an important milestone in the relationship between my military father and his gay son. As the first in my working-class family to earn a bachelor’s degree, I was acutely aware of what this day meant to my parents. The children of immigrant families from Ireland and Scandinavia, my father

and mother had grown up poor in Boston tenements and housing projects, had struggled all their adult lives to raise three children, and were now coming to see their youngest son graduate from college. Like many parents across America, mine had taken on enormous financial burdens, exhausting overtime work, and hefty long-term loans to pay for my college education. Yet, in addition to these financial challenges, my parents had sacrificed a great deal more in their struggle to raise and educate a gay son.

When the Gulf War broke out in 1991 during the winter of my sophomore year, there were heated debates in my family about what I and my older brother, Kevin, would do in the event of a protracted conflict and the return of the draft. My father, who had lost an entire generation of his peers to the war in Vietnam, wanted to spare his sons from a similar fate. As the daughter of immigrants, however, my mother felt a keen sense of patriotism and believed that it was our duty to serve the country if drafted into service. Despite what I saw as an ironic gender disparity between a civilian mother who (like Shakespeare's Volumnia) expected her sons to fight and a military father who (like many parents during the Vietnam era) wanted to save his boys from harm, I understood the logic of my parents' opposing positions. While my mother's patriotism grew from an idealistic sense of immigrant gratitude, my father intimately understood—after a lifetime of service in the Massachusetts Army National Guard and the Boston Police Department—the dangers that a soldier would face in combat.

Born in 1939, both of my parents had vivid memories of their childhoods in Boston during the Second World War, including the daily challenges of material shortages and ration books, the death of my father's uncle Tommy during combat in Germany, the return of my grandfather George from service in the army, and the victory celebrations in Boston at the end of the war in both Europe and the Pacific. But as adolescents and young adults, they had also lived through the tumultuous years of the war in Korea—where my dad's stepfather Paul had served in the navy—and the Vietnam War, when my father's military service placed him in the precarious position of being shipped out for combat in Southeast Asia. Because of his Cold War duties in domestic defense, my father was spared from the killing fields in Vietnam. But as both an Army National Guardsman and a police officer, he spent the war years on the front lines of the domestic conflict, in which he was often forced to confront college students—similar in age but vastly different in social class and privilege—amid the mass protests on and around the campuses of Boston's many universities. Decades later, when the Gulf War broke out in 1990–91, my father's National Guard unit was among those to be activated for deployment, but he was again spared from combat due to the brevity of the war. He and his fellow officers, however, faced a new era of domestic unrest at home and a new generation of college protesters and anti-war demonstrations.

I vividly remember the day in the winter of 1991 when my friend Kristin Kimball

and I marched in protest down Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square in Cambridge to Boston's City Hall, along with hundreds of other students from Harvard, Tufts, and MIT, and found ourselves on opposite sides of the lines from my father, who had been ordered to police the demonstration. In a nostalgic gesture of early Vietnam-era flower power (as opposed to later Vietnam-era rage), Kristin ran up to my uniformed father and kissed him on the cheek. Spotting me in the crowd shortly after, my father smiled and assured me that he respected my right to protest, but I was careful not to embarrass him in front of his fellow officers.

By the time the Iraq War began over a decade later in 2003, I had returned to Harvard for graduate school—where my undergraduate students were far less willing to protest this new war than my generation had done a decade earlier or their parents had done during Vietnam—and my father had retired from both the military (at the rank of master sergeant, after thirty-six years of service) and from the police (as a senior detective, after thirty-seven years of duty). Yet, as a child of war, a career soldier, and a police officer, my father understood the dangers involved in combat. And it was for this reason that he was determined back in 1991—despite his own patriotism and sense of duty—to spare his sons from the horrors of warfare in the Middle East.

The Gulf War, however, was not the only grave danger facing young men in the early 1990s. In the fall of 1991, at the beginning of my junior year in college, my brother Kevin told us that he was dying of AIDS. Having come out of the closet at the age of eighteen in 1984, Kevin strove his entire adult life to live openly and honestly as a gay man. When he was diagnosed with AIDS in 1989, Kevin hid the news from all but his lover Keith and his best friend Frank, in an attempt to shelter his family and friends from what was, in that first decade of the AIDS crisis, a fatal disease stigmatized by shame, homophobia, and gross government inaction. Facing the collapse of his immune system, a new battle with pneumocystis pneumonia, and the rapid wasting of his body that fall, my brother decided to tell me, my sister Karen, and my parents his painfully guarded secret. After three more months of progressive suffering and rapid decline, Kevin died on December 6, 1991. He was twenty-five.

A year and a half later in June 1993, when Nancy and Joseph Martin arrived in Harvard Yard to see their youngest son graduate from college, they had succeeded in overcoming their own childhood poverty and in raising their three children. But they had paid an enormous price, and it must have been bittersweet to watch the celebrations of one son's success on the heels of another son's burial. It took me a long time to understand and appreciate how the sacrifices of my brother's generation—those hundreds of thousands of gay men silenced by AIDS, homophobia, and indifference—made it possible for those of my generation to avoid and fight HIV, to live and thrive. And I had only recently begun to appreciate why many writers and activists had, amid great criticism, metaphorized these sacrifices in military terms.²

What was clear to me on that June morning in 1993, as I walked in the graduation procession, was that my parents needed and deserved to feel proud that day.

It was thus with some hesitation that, at the appointed moment, I stood up on my chair to turn my back on Colin Powell, hold up my protest poster, and face my parents who were sitting only a dozen rows back. Sure of my political position but afraid of ruining their day, I flinched when my eyes met my father's. On the point of losing my nerve, I was relieved when I saw his mouth curl up into a smile and his hand thrust into the air with a big thumbs-up. I knew that he probably disagreed with my political position, but I could tell from his reaction that he was trying to say something like, "I respect your guts, kid. Give 'em hell." Since my freshman year, when we first drove through the main gate in Harvard Yard (on which the university's seal and motto of "Veritas" are embossed), my father had loved to joke, in a kind of working-class rebuff to establishment privilege, that "When you enter the gates of Harvard, you turn your back on truth." Now at the end of my college years, I could see that he was amused to see me holding up my protest sign and sweating it out in my dark robes, but pleased that I was standing up for myself and trying respectfully to prove him wrong.

After the ceremony, I waded through the crowd and apologized to my parents for all the political drama. My dad laughed, hugged me, and said "That's okay, kid. I know the story and it's all right with me. I love you and I'm proud of you." Fearing they had suffered too much over my brother's death to absorb the news of another gay son, I had never explicitly come out to my parents. And here, on what was already an important day in my life, my father came out *for* me, let me off the hook, and told me he was proud. It was an overwhelming moment, a kind of vindication of much that we had suffered together, the emotional highpoint of my coming out as a young gay man.

After receiving my diploma in the morning ceremony, I agreed to return with my father after lunch to hear General Powell's commencement address. Although I'd planned to boycott the speech, I wanted to honor my father's wish to hear the general speak, after he had respected my right to protest. As we listened to Colin Powell, I was baffled by what seemed to me two gross contradictions. First, I could not understand how General Powell could be so opposed to the open integration of all Americans in the armed forces, when his own pioneering military career—beginning as an ROTC cadet at City College in 1954 and leading to his historic appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1989—had benefited from both his own extraordinary talent and President Truman's 1948 executive order desegregating and fully integrating African-Americans in the United States military.³ Second, and more important, I could not reconcile the contradiction between this homophobic military policy and what I perceived as the glaringly obvious common ground shared by soldiers and gay men. For it seemed to me that few knew more about physical and

emotional intimacy between men than soldiers, whose training demanded a communal knowledge of each other's bodies, and whose experiences in combat often created the kind of affectionate bonds that exemplify male love. I understood that much of the homophobic discourse coming out of the Pentagon had to do with a tacit fear of gay sex, a refusal to believe that gay soldiers can also be effective ones, and a panicked concern about unbridled gay sexuality in close quarters, communal showers, and barracks bunks. But in emotional terms, military friendships had always seemed to me synonymous and concomitant with masculine affection. If any heterosexual man could empathize with the emotional life of a gay man, I reasoned, it was a soldier.

Admittedly, much of what I knew about military life came from war films I had grown up watching with my father. Among the many Second World War films we'd seen together were classics such as *The Great Escape*, *The Dirty Dozen*, *Stalag 17*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, and later films like *Saving Private Ryan*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Enemy at the Gates*, and *Band of Brothers*. Over the years, we'd watched every television episode of *M*A*S*H* and its depiction of the Korean War multiple times. And we'd seen together such landmark Vietnam films as *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July* and more recent military movies like *Black Hawk Down* and the Gulf War films *Jarhead* and *Courage Under Fire*. In so many of these films, soldiers had survived the hardships of military life and the suffering of combat by relying on the affectionate care of their buddies and comrades in the trenches. These homosocial bonds of soldier friendship—which I would later recognize in the epic warriors of the *Iliad* and the *Song of Roland*, the war poems of Walt Whitman and Wilfred Owen, and the historical analysis of Paul Fussell and Allan Bérubé—seemed to me a ubiquitous and self-evident fact of military life, from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, from the American Civil War to the First and Second World Wars, from the wars in Korea and Vietnam to those in Afghanistan and Iraq. For me, this implicit connection explained in part how my straight military father had come to understand and accept his two gay sons.

As General Powell defended his arguments that day against the integration of gay men and women in the military, I sat next to my father, smugly clutching my new diploma but secretly worried about my looming student loans and what seemed to be a shamefully unbankable degree in French. Hoping to justify this impractical major, I tried to focus my thoughts on my upcoming summer job in France, and wondered what Napoleon would have said about gays in the military. Despite his political dictatorship and notorious nepotism, Napoleon championed military meritocracy, promoted thousands of non-aristocratic soldiers, and elevated many to the highest ranks of his army for their demonstrated skill, bravery, and leadership on the battlefield. Napoleon understood the vital role of military friendship in steeling nerves, allaying fear, and cementing loyalty among fighting men in combat. Given Napoleon's partnership and trust in his Second Consul and later Arch-Chancellor

Cambacérès—the infamous homosexual who co-authored the Napoleonic Civil Code decriminalizing sodomy—I suspected that Napoleon wouldn't have cared about a soldier's sexuality, as long as he was loyal and fought like hell.

A few weeks after graduation in June 1993, my parents came to visit me in Paris, where we saw Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe on the Champs-Élysées, Jacques-Louis David's imperial coronation portrait of Napoleon and Josephine in the Louvre, and the Emperor's monumental tomb at the Invalides. As we looked at the marble side-chapels flanking the magnificent gilded dome under which Napoleon rests, my father and I easily recognized the tomb of Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929), the great French military hero of the First World War. But we had more difficulty identifying Marshal Hubert Lyautey (1854–1934), who is buried in the adjacent chapel, bathed in the light of sapphire-blue stained glass windows. Despite our mutual interest in military history, we had no idea who Lyautey was or why this man—who I would later learn was one of France's most notorious military homosexuals—had received the great honor of being laid to rest next to Napoleon, in the most celebrated military mausoleum in France.

Years later in the summer of 2000, after a year of doctoral research in Paris, I invited my parents to make another trip to France, where we toured the D-Day beaches, battlefields, and cemeteries in Normandy, before traveling to Belgium where my father's uncle Tommy is buried in an American military cemetery amid the rural farmlands of Henri-Chapelle, thirty kilometers east of Liège. After the Normandy invasion in 1944, Tommy's battalion took part in the liberation of Chartres and Verdun, before marching into Belgium. Having survived the punishing winter in the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge, Tommy was killed following the strategic capture of the Remagen Bridge, spanning the Rhine in Germany just south of Bonn. Only five years old at the time, my father recalls the day in 1945 when the military telegram arrived in Boston announcing the death of his uncle and remembers his mother's grief over the loss of her kid brother. For many years, my grandmother sent flowers to Tommy's grave through the services of the American Battle Monuments Commission, but we were the first in our family to visit Henri-Chapelle, fifty-five years after Tommy's death during the Second World War. A young and unmarried man when he died, Corporal Thomas Mahoney left behind little trace of his personal ambitions or passions, other than the legacy of his service, etched on the white marble cross marking his grave.

Back in Paris a few days later, we visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, under Napoleon's grand Arc de Triomphe on the Champs-Élysées. From the grandiose tombs of Napoleon and Lyautey in the Invalides, to the vast military cemeteries in Normandy and Belgium, to this honored grave of a nameless French soldier from the First World War, I wondered how many of these military men had secretly harbored a sense of love and commitment for one another amid the horrors of nineteenth- and

twentieth-century warfare. From the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to the First and Second World Wars, how did such men conceal or express their feelings of affection for their fellow soldiers? How many stories of military intimacy remain buried with these men, sealed in these graves, silenced by combat and history? Amid the homophobic imperatives of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” what might the historical and literary record of forgotten “gays in the military” have to tell if we dared to ask?

Napoleon Wept

Napoleon wept. On the eve of the battle of Wagram, during his Austrian Campaign in the spring of 1809, the Emperor received word that his longtime friend Marshal Jean Lannes had been gravely wounded on the battlefield at Essling. Following the gruesome amputation of his shattered left leg, Lannes had been evacuated to a safe position on Lobau, an island in the middle of the Danube river, six kilometers east of Vienna. Rushing to his side amid the carnage of a rudimentary field hospital, Napoleon embraced his friend of sixteen years as Lannes lay in agony. An eyewitness report by General Marcellin de Marbot, the marshal's chief-of-staff, explains how "The Emperor, kneeling at the foot of the stretcher, cried while embracing the marshal, whose blood soon stained his white cashmere coat."¹ Despite his rough military exterior and almost twenty years of battle experience, Napoleon was overcome by emotion at the sight of Lannes. In an effort to comfort his bleeding friend, he embraced Lannes and covered him with tears. Ten days later, after a week of excruciating pain, infection, and gangrene, Lannes died. Once more, Napoleon rushed to his friend's side where, despite the overwhelming odor of putrefaction caused by Lannes's gangrenous wounds, Napoleon "moved towards the marshal's body, which he kissed while bathing it in tears, saying several times, 'What a loss for France and for me!'"²

Napoleon's public grief at the death of Jean Lannes represented a new model for social relations between soldiers in early nineteenth-century France. Weeping over his friend's broken body, Napoleon demonstrated how the Revolution and Empire had made it possible not only for an emperor to grieve openly for a fallen marshal, but for a soldier to love his comrade. This uncharacteristic expression of affection between Napoleon and Lannes was echoed in similar relationships between officers and foot soldiers in Napoleon's armies. Military memoirs of the First Empire bear witness to a wide range of intimate relationships among generals, colonels, and captains as well as sergeants, corporals, and grunts (*grogards*), the infantry soldiers who made up the majority of the imperial armies. Napoleon's love for Lannes might thus be said to represent a broad spectrum of masculine affection and intimacy in the ranks of the Grande Armée, or what could be called Napoleonic friendship.

In the larger scope of French military history, the friendship between Napoleon and Lannes reflected both the past and the future. Recalling the classical model of the *Iliad*, the chivalric model of the *Song of Roland*, and the fraternal model of the Revolution, their friendship set the tone for new kinds of social relations between soldiers during the Empire and in post-1815 France. At the beginning of a century overwhelmed by military conflict—from the Napoleonic Wars (1796–1815), to the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), and the decades preceding the First World War

(1914–18)—Napoleon and Lannes provided an abiding model of military friendship. By the end of the nineteenth century, when universal conscription required every able-bodied Frenchman to be a soldier, this early model of Napoleonic friendship would persist on a more uniform level. As France prepared itself for another century of brutal warfare, the Napoleonic origins of modern military friendship may have been forgotten, but their effects remained embedded in the institutionalized notion that to serve one's country was to live and die in the care of other men.

Combat Companions and Warrior Lovers from Antiquity to Medieval France

Antiquity's earliest oral tales, epic poems, and literary texts celebrate the central role of combat companions and warrior lovers. This ancient tradition stretches back to Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (c. 2100 BC), David and Jonathan in the biblical Book of Samuel (c. 625 BC), Achilles and Patroclus in Homer's *Iliad* (c. 800–750 BC), Nisus and Euryalus in Virgil's *Aeneid* (19 BC), and the historical Sacred Band of Thebes (378–338 BC) inspired by Plato's *Symposium* (c. 385 BC) and later described in Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas* (c. 75 AD).³ In the *Symposium*, Plato proposes his idea for an “army consisting of lovers,” in which men would fight with greater courage since it is “only lovers who are willing to die for someone else.”⁴ Plato's proposal represents an early homoerotic theory of effective combat: “The last person a lover could bear to be seen by, when leaving his place in the battle-line or abandoning his weapons, is his [lover]; instead, he'd prefer to die many times. As for abandoning his [lover] or failing to help him in danger—no one is such a coward that he could not be inspired into courage by love.”⁵ Plato's theoretical model was later put into practice by the Theban General Gorgidas who in 378 BC created his “Sacred Band,” an army of three hundred lovers paired off into one hundred and fifty couples, whose military success was attributed to their fierce devotion to one another. While Gorgidas realized Plato's vision of warrior lovers, the *Symposium* in turn echoed an earlier model of combat companions in the *Iliad*.

In his epic poem on the Trojan War, Homer foregrounds the heroic friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, whose love for one another is exemplified by Achilles's overwhelming grief at the death of his companion in combat:

[T]he black cloud of sorrow closed on Achilleus. In both hands he caught up the grimy dust, and poured it over his head and face, and fouled his handsome countenance and the black ashes were scattered over his immortal tunic. And he himself, mightily in his might, in the dust lay at length, and took and tore his hair with his hands, and defiled it.

(18.23–27)⁶

Consoled by his mother, the despondent Achilles answers, “But what is this to me,

since my dear companion has perished, / Patroclus, whom I loved beyond all other companions, / as well as my own life” (18.80–81). Achilles’s personal grief leads to national mourning. While his fellow “Achaians mourned all night in lamentation over Patroclus” (18.314–15), Achilles himself “led the thronging chant of their lamentation, / and laid his manslaughtering hands over the chest of his dear friend / with outbursts of incessant grief” (18.316–18). By publicly expressing his love for Patroclus, Achilles honors his fallen friend, their lives as combat companions, and their homoerotic model of military friendship.⁷

In the French literary tradition, the love of Achilles and Patroclus resonates in the chivalric friendship between the medieval knights Roland and Olivier in the *Song of Roland*. Written between the eleventh and twelfth centuries and based on an even older oral tradition, this epic poem or *chanson de geste* recounts Charlemagne’s defeat to the Saracens at the battle of Roncevaux in the Pyrenees in 778.⁸ Like the *Oaths of Strasbourg* (842), a treaty between Charlemagne’s grandsons that is considered the oldest extant text in the French language, the *Song of Roland* is celebrated as the oldest poetic text in France and a foundational narrative in French literature.⁹ In its epic account of Charlemagne’s devotion to Roland and Roland’s affection for Olivier, this inaugural text celebrates chivalric loyalty and combat companionship.¹⁰

Charlemagne’s love for Roland is dramatized by his inconsolable grief at the death of his beloved nephew. Having conquered a vast empire stretching from Spain and France to the Frankish kingdoms of Germany, this mythic warrior weeps and faints on the body of his fallen knight:

He sees his nephew lying on the grass:
it is no surprise that Charlemagne is in pain.
He dismounts, and runs to him.
He takes him in his arms
And he faints on him, from anguish and grief.

(205.2876–80)¹¹

As Charlemagne mourns for Roland, his knights and soldiers also grieve for their fallen comrades: “One hundred thousand Franks feel such pain / that there is not one who does not cry bitterly” (207.2892, 2906–8). Amid the carnage on the battlefield at Roncevaux, the “extraordinary suffering, / and so many dead, wounded, bloodied men / lying one on top of another” (125.1655–57), Charlemagne’s men abandon their weapons and weep for their friends. In an echo of the *Iliad*, this landscape of grief juxtaposes the violence and brutality of war with the tenderness of its mourning warriors.

As with Achilles on the death of Patroclus, Roland mourns the death of his beloved Olivier whom he calls his “[g]ood [l]ord” and “dear companion” (147.1976–

77). When Olivier is mortally wounded, Roland rushes to him, takes him in his arms, and “one against the other, they lie down” (149.2008–9). As Olivier dies, the two companions embrace “full of love” (149.2009, 268.3710) and Roland tells his fallen friend, “Lord companion, you have fought so hard for your misfortune! / We have been together for years and days: / you never did me any harm, I never did you any wrong. / Since you are dead, it is painful for me to live” (151.2024–30). Devastated by Olivier’s death, Roland embraces his companion and openly expresses his love. Like the institution of marriage, “love” between knights, vassals, and their lords in twelfth-century France represented a contractual oath of political alliance, economic cooperation, and feudal loyalty.¹² And as in other twelfth-century *romans* and *chansons de geste*, the conventions of courtly love demanded chastity. These historical distinctions, however, do not lessen the emotional power or parting tenderness between these Carolingian companions.

Collapsing on Olivier’s body, “The valiant Roland cries and mourns him” with such intensity, the text insists, that “never on earth will you hear a man more afflicted” (150.2022–23). Despite this moving hyperbole, Roland’s grief at the death of Olivier is not a unique or isolated loss. The love of these medieval combat companions echoes the warrior lovers of the ancient past and establishes a founding trope of French military friendship for the future. Just as Achilles mourned Patroclus, and Roland grieved for Olivier, Napoleon would weep for Lannes.

Despite considerable historical differences between these ancient, medieval, and Napoleonic contexts, Achilles and Roland were repeatedly invoked in early nineteenth-century France to describe Lannes and his friendship with Napoleon.¹³ Rather than evoking any continuous evolution in military friendship from the Trojan to the Napoleonic Wars, these comparisons amplified the pathos of the deathbed intimacy between Napoleon and Lannes, whose open expressions of affection reflected a more recent evolution in military culture during the Revolution and the Empire. After centuries of antagonism and abuse between aristocratic officers and subordinate soldiers in the Royal Army of the Ancien Régime, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies radically transformed their systems of recruitment and promotion to reflect the meritocratic ideals of the Revolution and the military ambitions of the Empire.¹⁴ Echoing both the theoretical and practical models of Plato and Gorgidas, this transformation in Napoleon’s armies reflected these practical reforms in the Revolutionary armies as well as a growing belief—or emerging military theory—in nineteenth-century France that friendship between soldiers could be an effective strategy for regimental unity.¹⁵

Military Friendship and Combat Theory in Nineteenth-Century France

In their collective work of military theory, General Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–

1821), Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq (1819–70), and Marshal Hubert Lyautey (1854–1934) all argue that increased intimacy, mutual respect, and fraternal support among soldiers ultimately lead to stronger armies and greater success in combat. Often overshadowed by the military theories of their contemporaries General Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) and Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929), these three celebrated strategists produced a small body of theoretical work whose emphasis on solidarity between soldiers and officers represents the legacy of ancient-medieval discourses on combat companions and warrior lovers, a break with the rigid social structures and inequalities in the Royal Army of the Ancien Régime, and a new nineteenth-century focus on the tactical advantages of military friendship. Conceived independently at the beginning, middle, and end of the century, the military theories of Bonaparte, Ardant du Picq, and Lyautey could be considered a collective and sustained theoretical argument on the strategic importance of military friendship in the armies of nineteenth-century France.

Although Napoleon left behind no unified work of combat theory, the military maxims and tactical theories expressed in his voluminous correspondence and speeches have been collected and anthologized in numerous military memoirs and studies, such as Honoré de Balzac's *Maxims and Thoughts of Napoleon* (1838) and General Paul Adolphe Grisot's *Napoleonic Maxims* (1897–1901).¹⁶ Considering Napoleon's celebrated consolidation of military and political power, it is perhaps not surprising that he believed that "[t]he unity of command is the most important thing in war," that "[t]he presence of the general is indispensable," and that "it was not the Roman army that conquered Gaul, but Caesar."¹⁷ These images of central authority are also advocated by Clausewitz who argues in *On War* (1832) that "[a]s the forces in one individual after another die away and can no longer be excited and maintained by his own will, the whole inertia of the mass gradually rests its weight on the will of the commander."¹⁸ Clausewitz also concurs with Napoleon's theory of central command as an antidote to fear in combat: "Above all, the highest spirit in the world changes only too easily with the first misfortune into depression, and one might say into a kind of gasconade of fear ... Such an army can only achieve something through its leader."¹⁹ As both Napoleon and Clausewitz make clear, these combat models attribute the success and failure of an army to the skill of its commander.

Napoleon argues elsewhere, however, that combat success depends on relationships of mutual respect, support, and solidarity between soldiers and their officers. Reasoning that "[o]ne is only brave for others" and that "[a]n order from a beloved general is worth more than the most beautiful speech," Napoleon contends that fear in combat is overcome by soldiers' sense of communal responsibility and even affection for their fellow comrades and leaders.²⁰ Successful combat officers, he argues, must thus gain the trust and affection of their soldiers. In his words to the French armies and naval fleet on their departure for the Egyptian Campaign in 1798,

General Bonaparte reminded his men that their Roman ancestors had been “patient in enduring fatigue, disciplined, and united among themselves.”²¹ In this spirit of military solidarity, Bonaparte thus commanded his men to “be united; remember that on the day of battle, you all need one another.”²² Building on this ancient model of Roman unity in combat, Napoleon encouraged his soldiers and sailors to work together and support one another in hardship.

While Napoleon evoked the legacy of the ancient past and its emphasis on military unity, his insistence on group solidarity represented a radical departure from the more recent past in France, where rigid class divisions during the eighteenth century presented enormous obstacles to mutual respect and cooperation among soldiers. The radical social changes of the Revolution and the military meritocracy advocated by Napoleon fostered a new ethos of more equal rights and responsibilities in the ranks. With this new model, shared suffering and success in combat depended on greater trust and intimacy between soldiers in the Grande Armée or what can more broadly be called Napoleonic friendship. Even after the fall of Napoleon and amid frequent regime changes in France, the influence of this Napoleonic model irrevocably transformed French military culture and pervaded military life during the later decades of the nineteenth century.

Over half a century after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and on the eve of Napoleon III’s fall from power during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq’s late nineteenth-century theories of group solidarity represented the legacy of Napoleonic friendship in a neo-Napoleonic empire. Born in 1821, the same year as Napoleon’s death in exile on Saint Helena, Charles Ardant du Picq studied at the military academy of Saint-Cyr and served as an infantry officer in the Crimean War (1854–55), during which he was taken prisoner at Sebastopol. After service in Syria (1860–61) and colonial Algeria (1864–66), Ardant du Picq fought in the Franco-Prussian War at Metz, where he was killed in 1870. A decorated officer of the Légion d’Honneur, Colonel Ardant du Picq is also the author of two influential works of military theory: *Ancient Combat* (1868), which appeared shortly before his death, and *Modern Combat* (1876–80), which was published posthumously. Later combined into a single volume titled *Combat Studies* (1880), Ardant du Picq’s enormously influential theories on the psychological effects of combat and the importance of cohesion among soldiers were later taught at the École Militaire in Paris where they inspired new generations of military leaders during the decades leading to the First World War. Grounded in the nineteenth-century Napoleonic military tradition, Ardant du Picq’s work continued to exert influence on military theorists both in and outside France, from the beginning to the end of the twentieth century.

Ardant du Picq’s theory of combat solidarity relies on a realistic understanding of human fear. In contrast to the notion that soldiers can be made to fight through

discipline, Ardant du Picq acknowledges the limits of disciplinary training in overcoming fear in combat: “Discipline’s goal is to wage war on fear by creating an even larger fear, that of punishment and shame. But there always comes a moment when natural fear overwhelms discipline, and the combatant flees.”²³ Ardant du Picq explains that while “the severe laws of discipline” (52) often fail to help soldiers overcome their natural and overwhelming fear of death, “powerful passions” (52) are more effective in inspiring soldiers to fight. Arguing that soldiers are less likely to fight for abstractions—like honor or the nation—than for the friend standing beside them, Ardant du Picq advocates a system of affectionate responsibility in which “everyone’s eyes should be on everyone else” and where “each group should be made up of people who know each other well and understand this [mutual] surveillance as a right and duty of the common good” (52).

For Ardant du Picq, the shared suffering of warfare creates bonds of affection and feelings of mutual responsibility among soldiers, for whom “the habit of living together, obeying the same leaders, commanding the same men, sharing fatigue and privations” produces a sense of “fraternity, union, professionalism, palpable emotions, in a word, and intelligent solidarity” (53). In this way, he reasons, “when faced with the enemy, each person understands that the task is not an individual burden but a collective one” (53). In what resonates as a late nineteenth-century version of Plato’s vision for an army of lovers, Ardant du Picq’s theory of combat solidarity argues that men who care for one another are more effective combatants. Although he was killed before *Ancient Combat* and *Modern Combat* had reached a wider audience, Ardant du Picq’s ideas on military solidarity were admired, taught, and integrated by Marshal Ferdinand Foch—who writes in his *Principles of War* (1903) about the “Immense task of command which ... is rarely managed by one man, but rather by a plurality”—and were later evoked by American military theorists in their debates on “gays in the military” at the end of the twentieth century.²⁴

Building on Napoleon’s and Ardant du Picq’s theories of combat unity and solidarity, Marshal Louis Hubert Lyautey proposed at the end of the nineteenth century a theory of affectionate leadership between commanding officers and their men. Born in 1854, Lyautey was moved by the French defeat in 1870 to enroll in the military academy of Saint-Cyr in 1873. Following in the footsteps of the academy’s founder Napoleon and fellow Saint-Cyriens like Ardant du Picq, Lyautey thus began an illustrious fifty-two year career as a French officer, serving in colonial Algeria, Indochina, Madagascar, and Morocco, where he served for almost two decades as both military and colonial governor (1907–25). Appointed the French War Minister (1916–17) during the First World War, Lyautey was named a Marshal of France in 1921. Following his death in Lorraine in 1934, Marshal Lyautey was first buried in Morocco but was later interred—in honor of his distinguished military career—

alongside Napoleon in an opulent marble and stained-glass chapel under the dome of the Invalides in Paris.

In *The Social Role of the Officer* (1891), Lyautey argues that officers must garner the respect and love of their troops by working closely with their men and paying attention to their abilities and needs. For Lyautey, an officer's effective leadership depends on his capacity to "first love them and conquer their affection" by the experience of "having intimately mingled with these brave men, by the force of circumstance, during maneuvers, while marching, and on bivouac, to know their capacity for devotion and their affectionate concern for the officer who has gained their confidence."²⁵ Insisting that young officers develop their "military heart" as well as their "military intelligence," Lyautey explains that foot soldiers "love the one that loves them" (22) and that they admire those officers who "share without hesitation their privations and their fatigue" (26). Echoing Napoleon's belief that "[a]n order from a beloved general is worth more than the most beautiful speech," Lyautey explicitly cites love as a factor of effective leadership. While Ardant du Picq advocates lateral or horizontal affections between soldiers, Lyautey advocates hierarchical or vertical affection between soldiers and officers, as a model for military order and combat success: "By showing his concern and proving his personal interest in his men, not by words, but by direct actions drawn from knowledge of their individual needs, an officer eventually gains their affection and confidence" (27–28).

A decorated marshal, minister, and member both of the French Academy and Legion of Honor, Lyautey is perhaps France's most distinguished—or infamous—military homosexual.²⁶ Speaking of Lyautey, Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau once quipped, "Here is an admirable and courageous man who always had balls ... even when they were not his own."²⁷ Along with the popular fiction of Pierre Loti—the pseudonym of the French naval captain Julien Viaud (1850–1923) whose novels eroticize the lives of colonial sailors—Lyautey's notoriety played a role in perpetuating the association of homosexuality with the French colonial military.²⁸ Referring to sodomy in the French armies, Marshal Patrice de MacMahon admitted, "In Morocco, we were all [homosexual]; only Lyautey remained so."²⁹ Reflecting more than a century of discourse on homoeroticism and homosexual tourism in the colonial and post-colonial Maghreb, MacMahon's gibe also supports the speculation that Lyautey may have provided the model for the celebrated homosexual Baron de Charlus in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*.³⁰

Lyautey's theory of affectionate leadership, however, cannot be easily explained or essentialized as a product of his own homoerotic desire. Nor can one simplistically trace the emergence of homosexual soldiers in early twentieth-century France to the arbitrary influence of a few prominent military homosexuals. Much more broadly, Lyautey's insistence on affectionate leadership in *The Social Role of*

the Officer represents the culmination of an entire century of Napoleonic theory and practice that not only encouraged affection between soldiers and officers but also elevated military friendship to the level of strategy and policy. The collective military theory of Napoleon, Ardant du Picq, and Lyautey thus represents the gradual development of military friendship in France over the long course of the nineteenth century, from the First and Second Empires to the decades leading up to the First World War.

Military Friendship and the First World War

In an interview titled “Friendship as a Way of Life” (1981), Michel Foucault discusses the role of military friendship in the evolution of homosexual modernity.³¹ Building on the tradition of Plato’s *Symposium*, Cicero’s *De Amicitia*, and Montaigne’s *On Friendship*, Foucault considers the conventions of male friendship as a way of understanding the emotional life of gay men. By shifting the focus from sexuality to sociality, he defines gay relationships in terms of shared affection and mutual support. Before his death in 1984, Foucault had planned to write a history of the French military. Like his histories of the clinic, the prison, madness, and sexuality, Foucault’s military history might have offered new ways of thinking about institutional power and a new vocabulary for discussing social relations between men. Foucault’s biographer Didier Eribon writes that “Foucault spoke several times of undertaking a history of war after his *History of Sexuality*. Or perhaps more accurately, a history of the army. And there is no doubt that military or warrior forms of masculine sociability, or ‘friendship’ between men, would have been one of the axes of this study.”³²

In “Friendship as a Way of Life,” Foucault offers a glimpse of what his military history might have examined, by asking, “How is it possible for men to be together? To live together, to share their time, meals, bedroom, leisure, sorrows, knowledge, confidences?” (163–64). Acknowledging the role of shared bedrooms, Foucault broadens his conception of gay relationships as not only an erotic but an emotional way of life built on daily living and long-term intimacy. Surprisingly, Foucault argues, this focus on affection over sexuality is a radical idea: “I think that is what makes homosexuality so ‘troubling’: the homosexual way of life more than the sexual act itself. To think of sexual acts that do not conform to law or nature, that is not what bothers people. But when individuals start to love one another, then there’s a problem” (164). Despite homophobic discourse obsessed with sodomy, gay male sex is in fact less shocking than masculine affection, tenderness, and intimacy, especially for those who have come to expect the stereotype of what Foucault describes as “two young men meeting each other on the street, seducing each other with a glance, putting their hands on each other’s ass, and hooking up fifteen minutes later” (164). These images perpetuate what Foucault calls a “neat and tidy

image of homosexuality” that thoroughly “negates everything that has to do with affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship, which an uptight society cannot accept without fear that this will lead to new and unforeseen forms of alliance and association” (164). Foucault thus defines gay relationships as a radical form of camaraderie and companionship, fidelity and friendship.

Institutionally, Foucault traces the modern origins of this radical male friendship to the army, where “love between men is incessantly invoked and honored” (164). In contrast to civilian life, where “[m]en’s bodies were forbidden to each other in a more drastic way,” Foucault argues that “it is only during certain periods and since the nineteenth century that life between men was not only tolerated, but rigorously obligatory: quite simply, during war” (166–67). Faced with the suffering and dangers of combat, soldiers form intimate relationships of mutual support and affection. More than a mere by-product of war, these relationships are actively encouraged by the military in order to create more effective armies. Friendship therefore becomes a military technique for individual survival and collective success in combat, where men are trained to love and protect their fellow comrades in order to better hate and kill their enemies.³³

For Foucault, masculine affection and friendship enter into modern military discourse during the nineteenth century and culminate with the First World War. Comparing the shared intimacy of the barracks to the mutual suffering of the trenches in 1914–18, Foucault writes, “You had soldiers and young officers who had spent months, years together. During the Great War, men lived together completely, one with another; and for them, this was no small thing, in the sense that death was all around, and that their devotion to one another was necessitated by a game of life or death” (167). Amid “these grotesque wars and infernal massacres,” Foucault explains, soldiers cared for their comrades and mourned their buddies, in an open expression of “emotional tornadoes” and “tempests of the heart” (167). In focusing on the emotional lives of soldiers during the First World War, Foucault concurs with Paul Fussell and Allan Bérubé who—in their landmark work on military homosexuality during the First and Second World Wars—demonstrate how the violence of combat creates greater physical and emotional intimacy between soldiers, and how the mass mobilization of war often brings together homosexuals who might never have met one another in their isolated towns, rural villages, and civilian lives.³⁴

Combat thus creates an atmosphere where masculine affection is tolerated and understood. Even for men with divergent feelings of homoerotic and heteroerotic desire, combat suffering often leads to mutual feelings of male affection. Foucault qualifies this distinction between eroticism and emotion by insisting “I don’t want to say that it was because they were in love with one another that they continued to

fight. But honor, courage, not losing face, sacrifice, leaving the trench with one's buddy, in front of one's buddy, this implies a very intense emotional relationship" (167). While different soldiers will continue to desire both women and men, the shared trauma of war inspires mutual understanding, support, and intimacy where male affections are acknowledged and normalized: "This is not to say: 'Aha! Here is homosexuality!' I hate that sort of reasoning. But this is one of ... the conditions that made this infernal life possible, during the weeks of slogging through mud, cadavers, shit" (167). From the horrors of the trenches during the First World War, reciprocal love thus emerged as an intelligible and provisionally acceptable form of male sociability whose modern military origins stretch back to the nineteenth century.

Napoleonic Friendship

This book attempts to trace a history of intimate friendship in French military literature from Napoleon to the First World War. Through an investigation of military memoirs and fiction, *Napoleonic Friendship* argues that the emergence of homosexual soldiers in the trenches of early twentieth-century France is linked to the dramatic evolution of military friendship during the nineteenth century, from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815) to the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) and the First World War (1914–18). Following the rigid social structure of the Royal Army during the Ancien Régime and major military reforms in the armies of the Revolution, a new emphasis on fraternity and meritocracy fostered an unprecedented sense of camaraderie among soldiers in the armies of Napoleon. For many, the hardships of combat led to intimate friendships based on mutual comfort and support. For some, the homosociality of military life inspired feelings of great affection, lifelong commitment, and homoerotic desire.

From Charlemagne to Charles de Gaulle, the French historical record is rich in anecdotal tales of military camaraderie and friendship. During the period between 1789 and 1916, however, radical military reforms transformed social relations on an institutional level in the French armies and set in motion a gradual evolution toward greater intimacy among soldiers. This process began with the Revolution's invocation of fraternity as the inaugural theme and central principle of republican military service. As the French Republic moved toward Empire, this fraternal military ideal was integrated into the ranks of the Grande Armée whose officers and soldiers set an example of Napoleonic friendship for the century that followed.

This example began at the top, as soldiers looked to Napoleon's own intimate friendships with Marshal Jean Lannes, General Gérard Christophe Duroc, and General Jean-Andoche Junot on the battlefields of the Napoleonic Wars. From senior officers to men in the ranks, this model of Napoleonic friendship inspired an entire generation of combat soldiers whose stories of shared suffering and survival are documented in the moving memoirs of General Marcellin de Marbot, Captain Jean-

Roch Coignet, and Sergeant François Bourgogne. From military memoirs to novels, Stendhal and Victor Hugo dramatize the survival of Napoleonic friendship amid the disastrous defeat at Waterloo. In Honoré de Balzac's military fiction, Napoleonic veterans face the miseries and humiliations of the Restoration and July Monarchy in supportive couples and pairs. In the neo-Napoleonic fiction of Guy de Maupassant and Émile Zola, combat buddies look to one another for emotional and erotic intimacy in the defeated armies of Napoleon III and the prison camps of the Franco-Prussian War. And as France entered a new century of warfare and unprecedented military violence, Marcel Proust documents the emergence of the homosexual soldier in the brothels and trenches of the First World War. The military novels of Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac and the war fiction of Maupassant, Zola, and Proust thus bear witness to the legacy of Napoleonic friendship among soldiers in post-1815 France, from the battles of Waterloo (1815), to Sedan (1870), and the Somme (1916).

In their collective work on military friendship, these writers participate in three important literary traditions. First, they echo an ancient and medieval tradition of warrior lovers and combat companions. Second, they represent an entire genre of Napoleonic literature, from military memoirs, to Napoleonic novels, and neo-Napoleonic fiction. Third, they presage the proliferation of homoerotic texts during the First World War. ³⁵ The memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne, the novels of Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac, and the fiction of Zola, Maupassant, and Proust thus create a literary bridge between the epic devotion of ancient and medieval warriors, the evolution of Revolutionary fraternity into Napoleonic friendship, and the emergence of homosexual military modernity during the First World War.



NAPOLEONIC FRIENDSHIP is organized into three parts and nine chapters. Part I traces the evolution of Napoleonic friendship from the beginning of the Revolution in 1789 to the end of Napoleon's Empire in 1815. Through an investigation of historical sources, Chapter 1 looks at how the Enlightenment principles of federation and fraternity emerged during the military festivals of the Revolution and inspired major reforms in recruitment, integration, promotion, and training that transformed the social antagonism in the Royal Army of the Ancien Régime into fraternal camaraderie in the armies of the Revolution and Empire. Chapter 2 considers the intimate friendships between Napoleon and three of his senior officers—Marshal Lannes, General Duroc, and General Junot—as models of Napoleonic friendship for men in the lower ranks. By comparison, Chapter 3 analyzes the friendships between junior officers and foot soldiers in the Napoleonic military memoirs of General Marbot, Captain Coignet, and Sergeant Bourgogne. In describing their military mentors, bedfellows, buddies, and friends, Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne bear witness to the lifesaving support of fellow soldiers and provide a new vocabulary for

the great diversity of Napoleonic friendship.

Moving from the Empire to the Restoration, from combat soldiers to veterans, and from Napoleonic memoirs to novels, Part II examines the challenges to Napoleonic friendship amid the fall of the Empire at Waterloo in 1815. Chapter 4 argues that Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* (1830) and *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) can be read as allegories of the military closet in which the Napoleonic latecomers Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo struggle to understand—at Waterloo and beyond—both the pleasures and responsibilities of Napoleonic friendship. In analyzing Victor Hugo's epic account of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862), Chapter 5 documents the survival of Napoleonic friendship in the aftermath of Waterloo when, despite the abuse of veterans like Colonel Pontmercy and Sergeant Thénardier, a new generation of soldiers like Gavroche symbolizes the rebirth of revolutionary and military fraternity. Chapter 6 recounts the transition from military retreat to civilian retirement for thousands of Napoleonic soldiers amid the political disfavor of the Restoration (1815–30) and July Monarchy (1830–48), when veterans were reduced to an army of bachelors, invalids, vagrants, and rogues who continued to depend on one another for comfort and companionship.

Part III investigates the legacy of Napoleonic friendship in post-1815 France, from the beleaguered veterans of the First Empire who faced the miseries of defeat in supportive pairs, to the neo-Napoleonic soldiers of the Second Empire who shared even greater intimacies in the trenches of the Franco-Prussian War (1870). Chapter 7 considers the Napoleonic friendships in Balzac's military novels *The Chouans* (1829) and *Colonel Chabert* (1832), in which Major Hulot and Hyacinthe Chabert spend their entire military careers and retirement in the care of fellow soldiers and veterans. Chapter 8 argues that Balzac's veteran novels *The Country Doctor* (1833) and the third volume of *The Bachelors* (1840–43) demonstrate radical new forms of military homosociality: while the Napoleonic couple Gondrin and Goguelat and their comrades Benassis and Genestas form a collective co-parenting family, the veteran rogue Philippe Bridau betrays his Napoleonic comrades to join an underworld of perverse criminality and sexuality. And in its analysis of neo-Napoleonic friendship during the Franco-Prussian War, Chapter 9 looks at homoerotic military fiction from Guy de Maupassant to Émile Zola, whose war novel *The Debacle* (1892) and its combat companions Jean Macquart and Maurice Levasseur signal both a return to the warrior lovers of antiquity and a step toward homosexual military modernity. *Napoleonic Friendship* concludes with a discussion of Marcel Proust's *Time Regained* (1927), in which the emotional and erotic life of the French officer Robert de Saint-Loup in 1916 represents the legacy of Napoleonic friendship and the emergence of the homosexual soldier from the military closet during the First World War.



THE FRENCH HISTORIAN Jean Tulard has famously argued that Napoleon is “an inexhaustible myth open to all ‘readings.’”³⁶ Acknowledging that “homosexuality is, of course, only allusive in [Napoleonic] memoirs,” Tulard advises that, to find evidence of love between Napoleon’s soldiers, “One must read between the lines.”³⁷ This book traces the evolution of Napoleonic friendship by reading between numerous historical and literary lines, from the line of tears streaming down the grieving face of Napoleon on the deathbed of his beloved friend Lannes, to the front lines of Waterloo and Sedan, to the narrative lines of Napoleonic memoirs and novels. More than an invitation to read what Roland Barthes has called the infinite “plural” of a text, Tulard’s suggestion to “read between the lines” can also be understood as a call for an interdisciplinary investigation of Napoleonic literature that might productively cross the disciplinary lines of historical, literary, military, and queer studies.³⁸ In crossing and analyzing these multiple lines, *Napoleonic Friendship* examines the gradual evolution from Napoleon’s tears on the battlefields of nineteenth-century Europe to the emergence of military queers in the trenches of twentieth-century France.

PART I



Revolution to Empire **1789–1815**



Military Fraternity from the Revolution to Napoleon

The rain fell and the soldiers swore. On July 14, 1790, in celebration of the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille and the beginning of the French Revolution, General Lafayette stood before almost half a million soldiers and citizens gathered on the Champ de Mars in Paris for the Fête de la Fédération, a massive Revolutionary festival which was to unite all of France's soldiers into one federated body. Here, in front of the École Militaire, amid a soaking summer downpour, Lafayette administered to the assembled soldiers the fraternal oath: "To remain united with all the French by the indissoluble bonds of fraternity."¹ Having traveled on foot and horse from every commune in France, the soldiers stood in soggy formation on the military field between a grand triumphal arch and a central altar from which Lafayette shouted out the federative oath. In one choral voice, the soldiers answered Lafayette's call to fraternal federation with a resounding "I swear!" as multiple cannon fired in echo of their resolve.² In this ritual oath, the Fête de la Fédération baptized a new Revolutionary Army, based on the notion of fraternity between soldiers, united in their defense of France and devotion to one another.

Founded on the principle of *fraternité*, the transformation of the military during the French Revolution—from the socially segregated Royal Army of the Ancien Régime to the more integrated and egalitarian armies of the Revolution—created the conditions for more intimate relationships between soldiers. This military transformation coincided with Bonaparte's rise to power. Educated at the Royal Military School in Brienne (1779–84) and the École Militaire in Paris (1784–85), Napoleon was trained as an officer of the Royal Army during the Ancien Régime, but rose to national prominence in the armies of the Revolution before assuming power as First Consul in 1799 and Emperor in 1804. His early Revolutionary victories over English and Spanish invaders at Toulon in 1793 and over French royalists in Paris in 1795 rapidly propelled him to the rank of general and to national fame. Even with his privileged social status and military education, Napoleon's meteoric rise might not have been possible without the Revolutionary armies' major ideological and meritocratic reforms. Born of the Revolution's new focus on

military fraternity, Napoleonic friendship grew out of these fundamental changes in ideology and policy in the armies of the Revolution (1789–99), Consulate (1799–1804), and Empire (1804–15).

The origins of military fraternity can be traced back to Antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment, but it was during the festivals of the Revolution that fraternity entered the Republican motto of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, as a distinctly military principle. The ceremonial rites at the Fête de la Fédération, the journalism of Camille Desmoulins, and the paintings of Jacques-Louis David established a ritual, literary, and iconographic vocabulary that celebrated homosocial and homoerotic expressions of military fraternity. In turn, the ideological power of Revolutionary fraternity inspired practical policy reforms in military recruitment, integration, promotion, and training, which collectively transformed the Royal Army of the Ancien Régime into the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Armies during the period between Lafayette’s fraternal oath in 1790 and Napoleon’s rise to First Consul in 1799. From their initial campaigns of defense against Austrian and Prussian invaders to their later campaigns of conquest in Austria, Prussia, Italy, and Egypt, the Revolutionary Wars (1792–99) lay the foundation for the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815), when French soldiers depended on one another for fraternal comfort and support.

Origins of Fraternal Ideology

The Revolutionary principle of *fraternité* finds its immediate origins in the Enlightenment, notably in the encyclopedic work of Denis Diderot and his collaborators, the political discourse of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the ritual traditions of the Masons.³ Since its earliest incarnation, the civic idea of fraternity has been linked to the military notion of “fraternity in arms” among knights, soldiers, and citizens in defense of the nation. According to the Chevalier de Jaucourt in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (1751–72), fraternity in arms is defined as “the association between two knights for a noble enterprise ... they pledge to each other to share both the labors and glory, dangers and profit, and not to abandon each other as long as they have need of one another.”⁴ Based on medieval courtly traditions, these images of mutual devotion between knights are exemplified by the military exploits of Charlemagne, Roland, and Olivier in the early twelfth-century *Song of Roland* and by the Arthurian legends of Lancelot, Yvain, and Perceval in the later twelfth-century *romans* of Chrétien de Troyes. In tracing the origins of fraternity to relationships between medieval warriors, the Enlightenment *encyclopédistes* defined fraternity as a particularly military concept.

While Diderot and his collaborators trace fraternity back to military traditions of the medieval court, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s notion of fraternity is modeled on the civic duties of Renaissance friendship defined by Étienne de la Boétie and Michel de

Montaigne. Building on Cicero's treatise *On Friendship* (44 BC), La Boétie writes in his *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude* (1549) that nature "has created all of us the same and formed us from the same mold, in order to show us that we are all equals, or rather brothers."⁵ In his own essay *On Friendship* (1580), Montaigne in turn defines his friendship with La Boétie as an intimate brotherhood or fraternal bond: "It is in truth, under the beautiful and significant name of brother that we formed, he and I, our alliance."⁶ And in *On Vanity* (1588), Montaigne extends this notion of friendship to all men, as a kind of universal brotherhood: "[I] esteem all men my compatriots, and embrace a Pole as I do a Frenchman, deferring this national liaison to the universal and the communal ... I know that friendship has arms long enough for us to hold one another and join together from one corner of this world to the other" (3: 186–88). Here, Montaigne's sense of fraternity expands from his neighbor to the nation, from the national to the global, from the particular to the universal.⁷

In his *Discourse on Inequality* (1755), Rousseau defines fraternity in similar terms, by expanding the fraternal from familial to national citizenship: "My dear fellow citizens or rather my brothers ... the bonds of blood and law unite almost all of us."⁸ Rousseau later argues in the *Social Contract* (1762) that familial and religious bonds also instill a sense of civic fraternal responsibility, as a kind of "sublime religion, by which men, children of the same God, all recognize one another as brothers" (3: 464). Building on La Boétie's and Montaigne's concepts of civic friendship, Rousseau's notion of fraternity thus shifts from the needs of the family to those of the nation. In his *Discourse on Political Economy* (1755), Rousseau argues that as brothers, citizens must come together to defend national interests: "Let us not doubt that they will thus learn to hold each other dear as brothers, and to want only that which society wants ... and to become the defenders and fathers of the nation."⁹ Rousseau thus defines fraternity as a call to citizenship, but his reference to defenders and defense nevertheless illustrates the persistent link in fraternal discourse between civilian and soldierly duty.

Rousseau's concepts of military and civic fraternity were also found in the rituals of fraternal organizations like the Masons who, according to a 1735 manual of French Freemasonry, pledged to "cultivate brotherly friendship between them, the basis and glory of an ancient and respectable fraternity."¹⁰ It is perhaps through this pre-Revolutionary invocation of brotherhood in fraternal associations like the Masons that *fraternité* later became a catchword for Revolutionary political clubs like the Montagnards, Girondins, and Jacobins, who were known for their fraternal forms of address: "brothers and friends," "brothers and citizens," and "salutations and fraternity."¹¹ Rooted in medieval knighthood and Renaissance friendship, fraternity thus became a ubiquitous catchword in the political and social discourse of the Enlightenment, which inspired the later ritualization of military fraternity during the Revolution.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

In a slow and gradual process, the Revolution elevated fraternity to a position of prominence alongside the more prominent Republican ideals of liberty and equality.¹² Even amid its constant invocation during the Revolution, however, fraternity did not attain an official, legislative status until much later. Although fraternity was invoked by Louis XVI at the opening session of the Estates General on May 5, 1789 and mentioned in the Constitution of September 3, 1791, *fraternité* was not officially added to the early Revolutionary motto *liberté et égalité* even after the abolition of the monarchy on August 10, 1792, when an earlier Revolutionary slogan, “Nation, Law, and King” was substituted with “Nation, Liberty, Equality.” And there were many Revolutionary mottos in 1790 that did not include the notion of fraternity at all, including “Union, Strength, Virtue,” “Strength, Liberty, Peace,” and “Country, Laws, and Liberty.” In fact, the notion of fraternity was absent in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), only secondary in the Constitution of 1791, wholly omitted in the Constitution of 1793, and would not become part of the official motto of the French Republic—*liberté, égalité, fraternité*—until much later in 1848. The lack of official status for fraternity during the Revolution, however, belied its ubiquitous invocation during the 1790s.¹³

In addition to becoming the salutary catchword of the Jacobins, fraternity was invoked frequently by Revolutionary leaders. In 1789, Honoré Gabriel de Mirabeau hoped that fraternal democracy would create a new “history of men, of brothers.”¹⁴ In 1790, Maximilien de Robespierre proposed to the National Assembly that *fraternité* be inscribed on the uniforms and regimental flags of the National Guard. And in 1792, the Girondin leader Jean-Marie Roland told the delegates at the Convention that founding a Republic was “one and the same thing as fraternity.”¹⁵ Perhaps the most dramatic invocation of fraternity during the early years of the Revolution, however, took place at popular provincial military festivals, where Revolutionary soldiers and citizens pledged fraternal oaths to the nation and one another.

Fraternal Festivals and Federation

After 1789, it became popular among fervent new volunteers of the National Guard to make public oaths of fraternity in rural towns and villages all over France. While these Revolutionary oaths found their origins in feudal pledges between vassals and lords, they were intended to bind citizens, as brothers and equals, into a relationship of mutual respect and support. On November 19, 1789, ten thousand soldiers from opposite banks of the Rhône in the Dauphiné region of southeastern France pledged as “brothers in arms” to be federated to one another and maintain their union forever.¹⁶ During the fall of 1789 and winter of 1790, dozens of similar oaths of federation were sworn by tens of thousands of citizens and National

Guardsmen in cities and towns from Lyon and Marseilles in the south to Anjou and Brittany in the north. The historian Simon Schama has characterized this fraternal frenzy or “revolutionary obsession with oath swearing” as the “new revolutionary religion—the cult of Federation” (502). And according to the historian Mona Ozouf, fraternal federation was primarily a military preoccupation, fêted in the context of a “completely military festival” (52).

This celebration of military fraternity in the provinces soon spread to the capital. On June 4, 1790, the Parisian mayor Jean-Sylvain Bailly proposed to the Constituent Assembly that the French capital host a great national festival of federation on July 14, 1790 to mark the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille and the beginning of the Revolution. Citizen Charon, the president of the Paris commune, wrote to the Assembly to ask that the oath for this national Fête de la Fédération be both military and civilian in nature, open to both soldiers and citizens: “All citizens are soldiers, no doubt, but it is as much [in their role] as citizens as it is [in their role] as soldiers that the French should be called to make an oath of fraternity.”¹⁷ Rejecting Charon’s request, the Constituent Assembly nonetheless approved Mayor Bailly’s proposal on the condition that this festival of federation be a particularly military occasion. Civilians and citizens would be invited to attend, but only soldiers—or those deputized as such— could be official delegates and allowed to take the federative oath. As Talleyrand wrote on behalf of the Assembly, “It is France as an army that is going to gather together, not France as a deliberating body.”¹⁸

Despite their official exclusion, civilian citizens expressed their federative zeal in the enormous preparations for the great festival. With very little time to prepare between Bailly’s initial request on June 4, the Assembly’s approval on June 21, and the approaching anniversary of the Bastille on July 14, thousands of citizen volunteers joined in the massive effort to prepare the military field on the Champ de Mars, construct an elaborate triumphal arch for the procession, and build a great altar for the swearing of the federative oath. While Parisians toiled in the capital, citizens and soldiers in towns and villages all over France began the complex task of selecting military delegates, helping these representatives make the long journey to Paris, and preparing their own local federative festivals, so that at noon on July 14, all of France’s soldiers would simultaneously pledge in unison their oath of fraternal federation.

No one had planned on the rain. In his eyewitness account of the Fête de la Fédération, the journalist Camille Desmoulins describes how “the wind was glacial and an intermittent rain fell in torrents” on the crowd of almost half a million spectators and delegates in Paris.¹⁹ Reporting for his journal, *Revolutions of France and Brabant* (1789–91), Desmoulins also quips at the tedium of the lengthy procession, which began at dawn and concluded at one o’clock. In his description of the more than one hundred and fifty thousand delegates— which included soldiers,

sailors, cavalymen, grenadiers, veterans, and children's battalions, plus invited notables, representatives of the Paris commune, and deputies of the National Assembly—Desmoulins writes, “Our readers will forgive us for not describing the federal procession ... [which] soon exhausted all curiosity” (35: 501). Because of the lengthy delays caused by the procession, Desmoulins admits, “The oath that we took on the 14th at 3 o'clock, all of France had already pronounced at noon” (35: 524).²⁰ Despite the pouring rain, the interminable procession, and the unceremonious delays, however, nothing could dampen the symbolic power of the oath itself.

General Lafayette had been appointed to administer the oath. Despite his nobility and training as a Royal Army officer, Lafayette was a hero of the American Revolution who symbolized a bridge between the Ancien Régime's Royal Army and the Revolution's National Guard. When he called upon these soldiers, crowded around the ceremonial altar on the Champ de Mars, to pledge an oath of fraternal federation to one another, Lafayette's voice was echoed by relay to the hundred and fifty thousand military delegates, four hundred thousand spectators, and—by symbolic extension—millions of soldiers and citizens throughout France. Although their timing was off, the soldiers' solemn oath at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790 represented the unison affirmation and mass ritualization of military fraternity in Revolutionary France.

Fraternal Oaths and Embraces

One year earlier, Revolutionary fraternity had been spontaneously invoked during the storming of the Bastille. On July 17, 1789, only three days after the prison uprising, several revolutionaries had attempted to pacify the Bastille guards by inviting them, in the name of fraternal brotherhood, to leave the ranks of Louis XVI's Royal Army and join the Revolutionary cause, arguing “Brave soldiers, mingle with your brothers, receive their embraces. You are our friends, our fellow citizens, and soldiers of the *patrie*.”²¹ At the very inception of the Revolution within the Bastille walls in 1789, spontaneous embraces were thus extended as gestures of fraternal fellowship between soldiers.

More than a mere oath, the fraternal embrace became a corporal expression of brotherly solidarity. In this distinct shift from verbal to physical fraternity, soldiers pledged to one another both their fraternal spirit and their bodies, in an act of homosocial fellowship and affection. As the fraternal embrace became a common companion to the fraternal oath, the embrace played a central role in the ideological dissemination of military *fraternité* in popular culture, most notably in the journalism of Camille Desmoulins and the paintings of Jacques-Louis David. Desmoulins, whose dramatic reports on fraternal embraces at the Bastille in 1789 were followed by even juicier accounts at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790, has been credited as the first known writer to articulate the tripartite slogan *liberté, égalité,*

fraternité in print.²² David dramatized fraternal oaths and embraces in neoclassical paintings that created a visual vocabulary for homosocial and homoerotic military fraternity, from the Ancien Régime to the Revolution, Consulate, and Empire.

Several eyewitnesses to the Fête de la Fédération in 1790 recount that the oath was followed by open expressions of fraternity among the assembled soldiers, which may have included patriotic embraces, the holding of hands, and promises of devotion.²³ In his first-hand report, Desmoulins colorfully describes the spontaneous gestures of fraternal affection shared between delegates following the swearing of the oath:

On their feet since five o'clock in the morning, the citizen-soldiers were dying of hunger. This became an occasion to show signs of fraternity that have never been seen before: loaves of bread thrown from windows and received on bayonets, cold meats, wine, brandy, etc. Women, young and old, came out of their houses to bring all kinds of refreshments to the *fédérés*. Without fearing incest, these sisters received from their brothers many patriotic embraces that had none of the innocence of fraternal kisses. (35: 509)

According to Desmoulins, these fraternal embraces were not limited to those between men and women: “After the oath, there was a touching spectacle of soldier-citizens throwing themselves into one another’s arms” (35: 510). Moved by the words of General Lafayette and bound to uphold their oath of fraternal federation, the festival’s soldiers spontaneously threw themselves into the arms of their comrades. For many, these soldierly embraces may have been as chaste as those they received from female citizens offering food and drink. But for how many of these uniformed men did these gestures of masculine affection—like those from their sister citizens—feel like “patriotic embraces which had none of the innocence of fraternal kisses”? While the strictest sense of fraternity (kinship between family members) would limit incestuous relations between siblings, the metaphorical construction of fraternity (bonds between soldiers and citizens) might allow for such expressions of fraternal frottage between men. The Fête de la Fédération had not only elevated military fraternity to the level of national discourse, but had made the open display of affection between soldiers both possible and honorable.

Desmoulins also describes how fraternal embraces were shared by three generations of soldiers at the Fête de la Fédération: the older veterans of the Royal Army, the younger soldiers of the Revolutionary National Guard, and the children’s battalion whose young cadets would one day make up the ranks of Napoleon’s Grande Armée. Desmoulins writes that “[n]ext to the battalion of veterans and old men was the children’s battalion, harking back to the Spartan festivals that Plutarch speaks of where there were always three dances and three groups, a group of old

men, a group of young men, and a group of children ... After the oath these groups came together and merged in embraces” (35: 515–16). Imitating their ancient Spartan ancestors, these three generations of embracing soldiers represent a bridge between the armies of the Ancien Régime, Revolution, and future Empire. As these generations enthusiastically merged, mingled, and embraced, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the French Army was reborn in a ceremonial display of fraternal affection.

More than mere reporting, Camille Desmoulins’s journalistic accounts represent the entry of Revolutionary military fraternity into the printed record. In his account of fraternal embraces at the Bastille in 1789 and their ritualization at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790, Desmoulins both documents and disseminates the notion of affectionate military fraternity in the ranks of the new Revolutionary armies. This is not to say that individual French soldiers had never embraced before 1789 or that Desmoulins was the sole reporter of such fraternal displays in 1790. But Desmoulins’s published descriptions of fraternal military embraces during the first year of the Revolution can be said to symbolize their appearance in narrative form.

Further, it was Desmoulins’s account of embracing soldiers at the Fête de la Fédération that, for the first recognized time in print, raised the notion of fraternity to the level of liberty and equality. Revolutionary historians Marcel David and Michel Borgetto concur that Desmoulins’s description of the festival effectively introduced the phrase *liberté, égalité, fraternité*—for the first time in publication and in the proper order—as the future motto of Republican France.²⁴ In documenting this scene of soldiers “throwing themselves into one another’s arms, making promises to each other of liberty, equality, fraternity” (35: 510), Desmoulins projects the future motto of the French Republic out into public discourse. In ideological terms, one could thus say that “liberty, equality, fraternity” was born in the intimate space between the bodies of embracing soldiers and their affectionate bonds of military fraternity.

Like Camille Desmoulins’s fraternal narratives, Jacques-Louis David’s paintings created a visual vocabulary for military fraternity, from the end of the Ancien Régime to the Revolution, Consulate, and Empire. In a career that, like Napoleon’s, spanned the years from the twilight of the Bourbon monarchy in the 1770s to its Restoration in 1815, David produced a series of paintings in which fraternal oaths and embraces express civic duty, military virility, and masculine affection. Equally famous for his portraits of Napoleon—which chart the progression from Napoleon’s early celebrity in *General Bonaparte* (1797) and *Napoleon Crossing the Saint Bernard* (1800) to his imperial ascension and power in *The Coronation of Napoleon* (1805–7) and *Napoleon in his Study* (1812)—David evokes the ancient tradition of warrior lovers in his paintings of fraternal oaths and embraces, which in turn created an iconographic record of military fraternity in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic

armies.

In his early academic painting of the *Funeral of Patroclus* (1778), David employs a fraternal oath and embrace to celebrate the sacrifice of the military hero for both the state and his comrade in arms. In David's visual interpretation of the *Iliad*, the outstretched arm of Achilles lays over the body of his fallen companion Patroclus as a pledge to avenge the warrior's death to Hector during the Trojan War. David's subject reflects the Revolution's passion for neoclassical images and what the historian Lynn Hunt calls the "transfer of sacrality from the Old Regime to the new," in which ancient ritual oaths and embraces symbolize new commitments to civic and military fraternity.²⁵ From the Greeks to the Romans, David again takes up fraternal oaths and embraces in the *Oath of the Horatii* (1784), in which three brothers pledge to protect the honor of Rome in a battle against their Curiatii rivals. While stretching out one of their arms in a paternal oath to their father, these warrior brothers simultaneously wrap their other arms around each other in a fraternal pledge to one another. With these dual gestures (oath/embrace), dual arms (limbs/swords), and dual loyalties (paternal/fraternal), David's fraternal figures swear allegiance to father and brother, family and nation, Rome and Republic. Painted five years before the fall of the Bastille, the *Oath of the Horatii* thus foreshadows the fraternal oaths and military fraternity of the new French Republic during the Revolution.

Following 1789, David documents and dramatizes the use of fraternal oaths during the Revolution's infancy. In the *Tennis Court Oath* (1791–92), David's painting of the meeting of the Estates General in 1789, the deputies assembled on the royal tennis court at Versailles pledge with outstretched arms to become the new National Assembly. Art historian Ewa Lajer-Burchard argues that David's *Tennis Court Oath* focuses dually on the male body—both legislative and corporal—as “the very icon of *fraternité*, the Jacobin revolutionary notion of inter-male alliance.”²⁶ First sketched by David as muscular nudes, the oathswearing figures are organized in pairs whose fraternal gestures replicate those of David's earlier Greco-Roman soldiers and thus evoke both civic duty and what Lajer-Burchard calls “desire ‘between men’” (107). This same relationship between military fraternity and male desire can be seen in David's later painting of the *Distribution of the Eagles on the Champ de Mars* (1810), in which Napoleon's marshals and officers—clad in spectacular full-dress uniform—hold one another, salute their newly crowned Emperor, and receive their gilded regimental eagles in 1804. Like the preliminary sketches of the *Tennis Court Oath*, the nude sketches for this Napoleonic portrait reveal the masculine virility of these embracing men underneath their ornate uniforms. Here again, David combines the outstretched arms of the fraternal oath with simultaneous fraternal embraces, linking the desire of these men to serve both Napoleon and one another.

In his most extraordinary fraternal oath painting, *Leonidas at Thermopylae* (1799–

1814), David finally strips away both the clothing and contemporary setting of the *Tennis Court Oath* and the *Distribution of the Eagles* to reveal a neoclassical scene of nude male corporality, military virility, and homoerotic affection. Painted over the entire fifteen-year period that spans Napoleon's rise and initial fall from power (1799–1814), David's *Leonidas* examines the moments before the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC, when three hundred Spartan soldiers under the command of their warrior-king Leonidas were slaughtered by Xerxes's massive Persian army in a courageous effort to delay the invaders and give their Greek brothers-in-arms enough time to mount a defense. While the painting evokes Leonidas's—and Napoleon's—looming defeat and death, it celebrates this self-sacrifice as the ultimate expression of military loyalty to the state and fraternal devotion to fellow soldiers. In this painting, Spartan soldiers replicate the fraternal oaths and embraces seen in David's earlier work, with one arm stretched out in an oath and another wrapped around the muscular bodies of their comrades. Arm in arm, these soldiers go to their deaths so that other soldiers and citizens might live.

While the arms of these Spartans echo the visual vocabulary of David's other fraternal paintings, here they are completely laid bare. Having relegated his male nudes to preliminary sketches in the *Tennis Court Oath* and the *Distribution of the Eagles*, David liberates these muscular nudes and their expressions of fraternal military affection in *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, and thus celebrates these soldiers' extraordinary self-sacrifice and devotion to one another. Their nude vitality intensifies the tension in the painting between the beauty of their bodies and their imminent dismemberment and slaughter at the hands of the Persians. Facing certain death, these Spartan soldiers encourage and comfort one another with hearty embraces and open expressions of camaraderie and tenderness, or what the art historian Norman Bryson calls "overtly homoerotic" gestures, in a scene that Lajer-Burcharth argues is "soaked in homoerotic desire."²⁷

In his own published *Explication of the Thermopylae Painting* (1814), David himself describes the emotional power of these Spartan warriors in a landscape where "Every man runs to his weapon, embraces his comrades for the last time, and gets into position for combat. Leonidas, King of Sparta, seated on a rock in the middle of his three hundred companions, meditates with a sort of tenderness on the impending and inevitable death of his friends."²⁸ Leonidas's fraternal solidarity with his men serves as a model for—and an homage to—Napoleon's leadership of the soldiers in his Grande Armée. As a visual allegory of Napoleonic friendship, *Leonidas at Thermopylae* thus links the fraternal oaths and embraces of the Revolution to the new military fraternity of the Empire.

From Bonaparte's Revolutionary campaigns in Italy and Egypt (1796–99), and his great imperial victories over the Austrians and Prussians at Austerlitz and Jena (1805–6), to his disastrous later campaigns in Spain and Russia (1807/14),

Napoleon's soldiers fought, suffered, supported, comforted, and buried one another. Like Napoleon's heavy losses on the Polish and Russian battlefields of Eylau in 1807 and Borodino in 1812, the final disaster at Waterloo in 1815 is analogous with Leonidas's Thermopylae as Napoleon's ultimate defeat. Yet amid such suffering and loss, the cultural record—reflected in David's neoclassical painting—reveals a legacy of great devotion and mutual affection among the soldiers who served with Napoleon. From the fraternal oath described by Desmoulins at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790 to the completion of David's *Leonidas at Thermopylae* in 1814, fraternity was thus synonymous with Revolutionary and Napoleonic military friendship.

The symbolic power of military fraternity at the Fête de la Fédération and in the popular literary and visual representations of Desmoulins and David was later incorporated into legislative discourse and military policy during the Revolution. In December 1790, Robespierre proposed to the National Assembly that soldiers of the National Guard “wear on their chests these engraved words: *The French People*; and below: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. These same words will be inscribed on their flags, which will bear the three colors of the nation.”²⁹ This proposal was rejected, but Robespierre's invocation of Desmoulins's tripartite slogan alongside the French tricolor flag represents the official arrival of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* in national legislative discourse. When the Assembly voted to accept the Constitution of 1791, it contained a short, but significant article on fraternity: “National festivals will be established to conserve the memory of the French Revolution, to maintain fraternity among citizens, and to endear them to the constitution, the nation, and its laws.”³⁰ As both Robespierre's proposal to the National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791 demonstrate, the symbolic influence of the Fête de la Fédération promulgated fraternity to the status of a national Revolutionary ideal, inspiring the future role of fraternity in the Republican motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and ensuring the continued association of fraternity with the military defense of the nation. As France embraced fraternity, so did its soldiers embrace one another, making fraternal affection a matter of sworn duty and military policy in the new armies of the Revolution.

Fraternal Policy and Military Reform

During the decade following the Fête de la Fédération in 1790, fraternity was invoked as much by pragmatic military reformers as by festival participants. The military reformer and later War Minister Edmond Louis Dubois-Crancé remarked in 1793 that the army “seemed but one family of brothers” and wrote “our camps ought to be composed only of brothers.”³¹ War Minister Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bouchotte similarly argued that a good general should be “devoted to duty and exuding fraternity in his relations with others.”³² And as Sergeant Jacques Fricasse writes in

his memoirs, Revolutionary soldiers swore new oaths to the men of their battalions in which they pledged to work together in fraternal cooperation: “We drank the wine of alliance, we swore fraternity would reign among us unto death; and since we served the same *patrie*, we promised to live forever in peace as brothers.”³³

In the short decade between the beginning of the Revolution in 1789 and the rise of Napoleon in 1799, the French military underwent rapid and radical reform which transformed the Ancien Régime’s Royal Army into the Revolution’s National Guard and Napoleon’s Grande Armée. In part, the ideological and material changes brought about by these reforms can be traced to the military’s new focus on fraternity invoked at the Fête de la Fédération. These fraternal changes created more egalitarian systems of recruitment, integration, promotion, and training, and thus created the conditions for better social relations between soldiers. But the long road from the celebration on the Champ de Mars in 1790 to the bloody battlefields of Jemappes (1792), Marengo (1800), Austerlitz (1805), and Waterloo (1815) would also be littered with hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded French soldiers. During more than twenty years of combat, privations, and suffering, the soldiers of the Revolution and Empire would learn to depend on their newfound fraternity not only as an ideal but as a technique for survival.

In their collective work on the military history of the Revolution and Empire, Jean-Paul Bertaud, John Albert Lynn, and Alan Forrest explain how the years between the fall of the Bastille in 1789 and the fall of Napoleon in 1815 represent a period of almost continual war for France.³⁴ Despite these sustained decades of warfare, the series of conflicts often referred to as the Revolutionary Wars (1792-1799) and the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815) were not uniform events but a complex series of individual yet interconnected campaigns. The Revolution posed a serious threat to the monarchies of Europe and thus made France vulnerable to military attack, first from Austria which hoped to reinstate its compatriot Marie-Antoinette and her husband Louis XVI on the French throne, and later from Prussia and England. At the same time, the Revolution was under internal attack by French loyalists in Vendée, Brittany, Lyon, and Toulon, and by counter-Revolutionary forces organized by exiled French nobles and officers of the former Royal Army.

In response to such royalist resistance, the young Captain Napoleon Bonaparte rose to the rank of brigadier general for his victory over French loyalists and both English and Spanish invaders at the siege of Toulon in 1793. Similarly, Napoleon rose to the rank of major general and to national celebrity when he put down a popular royalist uprising at the Tuileries in Paris in 1795. The Revolutionary Wars thus began in 1792 as a series of defensive campaigns against both internal royalist rebellion and external foreign invasion. This early need for defense forced the Revolutionary armies to transform themselves rapidly through major reforms in recruitment, integration, promotion, and training that were ideologically inspired by

military fraternity and intended to create more egalitarian, cohesive, and effective combat brigades for the defense of the imperiled Republic.

Recruitment (*Conscription*)

The Royal Army, which the Revolution inherited, was a relatively small force of some 238,000 troops, divided among three disparate groups, which included the king's white-gartered household bodyguards; "regulars" or line regiments of infantry, cavalry, and artillery made up of both French and mercenary soldiers; and a reserve militia recruited among the peasantry.³⁵ All three of these groups were decimated during the opening years of the Revolution. The officer corps was drawn almost entirely from the nobility, many of whom resigned out of loyalty to the king and emigrated to safety in foreign courts. Among the French regulars, many were career soldiers who sided with the Revolutionary cause and thus remained on active duty, though most of the foreign mercenaries fled when unstable Revolutionary coffers could not pay them. The Royal Army's reserve militia, comprised of poor young conscripts who were forcibly recruited by lottery from the peasantry and thus eager to desert, evaporated with the Revolution. For the militia, the miseries of Ancien Régime service included (in addition to the mortal dangers faced by all soldiers) a mandatory six-year period of low pay, hunger, privations, boredom, and corporal punishment, all of which led to large rates of desertion. While all unmarried men between eighteen and forty could be called to serve, the common practice of purchasing a replacement (*remplacement*) ensured that service in the militia was the scourge of the poor.³⁶

Soldiers were discouraged from marrying and needed the permission of their superior officer to do so. Even those who did marry and have children were separated from their families for years and made very little money to send home. Those who survived the malnutrition and disease brought on by meager food and cramped quarters still faced the constant threat of being wounded, mutilated, or killed in battle. Like the title character in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), a soldier in the militia was subjected to a life of great poverty, misery, and indentured servitude. After years of ill treatment by their disinterested aristocratic officers, it would have been difficult to convince these militiamen to remain. During the early years of the Revolution when patriotic fervor was fresh, new and eager volunteers filled the void in the ranks. But as the wars of defense against Austria and Prussia in 1792 produced casualties, this fervor waned and a new system of recruitment was designed to make up the difference.

The first wave of volunteers in 1791 was overwhelming, with over 100,000 enthusiastic enlistees. With subsequent defeats and casualties, however, the appeal of 1792 was far less successful. The Convention's call for a levy of 300,000 in the winter of 1793 placed the responsibility on local departments, municipal officials,

and mayors for obtaining new recruits, which they achieved by ingenious and insidious methods of lottery, public nomination, bribery, and inebriation. As a result, the levy of 1793 was relatively effective and produced 150,000 new soldiers. Despite these new and supposedly more egalitarian methods of recruitment during the Revolution, the Ancien Régime practice of replacement was still widely practiced and resented by peasants who resorted to rioting and lynching. Others seeking exemption opted for marriage or dental self-mutilation since married men were excused from service and a man without teeth could not rip open a musket cartridge.³⁷

In the fall of 1793, the Convention made another call for recruitment, known as the *levée en masse*, for which replacement was strictly forbidden. While this may not have entirely eliminated payoffs to officials for passing over the sons of the rich, this massive levy was successful in recruiting 300,000 new troops among not only peasants, but laborers, merchants, artisans, clergy, and other members of the *petite bourgeoisie*.³⁸ The mass levy of 1793 thus initiated a new system of conscription in France where, at least in principle, every able-bodied, unmarried man between eighteen and twenty-five years of age—regardless of his profession, rank, or social class—could be called to serve the nation as a soldier. This did not mean that everyone was willing to serve or that bribery and corruption disappeared, but conscription could now be said (in principle) to live up to the more egalitarian and fraternal ideals of the Revolution.

Since leaders wanted to avoid another unpopular levy and since the terms of conscription for those already recruited into the ranks did not limit their years of service, the mass levy of 1793 provided the Revolution with the great bulk of its troops until the institution of regular recruitment under Napoleon in 1799.³⁹ Because of these levies, the Revolutionary armies numbered some 750,000 men by 1794, almost triple the size of the Royal Army in 1789. This enormous military force would be employed during the Revolutionary campaigns of defense against Austria and Prussia, the later Revolutionary Wars of offense against Holland, Belgium, and Spain, and Napoleon's early campaigns in Italy and Egypt.

Amazingly, some of the soldiers recruited in the mass levy of 1793 remained in the military until 1814, serving Napoleon and the Empire as well as they had served the Revolution. After 1799 and despite continued resentment, resistance, draft evasion, self-mutilation, replacement, and desertion, recruitment eventually became routine and thus painfully accepted. More importantly, the mass levy of 1793 served as the model for systematic recruitment after 1799, for Napoleon's mass conscription of 1810–11, and for the annual conscription that would recruit over two million soldiers for service in Napoleon's Grande Armée.⁴⁰ This new model of conscription redefined military service as every male citizen's civic responsibility and elevated fraternity from a mere festival ideal to the level of military policy. All

men would be required to defend the nation and in doing so, French men of every class, rank, profession, and region would be socialized—at least in theory—as equals, brothers, and soldiers.

Integration (*Embrigadement*)

While conscription brought diverse groups of men together, it alone could not ensure their fraternal integration. When these men met each other in the ranks, they did not immediately embrace one another as brothers. Tension was rife, not only between men of different regions and social classes, but between the seasoned old Royal Army regulars (or *blancs* because of their white uniforms), the newer volunteers (or *bleus* for their blue uniforms), and the new and often disgruntled conscripts (who could be described as green). In the early years, regulars and volunteers not only wore differently colored uniforms but were paid at differing rates. Tension resulted in a lack of cohesion and in frequent and sometimes fatal brawls.

To integrate these men, the military reformer Dubois-Crancé proposed to the Convention in 1793 a program to issue identical uniforms, equalize pay, and restructure the armies' battalions through the process of brigading (*embrigadement*). Unlike other solutions, such as incorporation (adding volunteers to already-formed regiments of regulars) or amalgamation (dissolving existing regiments of volunteers and regulars and creating entirely new mixed regiments), brigading created new and larger units called *demi-brigades*, which were made up of one already-existing battalion of regulars, and two battalions of new volunteers.⁴¹ In this way, regulars and volunteers could maintain cohesion within their battalions, while simultaneously serving with other men. This integration would take time, but the hope was to create larger and more effective brigades of men who would eventually come to know each other as brothers-in-arms.

These reforms also aimed at integrating men from all over France to serve in the same regiments. The Revolution did away with departmental regiments in order to foster national instead of regional loyalty. But in an effort to combat desertion, low morale, and homesickness, especially among new conscripts, the army often allowed smaller groups of friends and comrades from the same town or region to serve together. These hometown friends—referred to by soldiers as their *pays*—shared letters and news from home, provided familiar comforts amid daily hardships, and cared for each other when wounded or dying.⁴² Here again, the army exploited male intimacy and fraternity as a means of successful integration and as a safeguard against desertion.

Promotion (*Avancement*)

Since the Ancien Régime officer corps was made up almost entirely of nobles—who had to prove at least four generations of nobility to even be considered for the

rank of officer—the French army leadership was numerically devastated during the Revolution when at least one-third of these noble officers either fled, emigrated, or joined the counter-Revolutionary forces in exile. Between 1792 and 1793, the National Convention removed many of the remaining officers from service because of their noble birth, including almost three hundred generals. And in September 1793, on the eve of the violent purges of nobles during the Terror, the Committee on Public Safety ordered the dismissal of all nobles from the Republican forces. The new Revolutionary Army thus had to fill important vacancies in its leadership from among its corps of seasoned *sous-officiers*, non-commissioned officers who had years of military experience but little chance of advancement during the Ancien Régime. These early promotions at the beginning of the Revolution initiated a new system of advancement in which a soldier's talent, experience, and merit would weigh more heavily than his social rank and class.⁴³

In addition to integrating the army through brigading, the military reformer Dubois-Crancé restructured the system of promotion, where generals would now be appointed directly by the National Assembly to ensure their political loyalty, and officers would be selected by both seniority and the election of their peers in the ranks. While one-third of promotions were based on a soldier's number of years in service, two-thirds were chosen by a democratic system of popular election: men of lower rank would select from among their peers three candidates for a vacant post, and their superior officers would choose one of these three for promotion. Candidates thus needed to earn the respect of both their superior officers and fellow soldiers.

These new possibilities of promotion created an entirely new ethos of hope, pride, and ambition in the Revolutionary armies.⁴⁴ Regardless of their social class, seasoned regulars, new volunteers, and fresh conscripts could now hope to make a career out of the military instead of merely fulfilling their period of service. This new policy favored talented and ambitious soldiers like Jean Lannes, a runaway of humble origins who attained the highest rank in the French military as a marshal of France, or the young Bonaparte who rapidly rose to the rank of general at the extraordinarily young age of twenty-four.⁴⁵ In turn, Napoleon was notorious, both during his Revolutionary campaigns and the Napoleonic Wars, for doling out generous field promotions to soldiers and officers who demonstrated great skill, courage, and success in battle.⁴⁶ Napoleon's practice of field promotions would later lead to the creation of military pensions and the establishment of the Légion d'Honneur in 1802. In perpetuating the practice of military meritocracy established in the armies of the Revolution, Napoleon thus instilled in his soldiers a sense of fierce loyalty and fostered an atmosphere of fraternal admiration and mutual respect among the soldiers of his Grande Armée.

Training (*Formation*)

Intended to offer political instruction to soldiers, the Revolution's reforms in military training and education attempted to inspire the army's loyalty to the Republic and thus guard against a military coup d'état. During the early years of the Revolution—long before Napoleon staged his own coup and seized power in 1799—it was believed that good training and education would combat what the historian Jean-Paul Bertaud calls the “menace of Caesarism.”⁴⁷ Before Lafayette lost the support of the army and fled France in 1792, Robespierre feared that the general might stage a military coup. This fear prompted successive Revolutionary leaders, the Convention, and the National Assembly to keep the power of the military in check by requiring all generals to be directly appointed by the Assembly and all soldiers to be exposed to a system of political education designed to encourage their loyalty to the ideals and goals of the Revolution. Fearing the political power of the military, the Assembly encouraged soldiers to be fully active citizens by voting, joining political clubs, and reading a variety of political newspapers.⁴⁸

For some, this meant learning to read and write. To combat widespread illiteracy in the ranks, the Revolutionary government required in 1794 that all candidates for the rank of officer or *sous-officier* be required to read. Coupled with new opportunities for advancement, this gave illiterate soldiers an incentive to learn from their literate comrades, and would thus provide historians of the Revolution and the Empire with memoirs written not only by generals and colonels but by corporals and sergeants.⁴⁹ Improvements in literacy and education also created better *sous-officiers* who were able to read maps in the field and act without the constant supervision and direction of their officers. Foot soldiers could now look to their corporals and sergeants to share political news from the press, read their letters from family, and help them write letters home. This afforded new opportunities for fraternal intimacy and greater trust between soldiers and their superiors.

For many Revolutionary soldiers, these reforms in recruitment, integration, promotion, and training also generated a new sense of respect for military service. No longer forced to serve under abusive, demeaning, or incompetent officers from among the nobility, these men could now depend on able and experienced leaders whom they could trust and who in turn owed their own advancement to the confidence and election of their men. More than a symbolic slogan for military festivals, *fraternité* thus became the ideological foundation for major policy reforms between 1791 and 1799 that were intended to create more loyal and cohesive fighting units. It would be overly optimistic to think that the transformation of the military—from the Royal Army to the armies of the Revolution and Empire—entirely lived up to the fraternal ideals invoked at the Fête de la Fédération, or that all soldiers openly expressed fraternal loyalty to their comrades, or that fraternity was a panacea for the miseries of military life.⁵⁰ Revolutionary and Napoleonic

soldiers would continue to suffer privations, fatigue, hunger, and disease, and military reforms could not save soldiers from the alternating periods of boredom in the garrison and violence on the battlefield. Yet these practical reforms in recruitment, integration, promotion, and training proved that *fraternité* could be an effective model for radical change, cohesive battalions, and improved social relations between soldiers.

With a new army came new strategies and tactics. The French defeat of the Austrians at Valmy and the Prussians at Jemappes in the fall of 1792 marked a turning point in the Revolutionary Wars. From this moment, these wars of defense would become wars of offense, invasion, and conquest. In 1793, the Committee on Public Safety issued the order: “Attack offensively, always offensively. Let us attack so as not to be attacked ourselves.”⁵¹ By 1794, the Committee summarized this new period of military aggression in its instructions to the army: “The general rule is always to act offensively and *en masse* ... to engage the enemy in combat at every occasion with bayonets, and to pursue the enemy until its complete destruction.”⁵² This new strategy of mass attack and closerange combat was made possible by recent reforms in conscription, the tripling of the army, and the new enthusiasm of the French soldier, whose bayonet zeal would have been unlikely among the indentured and disgruntled militia of the Ancien Régime.⁵³ While enthusiasm alone might not have been enough to steel the nerves of these new Revolutionary soldiers in combat—where abstract political convictions often evaporate in the face of mortal danger—soldiers who began to care for their comrades as brothers were more inclined to fight and engage in dangerous bayonet warfare. This cult of the bayonet was thus an early indication of combat cohesion and the strategic advantages of military fraternity.

Amid this new strategy of military offense and invasion, fraternal ideology could also be invoked to explain larger political goals. While Austria and Prussia had attacked France on the pretext of defending monarchy, the Revolution’s offensive campaigns were ostensibly mounted in the name of liberating other European brothers and sisters from despotic tyranny. Of course, these ideological pretexts were also financially expedient for the indebted Revolution, which benefited from the material wealth of military conquest. Having expelled the Austrian and Prussian invaders in 1792, the Revolutionary Army began an invasion of the lands across its borders in a wave of successive campaigns in Belgium and Holland, Prussia and Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. These Revolutionary Wars of invasion would include General Bonaparte’s Italian and Egyptian Campaigns (1796–99), from which Napoleon returned to stage his coup d’état of 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799) and assume power as First Consul.

In addition to increased executive power, the Revolutionary Wars also provided Napoleon with seasoned officers and soldiers who would later fill the ranks of his

Grande Armée. The Revolution's reforms in military recruitment, integration, promotion, and training thus served as the foundation for Napoleon's new programs of annual conscription starting in 1799, his continued integration of new recruits, experienced soldiers, and foreign regiments in the Grande Armée, and his rapid promotion of talented young officers. The new Revolutionary tactic of military aggression and the victories of the Revolutionary Wars provided momentum for Bonaparte's future invasions of Italy and Spain, Austria and Prussia, Poland and Russia during the Napoleonic Wars. And the integration of fraternity into military policy provided Napoleon with motivated brigades, cohesive battalions, and unified combat troops.



DURING THE GRADUAL transformation of the French military—from the armies of the Ancien Régime to those of the Revolution, Consulate, and Empire—fraternity served as an underlying ideology for policy change, radical reform, and strategic innovation. The fraternal oath sworn by France's soldiers at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790 was echoed at military festivals, conscription ceremonies, and regimental rituals throughout the Revolutionary Wars. It was in a description of embracing soldiers at the Fête de la Fédération that fraternity first entered the Republican motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité* and it was as a military concept that fraternity entered the legislative discourse of both the National Assembly and the Constitution.

Despite the influence of fraternity on the French military between 1790 and 1799, the ritual fraternal frenzy gradually subsided during the Consulate and Empire (1799–1815). After its dramatic emergence from the fraternal oaths and embraces at the Fête de la Fédération, the Republican slogan “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” was eventually deferred until the later declaration of the Second Republic in 1848.⁵⁴ Even as the Consulate and Empire abandoned the fraternal discourse of the Republic, however, Napoleon's Grande Armée continued to benefit from the structural and social reforms inspired by the Revolution's fraternal ideology. Having radically transformed social relations between soldiers, military fraternity became a model for regimental cohesion, a safeguard against desertion, and an incentive for soldiers to engage in combat. Although *fraternité* faded from Napoleonic discourse, it had become a fully integrated aspect of military life whose effects could be seen not only in policy and strategy but in the affection and intimacy shared between officers and soldiers of every rank in the Grande Armée, where Revolutionary fraternity gave way to Napoleonic friendship.



Napoleonic Friendship at the Top Marshal Lannes, General Duroc, General Junot

Alone in his tent, Napoleon sobbed into his soup. A seasoned soldier and military commander, Napoleon had seen thousands of men die in battle during his many bloody campaigns across Europe. Yet his grief over the death of Marshal Jean Lannes during the Austrian Campaign in 1809 was inconsolable. Gravely wounded in the knees on the battlefield at Essling on the far shores of the Danube River near Vienna, Lannes had survived the amputation of his mangled left leg by Napoleon's chief army surgeon Dominique-Jean Larrey. Larrey's best efforts however, could not save Lannes from the excruciating pain and inevitable onset of fever, infection, and gangrene. Following Lannes's agonizing death on May 31, 1809, Napoleon retreated to his tent where his valet Louis Constant later found the Emperor "seated, immobile, mute, and staring into space, in front of his hastily prepared meal. Napoleon's eyes were inundated with tears; they multiplied and fell silently into the soup."¹ As Napoleon stared blankly into his bowl, his overwhelming grief spilled out of his weary eyes, down his despondent face, and into his neglected supper.

This moving account of the Emperor's private grief demonstrates his great affection for Lannes and his capacity to love and mourn his fellow soldiers and friends. There is overwhelming evidence that Napoleon did not limit his grief for Lannes to the privacy of his own quarters. While one might expect a toughened military leader to hide his feelings from his troops and drown his tears in his soup, Napoleon's grief for Marshal Lannes took on the very public character of open lamentation. Rather than grieve behind closed doors and conceal his personal vulnerabilities in order to show public strength, Napoleon's mourning for his beloved friend became a matter of great public spectacle. Like Achilles mourning his beloved Patroclus, Napoleon wept publicly and openly expressed his affection in a way that was widely reported, discussed, and admired by the officers and soldiers in his armies. More than mere tears, Napoleon's grief over the death of Jean Lannes represented a new military ethos in which even the most hardened soldiers at the very top of the chain of command could express sorrow, tenderness, and affection for their military comrades and friends.

Napoleon's relationships with three of his most beloved senior officers—Marshal

Jean Lannes, General Gérard Christophe Duroc, and General Jean-Andoche Junot—provide models of Napoleonic friendship at the highest ranks of the Grande Armée. From Napoleon’s grief at the deaths of Lannes and Duroc, to Junot’s inverse fanatical devotion to Bonaparte, these friendships illustrate the Emperor’s affection for his men and their cult-like devotion to him. As figures of Napoleonic friendship at the top, these three friendships served as both exemplary and cautionary models for men throughout Napoleon’s armies, from senior and junior officers to *sous-officiers* and foot soldiers, many of whom emulated these military friendships with their own comrades and wrote about them eloquently in their military memoirs.

Napoleon and Lannes

Jean Lannes met Napoleon during the Italian Campaign in 1796 when Lannes was a mere colonel (*chef de brigade*) in the Revolutionary Army and Bonaparte was a young general. The son of a modest laborer and merchant, Lannes was born in 1769—the same year as Napoleon—and joined the Revolutionary Army in 1792 as a young volunteer. Having distinguished himself in the first Italian Campaign (1796–97), the Egyptian Campaign (1798–99), and the second Italian Campaign (1800), Lannes rose rapidly to the rank of general. Despite a military misappropriations scandal in 1801 for which the First Consul exiled Lannes to an ambassadorial post in Portugal (1802–4), the new Emperor promoted Lannes in 1804 to marshal, the highest rank in the imperial armies. And for Lannes’s victory over the Austrians in Italy on June 9, 1800, Napoleon later named him Duc de Montebello in 1808. In addition to these early victories, Lannes was instrumental in Napoleon’s victory at Austerlitz (1805) and during the Prussian and Polish Campaigns (1806–7), Iberian Campaign (1808–9), and Austrian Campaign (1809). Lannes was Napoleon’s friend of sixteen years, one of his most talented military leaders, and a decorated soldier who had been wounded an extraordinary thirteen times in battle. His death was an enormous loss for France and Napoleon, the Empire and the Emperor.

Both men were known for their iron will, courage in battle, and toughened military character. During their lifetime military careers, they had witnessed the agony and death of thousands on the field of battle. Yet multiple witnesses report that Napoleon was overwhelmed with grief on seeing Lannes’s wounded body. Echoing the moving account of the marshal’s aide-de-camp General Marcellin de Marbot, General Jean-Marie-René Savary confirms that Napoleon “was visibly affected and shed tears,” and General Louis-François Lejeune attests that “[t]he Emperor had thrown himself on his friend, embraced him, held him in his arms, and bathed his face with his tears.”² In more detailed terms, General Jean-Jacques-Germain Pelet writes how Napoleon—using the informal *tu* to address Lannes—consoled his wounded friend:

As soon as the Emperor saw him, he ran, hastened to him, covered him

with kisses. He called to him in the middle of his sobs, and said to him in a muffled voice: 'Lannes, my friend, do you recognize me? It's me, it's the Emperor. It's Bonaparte, your friend!' ... Napoleon, kneeling before the dying hero, cried hot tears. This most touching meeting, these most tender embraces moved us profoundly ... The Emperor's pain was so intense that none of the witnesses to this scene could ever deny the profound feeling that it inspired.³

These multiple references to Napoleon's tears, embraces, and kisses stand in contrast to the more stoic images of Napoleon in paintings by David, Gros, and Ingres. Napoleon's overwhelming grief is particularly moving because it is so wholly uncharacteristic. A forty-year-old man with almost twenty years of combat experience, Napoleon would have been accustomed to the carnage of battle and the inevitable loss of comrades. His open display of affection at the death of Lannes also belies his characteristic confidence, ruthlessness, and aggression on the battlefield.

Other accounts confirm the reports made by Generals Marbot, Lejeune, Savary, and Pelet. In his best-selling collection of conversations with Napoleon in exile, *The Memorial of Saint Helena* (1823), Emmanuel de Las Cases explains how "Lannes was transported to the isle of Lobau; Napoleon went to meet him near the small bridge. Their meeting was most touching, their embraces most tender. Napoleon cried hot tears on his knees before the dying hero."⁴ In similar terms, General Comte Philippe-Paul de Ségur confirms in his memoirs how, in the presence of other tearful soldiers, Napoleon wept and comforted his fallen comrade:

Napoleon, dismayed, saw our grenadiers all in tears as they carried the dying hero to the island. At this sight, he hastened towards him, threw his arms around him, melted in tears, and covered his face with kisses ... The witnesses who are still alive all say that, through the tears that moistened their eyes, they saw Napoleon on his knees for a long time, his head leaning on the head of the unfortunate marshal, covering him with tears.⁵

In all of these reports, Napoleon's weeping is unapologetically documented as the sign of his intimate affection for Lannes. These military memoirs reproduce the tearful scenes that had become a common trope of the Romantic novel. Like Chactas at the death and funeral of the title character in Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801), Napoleon's lamentation on the death of Lannes in the military memoirs of the Empire figure him as a kind of melancholic, Romantic hero.⁶

Napoleon's valet Louis Constant and his pharmacist Cadet de Gassicourt would later claim that in his agony, Lannes had berated the Emperor for his insatiable ambition and never-ending wars, but these accounts were vehemently refuted by Generals Marbot, Savary, and Pelet who attest in their memoirs to Lannes's warrior spirit and loyalty to Napoleon till the end.⁷ Lannes's biographers, Margaret Scott

Chrisawn, Jean-Claude Damamme, and Ronald Zins, attribute Lannes's alleged deathbed accusations to either the unconscious ramblings of a man in great pain or the later invention of anti-Bonapartist propaganda during the Restoration.⁸ Even if Lannes had confronted Napoleon, this frank, deathbed criticism would only confirm the familiarity and intimacy that Lannes shared with the Emperor. Collectively, the memoirs of Marbot, Constant, Savary, Lejeune, Pelet, Las Cases, and Ségur corroborate the Emperor's tearful despondency at Essling and verify that the death of Lannes represented not only a major military loss for the Grande Armée but a deep personal loss for Bonaparte.

Napoleon did not count many people as friends. The corruption of power and influence made him weary of friendship, flattery, and false intimacy. In 1802, Napoleon told his secretary Louis de Bourrienne, "Friendship is just a word; I don't love anyone ... Personally, I couldn't care less. I know very well that I have no true friends."⁹ Ironically, Napoleon confided this complaint to Bourrienne, a man whom he had known since their school days at the Royal Military School in Brienne (1779–84), and whom years later Napoleon dismissed and blacklisted after ten years of loyal service.¹⁰ While Napoleon was weary of false friendship, he could also prove to be an unforgiving and disloyal friend. But by 1809, after thirty years as a soldier and ten years in power as First Consul and Emperor, Napoleon had come to depend on the friendship and expertise of rare men like Lannes whom he described as adoring and dependable: "Lannes adored me ... He was surely one of the men on whom I could most depend in this world."¹¹

Following the death of Lannes, Napoleon expressed this friendship in even stronger terms in a letter to the marshal's wife, Louise, on May 31, 1809: "My pain is equal to your own. I lost the most distinguished general of my armies, my companion in arms of sixteen years, the one I considered my best friend."¹² Seven years later, while in exile on St. Helena, Napoleon remembered how, on his friend's deathbed, Lannes had expressed his devotion to both his family and the Emperor: "he clung to me ... for the rest of his life; he wanted only me, thought only of me ... Certainly, he loved his wife and children more than me; nevertheless, he never spoke about it because he expected nothing of it; he was the one who protected them, while in turn, I was his protector."¹³ Just as Lannes protected his wife, so did Napoleon protect Lannes, in a kind of military marriage of mutual admiration and affection.

Lannes, in turn, was also loved and admired by his own officers. Louis Constant reports that Napoleon was not the only one sobbing at Lannes's deathbed: "What a touching and terrible thing to see—surrounding his house, at his door, in his bedroom—these old hardened grenadiers of the Imperial Guard crying and sobbing."¹⁴ Lejeune confirms that "on seeing the Emperor so moved, melting in tears ... all of our hearts were torn with an equally sincere pain; immediately one saw tears running from the eyes of all those tough old soldiers."¹⁵ This communal

grief for Lannes reflected, in turn, the marshal's own affection for his men. In fact, Lannes was mortally wounded while mourning the death of his dear friend General Pierre Charles Pouzet, who had been killed just minutes before at Essling. In some ways, Lannes and Pouzet's friendship mirrored the long-term military mentorship between Lannes and Napoleon. Lannes had met Pouzet in 1792, when Lannes was a young volunteer and Pouzet was his sergeant major at the training camp in Mirail. Following his promotion to marshal by Napoleon in 1804, Lannes later named his former drill instructor Pouzet to his senior staff. At Essling, Lannes and Pouzet were talking when a stray Prussian bullet penetrated Pouzet's head, killing him instantly. Devastated, Lannes sat down on the ground, crossed his legs, and held his own head in his hands. It was while he sat mourning the loss of his beloved Pouzet that a piece of shrapnel struck and wounded Lannes in the knees. As Lannes had mourned Pouzet, so would Napoleon mourn Lannes.

This triangle of Napoleonic military affections recalls the epic grief between Charlemagne, Roland, and Olivier in the *Song of Roland*. The similarities between the Emperors Charlemagne and Napoleon, their lamentation at the death of Roland and Lannes, and the loss of the heroes' own comrades Olivier and Pouzet were noted by Napoleon himself and several officers in the Grande Armée. In *The Memorial of Saint Helena*, Las Cases recounts how Napoleon twice referred to Lannes as "the Roland of the army" (94) and describes the death of Lannes in parallel terms with the *Song of Roland*: "The Emperor also spoke of the last moments of Marshal Lannes, the valorous Duke of Montebello, so justly called the Roland of the army, who, visited by the Emperor on his deathbed, seemed to forget his own condition to tend to him whom he loved above everything" (143–44). Later in *The Memorial of Saint Helena*, Napoleon recalls how "Lannes was the Achilles of the army" (409) and thus extends the epic metaphor from the *Song of Roland* to the *Iliad*.¹⁶

In addition to Napoleon, both junior and senior officers describe Lannes as a latter-day Roland. In his memoirs, Lieutenant François-Frédéric Billon writes of his beloved Marshal Lannes, "We loved him, that intrepid leader, he was our Roland ... he was for the *Grande Armée* a demi-god, the demi-god of war."¹⁷ Similarly, the Comte de Ségur recalls how Napoleon ordered a grandiose state funeral for his beloved friend: "[Lannes] was the Roland of his Empire, his most beloved hero! He wanted the remains of this most regretted companion-in-arms to be transported to the dome of the Invalides, to immortalize his pain by this tomb surrounded by the glorious veterans of our great wars" (3: 360–61). Just as Achilles and Charlemagne had ordered the public funeral rites of Patroclus and Roland, so did Napoleon order an elaborate state funeral for Lannes.

Following the marshal's death, the Grande Armée's chief surgeon Dr. Larrey organized the complicated embalming of Lannes's body, which was then transferred to the Hôtel de Ville in Strasbourg. There it remained for a year until the state

funeral in 1810, which began on May 22 in Strasbourg and lasted until July 6 in Paris, the first anniversaries of the battles of Essling and Wagram. From Strasbourg, Lannes's casket was draped in black, honored by Mozart's Requiem Mass at the Strasbourg Cathedral, and transported with a military cortege and great public ceremony across eastern France. In Paris, the marshal lay in state between July 2 and July 6 under the dome of the Invalides before again being transported in a grand funeral procession through the streets of the capital where, amid cannon-fire and church-bells, Lannes was laid to rest in the crypt of the Panthéon on July 6 alongside the nation's other celebrated leaders, writers, and heroes.

In terms that rival Camille Desmoulins's account of the Fête de la Fédération in 1790, Louis Constant describes in detail the elaborate ceremonies at both the Invalides and Panthéon in 1810, as well as the lengthy procession that included a military cortège of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, a religious cortège of clergy, acolytes, and choirs from almost every parish in Paris, and a *cortège d'honneur* that included the marshal's widow, five children, and family, hundreds of imperial princes, dignitaries, and ministers, and scores of distinguished marshals, generals, and colonels of the Grande Armée.¹⁸ Everyone, it seems, was present except Napoleon. In the absence of the Emperor, Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout delivered Lannes's funeral oration:

[Lannes] received the most beautiful sign of [Napoleon's] devotion when, on hearing the news of his mortal wounds, the Emperor suspended his vast maneuvers in the middle of combat to go and comfort him, to share the last hours of this great friend he was about to lose, and to pronounce these memorable words that the centuries will remember: 'Only a painful blow to my heart such as this could distract me from the needs of my army.' Happy is he who, in dying, can inspire such regrets and merit such tears.¹⁹

For those mourners who had not seen Napoleon's tears on the battlefield at Essling, Davout's eulogy transformed Napoleon's private grief for Lannes into a matter of public spectacle. For many, the Emperor's absence at Lannes's funeral underscored his overwhelming sense of loss.²⁰ While Napoleon the soldier had wept openly for his comrade on the battlefield in 1809, Napoleon the Emperor would not risk such a display of affection at the state funeral of his marshal in 1810. This distinction between the private man and the public emperor accentuates the pathos of Napoleon's grief. Despite or perhaps even because of the Emperor's absence, this funerary ritual elevated Napoleon's love for Lannes to the level of national discourse.

According to what Jean Tulard calls the Napoleonic myth or legend, the Emperor is an enigmatic repository of all kinds of collective fantasies and interpretations.²¹ In his public life, Napoleon is both saint and demon, benefactor and butcher, a

benevolent liberator bringing law and order to the peoples of Europe and a totalitarian dictator wreaking death and destruction in his mega-lomaniacal thirst for power. General Bonaparte shines as the hero of Marengo, the conqueror of Egypt, and the champion of Austerlitz. First Consul Bonaparte is lauded as the soldier who brought order to a state in chaos. Emperor Napoleon is hallowed as the great conqueror of an empire that stretched across continental Europe. However, the general, consul, and emperor are also collectively known as the mythic ogre who ravaged Europe, sent generations of soldiers to their deaths, and bloodied the battlefields of Eylau, Borodino, and Waterloo. He is blamed for abandoning his men in Egypt, deserting his armies in Russia, and forsaking his soldiers in Spain. Adored by his Imperial Guard, who regularly risked their lives to protect him, Napoleon also suffered from mass desertion and draft evasion among both the French and foreign soldiers of his Grande Armée. While the Napoleonic myth emphasizes the ubiquitous chant of “Long Live the Emperor!,” other cries of “Long Live Peace!” are said to have been heard among Napoleon’s wounded and dying soldiers.

Napoleon’s legendary friendship with Lannes participates in this Napoleonic myth and is thus susceptible to both misinterpretation and overstatement. But it is no exaggeration to say that the death of Jean Lannes marked the end of a great friendship, and made public Napoleon’s ability to offer comfort, feel pain, and shed tears for a fellow soldier. As if to compensate for Lannes’s shattered legs, Napoleon offered his arms, in an embrace that recalls the earlier fraternal oaths and embraces of their Revolutionary youth. By reproducing both the fraternal gestures and melancholic pathos of the funerary rites in the *Iliad*, the *Song of Roland*, and the Romantic novel, Napoleon and Lannes take part in an epic heroic tradition. In describing the death of Lannes in these terms, Napoleonic witnesses, memoirists, and biographers perpetuate this narrative and iconographic myth. Despite their seemingly limitless variation, these accounts concur that Napoleon did indeed weep, trading his weapons for tears, his *armes* for *larmes*, to mourn his beloved friend.

Napoleon and Duroc

In many ways, the death of Lannes in 1809 was echoed by the death of General Gérard Christophe Duroc in 1813.²² Duroc had been Napoleon’s close friend and comrade since the siege of Toulon in 1793, the Revolutionary victory that had first propelled the young Captain Bonaparte to the rank of major, then brigadier general, and to national recognition. Twenty years later, during Napoleon’s Saxon Campaign in 1813, the Emperor and Duroc were riding side by side during the battle of Bautzen when a cannonball ricocheted off a tree, narrowly missing Napoleon, but disemboweling Duroc. According to Louis Constant’s eyewitness account, “The despairing Emperor embraced his faithful friend several times, trying to offer some hope, but [Duroc], who knew perfectly well his condition, did not answer except to beg for opium. At these words, no longer able to bear it, Napoleon left” (4: 38–39).

Duroc spent the rest of the day and night in agony, and died the next morning, on May 23, 1813. Unable to remain with his suffering friend, the despondent Emperor had returned to his camp where, according to Constant, Napoleon “sat down on a stool in front of his tent, his head hung low, his hands gripped together, and ... remained for almost an hour without saying a single word” (4: 38–39).

As with Lannes, Duroc was mourned by both Napoleon and the nation. Constant writes that “[t]he Emperor’s heart was broken ... This was a loss not only for the Emperor, who considered him a true friend, but I daresay a loss for all of France” (4: 36–37). And as with Lannes, Napoleon ordered both rituals and monuments to honor this imperial hero and beloved friend: “The Emperor ordered that his body be transported to Paris to lie in state under the dome of the Invalides; he bought the house in which [Duroc] had died, and asked the village minister to place on the spot a stone ... ‘Here, General Duroc, Duke of Frioul, Grand Marshal of the Imperial Palace of the Emperor Napoleon, wounded by a bullet, died in the arms of the Emperor, his friend’ ” (4: 39–40). Yet again, Napoleon’s private grief translated into public mourning.

In the *Memorial of Saint Helena*, Las Cases writes that Napoleon valued Duroc’s capacity for “loving the Emperor for himself” and “knowing to speak the truth” (58). Convinced that Duroc was “devoted to his well-being ... [t]he Emperor told me that Duroc alone had his trust and possessed his entire confidence” (58). Like Constant, Las Cases recounts the horrific conditions of Duroc’s death in Saxony: “When [Napoleon] went to see Duroc after his mortal injury, he tried to give him hope; but Duroc, who did not delude himself, only responded by imploring [Napoleon] to give him opium. The Emperor, too moved, could not take it upon himself to remain any longer and withdrew from this heartbreaking spectacle” (144). As both Constant and Las Cases report, Napoleon’s inability to remain with Duroc seems to have had more to do with the emotional pain of seeing his friend suffer than the physical effects of a weak stomach. Napoleon had braved the stench of Lannes’s gangrene to be with him at his deathbed in 1809 and must have witnessed countless scenes of carnage no less gruesome than Duroc’s disembowelment in 1813. But having already lost his beloved Lannes, Napoleon could not bear to watch Duroc die in agony.

According to Las Cases, the Emperor’s grief reflected Duroc’s own affection for Napoleon. Their mutual friendship was based on an intimate familiarity, outside the rigid formality of the imperial court and chain of military command. Although he was never promoted to marshal, Duroc’s role as Napoleon’s aide-de-camp and Grand Marshal of the Imperial Palace afforded the kind of daily access and intimate involvement with the Emperor that would have been impossible had Duroc been assigned to distant military posts. In addition, Duroc was reportedly the only one of Napoleon’s officers besides Lannes who was allowed to use the familiar *tu* with the Emperor.²³ Las Cases reports that this familiarity signaled Napoleon’s favor with

Duroc and, in turn, Duroc's ability to treat Napoleon as both emperor and friend: "I've heard the Emperor say that in all of his military career, Duroc alone possessed his blind confidence and received all his affection ... Duroc loved the Emperor for himself; he was devoted most of all to the private man, even more than to the monarch" (144).

Memoirists and biographers have debated whether Napoleon was closer to Lannes or Duroc. While Las Cases reports that Duroc bested Lannes in Napoleon's affections, General Pierre Berthezène argues in his memoirs "I am tempted to believe that Lannes is the only man that Napoleon truly loved. I have since seen the death of ... Duroc; but how differently [Napoleon] was affected!"²⁴ Similarly, Captain Jean-Roch Coignet writes in his memoirs how, at a Parisian military inspection in 1808, Napoleon "was accompanied by Marshal Lannes, his favorite."²⁵ Ultimately, Napoleon's preference for Lannes or Duroc is less important than the intimacy he shared and the love he expressed for both men. Like his grief at the death of Jean Lannes, Napoleon's anguish over the death of Gérard Christophe Duroc provides a rare example of the Emperor's demonstrated affection for a beloved soldier and friend.

While the deaths of Lannes and Duroc offer only a glimpse of Napoleon's long-term relationships with these men, they serve as models of Napoleonic friendship at the top and demonstrate at least three new forms of intimacy between soldiers in the Grande Armée. First, these models tacitly give permission for a soldier to express affection for a fellow comrade. Second, they suggest that if an emperor can openly love a general or marshal, then officers can in turn love the soldiers under their command. Third, they imply that while the Emperor loved some of his officers, many officers also loved the Emperor. These three forms of Napoleonic friendship—lateral relationships between soldiers of similar rank, compassionate relationships between leaders and their men, and devotional relationships between soldiers and their superiors—formed the basis for relationships throughout the Grande Armée.²⁶ During the Empire, this third model of affection—by subordinates for their superiors—accounted for the legendary and cultish adoration of Napoleon by many of his men. One of the most extreme cases of this hero-worship was the devotion of General Jean-Andoche Junot, whose fanatical service to Napoleon as both a friend and officer echoed the tropes of a turbulent epistolary romance.

Napoleon and Junot

Junot's passionate devotion to Napoleon bordered on obsession. In 1813, after a lifetime of service to Bonaparte, General Junot wrote a final and desperate letter to his longtime friend, the Emperor: "I who love you with the affection of a savage for the sun, I who am ENTIRELY YOURS. Well then: this eternal war that we must fight for you, I WANT NO MORE OF IT! I WANT PEACE!"²⁷ After twenty years of service as

Bonaparte's intimate friend, general, aide-de-camp, and Commandant of Paris—a period during which he suffered an astounding twenty-seven battle wounds and the long-term effects of head trauma—Junot was refused promotion to marshal, dismissed from military duty, and exiled to a marginal ambassadorial post in eastern Europe. It was during this time in exile that the symptoms of Junot's accumulated head wounds became acute and the ambassador's behavior degenerated into scandal, forcing him to return to France where, on July 29, 1813, Junot died of self-inflicted wounds.

On hearing the news of Junot's death, Napoleon sent a messenger to the general's home with orders to seize and destroy his letters. Mysteriously, Napoleon feared that the contents of their twenty-year correspondence might be made public. In burning Junot's letters, Napoleon ironically underscored his embarrassment over these expressions of epistolary affection and stoked the fires of rumor and speculation. Of the few letters that survive, five in particular—from Toulon, Egypt, Portugal, Russia, and Illyria—provide an intimate glance into the nature of Junot's devotion to Napoleon. However, since Napoleon destroyed most of Junot's letters, much of what is known about their passionate friendship relies on the celebrated memoirs of the general's wife, Laure Junot, the Duchesse d'Abrantès.

Born Laure Permon, the future Madame Junot hailed from a family of the Corsican nobility that had maintained an intimate and long-term friendship with the Bonaparte family. In fact, Napoleon once had a serious infatuation with Laure's widowed mother, Laetitia Permon, and it was Napoleon himself who later introduced the sixteen-year-old Laure Permon to her future husband, Jean-Andoche Junot. Napoleon and Josephine later agreed to be the godparents of the Junots' first child, who was named in honor of the Empress. The christening of the infant Josephine was hosted by the imperial couple at Mal-maison, where Marshal Lannes's own infant son was simultaneously baptized and named Napoleon. As christening presents, the Empress gave Madame Junot a pearl necklace and the Emperor gave General Junot the deed to a lavish mansion on the Champs-Élysées, where Madame Junot would entertain, as befit her husband's role as Napoleon's future military Commandant of Paris.^{[28](#)}

Written much later during the July Monarchy at the encouragement of her friend Honoré de Balzac, Laure Junot's celebrated *Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Abrantès* (1831–34) are a rich source by a privileged witness of the Empire and an important, if biased, record of Junot's devotion to Napoleon. Doubtless, the extremes of Junot's devotion are often exaggerated by Laure Junot, who hoped to champion her husband's role and her own memoirs in the annals of Napoleonic history. While one must be skeptical of Laure Junot's account, one cannot ignore her version of General Junot's story, especially when her interpretation closely seconds other sources.^{[29](#)} Most of what is known about the friendship between General Junot and Napoleon

must be gleaned between the lines of Junot's remaining letters and his wife's memoirs, which collectively reflect the literary spirit of the late eighteenth-century epistolary novel and the *mal du siècle* of early nineteenth-century Romanticism. From their cavalier seduction on the battlefield at Toulon and the shared intimacies of their youth in Paris, to Junot's blind loyalty, later disillusionment, and madness, Junot's lifelong devotion to Napoleon reads like an epistolary novel by Prévost, Laclos, or Rousseau and concludes with as much despair and melancholic ennui as the Romantic novels of Chateaubriand, Constant, and Stendhal.

Like Duroc, Junot gained the attention of the young Bonaparte at the siege of Toulon in 1793. His first major military victory, Bonaparte's triumph over French royalists and their English allies in Toulon distinguished him as an important Revolutionary figure, earned him promotion to the rank of brigadier general, and gained him national recognition. Given Napoleon's later destruction of Junot's letters following Junot's death, it is ironic that at Toulon, Major Bonaparte and Sergeant Junot met over the writing of a letter. In the *Memorial of Saint Helena*, Las Cases explains:

During the construction of one of the first batteries that Napoleon, on his arrival at Toulon, ordered built against the English, he asked in the field for a sergeant or corporal who knew how to write. Someone stepped out of the ranks and wrote what [Napoleon] dictated, on the retaining wall itself. The letter was barely finished when ... cannon-fire sprayed it with dirt. 'Good,' said the writer, 'now I won't need any sand [to dry the ink].' This joke and the calm with which it was made, drew Napoleon's attention and made the sergeant's fortune: this was Junot. (58)

In this account, Napoleon and Junot's first meeting reads like an epistolary seduction. Bonaparte is impressed by Junot's eagerness to serve as well as by his sense of humor, unshakable nerve, and courage under fire. Laure Junot recounts the story in almost identical terms:

Bonaparte asked for someone with beautiful handwriting; Junot stepped out of the ranks and presented himself. Bonaparte ... told him to prepare to write a letter under his dictation. Junot wrote on the retaining wall of the battery itself. He had barely finished the letter when an English bomb exploded ten feet away, covering Junot and the letter with dirt. 'Good!' said Junot while laughing, 'we didn't have any sand to dry the ink.' Bonaparte fixed his gaze on the young sergeant; [Junot] was calm and had not even flinched. This event decided his fortune. (1: 391)

Laure Junot goes on to describe, in passionate and exaggerated terms, Junot's total devotion to Napoleon: "He soon attached himself to his general with a devotion that

became a kind of religion” (1: 391–92). This cultish devotion that began at Toulon over the writing of a letter can be seen in five surviving letters between the two men—from Toulon (1794), Egypt (1799), Portugal (1808), Russia (1812), and Illyria (1813)—which span the twenty years of their friendship and dramatize Junot’s sometimes moving yet fanatical devotion to Napoleon.

Letter from Toulon (1794)

Following his victory at Toulon in 1793, Brigadier General Bonaparte was falsely accused of treason in the wake of Robespierre’s fall from power in 1794. Imprisoned, Bonaparte received a letter from Junot pledging his loyalty and promising to free Napoleon by force, if necessary. To this personal declaration of loyalty, Napoleon replied: “I well know your friendship, my dear Junot, from the offer you’re making; for a long time you have also known the friendship that I have vowed to you ... [But] do nothing, for you would compromise me. Goodbye, my dear Junot. Salutations and friendship, Bonaparte” (Junot 1: 162). Echoing the old Jacobin greeting of “salutations and fraternity,” Bonaparte’s farewell wishes indicate how his friendship with Junot grew out of the military fraternity of the Revolution. Confirming that Junot’s feelings for Napoleon were equally fraternal, Laure Junot writes that her future husband was “devoted to General Bonaparte with a fraternal tenderness” (11: 131). Here one can see a direct link between Revolutionary fraternity and the early evolution of Napoleonic friendship.

Soon after his imprisonment, Napoleon was released and exonerated, but with little money and no desire to take on a new military post in Brittany, he returned to Paris where, as Laure Junot explains, he lived with his comrade Junot and depended on his friend’s emotional and financial support: “At that time, having returned to Paris, Bonaparte was without resources ... [and] truly miserable. Junot, who often spoke to me about those six months that they spent in Paris ... gave him all that he received from his family” (1: 187–88). The 1794 letter from Toulon thus initiates a half-year period in the lives of the twenty-five-year-old Bonaparte and twenty-three-year-old Junot when, like Rastignac and Bianchon in Balzac’s *Old Goriot* (1834–35), these ambitious young men relied on each other during their impecunious days in Paris. Describing how Junot “loved Bonaparte as one loves at the age” (1: 188), Laure Junot implies that the young Jean-Andoche developed an adolescent crush on Napoleon, as the two young men grew in intimacy.

In one particularly florid passage, Laure Junot describes Bonaparte and Junot’s evening stroll in a Parisian park: “One evening, they took a stroll in the *Jardin des Plantes*. These solitary promenades always had a great charm for Bonaparte; he felt more at ease, confident, and closer to divinity, for which a true friend, he said, was the faithful image” (1: 188). Here again, Laure Junot speaks of an idealized adolescent friendship in which the companion is not only charmed but venerated. Amid the luxuriant foliage and perfumed air of the Jardin des Plantes, Junot’s and

Napoleon's friendship is described in terms that echo the pastoral romances of Abbé Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731) and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788) as well as the Romantic landscapes of Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801) and *René* (1802):

They plunged into the shadows where they found the air heavy with the perfume of thousands of blooming rosebushes that filled the flowerbeds. The air was soft and cool; the two friends walked slowly, silently holding each other by the arm, squeezing each other's arms from time to time, as if to consult the heart and respond. At this moment, the two friends were much closer ... [D]uring this beautiful evening, swimming in this soft, brilliant, perfumed atmosphere, surrounded by lush greenery, garlands, thickets, and the most wonderful, fragrant flowers, speaking to one another, heart to heart, they were then much closer the one to the other than they have ever been since. (1: 190)

Juxtaposing the siege of Toulon in 1793 with the idyllic Jardin des Plantes in 1794, Laure Junot reproduces the literary tropes of pastoral romance and casts a softer light on Napoleon's and Junot's otherwise violent military youth. Having won Napoleon's favor on the battlefield, Junot now shares with him the arm-in-arm and heart-to-heart intimacies of silent evening walks. Their stroll amid the shadows and intoxicating flowers of this Parisian park recalls the cruising habits of eighteenth-century lovers in the Tuileries and prefigures the floral flamboyance of later nineteenth-century dandies and flâneurs.³⁰

This early adolescent intimacy between Napoleon and Junot has fueled speculation on the nature of their relationship.³¹ Comparing Napoleon's friendships with Generals Junot and Duroc, Laure Junot tactfully observed many years later that it was difficult to assess the nature of these friendships without offending their masculinity: "These are the very profound and abstract mysteries of the human heart. It is difficult to explain them without first wounding a man's dignity" (11: 131). In relegating Napoleon's military relationships to the realm of the mysterious, Laure Junot defines Napoleonic friendship—long before "the love that dare not speak its name" was articulated by Lord Alfred Douglas in 1894 and invoked at Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895—as an enigmatic and unspeakable love incapable of being articulated without shaming a soldier's manhood.³² Amid such ambiguity, it is unclear if such "mysteries" encompass both the emotional and the erotic. What is clearer is that Napoleon and Junot shared a degree of affection during their youth in Paris that was undeniably intimate.

Following his 1794 promenade with Junot in the Jardin des Plantes, Napoleon distinguished himself again by his victory over the Tuileries rebellion in 1795, an achievement that earned him the renewed trust of the Revolutionary authorities and

the command of the Armée d'Italie. From this position, General Bonaparte launched his successful first Italian Campaign (1796–97) and then his mythic Egyptian Campaign (1798–99). Because of Junot's continued devotion, the rumors about him and Napoleon persisted among French soldiers in both Italy and Egypt. Despite Napoleon's attempts to distance himself from his well-meaning but doting friend, Junot's behavior did nothing to stem the gossip.

Letter from Egypt (1799)

During the Egyptian Campaign, Napoleon promoted Junot to general, an advancement that was both a personal victory for the young twenty-seven-year-old officer and a disappointment since it meant that he would have to leave his position as Napoleon's aide-de-camp and assume his own command. As Laure Junot explains, General Junot was deeply saddened by this separation since "He was leaving the man that he tenderly loved" (2: 2). In her account of General Junot in Egypt, Laure Junot describes the young man's love as a sacred fire, a blind and passionate devotion bordering on worship: "The fire which nourished this love was sacred. Many generals loved the Emperor ... but nothing ever approached this blind, passionate devotion bordering on *séidisme* which several of his officers felt for him, most especially Junot" (2: 1). Here again, Laure Junot's exaggeration reflects both her hyperbolic style and personal bias, but her reference to General Junot's fanatical *séidisme* is consistent with the many rumors associated with Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign.

Derived from the Arabic, the French word *séide* finds its origins in a seventh-century figure named Zayd ibn Haritha, a slave who, having been freed and adopted by Mohammed, was fanatically devoted to the prophet. While a similar character named Zaïd appears in Voltaire's eighteenth-century tragedy *Mohamet* (1741), the word *séide* entered popular usage in France during the nineteenth century to signify a person who was fanatically devoted to Napoleon.³³ Just as Laure Junot refers to her husband as a *séide* or blind follower of Napoleon, so was General Bonaparte widely rumored to have pacified the conquered Egyptians by converting to Islam and becoming a *séide* of Mohammed and Allah. The rumor was not true, but neither were the reports of Napoleon's great success in Egypt. While news of Bonaparte's conquest of the pyramids made him a living legend back in France, the Egyptian Campaign was an unmitigated military disaster. Despite the early French victories at Cairo and Alexandria, Napoleon's army suffered crippling heat, disease, and resistance by the occupying Ottomans, Egyptians, and English, whose naval victory at Aboukir effectively trapped the French in Egypt. In the end, two-thirds of Napoleon's thirty-six thousand soldiers died of combat and disease during the Egyptian Campaign, which Napoleon abruptly abandoned in order to return to France, stage his coup d'état in Paris on November 9, 1799, and assume power as

First Consul.³⁴

Among his disillusioned troops, reports of Napoleon's Islamic *séidisme* gave way to rumors of his military sadism. While Antoine Gros's *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa* (1804) portrays Napoleon as a kind of Christ figure saving the sick and the dying, rumors spread among Napoleon's men that he had ordered his own wounded to be poisoned in order to avoid the tactical burden of evacuating them. This culture of rumor during the Egyptian Campaign explains, at least in part, the kind of resentful gossip that arose among Napoleon's soldiers about Bonaparte's relationship with Junot. While Laure Junot speaks of her husband as a devoted *séide* or loyal disciple of Napoleon, others may have used *séidisme* as an orientalist code word for Junot's curiously passionate and emotional attachment to Bonaparte. The growing hostility of the French army toward General Bonaparte also explains why Junot's continued acts of Napoleonic *séidisme* stood out as particularly suspect, especially when Junot's devotion took on the appearance of chivalric romance.

Despite Bonaparte's strict prohibition of dueling among his officers, Junot challenged Brigadier General Pierre Lanusse to a duel on the banks of the Nile in 1799 because of Lanusse's open disapproval of Napoleon's leadership. Addressing his opponent, Junot reportedly said, "We must fight; it is essential that only one of us survive. I hate you because you hate the man that I love and admire as much as God, if not more" (Junot 2: 5). The very nature of Junot's challenge—as a gentlemen's duel—seems awkwardly inappropriate amid a ferocious military campaign, especially one in which many of Bonaparte's officers were openly and justifiably critical of his tactical decisions, political motives, and questionable leadership.³⁵ While Junot's loyalty to Bonaparte can be interpreted as a mark of military duty, Junot's language oddly recalls the literary tropes of both the medieval chivalric *roman* and the eighteenth-century epistolary novel. Like Lancelot defending the honor of Guenièvre in Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier à la charrette* (c. 1170) or the young Chevalier Danceny dueling Valmont to defend the honor of Cécile de Volanges in Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782), Junot commits himself to defending the honor of the "man that [he] love[s]" and admires as a god in what awkwardly smacks as either obsequious flattery or gross infatuation.

Both Lanusse and Junot were seriously wounded with saber lacerations to the face and chest. Napoleon was reportedly furious, but was said to have later remarked, "My poor Junot ... wounded for me!" (Junot 2: 8). Before his abrupt departure from Egypt and return to France, Napoleon wrote Junot a farewell letter explaining, "I'm leaving Egypt, my dear Junot. You are too far away from my port of departure for me to take you with me ... In whatever place or position that I find myself, be assured that I will give you positive proof of the tender friendship that I vowed to you. Salutations and Friendship, Bonaparte" (Junot 2: 8). Napoleon's Egyptian letter illustrates the distinction between the general, who was publicly furious at the

insubordination of his officers, and the friend, who was privately moved by Junot's loyalty. But the romance wouldn't last. Napoleon would not forget his promise in this Egyptian letter to repay Junot for his loyalty, but Junot's fanatical *séidisme*, which had flowered from adolescent infatuation in Paris to a kind of chivalric devotion in Egypt, would need to be tempered.

Letter from Portugal (1808)

Napoleon's return to France in 1799 and ascent to power as First Consul necessitated a radical change in the public relationship between Bonaparte and Junot. In a word, the rumors had to be squelched. While Bonaparte overlooked the notorious sodomy of his brilliant Second Consul Jean-Jacques Régis de Cambacérès, he needed a future military Commandant of Paris with a wife capable of entertaining his senior officers in the capital, where he could closely monitor their loyalty.³⁶ Junot was his first choice for this post but, as Napoleon told him during another garden stroll at Malmaison in 1799, Junot would have to marry: "I am going to name you Commandant of Paris, just as I told you; but you must marry. This is necessary, not only for the dignity of the position you are going to occupy but ... for your own best interests" (Junot 2: 181). Doubtless as concerned for the dignity of his own position as he was for Junot, Napoleon ordered his future Commandant of Paris to wed. While Napoleon did not mind the public intimacy of their 1794 stroll in the Jardin des Plantes, he used this 1799 walk in the gardens of Malmaison to engineer a radical change in the public perception of their friendship.³⁷ While the early years of their relationship had been marked by military devotion and the confidences of youth, this new period in their lives required Junot to cloak his personal affections in the mantle of public duty.

After his wedding to Laure in 1800, Junot skillfully performed the duties of his position as Commandant of Paris, defending the capital with military order and safeguarding the Consulate with careful diplomacy. In their official capacity, General and Madame Junot hosted dinners and receptions for Napoleon's officers, ministers, and advisors at their residence on the Champs-Élysées. In this way, Napoleon hoped to keep a close eye on his friends and enemies, military and civilian. The birth of Junot's first child in 1801 marked a highpoint in the maturity of Jean-Andoche and Napoleon's new relationship. While Madame Junot was in labor, Commandant Junot sought the support of his old friend:

'My old friend,' said [Napoleon] to his faithful and devoted servant, 'my old friend!' And then he shook [Junot's] hand, an excessively rare caress for Napoleon. 'You have done well to come to me in this moment, and I want to prove it to you' ... Taking the arm of my husband, he continued to converse with him, with a goodness that was so touching, so doubly touching in such a moment, that Junot was moved to tears. No doubt he

loved his general, no doubt he loved this great man who commanded admiration: but in such moments, Napoleon's conduct could conquer the heart ... This day riveted, if one can say so, the bonds that tied Junot to Napoleon. (Junot 4: 111–12)

One might go too far in saying that Napoleon comforted General Junot's labor pains, but the Emperor's affection here as an "old friend"—followed by his offer to become the child's godfather, host the christening at Malmaison, and furnish the young family with a lavish new mansion in Paris—signals Junot's continued favor with Napoleon and the maturity of their friendship.

Like Duroc, Junot was never promoted to marshal, but this may be because Napoleon placed a higher value on their counsel and diplomacy than their military potential. As head of the imperial palace, Duroc occupied a central position in Napoleon's household, with many intimate and diplomatic responsibilities. Similarly, Junot's role as Commandant of Paris placed him in charge of the military defense of the capital and at the center of social life. If Napoleon withheld the marshal's baton from Duroc and Junot, perhaps it was because he valued their proximity and more urgently required their skills in the drawing room than on the battlefield.

Amid the pressures of his new role as First Consul, Napoleon constantly questioned the public loyalties of even his most devoted friends. Citing several 1801 reports by his notoriously ruthless Minister of Police, Joseph Fouché, that Junot's wife and mother-in-law had entertained the First Consul's royalist enemies and pamphleteers, Napoleon confronted Junot: " 'Come on, you are a child. Look here. Shut up, dammit! I am not speaking of you, my most faithful friend. Didn't you prove your attachment when I was in prison? Didn't you want to follow me to prison?' 'I would have followed you to the scaffold!' Junot cried as he slammed his closed fist on the table" (Junot 4: 67). Confronting the Commandant over his wife's disloyalty, Napoleon nonetheless acknowledges Junot's own fidelity and friendship. Resembling a lovers' quarrel, this confrontation's emotional theatrics, ardent language, and focus on fidelity reproduces the tropes of romantic passion and foreshadows even worse fits to come.

As Napoleon's power increased, so did his fear of betrayal and his constant need to reassess the loyalty of his officers and friends. Following his confrontation with Junot in 1801, Napoleon admitted to him, " 'You are a good and loyal boy. You, Lannes, Marmont, Duroc ...' And at each name, Napoleon took a bit of tobacco and walked on, occasionally pausing to smile at a name which reminded him of a faithful servant ... 'Yes, these are good-hearted men who love me; I can count on them' " (Junot 4: 68–69). Here, Napoleon confirms his faith in Lannes, Duroc, and Junot and addresses Junot with the familiar *tu* and *toi* which, as Laure Junot explains, was a form of address that he reserved only for his closest friends: "I have never heard

anyone use the familiar *tu* with the First Consul. With [Junot], it's different ... Junot was addressed by him in this way until the last year of his life ... [I]n private, [Napoleon] always maintained this same cordial rapport with Generals Lannes, Junot, Berthier, Duroc, and two or three others" (4: 77). Echoing other witnesses and memoirists of the Consulate, Laure Junot insists on the loyalty, intimacy, and informality of Napoleon's small group of friends. But as Napoleon moved closer toward empire, his confidence in even his most loyal generals began to wane.

In 1802, when the Republican Junot showed only mild support for the plebiscite to elect Napoleon as "Consul for Life," Napoleon was so furious that Junot became ill, languishing for days until the First Consul forgave him at his bedside. Napoleon's temper flared again in 1803 when, despite growing tensions between England and France, Junot hesitated to carry out Napoleon's order to arrest all English subjects in Paris. Knowing that this was a rash and politically unwise decision, Junot advised Napoleon against it and was berated for disloyalty:

Again! he cried, How's this? The scene of the other day repeats itself? You and Lannes, you give yourselves too much license. Only the sedate Duroc does not come and preach to me. By God, gentlemen, I will show you another side of me. Lannes has already realized this, and I don't think he much enjoys eating oranges in Lisbon. As for you, Junot, do not count so much on my friendship. The day I doubt yours, mine will be destroyed. (Junot 4: 407)

This unsparing tirade stands in contrast to Napoleon's otherwise intimate friendship with Junot. Laure Junot reports that Napoleon later admitted how much he admired Junot's honesty and courage in standing up to him and how he regretted his own uncontrollable anger (Junot 4: 409). But on that day in 1803, Napoleon's harsh words marked the beginning of Junot's fall from favor.

Following Napoleon's coronation as Emperor in 1804, Junot was relieved of his post as Commandant of Paris and appointed Ambassador to Portugal in 1805. Some have attributed this demotion to Napoleon's mounting irritation with Laure Junot (who apparently refused, like her widowed mother had done years before, to become Napoleon's lover), while others cite Junot's apparent affair with Napoleon's sister, Caroline Bonaparte Murat (for whom Napoleon had greater ambitions, as the future Queen of Naples). Rather than speculate—as the work of René Girard and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick makes possible—on the triangular (homo)erotics between Andoche, Napoleon, and Laure/Caroline, it would perhaps be more prudent to say that the persistent intimacies of Napoleon and Junot's personal relationship continued to threaten their public reputation.³⁸ While Junot's new diplomatic post in Portugal may have seemed an honor, it amounted to virtual exile, far from the elegance of Paris and the intimate presence of Napoleon. Junot would shortly return

from Lisbon to take up his place again at Napoleon's side during the Austerlitz Campaign in 1805, but his initial exile to Portugal presaged a grim Iberian future.

In 1807, Napoleon again ordered Junot to Lisbon as the head of an invading army whose objective was to occupy Portugal as a staging ground for the future conquest of Spain. But the Iberian Campaign (1807–14) would soon be considered, along with the later Russian Campaign (1812–13) and the battle of Waterloo (1815), as one of Napoleon's greatest disasters. Bugged down by fierce guerilla fighting, ferocious civilian resistance, and the superior naval power of the English, the protracted campaign in Portugal and Spain soon became a military quagmire. Despite Junot's successful invasion of Lisbon in 1807, which earned him the title of Duc d'Abrantès, his disastrous capitulation to the English at Vimeiro in 1808 further tarnished his military reputation and favor with Napoleon. Amid the debacle of his military blunders in Portugal, Junot wrote desperate letters to the Emperor, asking to be reappointed Napoleon's aide-de-camp, expressing his continued love and devotion, and begging Napoleon to remember the affections of their youth. Although these letters have not survived, Napoleon's documented descriptions of the letters characterize them as material for epistolary melodrama.

In Paris in 1808, Napoleon confronted Laure Junot, now the Duchesse d'Abrantès, with General Junot's letters: “ ‘Look here, Madame, what your husband writes to me!’ said the Emperor, ‘Read this and tell me if he sends *you* such letters.’ I read these letters, and this caused me some pain: my husband sent me affectionate missives, but never in the tone of a lover; here were letters that resembled those between Julie and Saint-Preux, or those of the Portuguese nun” (Junot 8: 45). These comparisons of General Junot's letters with Guilleragues's *Portuguese Letters* (1669) and Rousseau's *Julie or the New Héloïse* (1761) imply that Junot's devotion to the Emperor burned like that of a lover in a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century epistolary novel.³⁹ Having written his own such novel, *Clisson et Eugénie* (1795), Napoleon was well aware of the tropes associated with such literary passions. After showing Madame Junot her husband's letters, Napoleon declared “Well then! It's like a novel!” (Junot 8: 49). Junot is thus compared to Guilleragues's lovesick letter-writing nun, languishing in faraway Portugal for his French military lover Napoleon. Hurt and embarrassed that her own letters from Junot lack such ardor, Laure Junot is forced to acknowledge that Napoleon is a rival for her husband's affections.

As the confrontation between the Emperor and the Duchess continues, Napoleon wonders aloud—like an incredulous lover—if General Junot's passionate words and flattery represent mere self-interest: “In admitting that Junot loves me more than anything in the world ... [he demonstrates] that he does not love me more than his own ambition” (Junot 8: 48). While venting his doubts over Junot's love, Napoleon underscores the fact that Junot loves him even more than his own wife. Devastated, Laure Junot is forced to admit publicly that Junot loves Napoleon even more than

herself and their children: “He loves you, Sire, more than all the honors that you can give, more than your crown, more than me perhaps, for it was pride that made me say the contrary just now, perhaps even more than his children!” (8: 48–49). While Laure Junot may exaggerate her husband’s affections for Napoleon in order to safeguard her own favor and position, this is nonetheless a humiliating admission. According to this account, General Junot’s Portuguese letter exemplifies the total loyalty required of Napoleon’s officers and friends. But the degree to which Junot’s letter expresses his continued affection for Napoleon seems to have been a source of embarrassment for both his wife and the Emperor.

Letter from Russia (1812)

Even as he naively hoped to please his beloved Napoleon, Junot’s Portuguese debacle (1808) and later failures in Spain (1810–11) were a prelude to his disappointing performance during the disastrous Russian Campaign (1812–13). Junot was not, of course, entirely responsible for Napoleon’s enormous losses at Borodino, the Russians’ burning of Moscow, the early onset of the merciless Russian winter, and the devastating loss of over half a million soldiers through combat, capture, desertion, and exposure.⁴⁰ Yet in December 1812, during the Grande Armée’s calamitous retreat from Moscow, Napoleon publicly denounced Junot in the *Bulletins of the Grande Armée*, which reported back to all of France how Junot’s incompetence had cost Napoleon a decisive battle at Smolensk.⁴¹ Echoing the thirteenth and fourteenth bulletins, which claimed that Junot had failed to “intercept the main route to Moscow and block the [Russian] retreat” (61),

Napoleon later declared that “Junot, in the Russian Campaign ... greatly displeased me; one no longer recognized him; he made vital mistakes that cost us dearly.”⁴² Having never received the order to attack, Junot argued that his hesitation at Smolensk was due to a gross lack of communication: “The bulletin, which speaks of the army’s march on Smolensk, says that I lost my way and made a bad tactical move. Sire, I did not at all lose my way... I NEVER RECEIVED ANY ORDER TO ATTACK ” (Junot 10: 316). Junot’s emphasis in this letter demonstrates his rage, shame, and pain at such an unwarranted and public denunciation.

Yet again, Junot was confronted with the irreconcilable conflict between his public and private relationships with Napoleon. According to Laure Junot, Jean-Andoche passionately loved the man, not the emperor, and could never reconcile Napoleon’s inability to love him as the young Bonaparte did when they first met in Toulon: “Now let me explain the sadness and pain which afflicted Junot on learning that Napoleon was no longer his General Bonaparte of Toulon. Perhaps the affair simply followed a natural decline. But Junot ... did not see it this way. He wanted reciprocity, which he craved even more as his own affectionate fantasies increased ... He loved the MAN, not the emperor” (10: 312–13). Junot seems to have forgotten

that Napoleon was first attracted to him in 1793 Toulon because of his courage and skill in combat. By disappointing Napoleon with his later military blunders in Portugal and Russia, Junot sabotaged the original terms of their seduction. As all of his intimate friendships attest, Napoleon was attracted to men of superior military ability. Once Junot began to falter on the battlefield, the seduction for Napoleon was over. While Junot loved the man, Napoleon only loved the soldier.

Whether Junot's lapse in military judgment at Smolensk was the fault of error, miscommunication, or the cumulative effects of his repeated head injuries and cerebral trauma, Napoleon's public denunciation of his old friend in the *Bulletins of the Grande Armée* helped the Emperor to cover his own embarrassing tracks in the Russian snow.⁴³ In a repeat performance of his early Egyptian withdrawal in 1799, Napoleon abandoned his decimated army in Russia in December 1812 on the pretext that he needed to return to Paris and reestablish his authority at home, following the attempted October military coup of General Claude-François de Malet. On the eve of his return to a politically destabilized France, Napoleon thus needed expedient scapegoats like Junot to explain the overwhelming losses of his soldiers and the colossal failure of the Russian Campaign. In deserting the Grande Armée in Russia, Napoleon also abandoned almost twenty years of friendship with Junot, along with the hundreds of thousands of frozen cadavers that littered the snow-covered route of the army's long and arduous retreat.

While still in Russia, Junot responded to this public denunciation with a late 1812 letter to Napoleon, arguing that he was hurt more by this personal betrayal than by the public humiliation it created: "Two *Bulletins* condemned me, Sire, and I did not complain. Public opinion is not what is dearest to me; your Majesty's opinion is the thing which I value more than life itself" (Junot 10: 315). For Napoleon, the Russian defeat in 1812–13 marked the beginning of the disastrous road leading to his first abdication and exile to Elba in 1814, and to his later defeat at Waterloo and final exile to St. Helena in 1815. For Junot, the Russian debacle represented both the public humiliation of the *Bulletins* and the personal loss of his cherished friendship with Bonaparte. Convinced that "Napoleon no longer loves me" (Junot 10: 315), General Junot returned to France disillusioned and disconsolate.

Letter from Illyria (1813)

In 1813, Napoleon relieved the forty-two-year-old general from active military duty and dispatched him to eastern Europe, to serve as the French Governor of the Illyrian Provinces, a group of Balkan territories on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea, which had been ceded by the Austrians following the French victory at Wagram in 1809 and incorporated into the French Empire.⁴⁴ Far from Paris, the company of Napoleon, and the battlefields of the ensuing Saxon Campaign in 1813, this new diplomatic assignment—like Junot's ambassadorship to Portugal in 1805—

amounted to another virtual exile. Unwilling to join her husband in this unfashionable and distant outpost of the French Empire, far from the salons of Paris and her new young lover Maurice de Balincourt, Laure Junot remained in France along with the Junots' four children.⁴⁵

After a month of languishing alone in this remote colony, where the degenerative effects of his head wounds gave way to increasingly erratic behavior, Governor Junot hosted a lavish ball for four hundred invited guests, drawn from the imperial nobility, his ambassadorial staff, and numerous local dignitaries. Flanked by the city of Trieste in the Italian north and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) in the Croatian south, the capital of the Illyrian Provinces was located in the Slovenian city of Ljubljana. Here, Junot's French imperial administration occupied a sumptuous Governor's palace, whose grand ballroom was furnished with glittering chandeliers and an elegant marble staircase. As the former Commandant of Paris and Ambassador to Portugal, Governor Junot was an experienced diplomat and host who was accustomed, on formal occasions, to wearing the many distinguished ribbons and medals that befit his rank as a French imperial ambassador, commandant, governor, and duke, as well as a decorated general of the Grande Armée and officer of the Légion d'Honneur. Not one to question protocol, Junot diplomatically and dutifully adorned himself with all of the many colorful decorations that attested not only to his own personal accomplishments but to the glory of the French Empire. His head held high, his sword at his side, and his epaulettes squared gallantly on his shoulders, Junot entered the Illyrian ballroom that evening in 1813 wearing all of—and nothing but—his many medals which, Junot's scandalized guests immediately realized, were not the only things dangling from the general's bare and battle-ravaged body.⁴⁶

While one could blame Junot's naked diplomacy on his progressive dementia, his shocking entrance can also be seen as a kind of buff rebuff to Napoleon. After a lifetime fighting for Bonaparte, watching shrapnel rip into young men's bodies, leading thousands of soldiers to their deaths, and suffering twenty-seven wounds of his own, Junot offered his own ravaged body as a hideous and spectacular product of Napoleon's violence.⁴⁷ Like the Roman general Coriolanus exposing his battle-wounds to the citizens of Rome, Junot presented his scars alongside his medals, exposing these marks of mutilation to his Illyrian guests as his most genuine decorations, painfully acquired in the service of Napoleon's voracious and insatiable ambition. In this ballsy ballroom display, Junot presented his disfigured body as bitter proof of his lifelong devotion to a man whom he once loved, for whom he frequently risked his life, and who in the end possessed neither the gratitude nor compassion to promote him to marshal, provide for his convalescence, or offer a comfortable retirement. In many ways, the scarred body that astonished the Illyrian ladies that evening was the body of a battered lover who had sacrificed his youth and vitality to a violent and abusive man. In addition to embodying his private suffering,

Junot's battle wounds also symbolized the public ravages of Napoleonic warfare on a grand scale. Like a worn map of French Imperial Europe, this body's multiple scarlines represented the violent rewriting of national borders. And Junot's cerebral trauma symbolized the degenerative effects of rampant Napoleonic madness.

Like the Emperor, Las Cases attributed Junot's behavior in Illyria to "complete insanity" and the "signs of dementia which only worsened on his return to France, during which, having mutilated himself in a horrible way, he soon perished, the victim of excesses which had altered his sanity and his reason" (361–62). Junot's final letter to Napoleon in 1813, however, shows no signs of insanity or dementia.⁴⁸ Rather, this letter seethes with the fatigue and regret of a man who dedicated his life to a thankless emperor and an ungrateful friend:

This eternal war that we must fight for you, I WANT NO MORE OF IT! I WANT PEACE! I want finally to repose my tired head, my sore limbs ... to enjoy that which I earned ... with my BLOOD! The blood of an honest man, of a good Frenchman, of a true patriot. I therefore ask, at last, for that tranquility that I earned through twenty-two years of effective service and seventeen wounds from which my blood has flowed for my country, and for your glory. (Junot 11: 207)

Echoing Marshal Lannes's alleged deathbed dissent, Junot reproaches Napoleon for his never-ending wars. Evoking the naked honesty of the Illyrian ballroom, Junot once again offers his ravaged body—his "tired head," "sore limbs," and spilled "blood"—as physical proof of his lifelong loyalty and as shameful signs of Napoleonic abuse. In these last words to his friend, Junot juxtaposes his lifetime commitment to Napoleon with his final disillusionment, rage, and regret, feelings that run even deeper than the rust of shrapnel on the brain.

That Junot was so cruelly abandoned by a man—if we are to believe Laure Junot—whom he loved even more than his wife and children, leaves little question as to why, on being relieved of his Illyrian post in 1813, Junot returned to his family home in Burgundy, threw himself from a window, and subsequently died of his wounds. More than what Las Cases refers to euphemistically as self-mutilation, Junot seems to have taken his own life in an act of suicidal despair. On hearing news of Junot's death, Napoleon did not weep.⁴⁹ Instead, he ordered General Savary, Fouché's successor as Minister of Police, to forcibly search Junot's home and to seize and burn his letters. Thus ended what for Napoleon must have been an embarrassing epistolary romance, but what for Junot had been his life's best purpose.



AS THREE OF the most visible figures of Napoleonic friendship— whose lives and deaths were widely celebrated and scrutinized in army bulletins, imperial

memoirs, and around bivouac camp fires—Lannes, Duroc, and Junot stood out as models of both Napoleon’s affection for his soldiers and their fanatical devotion to him. In turn, these models of Napoleonic friendship at the top influenced social relations among soldiers in the lower ranks. While Bonaparte and his senior officers emerged from an older generation of soldiers who had joined the Royal Army during the Ancien Régime and came of age in the armies of the Revolution, thousands of Napoleon’s junior officers and foot soldiers hailed from a younger generation of conscripts who first entered Napoleon’s armies during the Consulate and the Empire. In their fierce devotion to the Emperor and their belief in his devotion to them, this new generation perpetuated the terms of Revolutionary fraternity and Napoleonic friendship exemplified by Lannes, Duroc, and Junot.

Napoleon directly expressed his affection for this new generation through the many field promotions he made to both officers and soldiers who exemplified themselves in battle. More than mere appreciation or praise, these field promotions were often marked by moments of genuine affection between the Emperor and his troops, who later spoke fondly of Napoleon’s penchant for pinching the ears of well-regarded soldiers or his habit of pinning his own cross of the Légion d’Honneur onto a well-deserving warrior. Even though many of these promotions were arbitrarily distributed, this practice strengthened morale and wildly increased Napoleon’s popularity among his men. In his memoirs, General Jean-Pierre Pouget cites a characteristic episode in which a soldier, aptly named Bayonette, is honored by the Emperor on an Austrian battlefield in 1809: “You are the bravest soldier of the regiment. I name you a knight of the Légion d’Honneur, and I add to the title a pension of fifteen hundred francs that you can leave to your children.”⁵⁰ Despite the seemingly haphazard distribution of these promotions, they represented an extraordinary chance for many soldiers, conscripted from the abject poverty and limited opportunities of the peasantry, to become officers and ennobled knights and thus obtain financial security for themselves and their families.⁵¹

This interest in the welfare of his soldiers had led Napoleon to create the Légion d’Honneur in 1802 and its system of military pensions for veterans, widows, and orphans. In his memoirs, Captain Elzéar Blaze explains that, for a soldier of the Grande Armée, advancement was everything: “The word *advancement* lodges in the military brain from the moment one enters into service. It does not leave until the day one retires... This idea preoccupied everyone in the army, from the drummer boy to the marshal.”⁵² Since Napoleon had come of age in the meritocratic armies of the Revolution and had rapidly gained promotion in this same way, he understood the fierce thirst for advancement and encouraged this ambition among the soldiers of his Grande Armée. Napoleon thus demonstrated a kind of meritocratic affection for his soldiers through an interest in their promotion and welfare.

Many soldiers thus believed that Napoleon loved them as a fellow soldier:

awarding them as he had been awarded, eating scavenged potatoes as they did, fighting alongside them in the mud and misery of combat. Captain Blaze argues that Napoleon's willingness to share both their suffering and rewards was what distinguished the Grande Armée from the old Royal Army of the Ancien Régime: "One often saw the Emperor detach his own Légion d'Honneur cross and place it on the chest of a brave soldier. Louis XIV would have first asked if the brave man was noble; Napoleon asked if this noble man was brave ... While Napoleon would have embraced the sergeant, Louis XIV would have turned his back on him. This is the clearly divided nuance that separated the two periods."⁵³ In the eyes of his soldiers, Napoleon was—unlike an indifferent king who remained at court while his men died in combat—a fellow soldier who loved them with the kind of meritocratic respect of one warrior for another.

Recalling Junot's fanatical devotion to Napoleon, there are reports of soldiers who, at least in the beginning of their service, spoke of their great love and dedication to the Emperor. While some sources exaggerate the magnitude of Napoleonic devotion, there are cases where Junot's fanaticism seems neither extreme nor unique.⁵⁴ On the return of Napoleon from Elba in 1815, an enthusiastic young officer named Lieutenant Anciaume writes, "Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor! I am at the height of happiness. I am crazy with love and joy. I have found again my Emperor."⁵⁵ Even more extraordinary is the reaction of Jean Bordenave who passionately writes to the Minister of War, "My heart was as empty as a lover who has lost the object of his passion; all that he sees, all that he hears renews his pain ... But now I am like a lover who has rediscovered his desire; I offer my body to support His Majesty. Long live the Emperor!"⁵⁶ Bordenave's strikingly erotic discourse dramatizes the passionate and fanatical devotion of many soldiers to Napoleon.

If Lannes, Duroc, and Junot served as ideal models of Napoleon's love for his men and their love for him, Lannes's and Junot's final disillusionment with the Emperor also found ample voice in the lower ranks of the Grande Armée. Napoleon's desertion of his armies in 1799 Egypt and 1812 Russia led to widespread disappointment that he did not in fact love his men and to increasing reports that they did not love him. Oaths of loyalty to the Emperor soon gave way to talk of the ogre, who laid waste to entire generations of men in order to feed his insatiable ambition. In his memoirs, General Alfred-Armand-Robert de Saint-Chamans reports that in the aftermath of the bloody massacre at Eylau in 1807, the once loyal cries of Napoleon's troops had turned to mutinous calls for bread and an end to the Emperor's never-ending wars: "In the middle of cries of *Long live the Emperor!* I heard many soldiers cry *Long live Peace!* and others *Long live Peace and France!* [and] still others cried *Bread and Peace!*"⁵⁷

It was perhaps in this spirit of misery and complaint that the term *grognard* or

“grumbler” came to signify the Napoleonic foot soldier or grunt. These cries for bread and peace soon became more vehement, as Napoleon’s *grogards* grew tired of the Emperor’s empty promises. In his memoirs, Captain Jérôme-Roland Laugier complains that “[w]e no longer fight for peace, as [Napoleon] had promised, but for [his] excessive ambition, which used to impress a great number of superior officers and soldiers, but which the majority of men no longer support.”⁵⁸ As Laugier makes clear, the army’s growing disillusionment with Napoleon marked the difference between the glorious beginning of the Napoleonic Wars and the onset of the disastrous end.

In the memoirs of those who survived, the junior officers and foot soldiers of the Grande Armée express how fraternity and friendship took on a new and more intimate significance on the battlefield. As Captain Blaze explains, “This fraternity of peril had strengthened friendship for some and created new friendships for others. Friendship that forms on the field of battle is one of lasting duration” (43). For many, the hardships of life in Napoleon’s armies would necessitate such friendships, not only for communal comfort but also for mutual survival. As General Marcellin de Marbot, Captain Jean-Roch Coignet, and Sergeant François Bourgogne attest in their military memoirs, their survival during the disastrous Russian Campaign in 1812–13 depended on the help of fellow soldiers and the affectionate care of Napoleonic friendship in the ranks.



Napoleonic Friendship in the Ranks

General Marbot, Captain Coignet, Sergeant Bourgogne

His beard was caked with ice and his hands had gone numb. During the disastrous retreat of Napoleon's armies from Russia in the winter of 1812, a weary French soldier trudged across a frozen bridge in the blinding snow. Wrapped in the great white coat of the Imperial Guard, the old grenadier had long ago abandoned his exhausted horse to continue alone on foot. As conditions grew worse, thousands of Napoleon's men faced the more harrowing decision whether or not to abandon their debilitated comrades, weakened by exposure, hunger, and fatigue. During this frozen death march, many ravaged soldiers focused all remaining energy on their individual survival as they stumbled on in the snow and their eyes glazed over with indifference. Thus it was extraordinary when this grenadier snapped out of his trance on the bridge and heard a young sergeant's call for help. Attempting to cross the river on thin ice, Sergeant François Bourgogne cried out: " 'Comrade, I beg you ... in giving me a hand, you will save my life!' 'How can I give you a hand?' he said, 'I have none left! ... But,' he continued, 'if you can grab the hem of my coat, I will try to pull you up!'"¹

As Sergeant Bourgogne slipped into the icy river, the only one who helped was a man with no hands. Having lost his frostbitten fingers to the snow, this man lent a hand when he had no hand to lend. Saved by "the old grenadier," Bourgogne gratefully followed his orders "to huddle close," share the heat of their bodies, and march on together, "so as not to get separated" (315). While some survived the Russian retreat on the premise of *every man for himself*, many found that their lives depended on the commitment of *every self for his man*. More than mere ideals, military fraternity and friendship became essential strategies for survival in the harsh conditions of the Napoleonic Wars.

Russian Retreat (1812–13)

Over half a million men in Napoleon's Grande Armée died from battle wounds, starvation, exhaustion, and hypothermia during the Russian retreat between 1812 and 1813. Although Napoleon succeeded in taking Moscow, the Russians' scorched-earth tactics left the city uninhabitable and Napoleon's men exposed to a long winter

without sufficient food, shelter, or resources. Forced to retreat to winter quarters in occupied Poland, Napoleon's armies faced an eight-week march of almost one thousand kilometers as the early Russian winter began in late October. With few provisions and limited shelter along this barren stretch of burned-out towns and farms, the soldiers of this massive army were exposed to freezing temperatures and constant attack by Russian imperial forces and Cossack militia. Thousands of exhausted soldiers who stopped to rest simply fell asleep in the snow and froze to death. Thousands more drowned in icy waters during the perilous crossing of the Berezina River on fragile pontoon bridges hastily constructed by Napoleon's engineers. Frozen cadavers littered the route, buried under the snow in silent bundles amid the rest of the army's debris, including thousands of frozen horse cadavers, hastily killed and eaten raw or gutted for their blood, a desperate source of nourishment that hung on the frozen beards of Napoleon's men and made them look like savage animals gone mad.

In terms of human loss, the Russian Campaign was a titanic disaster. According to Alan Schom, Napoleon's invading forces were the "largest army ever assembled by any one force in European history," numbering over 600,000 men when they crossed the Niemen River into Russia in June 1812.² When the survivors of the Grande Armée crossed the frozen Niemen again during the December retreat, they numbered only 43,000 weak and ravaged men.³ For Czar Alexander I, his army, and his people, the early onset of the Russian winter and the suffering of Napoleon's armies must have seemed like divine justice. Yet the Russians suffered almost half a million dead and wounded of their own, as well as the humiliation of foreign invasion and the devastation of their burned capital, towns, and homes.⁴

As discipline broke down among Napoleon's men, many survivors resorted to the desperate tactic of *saue-qui-peut* or every-man-for-himself. Contrary to the ideals of Revolutionary fraternity and Napoleonic friendship, there were numerous reports of soldiers killing one another for a frozen potato, men stealing boots off the bodies of the wounded, and starving soldiers resorting to cannibalism. Even those who did not commit such atrocities fell victim to a kind of zombie-like complacency. Faced with the terrible decision to assist a comrade, many hid their meager rations, kept walking, or simply looked away. Yet amid these desperate acts of self-preservation, there were many stories of self-sacrifice and affectionate care between men, like the lifesaving friendship of the handless grenadier in the *Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne*.

Napoleonic Memoirs

Among the more than fifteen hundred titles listed in Jean Tulard's critical bibliography of Napoleonic memoirs are such celebrated volumes as Emmanuel de Las Cases's *Memorial of Saint Helena* (1823) and Laure Junot's *Memoirs of the*

Duchesse d'Abrantès (1831–35), as well as hundreds of military memoirs by the Emperor's secretaries, valets, and officers.⁵ In response to this astonishing literary output, several nineteenth-century Parisian publishing houses, such as Plon and Calmann-Lévy—and to a lesser extent Hachette, Ollendorf, and Firmin Didot—specialized in the publication of military memoirs. Far from marginal, Napoleonic memoirs attracted a wide readership and appealed both to high and low, scholarly and popular taste. As Tulard reminds us, Las Cases's bestselling *Memorial of Saint Helena* was “probably the greatest popular literary success of the nineteenth century.”⁶

As a genre, the Napoleonic military memoir confounds the lines between fact and fiction, anecdote and testimony, history and literature. This tension between who and what can be believed presents a number of challenges to historians and literary scholars. Combat mortality eliminated some of the most important potential memoirists, such as Lannes, Duroc, and Junot. Authenticity is often difficult to establish, especially for posthumously published memoirs. The memories of many writers were often inclined to distortion, embellishment, and exaggeration. History and regime changes altered the political positions, motivations, and ambitions of many memoirists. And quality is uneven, since many central witnesses were unskilled writers whose military memoirs often favor tedious descriptions of battle tactics over the kind of narrative structure, character development, and descriptive detail associated with vibrant literary texts.

In *The Autobiographical Pact* (1975), Philippe Lejeune argues that autobiography is fraught with deviation, exaggeration, and overt deceit.⁷ Even those memoirs that set out to honor what Lejeune calls the “autobiographical pact” (a tacit understanding that the identity of the author, narrator, and protagonist refers to the name on the book's cover) and the corollary “referential pact” (the implicit understanding that autobiography is subject to verification) are still susceptible to error and distortion, the “inevitable lapses in memory, errors, involuntary formations,” or “interpretations consubstantial with the elaboration of personal myth” (36, 40).⁸ Yet, as Lejeune and Tulard have both argued, these distortions are autobiographical categories in themselves, in which even a lie can be rich in meaning.⁹

It is perhaps this slippage between fact and fiction that makes these texts so appealing. In blurring the boundaries between historical account and literary creation, the Napoleonic military memoir shares much in common with Napoleonic military fiction, which developed simultaneously in a kind of symbiotic relationship of mutual production. Just as Balzac advised Laure Junot on the publication of her memoirs, Balzac consulted with military veterans like Commandant Nicolas-Louis Périolas while writing such Napoleonic fiction as *Adieu* (1830), *Colonel Chabert* (1832), and *The Country Doctor* (1833).¹⁰ Like the debris scattered along the

Russian retreat, the story of Napoleonic friendship lies somewhere on the road between history and literature, memory and invention, memoir and fiction.

Marbot, Coignet, Bourgogne

Like numerous military memoirs of the First Empire, the memoirs of General Marcellin de Marbot, Captain Jean-Roch Coignet, and Sergeant François Bourgogne bear witness to many selfless acts of Napoleonic friendship, especially among lower-ranking officers and soldiers during the Russian retreat. Despite their later promotions, Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne represent a wide cross-section of men who rose from the ranks to become officers and *sous-officiers*. While Marbot hailed from a noted military family and served as Marshal Lannes's aide-de-camp, Coignet was an illiterate runaway who was conscripted into the army, and Bourgogne joined Napoleon's Grande Armée as late as 1805, serving in Poland and Austria, before marching to Spain and Portugal, and then all the way to Russia. In spite of their diverse origins, education, and rank, these three men shared an uncommon talent for colorful and nuanced prose, a rarity for any military memoir, especially for one written by a simple foot soldier like Bourgogne or by a junior officer like Coignet who did not learn to read and write until the age of thirty-two.

In their gripping accounts of their initial military training, early combat experience, and the disastrous Russian Campaign, Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne describe with great warmth, occasional humor, and retrospective melancholy the friendships they made during their service in the Napoleonic Wars. As both literary and historical documents, their memoirs provide compelling proof of Napoleonic friendship among officers and soldiers in the ranks. More specifically, these memoirs distinguish between four different kinds of military friendship among soldiers of the Grande Armée: the nighttime *camarade de lit* (bedfellow), the trusted *intime ami* (buddy), the comforting *pays* (hometown friend), and the admired *mentor* (mentor).¹¹ In describing these bedfellows, buddies, hometown friends, and mentors, Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne underscore the great range of intimate relationships among Napoleon's soldiers, identify recurring tropes of military intimacy, and provide a broader vocabulary for Napoleonic friendship. Their accounts of comrade support, especially during the Russian Campaign, suggest that military friendship is a vital skill for combat survival. And in confounding the distinctions between historical account and literary narrative, the memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne create a bridge between the Napoleonic memoir and the concomitant Napoleonic fiction of Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac.

General Marbot

The son of a distinguished military father, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcellin de Marbot served as Marshal Lannes's aide-de-camp and later became a general in the Grande Armée. His early training and career, however, began among rough

Napoleonic *grogards* with whom he forged several lifelong and lifesaving friendships. From a young age, Marbot knew the hardships of life in the barracks and garrison. At the insistence of his father General Antoine Marbot, who did not want his sons to have special privileges, the young Marcellin, his older brother Adolphe, and his younger brother Félix all took part in rigorous military training under the stern instruction of seasoned *sous-officiers* and in the company of less privileged conscripts. Like the men with whom he trained, Marcellin de Marbot was a member of a younger crop of soldiers who entered Napoleon's armies during the Consulate and Empire. He thus belonged to a different class of officer than Napoleon's senior generals and marshals, many of whom had joined the military during the Ancien Régime and come to power in the armies of the Revolution. Despite his privileged military family, his later promotion to general, and his relationship with Marshal Lannes, Marcellin de Marbot represents a younger generation of junior officers who spoke with as much affection for their drill-sergeant mentors as for their senior commanding officers.

At the opening of the Revolution, Marbot's father was a retired officer of the Royal Guard and a wealthy provincial gentleman in central France. Despite his nobility and former service to Louis XVI, Antoine Marbot embraced the Revolution, freed his peasants from their feudal obligations, became a member of the legislative assembly, and reentered military service in the armies of the Revolution, where he rose to the rank of general. Fearing the violence of the Terror, Marbot's mother hid Marcellin with a friend who was the head of a school for girls in Turenne. As he later admits in his *Memoirs of General Baron de Marbot*, Marcellin was pampered and protected from the age of eight to eleven by a "small feminine flock" of "nice young ladies" who sang him songs, read him stories, and crowned him with flowered wreaths.¹² Regretting this feminine education, Marbot's father enrolled Marcellin in the military school at Sorèze in 1793, fearing that "it was no longer possible to leave me in a ladies' school, and that it was time to give me a more masculine education" (1: 36).

After six years of this masculine military education at Sorèze, Marbot joined the army and served with his father's division in the second Italian Campaign (1800), where he was reacquainted with two of his father's friends: General Bonaparte, who pinched him on the ear and complimented him for joining the army so young, and General Lannes who had served under Marbot's father in 1793. With the auspicious early support of Generals Marbot, Bonaparte, and Lannes, Marcellin seems to have been destined for his future as Lannes's aide-de-camp and a general in his own right. But soon after these words of praise from the Napoleonic elite, the young eighteen-year-old Marcellin was in for a much less glamorous period of training among the toughened soldiers and *sous-officiers* of his new regiment.

Worried that Marcellin still harbored the docility of his early feminine education

and concerned that his son should earn the respect of his comrades, General Antoine Marbot insisted that Marcellin enjoy no special privileges in his regiment: “[H]e also used to say that I should have been a girl and often called me Mademoiselle Marcellin: this upset me very much ... It was thus to overcome my timidity that my father wanted me to do my military service with my comrades ... as a simple soldier” (1: 65). As he sissy-baits his son, Marbot’s father shames him into leaving behind his feminine youth in order to take on more masculine responsibilities. Faced with this paternal challenge, he must now live up to two military names: Marbot, the name of his warrior family, and Marcellin, the diminutive of both the Roman war god Mars and Roman general Marcellus who subjugated the Gauls in the third century BC. General Marbot’s desire to toughen up his son may also have played into his decision to enroll Marcellin in his army’s first regiment of *hussards*. Named for the notoriously fierce Hungarian cavalymen known as *huszárok*, the French *hussards* were known for their aggression and courage under fire. From their elaborate uniforms, bear-skin shako hats, and thick mustaches, to their combat reputation as the first to attack and the last to withdraw, and their off-duty tendency for heavy drinking and brawling, the *hussards* exuded a hair-on-your-chest masculinity that Marbot’s father hoped would transform his son into a toughened soldier.

Marbot’s Mentor

To initiate Marcellin into his *hussard* regiment, General Marbot entrusted his son to the seasoned Sergeant Philibert Pertelay. Like a drill instructor at a present-day boot camp, Pertelay was an excellent if terrifying mentor who, according to Marcellin, was an archetype of the rough-talking, gruff-mannered Napoleonic *grognard*: “[T]hey had chosen this madman to teach a thing or two to a young man as gentle and timid as I was ... This guy, from the old school of *hussards*, was a drinker, fighter, and bruiser, but also brave to the point of recklessness; he was otherwise completely ignorant of everything that was not related to his horse, weapons, and engagement with the enemy” (1: 66). Always ready for a drink or a fight, Pertelay is also the kind of experienced soldier who is at all times ready for combat. In order to teach the young Marcellin how to survive in battle, his mentor Pertelay first shows him how to gain the respect of his military peers and form friendships through the homosocial initiation rites of the training camp.

After accompanying his new recruit to their barracks, Pertelay first trains Marbot in the practical tasks of using and caring for his arms, horse, and gear: “So I followed Pertelay who, taking me under his wing, came to my quarters [and] showed me how to pack my gear ... My mentor showed me how to saddle and unsaddle my horse ... [and] to wear my uniform and hold my arms; in short, he gave me a complete demonstration” (1: 67). Having mastered these material tasks, Marbot begins his transformation into a soldier. Despite his uniform, however, he lacks the

physical maturity to grow the full bushy mustache common to all hirsute *hussards*: “I had no more [mustache] than a young girl, and since a beardless face would have spoiled the uniformity of the squadron, Pertelay ... took a pot of black wax and with his thumb made me two enormous hooks which, covering the upper lip, reached up almost to my eyes” (1: 68). In fashioning a false mustache for Marbot, Pertelay helps him produce the illusion of mature masculinity through the substitution of what Judith Butler might call the “corporeal theatrics” of male military drag or what one could call the military regulation of uniform manhood.¹³ More than improvising a mustache, Pertelay helps put proverbial hair on Marbot’s chest.

Marbot’s military integration, however, depends on more than this mustache makeover. To be socialized as a fellow soldier, Marcellin is also initiated into the homosocial rituals of communal military life. These include both the daily tasks of soldiering and the off-duty activities of drinking and brawling. Far from mere delinquency, these rituals provide the soldiers of Marbot’s regiment with important social skills that will later increase their chances of survival in combat. The shared pleasures and dangers of drinking and brawling cement friendships and encourage the future cohesion of combat soldiers amid the paralyzing fear and confusion of battle. Marbot’s socialization with his regiment begins when Pertelay teaches him how to drink:

Pertelay took me to an inn whose dining room was full of *hussards*, grenadiers, and soldiers. They served us dinner and placed on the table an enormous bottle of strong red wine ... My man [Pertelay] emptied his glass, but I put mine down without even bringing it to my lips, because I had never drunk undiluted wine ... I confided this to my mentor, who then cried out with his booming voice: ‘Waiter! Bring a lemonade for this boy who does not drink wine!’ And huge fits of laughter erupted throughout the room. I was mortified. (1: 67)

This ritual mortification represents the death of Marbot’s boyhood. Peer-pressured and shamed by this barroom humiliation, the teetotaler Marbot must overcome his childhood timidity to gain the respect of his mentor and fellow soldiers. Failing with drink, Marbot looks for a fight.

Having provoked “an enormous cannoneer,” Marbot challenges this artillery soldier to a duel in order to defend the honor of his own regiment: “[Since] I had given him such a rude push that he fell head-first into a ditch full of mud, it was decided that this boy and I would fight a duel with sabers” (1: 72). In provoking this fight, the young Marbot is respected for both his courage and his insubordination at having broken his father’s strict prohibition on dueling among his soldiers. With this duel, Marbot thus proves his loyalty to his *hussard* comrades over adversaries, regulations, and childhood privilege. No longer the plaything of doting schoolgirls

or a spoiled papa's boy, Marbot has become one of the men and has gained their confidence: "The members of the gang were especially charmed with my show of resolution and decided unanimously to admit me into their company" (1: 74). In this way, Marbot is transformed from a privileged and pampered adolescent into a mustached, drinking, and brawling soldier.

In substituting his father's paternal care with his comrades' fraternal affection, Marbot endears himself to those who will one day risk their lives to protect him in combat. Marbot describes this transformation as a kind of savage initiation where "living in the middle of these rowdy *hussards* and having for my mentor a kind of ruffian who laughed at all my stupidities, I began to howl with the wolves; and ... became a real hell-raiser" (1: 69). In taking risks, numbing himself to fear, and acting aggressively in the barroom, Marbot builds up his courage and finds safety and protection within a fraternal pack of wolves. Despite its juvenile rituals and macho clichés, this military initiation fraternally socializes new recruits and volunteers into the ranks of the Grande Armée, instills a sense of shared affection between soldiers, and solidifies the bonds of Napoleonic friendship. As barroom brawls give way to mortal combat, Marbot will rely on these new comrades in order to survive.

Marbot's Bedfellow

During his military training, Marbot's relationships with his fellow soldiers are also strengthened through shared physical intimacy. In the barracks, this intimacy is best exemplified by the *camarade de lit* or bedfellow. Due to limited military budgets and frequent bed shortages, doubling-up in bunks became a common practice for men in the ranks. This bedfellow tradition served the practical function of providing soldiers with a means of warmth in drafty barracks and during even colder nights on bivouac. For Marbot, as for many new soldiers in the Grande Armée, this bedfellow tradition comes as an unpleasant shock:

[W]hat I found intolerable was the obligation of sleeping with another *hussard*, since the regulations only allowed one bed for every two soldiers ... The first night I spent in the barracks, I had just lay down when a tall beanpole of a soldier, who arrived one hour after the others, approached my bed and, seeing that there was already someone there, unhooked the lamp and put it under my nose to examine me closer; then he got undressed ... 'Move over, conscript!' Then, he got in the bed, lay down in such a way as to take up three quarters of the space, and began snoring loudly! It was impossible for me to get any sleep, especially because of his terrible odor. (1: 68)

Despite having grown up with three brothers and spent six years at military school, Marbot's first night in the barracks also seems to be the first time he slept with a

man. Marbot quickly learns that to be a soldier in Napoleon's armies is to share an intense physical intimacy with other men, from their beds to their odors, ailments, and injuries.

Although Marbot did not bed with his mentor Pertelay, the military bedfellow was often a conscript's first mentor in the training camps of Napoleonic France.¹⁴ As with drinking and brawling, the shared physical intimacy of the barracks prefigures the even more intimate conditions of combat where soldiers on bivouac must huddle closely together for warmth and even survival during cold winter months. In addition to the elements, the combined effects of fatigue, wounds, and disease become the shared experience and responsibility of fellow soldiers on campaign. The bedfellow is thus a frequent trope in Napoleonic memoirs, as soldiers rely on their training-camp bedfellows in order to survive the later perils of combat.¹⁵

While Marbot did not care for his first bedfellow, he is overjoyed at meeting his old mentor Pertelay seven years later in Berlin during the Prussian Campaign in 1806. Surprisingly, the gruff Sergeant Pertelay is equally pleased to see his young charge Marbot, who has now become a lieutenant and Marshal Augereau's aide-de-camp: "I was walking one evening with my comrades when I saw a group of non-commissioned officers from the First Regiment of *hussards* ... One of them broke off from the group, came running to me, and wrapped his arms around my neck. It was my old mentor, old Pertelay, who cried for joy, saying 'Here you are, my boy!'" (1: 250). While Marbot's colleagues are amused at seeing such signs of familiarity and affection between an officer and a *sous-officier*, Pertelay brags to his men that this lieutenant was once his pupil: "This old friend, who could not stop embracing me, said to his comrades, 'I was the one who trained him, just as you see him now!' And the old man was really persuaded that it was because of his lessons that I had become what I was" (1: 250).

Three years later in 1809, when Marbot was seriously wounded in Spain during the Iberian Campaign, he is again surprised by the attentions of his mentor Pertelay. Now a captain, a knight of the Légion d'Honneur, and Marshal Lannes's aide-de-camp, Marbot is still comforted by the presence and sympathy of his old sergeant: "[A]n old *hussard*, bathed in tears, was asking to see me; you may have already guessed that it was my old mentor, Sergeant Pertelay ... who, on learning that I was wounded, came running to see me" (1: 375). Yet again, the usually gruff Pertelay is overwhelmed with emotion. Despite Marbot's elevated rank and position, Pertelay still takes pleasure in offering his former charge superfluous but comforting advice: "With pleasure, I again saw this old friend and received him in style; he often came and kept me company, distracting me with his interminable stories and bizarre advice" (1: 375). The reversal of their rank does not diminish Sergeant Pertelay's desire to advise and mentor Captain Marbot. Like an older brother, Pertelay takes pride in his own mentoring and in Marbot's accomplishments.

This fraternal bond was perhaps doubly significant for Marbot and Pertelay, both of whom lost brothers during the Napoleonic Wars. A friend of Marbot, Pertelay's younger brother was killed in 1800 during combat in Italy. Also wounded in the battle, the grieving Pertelay was comforted by Marbot who explains, "The poor fellow was wounded and suffered even more emotionally than physically, since he adored his brother, whom we all mourned bitterly" (1: 87). Similarly, Marbot's younger brother Félix was killed in a duel as a sergeant-major cadet at the École Militaire de Fontainebleau in 1805. Within the context of military life, the deaths of Pertelay's and Marbot's brothers literalize the loss of fraternal comrades in combat. As regimental comrades become substitute brothers and as soldiers move on to new mentors, they perpetuate the cycle of military fraternity.

Pertelay and Marbot's bedside meeting in Spain also illustrates the vital comfort of Napoleonic friendship in battle. Just as Pertelay offers solace to his wounded friend, Marbot took care, throughout his military career, of mortally wounded mentors in combat. As his own father's aide-de-camp during the siege of Genoa in 1800, Marbot was with his wounded father when the old general died, saying " 'Poor child, what will become of him, alone and without help, in the middle of the horrors of this terrible siege?' He murmured a few more words, among which I made out the name of my mother, then his arms fell and he closed his eyes" (1: 96). Many years later, as Marshal Lannes's aide-de-camp during the battle of Essling in 1809, it was Marbot who held his mentor Lannes as he died: "[H]e regained all of his mental faculties, recognized me, squeezed my hand, spoke of his wife, his five children, his father ... and, as I was close to his bed, rested his head on my shoulder, appeared to sleep, and rendered his last breath" (1: 447). As these deathbed moments make clear, the mentor relationship was in some cases a lifelong commitment of mutual affection and a source of final comfort.

Short of death, military mentors also exemplify the kind of Napoleonic friendship that was often a soldier's best hope for survival in combat. While all soldiers are theoretically obliged to help their officers and comrades in need, the overwhelming physical and psychological demands of battle often numb a soldier's obligations to all but those whom he cares for with the greatest intensity. Marbot learned this at the battle of Eylau in February 1807, a bloodbath he survived because of the devotion of a young valet. Technically a victory for Napoleon, the battle of Eylau in East Prussia was a massacre. Fought in a blizzard against fierce Prussian and Russian forces, the two-day battle left 40,000 dead and wounded.¹⁶ As Antoine Gros's celebrated painting *Napoleon at Eylau* (1808) suggests, the battle of Eylau was a bloody prelude to Napoleon's disastrous Russian Campaign in 1812–13.

Wounded and unconscious, stripped naked, and left for dead, Marbot might have died in the snow at Eylau among the thousands of corpses that covered the battlefield if not for the assiduous dedication and loyal affection of a young man he

had mentored:

Stretched out on the snow among the piles of dead and dying, not able to move in any way, I lost all feeling, pain, and sense of myself. It seemed as if someone was gently rocking me. Finally, I lost all consciousness ... I estimate that I was unconscious for four hours, and when I regained my senses ... I was completely nude, except for my hat and right boot. A supply soldier, thinking I was dead, had stripped me, as was the custom, and wanting to take off my remaining boot, he pulled on my leg while putting one of his feet on my chest. (2: 276–77)

Literally stripped of his rank and identity, Marbot has become a mere body, indistinguishable from the other men around him. Even if special consideration had been given to fallen officers, Marbot's unidentifiably nude body would have been passed by, left to die of exposure, or—like Balzac's Colonel Chabert, whom Marbot strongly resembles—buried alive with other corpses in a mass grave.¹⁷ While it had taken the young Marbot many months of training to fill out his *hussard* uniform, many years to grow a real *hussard* mustache, and many battles to earn the decorations of a Napoleonic officer, these trappings of military identity are quickly stripped from him at Eylau. Trading his military uniform for the naked uniformity of death, Marbot is abandoned by the living and comes close to joining the anonymous ranks of the dead.

Miraculously, Marbot is saved by a young valet named Pierre Dannel, a junior member of Marshal Augereau's staff whom Marbot had befriended, mentored, and once saved from dismissal. Having recognized Marbot's uniform and personal effects among those collected from the field, the young Dannel goes searching for his mentor among the tens of thousands of denuded corpses: "The valet did not doubt that I had been killed but, regretting my death, he wanted to see me for the last time; guided by the supply soldier, he found me alive. The joy of this good man, to whom I certainly owe my life, was extreme: he hastened ... to have me transported to a barn, where he rubbed my body with rum" (1: 278). Had Marbot not mentored the young valet and earned his devotion, he might have hemorrhaged or frozen to death at Eylau. Grateful for this fraternal devotion, Marbot writes "instead of spending the night without help, stretched out on the snow, I was put to rest in a good bed and surrounded with the care of my brother and my comrades" (1: 278–79). Rather than end his life in a mass grave as a macabre bedfellow to his other fallen comrades, Marbot is brought back to life on a bed surrounded by the fraternal care of his mentee Pierre Dannel, his brother Adolphe Marbot, and their fellow military friends.

Marbot's miraculous survival at Eylau must be attributed to his role as a military mentor and the affectionate bonds of Napoleonic friendship. In the confusion and

chaos of battle, even the presence of Marbot's own mentor Augereau and his brother Adolphe did not save his life. Rather, it was the attention of a simple valet and that valet's own devotion to a mentor that saved Marbot from certain death. As this episode makes clear, Napoleonic friendship was both a source of comfort to the dying and a survival strategy for the wounded. From Pertelay to Augereau, Lannes, and Dannel, Marbot owes his career and survival to the lifesaving support of military mentorship.

Captain Coignet

Like Marcellin de Marbot, Jean-Roch Coignet entered Napoleon's armies as a modest *grogard* and worked his way up to the rank of *sous-officier* and then officer. Unlike Marbot, Coignet came from obscurity and a childhood marked by poverty, illiteracy, and abuse. Battered by his stepmother, Coignet ran away from home at the age of eight and worked for fourteen years as a shepherd, stable boy, and farmhand for both kind and abusive masters. In the summer of 1799, he was conscripted into military service, trained at Fontainebleau, and assigned to duty in Napoleon's second Italian Campaign (1800). For his exemplary service at the battles of Montebello and Marengo, Coignet was admitted to the grenadiers of Napoleon's Imperial Guard and designated to be the very first *grogard* decorated with the cross of the Légion d'Honneur.

Though he met Napoleon several times and was an eyewitness to such celebrated events as the first distribution of the Légion d'Honneur at the Invalides in June 1804, Napoleon's imperial wedding to Marie-Louise at the Louvre in April 1810, and the funeral cortège for Marshal Lannes at the Panthéon in July 1810, Coignet seems to take the greatest delight in his memories of Napoleon on campaign. Recounting the Napoleonic Wars through a foot soldier's eyes in his *Notebooks of Captain Coignet*, he recalls the first time Napoleon referred to his foot soldiers affectionately as *grogards* because of their grumbling and how the Emperor shared roasted potatoes in the snow with his soldiers during the Prussian Campaign in 1807.¹⁸ In addition to this uncommon mix of Napoleonic high and low, splendor and simplicity, pomp and folklore, the memoirs of Captain Coignet are also distinguished as an extraordinarily rare text by a soldier of Coignet's class, rank, and education.

A literary late-bloomer, Coignet did not learn to read until the age of thirty-two, when he was tutored by his military comrades so that he could advance to the rank of *sous-officier*. Among the 1,531 titles listed in Jean Tulard's bibliography of Napoleonic memoirs, only nine were written by *grogards*, who were often illiterate and incapable of writing their own stories. Completed at the end of his life and published between 1851 and 1853, the *Notebooks of Captain Coignet* bear the stylistic marks of his late education. But Coignet's simple style and occasionally awkward prose offer unique insight into the daily life of Napoleonic *grogards* and

their comrades.¹⁹

Coignet's Mentors

Like Marbot, Coignet speaks affectionately of the mentor relationships he cultivated during the first campaign of his military service. After the perilous crossing of the St. Bernard Pass in the Swiss and Italian Alps in 1800, Coignet speaks of his comrades' love for their captain: "Our captain had us make a circle around him, and said, 'My grenadiers, you have just completed a great mission. This is a great accomplishment for the company!' He shook all of our hands and told me, 'I am pleased with your debut in combat [and] will keep note of you' ... And we responded, 'Captain, we all love you.' 'Ah, that's good, grenadiers, I will remember this and I thank you' " (64–65). This affectionate exchange of words and gestures—in which the captain's handshakes recall the fraternal embraces of the Revolution, and his men openly express their love—demonstrates the kind of intimacy between soldiers and officers that would have been unlikely in the socially divided armies of the Ancien Régime. Only ten years after the Fête de la Fédération, this scene illustrates the evolution from Revolutionary fraternity to Napoleonic friendship.

Echoing these early gestures of mentorship and mutual affection, Coignet is later embraced by his captain and sergeant after saving their lives at Montebello: "My captain took me aside and we walked arm-in-arm, as if I were his equal ... All the officers shook my hand, and the brave sergeant whom I had saved came and embraced me before the whole company" (70). For his courage in battle, the grateful captain presents Coignet to his colonel, General Berthier, and to Napoleon himself, who characteristically caresses the young soldier on the ear, congratulates him, and notes Coignet for future admission to his elite Imperial Guard. Through their affectionate embraces, caresses, and congratulations, Coignet's military mentors offer him the kind of gratitude and encouragement that he had not known during his miserable childhood, and thus become his substitute fathers, brothers, and family.

Coignet's Bedfellows

In contrast to Marbot's disdain for his fetid barracks bedfellow, Coignet speaks with great affection and humor about his three *camarades de lit* and the role that bedfellows played in saving men's lives. Coignet's first bedfellow was as tall as Coignet was short. On entering Napoleon's elite Guard, Coignet was assigned to the bed of the tallest grenadier in his company by his officer Captain Renard and his sergeant major, who remarked that the diminutive Coignet would make a fine bunkmate for this lanky and solitary soldier, "a good comrade," who "bunks alone right now" and with whom Coignet would be "the smallest with the tallest" (98). When Coignet first meets his long-limbed bedfellow, he discovers a good-natured giant: "The sergeant-major led me to my room, and introduced me to my comrades. A strapping grenadier six feet four inches tall began to laugh on seeing how small I

am. ‘Well ... here is your bedfellow.’ ‘I could smuggle him under my coat’” (97–98). Like a marriage of opposites, this comic pair or odd couple becomes a source of communal humor among the men in Coignet’s barracks.

This regimental inside joke later became a matter of national reform. During a surprise inspection in the barracks, Generals Bonaparte and Lannes were amused at finding these two disproportionate men sharing the same inadequate bed:

[Napoleon] walked through all the sleeping quarters and arrived at my bed. My comrade, who was six feet four inches tall, stretched out on seeing the Consul close to our bunk; his legs stuck out of our bed by more than a foot. The Consul believed that there were two grenadiers lying head-to-head and came to the head of our bed to assure himself of the fact, by feeling the entire length of my comrade with his hand ... ‘But,’ he said, ‘these beds are too short for my grenadiers ... We must change all the bedding for my Guard.’ (100–101)

Having felt up Coignet’s bunkmate, Napoleon is far less scandalized by the possibility of two bedfellows sleeping “head-to-head,” than by the discomfort of his fighting men. In what might seem an absurd case of military misappropriation, the long legs of Coignet’s bedfellow prompted Napoleon to spend one million francs on new seven-foot-long beds for his elite personal Guard. Given the practice of two-to-a-bed, it might have made more sense to create wider instead of longer beds or simply to double the number and give each soldier a bunk of his own. Napoleon’s seemingly misguided bunk-reform suggests that the bedfellow was an entrenched custom with which he had no intention of tampering. An effective training method for creating cohesion between soldiers, the bedfellow tradition also encouraged men who had shared a barracks bunk to share the warmth of their bodies during long winter nights on bivouac.

Coignet owes his survival during the Austrian Campaign to the night he spent with his second bedfellow, Captain Renard, before the battle of Austerlitz in 1805. Though they had never shared a barracks bed, Coignet and Renard become bedfellows one bitter night in an abandoned wooden barrel in order to survive the snow and cold of the Austrian winter:

Unable to find any rations, I commandeered a large pine barrel ... Captain Renard immediately came and asked me to give him a place in my barrel. I went to the village and brought back a bundle of hay, which I placed in the barrel, then I put in [a] featherbed. We burrowed inside head-first, with our feet close to the fire. Never had we spent a happier night. My captain said, ‘I will remember you for the rest of my life.’ (123–24)

While the differences in their rank would have made them unlikely bedfellows in the

barracks, the necessities of life on campaign require these two men to share their resources and body heat. Having outfoxed the Austrian winter, Coignet warms up to his Renard in their improvised shelter.

More than mere duty, Coignet's bedfellow generosity toward Renard was inspired by the captain's open affection for his men: "[T]he captain was the most excellent man, esteemed and cherished by all the soldiers" (336). Even in the more egalitarian armies of the Revolution, Consulate, and Empire, not all officers merited this esteem. Coignet recounts how an entire demi-brigade of soldiers opened fire on their officers at the battle of Marengo, killing all but one lieutenant (331–32). When conditions were bad and resources scarce, military discipline alone could not ensure a warm barrel for sleep or a loaf of bread to eat. At these moments, soldiers shared their precious goods only with those men they esteemed and loved. Officers who did not command the respect and affection of their men thus risked their lives to mutinous gunfire, exposure, and starvation. In addition to rolling out his barrel for Captain Renard before Austerlitz in 1805, Coignet also shared his meager bread rations with him before the battle of Eylau in 1807: " 'What are you doing?' said my Captain Renard. Taking his hand and placing a piece of bread in it, I told him, 'Quiet! Guard my pack and eat, I'm going to look for wood ... We need to hide ourselves, my captain, so that we can enjoy this bread' " (135–36).

This extraordinary generosity must be understood within the context of the Prussian Campaign in 1806–7. As Coignet explains, the scarcity of food and the freezing winter in Poland were so severe that many men committed suicide to end their suffering: "Despondency set in among the ranks of the old soldiers; there were several who committed suicide to escape their suffering. We lost sixty in the space of two days" (136). That these men who took their lives were among the older, seasoned, battle-toughened soldiers illustrates the degree of their winter suffering, which Coignet reports as indescribable: "No, never could a man describe such misery" (137). In addition to the bitter cold, starvation took a deadly toll on Napoleon's men, whom Coignet characterizes as "cadavers coming out of the tomb" (139). It is under these conditions that Coignet shared his bed and bread with the grateful Captain Renard, who years later admitted that Coignet "saved us from dying of hunger in Poland ... I would be dead without him" (187).

The difference in rank between these men was neither a reason for Coignet's generosity nor an obstacle to their friendship. His intentions could not have been professional. Coignet had already been offered a field promotion to the rank of corporal by his commanding officer Colonel Frédéric during the campaign in Poland, but was unable to accept this honor since he could not yet read and write. Far from ambitious motives, Coignet's generosity with Renard represents the inverse power of the *grogard*. Since officers were forbidden to scavenge for food, they had to rely on their soldiers to share any foraged spoils.²⁰ For Coignet, sharing his bread

with Renard is more an act of personal devotion and fraternal affection than soldierly duty. As Coignet's second bedfellow, Renard continued for many years to share with this young soldier the material support, mutual esteem, and intimate friendship forged in Napoleonic combat.

Even more than Renard, Coignet's third bedfellow—whom he met during the perilous Russian retreat—owes his life to Coignet's care. By the time Coignet and his nameless comrade reached Vilnius, those men of the Grande Armée who had not already died of wounds, exhaustion, or exposure to the bitter cold were both physically and psychologically numb. In an echo of his description of Poland in 1807, Coignet explains how the weeks of privations and suffering during the winter retreat from Moscow in 1812 had ravaged Napoleon's men and deadened their sense of comradeship and compassion:

In this completely demoralized army, we marched like prisoners, without weapons or gear. No more discipline or humanity for one another! Each man marched for himself; for all of these men, the feeling of humanity had gone out; one would not have lent a hand to one's own father, [but] that was understandable. The man who bent down to help another would not have been able to get back up. One had to march straight ahead ... All feeling and humanity were dead in these men. (240)

In this death march across eastern Russia, men who offered a hand or some food to a comrade compromised the strength of their own weakened bodies. Under such conditions and faced with such life-and-death choices, duty and compassion lost all meaning.

Yet Coignet writes that these conditions also gave rise to heroic acts of selflessness. In a time when physical resources were scarce, emotional ties became a soldier's best hope for survival. Having survived weeks of exposure, Coignet and his third bedfellow find temporary shelter in an abandoned school in Vilnius where—unable to make a fire—they spend the night sharing the warmth of their bodies. Menaced by the approaching Russian army, Coignet and his bedfellow must soon abandon their schoolhouse. But like so many exhausted men who went to sleep in the snow never to wake again, Coignet's third bedfellow refuses to rise: “[I] woke my comrade ... he had thawed out [but] preferred to remain here at the mercy of the enemy. At three o'clock, I told him: ‘We're leaving!’ ‘No,’ he said, ‘I'm staying.’ ‘Well then, I will kill you, if you do not follow me.’ ‘Well then, kill me.’ I took out my saber and beat him hard while forcing him to follow me. I loved him, my brave comrade, and would not leave him to the enemy” (242).

Despite his own exhaustion, Coignet exerts great energy to wake his bedfellow from the seductive comfort of sleep. Having shared the intimacy of their makeshift Lithuanian bunkhouse, Coignet cares too much for this *camarade de lit* to abandon

him to a more permanent sleep. In his own words, Coignet tells us that he was motivated by love to wake his bedfellow and help him escape to safety. While Coignet's text is as susceptible to exaggeration and self-glorification as other Napoleonic memoirs, this account reveals how many soldiers were unashamed to admit love for their comrades, and that love between bedfellows could, in some cases, overcome apathy and exhaustion. The bed and bread that Coignet shares with all three of his bedfellows demonstrate how affection was a tool for survival and how for some soldiers in Napoleon's armies, emotional relationships sprang from physical intimacy.

Like many military memoirs, Coignet's *Notebooks* feature frequent discussions of men's bodies, their proportions and capabilities, weaknesses and infirmities. Coignet's intimate knowledge of male bodies is a fact of military life. The cramped quarters of the barracks and the shared suffering of combat literally expose soldiers' bodies to one another. In training and battle, soldiers are required to care for one another's bodies as a matter of mutual survival. A soldier with impaired feet slows down the entire squadron. Soldiers who are malnourished, exhausted, or wounded are ineffective fighters. One soldier's typhus can infect the entire regiment.

Before major reforms in military hygiene at the end of the nineteenth century, French soldiers endured a nauseating familiarity with each other's bodies in the cramped quarters of their barracks. The noxious combination of strenuous physical training, infrequent bathing, and poor hygiene led to common complaints of filthy bodies, repulsive odors, and revolting conditions among men in military bunkhouses.²¹ The fetid conditions of the barracks and the even more horrible effects of combat wounds, gangrene, dysentery, and disease certainly provided significant obstacles to both hygiene and friendship. But the everyday exposure to each other's physical discomforts and ailments created among some soldiers a sense of mutual suffering, compassion, and solidarity.

In addition to his bedfellows, Coignet describes his familiarity and contact with the bodies of other soldiers. At the battle of Marengo in 1800, Coignet and his comrades are forced to urinate into their over-heated muskets: "After firing so much ammunition, it was no longer possible to discharge them. We had to piss into our guns to clean them out" (74). On the eve of the battle of Eylau in 1807, Coignet shaved his scruffy comrades while on bivouac in the snow: "In the glow of our campfires, I shaved my comrades ... at least twenty of them" (337). In Paris in 1808, Coignet and the Imperial Guard were subjected to weekly inspections of their barracks and bodies: "General Dorsenne conducted inspections every Sunday ... He lifted up our coats to see if our shirts were white, he looked to see if our feet were clean, our nails were trimmed, and even our ears ... Every two weeks, he came with the surgeon-major to visit us in bed" (160–61). And at the beginning of the Austrian Campaign in 1809, Coignet and the soldiers of the Imperial Guard stripped off their

clothes on the fields outside of Metz, revealing “the most beautiful men in France, completely nude” before changing their uniforms (167).

While these four episodes illustrate the health and vitality of the soldier’s body, Coignet provides many more reports on wounded and ravaged military bodies. At the horrific battle of Eylau in 1807, Coignet admires the courage of a dismembered sergeant: “[A] bullet had taken off his leg; he cut off a little of the remaining flesh, and told us: ‘I have three pairs of boots in Courbevoie; that should last me a long time’” (141). After the battle, Coignet helps collect and bury the thousands of casualties and cadavers: “The field of battle was covered with the dead and wounded, all making one great cry. You have no idea what such a day is like. The next day was devoted to digging trenches to bury the victims and to transporting the wounded to the field hospital” (142). During the battle of Essling in 1809, Coignet is grotesquely splattered with pieces of flesh from his butchered comrade: “I looked down and saw on my arm a piece of flesh. I thought that my arm was shredded. Not at all. It was a piece of one of my brave comrades which had hit me with such force that it was stuck to my arm. The lieutenant came over to me, took me by the arm and shook me, and the piece of meat fell off” (174). And following the battle of Essling, Coignet witnesses the gore of field amputations: “[W]e heard these heart-wrenching screams nearby. It was [the surgeon] Larrey performing amputations; it was horrific to hear” (176). As a witness to all these horrors, Coignet demonstrates the soldier’s sad familiarity with the carnage of bleeding and broken bodies.

Faced with such violence, the soldier relies on the comforts and pleasures of the stronger, healthier bodies of his surviving comrades. For Coignet and many soldiers of the Empire, the comfort of the *camarade de lit* stands in contrast to the brutality of life in combat. Even in battle, the bedfellow offers the comforting illusion of safety. As the account of Coignet’s three bedfellows illustrates, this military culture of shared beds, barracks, and bivouacs created physical and emotional intimacy among Napoleon’s junior officers and soldiers. While images of sleeping soldiers—like Édouard Detaille’s celebrated painting *The Dream* (1888)—often project a deadly ambiguity between slumber and death, Napoleonic bedfellows like Coignet and his friends share an unambiguous commitment to mutual support and survival.

Sergeant Bourgogne

Younger than Marbot and Coignet, Adrien-Jean-Baptiste-François Bourgogne was the last of these three to enter military service. The son of a bourgeois merchant from northern France, Bourgogne came from less wealth than Marbot but greater privilege than Coignet, and it was this advantage that helped him enter Napoleon’s *vélites de la Garde* at the age of twenty in 1805. Named after the lightly armed Roman soldiers (*velitarius*) who in turn took their name from the Latin verb “to skirmish” (*velito*, *velitare*), the French imperial *vélites* were an entry-level class of soldier above the simple conscript (like Coignet) and below the elite cadet (like

Marbot's brother Félix) of the military academy at Fontainebleau.²² Since the training of young *vélites* cost their families 200 francs a year, Bourgogne's entry into service reflected his bourgeois social class, somewhere between the peasant Coignet and the noble Marbot. In addition to being the youngest of the three, Bourgogne was also their junior in rank. Promoted to lieutenant at the end of the Empire, Bourgogne would never surpass either Captain Coignet or General Marbot.

Despite his inferior age, rank, and experience, there is nothing inferior about Bourgogne's skills as a writer. In his *Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne*, he displays great talent for creating narrative, characterization, dialogue, and detail. Unlike Marbot and Coignet, who wrote their memoirs late in life and long after the events they describe, Bourgogne began taking notes for his memoirs while he was a Prussian prisoner from 1813 to 1814. These notes, along with the letters that he sent his mother from Russia between 1812 and 1813, formed the basis for Bourgogne's memoirs, parts of which were published in *L'Echo de la frontière* in 1856 and 1857. The full manuscript of Bourgogne's memoirs was published in the *Nouvelle revue rétrospective* in 1896, followed by Hachette's publication of the text in 1898. That Hachette published four editions between 1898 and 1901 attests to their popularity and to Bourgogne's talent as a writer.²³ As vivid as the Comte de Ségur's celebrated memoirs of the Russian Campaign, Bourgogne's memoirs offer the unique viewpoint of the Napoleonic *groggnard*. In their exceptionally colorful depiction of bedfellows, buddies, hometown friends, and men-tors, the *Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne* surpass even Marbot's and Coignet's animated accounts of Napoleonic friendship in Russia, and create a literary bridge between Napoleonic memoir and fiction.²⁴

Sauve-qui-peut vs. *Peu qui sauvent*

The crippling hunger, fatigue, and cold during the Russian retreat gave way to a breakdown in discipline among the soldiers of the Grande Armée. With little food, shelter, or rest, Napoleon's once grand army was reduced to an ambulant stretch of scattered stragglers, trudging through the snow, and fleeing the Russians to the rear. In this atmosphere of every man for himself or *sauve-qui-peut*, Bourgogne reports many acts of cruelty, especially when prolonged hunger and exposure incited men to violence. At one point, Bourgogne was mauled by his own friends for a piece of bread: "I barely had it in my hands when my friends ... fell on me like mad men, and took it from me. For my part, the only thing left was the piece that I held between my thumb and the first two fingers of my right hand" (102). Faced with similar violence, many soldiers hoarded food, hid their rations from starving comrades, and ate in secret. In the worst cases, Bourgogne reports, hunger eclipsed friendship: "[H]unger set in, in a terrible way. Those who still had a few rations, like some rice or porridge, hid themselves to eat it. There were no longer any friends; we looked on

each other with an air of suspicion [and] even became ungrateful towards our best comrades” (103). Haunted by remorse, Bourgonne admits that he also hoarded potatoes “without giving any to my friends who were dying of hunger” during the march to Smolensk, a fact which he calls both “an act of ingratitude” and “an act of selfishness for which I have never forgiven myself” (103, 106–7).

Some reports claim that desperate soldiers resorted to cannibalism. Both Ségur (who acknowledges these atrocities) and Marbot (who refutes them) attribute these alleged acts of cannibalism to Russian, Croatian, or Spanish soldiers.²⁵ True or not, these reports underscore the desperation of starving soldiers, whose ravenous hunger, Bourgonne admits, was shared by all: “If I had not found horsemeat to nourish me, I myself would have been forced to eat men; you had to have felt the rage of hunger to be able to appreciate their position” (113). For Bourgonne, the ravages of hunger—on bodies, friendships, and human dignity—was a universal burden and responsibility.

If hunger was an obstacle to friendship, the search for shelter often provoked even greater violence. Long-term exposure to the cold and the cumulative effects of fatigue incited horrific atrocities. Like Commandant Genestas in Balzac’s *The Country Doctor*, Sergeant Bourgonne is haunted by the memory of one terrible night when several of Napoleon’s freezing soldiers torched a barn in which hundreds of their fellow comrades were sleeping. Frustrated that they too could not gain entrance to the already overcrowded barn and desperate for firewood and warmth, these men set the building ablaze, killing all their comrades inside.²⁶ There was speculation that the fire had been an accident, but as hundreds of men burned alive inside the barn, few of those outside did anything to help. Bourgonne describes how many soldiers, “dying of the cold around campfires which were almost as dead as they were, ran to the barn, not to bring help ... but to secure a place to warm themselves, and to roast a piece of horsemeat on the end of their bayonets” (112).

Eager for the warmth of the blaze, these men had allowed the cold to numb both their bodies and their sense of fraternity: “ ‘It serves them right, for if they had let us take the roof [for firewood], this would not have happened!’ Still others extended their hands towards the fire, as if they did not know that they were warming themselves with the cadavers of hundreds of their comrades and ... said, ‘What a lovely fire!’ and trembled, not from the cold, but with pleasure” (113). There were even reports of men eating human flesh pulled from the blaze, cannibalistically “taking from the barn fire an entirely roasted cadaver, which they carved and ate” (113). While Marbot disputes these reports, Bourgonne attributes such desperate acts of self-preservation to foreign soldiers of the Grande Armée. Born of a will to survive, these atrocities nevertheless represent the very antithesis of Napoleonic friendship.

Yet as Bourgonne explains, it is precisely because of these appalling acts of

violence that other feats of self-sacrifice are so extraordinary: “One must say that if atrocious acts were committed during this disastrous campaign, there were also acts of humanity, which do us honor” (120). In juxtaposing these “atrocious acts” with “acts of humanity,” Bourgogne bears witness not only to the many who selfishly saved themselves but to those who tried to save others. Amid the desperate cry of every-man-for-himself (*sauve-qui-peut*), there were those admirable few who saved their friends (those *peu qui sauvent*). In contrast to the mass violence and indifference exemplified by the barn-burning atrocity, Bourgogne recounts several episodes of group solidarity and sacrifice.

During the retreat, an entire regiment of Hessian soldiers in Napoleon’s Grande Armée gave their lives trying to keep their beloved twenty-year-old officer, Prince Émile de Hesse-Kassel, from freezing to death. Devoted to their prince, these soldiers huddled around the young man throughout the night in an effort to shelter him from the cold: “These brave men, succumbing to the cold ... devoted themselves to saving their young prince ... Enveloped in their great white coats, they stayed awake all night, pressed the one against the other; the next day, three quarters of them were dead and buried under the snow” (118). More than mere duty to a prince and an officer, this sacrifice suggests a kind of fraternal protection of a fragile younger brother.²⁷ Despite their differences in rank and class, this older-brotherly comfort recalls the protection of a mentor, like Pertelay’s care for the wounded Marbot in Spain. And in their nighttime determination to keep their sleeping prince alive, these soldiers became, in effect, an entire regiment of bedfellows.

Later during the retreat, on the road to the Lithuanian city of Kovno (Kaunas) near the Russian border, Bourgogne witnesses a second episode of group solidarity, as men march on in the snow: “We had to place ourselves in groups, pressed close together, the one against the other, to give each other mutual support ... I remember that, as soon as a man fell, one could hear cries of: ‘Stop! A man has fallen!’” (307). In a third and more personal incident, Bourgogne owes his own life to the group effort of three companions who, toward the end of the retreat, virtually carried him to safety. “[O]verwhelmed by sleep and fatigue” after two months of marching, Bourgogne collapses and is revived by these nameless men: “It took the strength of two cannoneers and my com-panion to help me on my feet; even when I was standing on my own legs, I was still sleeping, but the cannoneer rubbed snow on my face, and ... had me swallow some brandy; this revived me a bit. They each took me by one arm, and made me march” (365). This commitment of the group to the survival of the individual attests that the collective ideals of military fraternity and Napoleonic friendship survived the otherwise perilous Russian Campaign.

In addition to these acts of group solidarity, Bourgogne’s account of individual friends during the Russian retreat—from bivouac bedfellows and intimate buddies to

hometown friends and elder mentors—provides the most compelling illustrations of Napoleonic friendship in his memoirs. While Bourgogne’s *camarade de lit* Captain Beaulieu represents the comforts of his youth, Bourgogne’s *intime ami* Sergeant Grangier reflects the kind of mature friendship born of years in each other’s company. Just as Bourgogne’s *pays* Sergeant Picart and Corporal Dumont recall the hometown pleasures of their native northern France, Bourgogne’s *mentors* Old Eliot and the handless grenadier represent the older generation of soldiers to whom he looks for guidance, inspiration, and courage. Bourgogne attributes his survival to these bedfellows, buddies, home-town friends, and mentors, as well as to the many other comrades who selflessly offered food, shelter, and a saving hand in the snow.

Bourgogne’s Bedfellow and Buddy: Beaulieu and Grangier

Long before the Russian Campaign in 1812, Bourgogne and Beaulieu had been bedfellows as young *vélites* at Fontainebleau in 1805. Seven years later, their chance reunion during the Russian retreat relies on the kind of recognition shared between people who have once known great physical and emotional intimacy: “[W]e looked at each other for a long time, like two men who had seen each other before and who were trying to recognize each other, underneath our rags and the filth of our faces ... We recognized each other and embraced one another without having even said our names” (143). Despite the ravages of hunger and fatigue, Sergeant Bourgogne and Captain Beaulieu recognize one other under their emaciated cheeks, among the masses of straggling soldiers, and amid the blinding wind and snow. Their nameless recognition is born of intimate long-term friendship, a youth spent sharing the same bunk and each other’s nighttime company. Those adolescent bonds of masculine affection are now advantages for survival. Despite their years of separation and differences in rank, Bourgogne shares with Beaulieu some of his precious rations: “[W]e shared the rice I had, like brothers ... This was the greatest proof of friendship that one could give a comrade in [such] a situation” (143). While he had been reluctant to share his potatoes with other comrades, Bourgogne now shares his precious rice with Beaulieu as a mark of his friendship and fraternity.

Like Captain Beaulieu, Sergeant Grangier had met Bourgogne at the military academy of Fontainebleau in 1805, but had not left Bourgogne’s side during the entire seven years that led them to Russia. They served together, shared the same rank, and matured into what Bourgogne calls “intimes amis” (304), intimate friends or buddies. After being separated during the confusion of the retreat, Bourgogne’s reunion with Grangier—like his reunion with Beaulieu—features embraces, the rush of recognition, and the sharing of food and comfort. But theirs was no chance encounter: Bourgogne had deliberately searched for Grangier. Lost in the mass of stragglers, these two men had longed for one another: “I set out to look for one of my friends, the one with whom I was most intimately linked, the one with whom I had never counted debts; our purses were one and the same ... We had been together

for seven years” (123–24). Here, Bourgogne characterizes his relationship with Grangier as that of a longterm couple, who have shared great intimacy, mutual finances, and multiple years together.

As Bourgogne searches for Grangier, his emotional longing is coupled by his hunger for food and warmth, comforts he associates with Grangier and knows his buddy will provide. Motivated by the “pleasure of seeing him again, the hope of having some of the rations that he had no doubt procured ... and the hope of sharing his lodging,” Bourgogne is delighted to find that Grangier was indeed “waiting for me, with a good stew to restore me and with straw to bed me” (12324, 140). Like the shared contents of their purse, Grangier freely opens his sack of rations to Bourgogne: “[H]e opened his sack and from it took a piece of cooked beef that ... he had saved for me, as well as a piece of bread” (141). Bourgogne’s complete confidence in Grangier to share provisions and provide comfort signals their total devotion to one another as “intimate friends.” In sharing both sack and purse, these buddies are a committed pair.

Bourgogne’s description of Grangier echoes the tropes of Renaissance friendship on which Enlightenment and Revolutionary fraternity as well as Napoleonic friendship are based. His longing and desperate search for Grangier recalls Montaigne’s description in his essay *On Friendship* (1580) of his beloved friend Etienne de la Boétie: “We had been searching for one another before we ever met ... And at our first meeting ... we found each other so noble, so familiar, so obligated to one another, that nothing has been as close to us since, as we are the one to the other.”²⁸ The emotional intimacy of these friendships, which Montaigne calls “so complete and so perfect” (1: 232) and which Bourgogne describes as “most intimately linked” (123–24), is coupled with their physical intimacy. Montaigne writes that with La Boétie, “Our souls have traveled so perfectly together, they have such an ardent affection for one another, and with an identical affection have discovered one another down to the very depths of our guts, so that not only do I know his like I know my own, but I would certainly entrust myself more to him than to me” (1: 237). This intestinal intimacy, described by Montaigne as his gut feeling for La Boétie, is echoed in Grangier’s attention to the alimentary needs of Bourgogne’s malnourished body.

Similarly, Bourgogne and Grangier’s shared “purse” symbolizes their material and emotional union. Like Montaigne’s and La Boétie’s joint souls, this unified purse recalls the Renaissance friendship of the two gentlemen of Perche in Marguerite de Navarre’s *L’Heptaméron* (1558–59): “In the country of Perche, there were two gentlemen who, from ... their childhood, had lived in such great and perfect friendship that they had but one heart, one house, one bed, one table, and one purse. They lived for a long time in perfect friendship ... so much so that they lived not only as two brothers, but as one man” (370). Echoing the emotional, material,

and even erotic tropes of Renaissance friendship—exemplified by Montaigne, La Boétie, and Marguerite de Navarre’s *Percheron* pair— Sergeants Grangier and Bourgogne survive the Russian retreat by focusing on the union of their material resources and the physical needs of each other’s bodies.²⁹

This commitment is most powerfully demonstrated by Grangier’s refusal to abandon Bourgogne. Wracked with dysentery, Bourgogne spends the night with Grangier in a shelter, where Bourgogne decides to die:

I was determined ... to write my will. I called my intimate friend Grangier; I told him that I knew very well that all was finished for me. I asked him to take care of several small objects to be given to my family ... He began to try and lift my spirits by reminding me of my courage in situations even more terrible than those [in which] we now found ourselves. (304)

Just as Jean-Roch Coignet had, under similar circumstances, saved his bedfellow at Vilnius, Grangier’s stern encouragement saves Bourgogne from the dangerous temptation of temporary shelter and certain death. Like Bourgogne’s bedfellow Beaulieu, Grangier shares with his buddy Bourgogne an unapologetically physical and emotional intimacy, and a total commitment to one another.

While Sergeant Bourgogne speaks of Captain Beaulieu as his bedfellow and Sergeant Grangier as his buddy, these terms are not mutually exclusive. For many Napoleonic soldiers, the *camarade de lit* developed into an *intime ami*, and many buddies like Grangier and Bourgogne also became bedfellows. Still others formed intimate ties with hometown friends whom they referred to as their *pays*. Even when these categories of Napoleonic friendship overlap, the *pays* is often distinguished in military memoirs by a particularly painful duty: for both emotional and practical reasons, the *pays* must often play the macabre role as his friend’s executor, the one entrusted—in the event of his comrade’s death—to deliver any final words and effects to family back in France. While Bourgogne tries to dictate his last will to his *intime ami*, many others confide their few possessions and final messages to a trusted *pays*, whom they hope will one day return to their hometowns, villages, and families. In this way, a soldier’s *pays* is both his first and last friend, the familiar face of childhood and home, and the bearer of his comrade’s memory.

Bourgogne’s *Pays*: Picart and Dumont

Like Captain Beaulieu and Sergeant Grangier, Sergeant Picart had known Bourgogne since their training at Fontainebleau. While Bourgogne shared his bed with Beaulieu, and his seven-year service with Grangier, he shares memories of home with Picart. Hailing from northern France, Picart of Picardy refers repeatedly to Bourgogne of neighboring Flanders as his hometown friend or *pays* (203, 367). As a character in Bourgogne’s memoirs, Picart is a larger-than-life regimental clown,

providing comic relief amid the despair of the Russian retreat. Picart makes a theatrical entrance into the narrative by emerging from an abandoned caisson—which he morbidly calls “my coffin” (189)—where he had gone either to hide or seek shelter. Sergeant Picart searches for food and shelter with equally dramatic and comic flare, speaking bawdily of a hometown character nicknamed Mama Sausage, impersonating a colonel to commandeer a warm shelter, and posing as the grandson of a Strasbourg rabbi in order to enjoy a shabbat meal in a hospitable Polish *shtetl*.³⁰

Because Picart injects such singular comic relief into the narrative, some critics suspect that he may have been invented.³¹ Even Picart’s name seems to suggest Bourgogne’s attempt at regional caricature, exploiting their synecdotal names to set them apart as symbols of Picardy, Burgundy, and France itself.³² If such suspicions are true, Bourgogne’s fictional characterization of Picart would in fact mark an interesting development between Napoleonic memoir and fiction. Real or embellished, Picart is Bourgogne’s hero of hometown support. When juxtaposed with the macabre deathbed responsibilities of the military *pays*, Picart’s uncommon talent at boosting morale demonstrates both the comic comfort and tragic duties of Napoleonic friendship.

As with Beaulieu and Grangier, Picart is reunited with Bourgogne during several chance reunions in the mass confusion of the Russian retreat: “Imagine my surprise and joy in recognizing this ghost ... one of my oldest comrades, named Picart: Picart by name and Picart by origin ... my old comrade with whom I had first entered military service” (189–90). Later in Vilnius, Picart and Bourgogne are again reunited: “I turned, and to my great surprise I saw Picart, who threw himself around my neck and embraced me, crying with delight ... [T]hey had told him that I was dead or taken prisoner” (277). Later again at Wilbaden, Picart and Bourgogne are reunited for a third time when Bourgogne is on the verge of collapse: “ ‘Good God! It’s my *pays*, my sergeant!’ Without responding, I fell onto the straw, exhausted with fatigue and hunger ... Picart ran to his pack, took out a bottle of brandy, and forced me to take a few drops, which revived me a bit” (367). As Bourgogne explains, these three reunions with his *pays* Picart offer the same embraces, tears, and material comforts as his reunions with his bedfellow Beaulieu and his buddy Grangier. More than mere comfort, this hometown care offers the hope of renewed strength and survival.

Even when this hope gives out, the *pays* can be counted on for deathbed support. Facing their own mortality, Picart and Bourgogne dictate to one another their last wills. When Picart shows Bourgogne where his money is sewn into his uniform, Bourgogne reciprocates: “All right ... another will is written! For the same reason, my old friend, I will make out my own. I have eight hundred francs, in hundred-franc pieces. You can have them, if it please God that I die” (224). Although Bourgogne and Picart attempt to remain light-hearted and unsentimental, these

monetary bequests—like the shared purse between Bourgogne and Grangier—represent a solemn mutual trust. Other *pays* and *camarades de lit* must face even grimmer bequests. During the retreat, Bourgogne witnesses an artillery soldier stripping the clothes off a dying man. Initially horrified by this act of cruelty, Bourgogne soon realizes that “it was his bedfellow: better that he have his [comrade’s] things than another” (120).

As trusted *pays*, Picart and Bourgogne also face such grim responsibilities. When he later rejoins his regiment and is asked to deliver the crucifix and pocket-watch of another *pays* named Rougeau to the young man’s mother back in France, Picart promises “if I have the good will to return to Picardy, I will fulfill the last wishes of my comrade” (248). Here, the usually comic Picart takes on the weight of a more somber mission. Similarly, Bourgogne is later asked by the dying Sergeant Poton to deliver letters to his mother in France: “he gave me his bundle of letters, telling me that he counted on me. I promise him to do what he asked” (331). Like a marriage contract or ceremonial oath, this ritual between dying soldiers and their *pays* incorporates solemn promises, exchanges of personal effects, and symbolic embraces. Before leaving his dying *pays* Rougeau, Picart seals his promise with a solemn embrace: “Before I left him, he made me promise not to forget him; we embraced and parted” (332). In this way, the *pays* represents both hometown cousin and deathbed confidant, comforter and executor, mourner and widower.

While Sergeant Picart plays the role of Bourgogne’s comic *pays*, Corporal Dumont represents, for Bourgogne, the more tragic duties of hometown responsibility. Months earlier, during the days leading up to Napoleon’s occupation of Moscow, Bourgogne had met Corporal Dumont on the eve of the decisive battle at Borodino. Known to the French as the *bataille de la Moskowa*, the battle of Borodino was an unmitigated bloodbath. Napoleon’s Grande Armée and the Russian Imperial Army suffered over 95,000 dead and wounded during a single day of combat on September 7, 1812.³³ As late as 1991, Russian farmers were still dredging human remains from this notorious battlefield.³⁴ Located only 100 kilometers from Moscow, Borodino was a strategically important victory for Napoleon, since it allowed him to march unimpeded on the Russian capital. But in terms of human life, Borodino was Napoleon’s worst massacre to date, claiming more than twice the number of lives as the equally dubious “victory” over the Russians at Eylau in 1807. With such a staggering loss of life and numbers that defy comprehension, Bourgogne recounts the battle of Borodino on a smaller scale with a heartbreaking story about a dozen of his *pays*.

Several days before the battle, Bourgogne had met Corporal Dumont and eleven other soldiers from their hometown of Condé-sur-l’Escaut, located in northeastern France, near the Belgian border. For a tired, hungry, and battleweary soldier, the comfort of meeting someone from his hometown, department, or province was a rare

and great comfort. Bourgogne's chance meeting with not one but a dozen young men from Condé is an extraordinary event, one that moves the toughened sergeant and is cause for celebration. Equally delighted to meet one of their *pays*, these twelve countrymen invite Bourgogne to spend an evening by the bivouac fire sharing letters and news from Condé: "We spent the night drinking the wine of a Russian general and talking about home. Day was breaking when cannon-fire put an end to our conversation. We returned to our regiments, in anticipation of another occasion to see each other. These poor boys did not know then that, several days later, eleven of them would be dead" (33).

Following the battle, Bourgogne meets the badly wounded Dumont who explains how he had found all eleven of their beloved *pays* on the "field of carnage" where "[t]hey were all still lying ... their limbs broken, their bodies shredded by bullets" (41). Rather than attempting to recount the battle in great epic detail, as Victor Hugo would later describe Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862), Bourgogne offers a more human and horrific Borodino, like Stendhal's version of Waterloo in *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1830). In lieu of Romantic heroism, Bourgogne offers Romantic melancholy and Realist carnage, as he mourns his twelve countrymen. Though few in comparison with the near hundred thousand soldiers who died that day, these twelve young men represent Bourgogne's entire sense of *pays*, country, and family.

After this sad meeting, Bourgogne never again saw Dumont, who likely died from his wounds and infection during the weeks following Borodino or during the deadly retreat from Russia two months later. In a great reversal, these twelve young apostles offered Bourgogne the wine of their last supper before handing themselves over to slaughter. With no letters, messages, or personal effects to bring back to their families in Condé, Bourgogne makes a gift of this story, a moving literary monument, which he concludes: "This is what Dumont, a beloved son of Condé, recounted ... And thus perished twelve young men of Condé, in the memorable battle of Borodino, on September 7, 1812" (41). Devastated, Bourgogne offers these dead young men as his own personal Borodino. In describing the loss of his *pays*, his countrymen, Bourgogne communicates the overwhelming loss of an entire nation.

Bourgogne's Mentors: Old Eliot and the Handless Grenadier

While Bourgogne openly grieves the death of the young, he is also moved by the suffering, enfeeblement, and emasculation of the older soldiers in Napoleon's ravaged army. Despite their impressive combat record and tough military exterior, many of these experienced soldiers succumbed to exhaustion, malnutrition, and the cold. After a dozen years of war, multiple wounds, and scores of battles, many of these wizened warriors were now reduced to madmen, like King Lear on the heath, shivering and crying in the snow. Like Marbot's mentor Pertelay, many of these older men had served as drill sergeants, regimental instructors, authority figures, and

role models in the ranks of the Grande Armée. For younger soldiers like Bourgonne, the demise of these older soldiers represents not only the death of admired mentors, but the loss of an entire generation of Napoleon's founding foot soldiers, and the emasculation of his once virile army.

Many of the older soldiers in Napoleon's elite Imperial Guard had been with him during his Egyptian Campaign back in 1799. These combat-hardened veterans of a dozen military campaigns had followed Napoleon across the North African desert and the Iberian peninsula, the Pyrenees and the Alps, the Rhône and the Rhine, and countless European battlefields before setting out to cross the plains of Russia. Having marched on Rome and Cairo, Vienna and Berlin, Madrid and Lisbon, Warsaw and Moscow, these men were accustomed to the hardships of war. Their suffering and decimation during the Russian retreat must have seemed, in the eyes of their adversaries, like just retribution for their countless acts of aggression, violence, and cruelty during the Napoleonic Wars. But for the older soldiers of the Grande Armée, this Russian death march was a great blow to their morale and manhood. In his account of the Russian Campaign, the Comte de Ségur explains how it became increasingly clear on the road from Moscow that this withdrawal was no mere retreat, but the panicked flight of a weakened army and a defeated emperor: "[T]he retreat became flight; and it was quite a new spectacle seeing Napoleon forced to give up and flee!" (247). Many felt that, as the ultimate mentor of the Grande Armée, Napoleon failed his men in Russia by giving up Moscow, fleeing in retreat, and abandoning his armies in the snow. As the Grande Armée lost its leader and devastated troops, its surviving soldiers lost their strength and dignity.

For Bourgonne, this emasculation is personified by two older mentors—the handless grenadier on the bridge and a sympathetic old soldier named Eliot, whose advanced age and acute suffering during the Russian retreat represent the deterioration of Napoleon's older guard and the decline of what had once been the young, vibrant, and victorious Grande Armée. Saved from an icy death by the helping hand of the handless grenadier, Bourgonne is grateful to this seasoned soldier, whose selfless assistance and battle-hardened perseverance are models of Napoleonic mentorship. But Bourgonne is also moved by the physical suffering and decay of the old grenadier, who had lost more than his hands to the cold. Unable to undo his breeches, he asks Bourgonne to help him “ ‘satisfy a natural need which I have not been able to do, for lack of a second person to help me’ ... Right away, we moved several feet to the side of the road, and ... I tried, not without pain, to undo his pants” (315–16). Having lost the use of his frostbitten fingers, the old grenadier has also lost his ability to urinate on his own and must depend on Bourgonne's discretion and tact in helping him manipulate both his buttoned pants and his penis. Emasculated by this loss of masculine control, adult independence, and human dignity, the old grenadier must now look to his comrades to help him manage this

most private and intimate of tasks.³⁵

Following the handless grenadier, Bourgogne is equally moved by the suffering and decline of Père Eliot, the oldest surviving soldier of his regiment, whom he discovers crying alone in the snow: “Old Eliot ... had been on campaign in Egypt. He was in a pitiful state; both feet and ears were frozen ... his beard and mustache were stiff with icicles. As I looked at him, I was so moved that I could not speak” (405). Bourgogne’s silence at the sight of Old Eliot demonstrates his shock and disbelief in the face of such appalling misery. After marching more than 1200 kilometers from Moscow to Poland, the survivors of the Grande Armée were continually menaced by the unrelenting pursuit of Russian forces. Having survived so much only to die at the very end, Old Eliot expresses his rage and helplessness through tears: “Ah, my dear friend ... I have been a soldier for twenty years and have never cried, but today I cry, more out of rage than misery ... for you see that I am half dead with cold and hunger ... I have marched over four hundred leagues in the snow from Moscow, without being able to rest; my feet and hands and even my nose are frozen” (406). Weak and disabled, Old Eliot’s strength has run out of him, like the “large tears” that “flow from the eyes of the old warrior” (406).

Moved by Old Eliot’s tears, Bourgogne, Grangier, and Picart secure him food, shelter, and transport. Like the title character of Balzac’s *Le Père Goriot* (1834–35), who dies in the presence of the young Rastignac and Bianchon, the miserable Père Eliot might have ended his life alone in the snow, if not for the comfort of these three young sergeants. Again, these gestures of military solidarity attest to the lifesaving care of Napoleonic friendship. But the humiliating defeat of the Grande Armée in Russia—exemplified by this enfeebled military mentor—presaged the future disaster at Waterloo in 1815 and the fall of Napoleon and the Empire.



THE MEMOIRS OF General Marbot, Captain Coignet, and Sergeant Bourgogne are an homage to their bedfellows, buddies, hometown friends, and mentors, and a literary monument to Napoleonic friendship. By committing their friends to memory and memoir, they honor their fallen comrades and celebrate the fraternal and affectionate care that helped them survive the ravages of combat and defeat. Bourgogne seems to speak for all three memoirists when he concludes, “It is not out of vanity or to speak of myself that I write my memoirs. I only wanted to recall the memory of this gigantic campaign which was so disastrous for us, and of the soldiers, my fellow citizens, who shared this campaign with me” (407). Like the genre of memoir itself, literary memorial creates many questions about exaggeration. But it is precisely this ambivalence between testimony and fiction that underscores the compellingly literary character of the Napoleonic military memoir.

It is thus not surprising that Balzac’s veterans—in *Colonel Chabert* (1832) and *The Country Doctor* (1833)—resemble Marbot’s and Bourgogne’s comrades.

Balzac's Commandant Genestas is haunted by the same barn-burning atrocities as Sergeant Bourgogne. Like General Marbot, Balzac's Colonel Chabert is stripped and left for dead on the battlefield at Eylau. And like Bourgogne's Old Eliot, Balzac's ageing veterans Gondrin and Goguelat tell tales of their Egyptian adventures and Russian suffering with the Grande Armée. These similarities draw attention to the simultaneous production and publication of Napoleonic memoir and fiction in post-1815 France. While memoirists like Bourgogne may be prone to literary license with larger-than-life characters like Sergeant Picart, novelists like Balzac sought advice from veterans like Commandant Périolas, who may have inspired Balzac's Commandant Genestas and Colonel Chabert. In this sense, one could argue that the memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne belong as much to the literary as to the military tradition in nineteenth-century France.

Although their memoirs recount the wars of the Consulate and Empire, Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne wrote and published their manuscripts long after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and exile to St. Helena in 1815, and his death in 1821. Based on notes and letters from as far back as 1812, their memoirs were completed between 1835 and 1857 and published between 1851 and 1898.³⁶ Spanning the entire nineteenth century, these texts demonstrate how Napoleonic memory persisted long after the disappearance of Napoleon, especially among veterans for whom the nineteenth century was, amid continual regime change, a Napoleonic century. The lengthy production of these memoirs also calls attention to three important transitions: the political transition from the Consulate and Empire (1799–1815) to the Restoration (1815–30) and July Monarchy (1830–48); the military transition reducing Napoleon's fêted soldiers to discharged and disfavored veterans; and the mythologizing transition from Napoleon's life to the Napoleonic legend.

Jean Tulard argues that the Napoleonic legend was born with the death of Bonaparte in 1821 and the subsequent publication in 1823 of Las Cases's best-selling *Memorial of Saint Helena*, a "masterpiece of Napoleonic propaganda" that launched the Napoleonic legend and initiated a century of literary production on Bonaparte, the Grande Armée, and First Empire.³⁷ In addition to more than fifteen hundred Napoleonic memoirs, a prolific quantity of Napoleonic fiction was published during the Restoration, July Monarchy, Second Republic (1848–51), and Second Empire (1852–70), including novels by Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac.

Napoleonic fiction casts light on the miserable fate of many imperial veterans and their continued dependence on Napoleonic friendship following 1815. While Stendhal and Hugo honor the last soldiers of the Empire in their literary monuments to Waterloo, Balzac sympathizes with veterans who must rely on one another amid the social isolation, political disfavor, and physical infirmity of their disgraceful and premature retirement. In Stendhal's and Hugo's Waterloos, military latecomers and wannabes struggle to understand the fraternal intimacies and responsibilities of

Napoleonic friendship. In Balzac's military fiction, Napoleonic friendship persists among veteran soldiers who provide mutual comfort and companionship to endure the humiliations, neglect, and abuse of post-1815 France.

PART II



Waterloo
1815



Wannabes & Waterloo Stendhal's Napoleonic Latecomers

In the spring of 1800, amid the snowcapped peaks of the western Swiss Alps, seventeen-year-old Henry Brulard prepared to cross the St. Bernard Pass in the footsteps of his hero Napoleon. As the invading French army descended into Italy, streaming down the mountains like alpine meltwater, the naive young man looked on, thrilled with this spectacular military entrance: “I was drunk with happiness, crazy with joy. Here began an enthusiastic period of perfect happiness ... when I became a dragoon in the 6th regiment.”¹ From a safe distance high above his very first battle, Brulard's military baptism by fire increases his Napoleonic enthusiasm. In a flush of excitement, he describes how “The terrible cannon-fire from these high cliffs into this narrow valley made me crazy with emotion” (422). Drunk on adventure and confident of future glory, Brulard later recalls, “This was the first time I discovered that sensation which I have felt many times since: the feeling of finding myself between the columns of Napoleon's army” (427). Here, in the pages of his autobiographical *Life of Henry Brulard* (1835–36), Stendhal recounts the adolescent thrill of a military debut not unlike his own.

Born Marie-Henri Beyle in 1783, Stendhal served in Napoleon's Grande Armée during both the second Italian Campaign in 1800, when he was a lieutenant and General Michaud's aide-de-camp, and the Russian Campaign in 1812–13, where he survived the disastrous retreat from Moscow. By 1812, the early enthusiasm of Henry Brulard had ceded to the battle-weary cynicism of Henri Beyle. In a letter from Smolensk, Stendhal describes “our profound misery” as he and a convoy of fifteen hundred wounded men marched for eighteen consecutive days in the “muddy abyss” produced by blocked roads and burned bridges: “I cursed the devil for the foolish idea of coming to Russia. In the evenings, after marching all day ... we bivouacked and slept a little in the freezing cold. On October 24, while building our camp-fires, we were surrounded by a swarm of Russian soldiers who began to shoot at us. Complete disorder.”²

While Henry Brulard romanticized the Alpine peaks and distant cannon fire in Italy, Henri Beyle struggles through freezing snow, debilitating mud, and enemy fire in Russia. Brulard's version of Napoleon's Italian invasion resembles the heroic

iconography of Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Saint Bernard* (1800) in which a gallant Napoleon mounts the Alps on a wild steed, rather than the more realistic representation in Hippolyte (Paul) Delaroche's *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps* (1848–50) in which a less enthusiastic Bonaparte descends the mountain, bundled against the cold, on an unheroic mule. In contrast to Brulard's admiration of the well-ordered Napoleonic columns in Italy, Beyle laments the complete disorder of the calamitous retreat in Russia. Amid the chaos of this epic disaster, however, Henri Beyle bears witness to the compassion of fellow comrades and the care of intimate friends. Following the Russian attack on October 24, Stendhal writes, "I bunked with five or six wounded colonels, whom I didn't even know a week earlier and who had become my intimate friends during the retreat" (681). Echoing Sergeant Bourgogne, Stendhal speaks of these bedfellows as *intimes amis*, insisting again that "[w]e all became intimate friends" (681).

Like Henry Brulard, Henri Beyle began his military career in 1800 as an eager and dutiful soldier, but concluded his Napoleonic service between 1813 and 1814 as a disillusioned and broken officer. Weakened by the Russian retreat, Beyle continued to serve during the Saxon Campaign and took part in Napoleon's victory at Bautzen in May 1813, but spent much of the remaining months of the Empire convalescing in Milan and Paris. In his *Journal* (1801–17), Stendhal describes one of his last engagements in Saxony as representative of mass confusion in combat. His account of the battle of Bautzen recalls the faraway perspective of Henry Brulard's first battle in Italy, but also the total disorder of Henri Beyle's ambushed regiment in Russia: "From atop this slope, we could see Bautzen perfectly, that is, in terms of what one can in fact see of a battle, which is nothing."³ In this brief entry, Stendhal summarizes his thirteen years of Napoleonic service—from May 1800 to May 1813, from the Alpine heights in Italy to the Bautzen heights in Saxony—as an absurd exercise in chaos. Amid the violent, deafening, smoke-filled confusion of battle, Stendhal describes a world that is incomprehensible and meaningless, except for the friendships that grow from shared terror, suffering, and survival. And in recounting his own stories of combat confusion and Napoleonic friendship, Stendhal outlines a model for his future military fiction.

As a veteran of Napoleon's armies, Stendhal intimately knew the tedium of military life, the perils of combat, and the intimacy of soldiers. His participation in the Napoleonic Wars no doubt contributed to his open admiration of the Emperor in his biographical *Life of Napoleon* (1817–18) and his novels *The Red and the Black* (1830) and *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839). Published after his death in 1842, Stendhal's hagiographic *Life of Napoleon* praises Bonaparte as "the greatest man to appear in the world since Caesar ... the most striking man since Alexander."⁴ Stendhal is critical of Napoleon's overreaching ambition, but nonetheless admires him as a leader of great ability, "a man graced with extraordinary talents and

dangerous ambition” (19).

Despite his admiration of Napoleon, Stendhal does not glorify war. In his move from military non-fiction to fiction, (auto)biography to novel, *Life of Henry Brulard* and *Life of Napoleon* to *The Red and the Black* and *The Charterhouse of Parma*, Stendhal exposes the chaos and suffering of modern warfare. Unlike many military memoirists who glorify Napoleonic combat, Stendhal combines his own wartime memories and the emerging discourse of nineteenth-century literary Realism to recreate an inglorious and horrific Waterloo. As a veteran, Stendhal speaks with authority on both the seduction and suffering of war. As a novelist, he dramatizes the transformation in his military characters from Napoleonic admiration to disillusionment, hero-worship to disgust, militarist idealism to combat realism. This transformation reflects the progression of Stendhal’s own attitudes on Napoleon, from blind admiration during his youth, and disillusionment during the Napoleonic Wars, to measured respect during the late Restoration and July Monarchy.⁵ Like many of Napoleon’s soldiers and veterans, Stendhal fell in and out of love with the Emperor, in a kind of turbulent affair that gave birth to the military characters in Stendhal’s Napoleonic fiction.

Stendhal’s admiration for Napoleon permeates *The Red and the Black* and *The Charterhouse of Parma*, where the young protagonists Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo dream of becoming soldiers despite the anti-Bonapartism of the Restoration and the July Monarchy. Echoing the Italian invasion in his *Life of Henry Brulard* and the classical comparisons in his *Life of Napoleon*, *The Charterhouse of Parma* opens by praising Napoleon’s military and imperial power: “On May 15, 1796, General Bonaparte made his entrance into Milan at the head of that young army ... and showed the world that after so many centuries, Caesar and Alexander had a successor.”⁶ Despite Stendhal’s admiration of Napoleon, Julien and Fabrice live in a post-1815 world that despises the fallen conqueror. Eager young men born too late to serve, they must leave behind their adolescent military dreams in order to navigate this new world where (like the Ancien Régime world on which Restoration and July Monarchy privileges are based) the monarchy and the Church are the primary paths to power. Having joined the clergy in their *Bildungsroman* search for success, both Julien and Fabrice must sublimate their desire to live and serve in the company of military men.

Amid their adolescent fantasies of military fraternity, Julien and Fabrice are thus Napoleonic latecomers who only come to understand late in their lives the mutual suffering and comfort of Napoleonic friendship. *The Red and the Black* can be thought of as an allegory of the military closet in which Julien’s struggle with self-fashioning symbolizes the repression of his military identity. From his lifelong obsession with Napoleon to his beloved military mentor (a retired surgeon major), fraternal military buddy (Norbert de La Mole), and war widow(er) (Fouqué), Julien

represents an entire generation of Napoleonic wannabes during the Restoration. In a similar way, *The Charterhouse of Parma* can be understood as a late-blooming soldier's disastrous search for Napoleonic friendship. Fabrice's failed quest for paternal and fraternal approval at Waterloo results from his inability to comprehend the terms of military intimacy. A watershed innovation in the development of the war narrative, Stendhal's Waterloo episode figures Fabrice as Napoleon's last recruit and youngest veteran, whose confusion in battle reflects the chaos and absurdity of war. Despite his desire to serve Napoleon and his fellow soldiers, Fabrice naively fails to understand the kind of hard-earned affection and friendship forged between men during extended combat and the shared long-term suffering of the Napoleonic Wars.

The Red and the Black (1830)

Julien Sorel's strategic choice of the priest's black cassock over the soldier's red uniform represents the sublimation of his military desire in a post-Napoleonic world. Forced to pursue an ecclesiastical career over a military one, Julien represses his great admiration of Napoleon, his primary identification with soldiers, and his deep desire to serve among them. Literally and figuratively, Sorel hides his uniform and military fantasies under the black folds of his cassock. His preoccupation with clothing and costume is thus the outer manifestation of an internal struggle. Inasmuch as Julien uses the soutane as a means to social and military conquest, *The Red and the Black* can be read as a personal account of the Napoleonic military closet.⁷

Julien has dreamed his entire life of becoming a soldier: "Since his childhood, the sight of certain dragoons of the 6th regiment—with their long coats and black horse-hair helmets, returning from Italy and attaching their horses to ... his father's house—had made him crazy for the military."⁸ Imprisoned in his childhood home and infatuated with the same 6th regiment dragoons of Napoleon's Italian forces as Henry Brulard, Julien loves the uniform beauty and freedom that these soldiers represent. Significantly, Julien's favorite books are Las Cases's *Memorial of Saint Helena* (1823), the *Bulletins of the Grande Armée* (1812–13), and Rousseau's *Confessions* (1765–70), a trilogy that "completed his Koran. He would have given his life for these three books" (66). Couched in terms of Roman Catholic confession and Islamic scripture, Julien's veneration of Napoleon takes on the tone of military and religious devotion, or the *séidisme* of General Junot for Bonaparte in Egypt. As a Romantic hero, Julien empathizes with Rousseau's pre-Romantic solitude, the Grande Armée's struggle in the frozen landscape of Russia, and Napoleon's isolation in exile on Saint Helena.

In contrast to Julien's violent father—who, while beating Julien, also desecrates his beloved copy of the *Memorial of Saint Helena*—Julien's early mentor is an

imperial veteran who cultivates the young man's passion for Napoleonic history: "Despised by everyone as a weakling, Julien had adored this old surgeon-major, who ... taught him Latin and history, that is to say all that he knew of history: the 1796 campaign in Italy. Before he died, he had bequeathed [to Julien] his Légion d'Honneur cross, ... his military pension, and thirty or forty books, whose most precious volume was just knocked into the gutter [by Julien's father]" (64). Unmarried and alone, the veteran surgeon-major finds comfort in Julien who, equally alone and misunderstood, is the perfect companion. Like a better father or older lover, this solitary old veteran nurtures the young Sorel and entrusts to him his life's legacy: the decoration, pension, and chronicles of his Napoleonic past. As the officer's beneficiary, Julien cherishes this military inheritance on which he hopes to build his future. From his fantasies and books to his military mentor, Julien's first friends are soldiers.

Despite his admiration for Napoleon and the Grande Armée, Julien is an anachronism. In the anti-Bonapartist world of the Restoration and the July Monarchy, Napoleon is an aberration, a memory, a thing of the past to be thrown in the gutter, like Julien's copy of the *Memorial of Saint Helena*. The Napoleonic soldiers whom Julien admires are now old men like his dear surgeon-major who, when they die, are buried and forgotten. Childless, these veterans often have no one to whom they can bequeath their memories. For the surgeon-major, Julien thus represents the perpetuation of his memory and a link to the future. But for Julien, the death of his beloved officer—like the Emperor's death in 1821—severs all ties to the Napoleonic past. Having lost his military mentor, Julien now longs for other soldier comrades.

Napoleonic Wannabe

If Julien is an anachronism, he is not an anomaly. Despite the anti-Bonapartist political landscape during the decades of his youth, Julien's adoration of Napoleon and his soldiers reflects the neo-Bonapartism of an entire generation that grew up during the Restoration and July Monarchy hearing heroic tales about the Grande Armée from the mouths and memoirs of Napoleonic veterans. Like Julien, who "listened with delight to the old surgeon-major's stories of the battles of Lodi, Arcole, and Rivoli" (70), this younger generation matured in an age that officially condemned Napoleon, but which admired the more glorious moments of his Empire. Too young to have known the sacrifices and suffering of the Napoleonic Wars, these young men often idealized the imperial past.⁹

In addition to Napoleon's victories, Julien admires the Emperor's system of military meritocracy. During the Empire, Julien would have been the kind of young man who, like Jean Lannes, could have escaped the suffocation of his abusive family and provincial village by joining Napoleon's armies. Dreaming of how he might have distinguished himself in battle and become an officer, Sorel reasons:

“Bonaparte, an obscure and penniless lieutenant, had become the master of the world with his sword. This idea consoled him” (71). When he sets off to pursue his studies, Julien regrets that he is headed to train at the seminary and not the garrison of Besançon: “There was a draft from which Julien was exempted as a seminarian. This fact moved him profoundly. Here, the chance of a lifetime was gone forever, when twenty years ago a heroic life would have awaited him” (284). This contrast between the garrison and seminary underscores the novel’s binary oppositions between red and black, army and Church, past and present, and thus the tension between Julien’s private desires and public ambitions.

In his realization of these competing ideologies, Julien comes to understand that he must answer another calling: “When Bonaparte was called on, France was afraid of being invaded; military merit was necessary and in fashion. Today, one sees forty-year-old priests with one-hundred-thousand franc incomes, that is to say three times more than Napoleon’s generals ... One has to be a priest” (71–72). In this play between being and believing, *être* and *prêtre*, Julien understands that he must join the clergy to succeed in 1830s France. Unable to conquer the world with a uniform, he will do so with a cassock: “All of a sudden, Julien stopped talking about Napoleon and announced his plans to become a priest” (70). Rather than a spiritual calling or religious vocation, Julien’s entry into the Church is a calculated career move, a wardrobe change or fashion statement, a literal in-vestment in his future.¹⁰

In the strict social order of the Restoration and July Monarchy, Julien gains access to power through his intellectual conquest of the clergy and erotic conquest of both the rural bourgeoisie and Parisian nobility. The literary forerunner to Balzac’s Eugène de Rastignac and Lucien de Rubempré, Julien escapes his miserable origins by pursuing a career of clerical study and social seduction. A skilled Latinist, he is admitted to progressively higher levels of society, as the tutor to the children of a provincial bourgeois mayor, as a seminarian in the regional capital of Besançon, and as the personal secretary to a Parisian marquis. Beyond his professional progress, Julien raises the stakes for personal success (and ultimate failure) through his attempted seduction of the provincial mayor’s wife Madame de Rênal, and the Parisian marquis’ daughter Mathilde de La Mole.

Despite his initial success, this ambitious ascent—via loveless affairs, sadistic professors, and unsympathetic employers—is a solitary project of self-abnegation for the young Sorel. Repressing his desire for the soldier’s sword, Julien mounts the social hierarchy by trying on other accessories of phallic power, from the tutor’s pen and the bishop’s miter to the lover’s gun. Only at the pinnacle of his power—after many costume changes as tutor, seminarian, secretary, and lover—can Julien re-fashion himself in the uniform of a soldier. Until then, he hides his military passion under clerical camouflage. Even in the guise of a priest, however, Julien is unable to conceal his inner soldier.

When a foreign king visits his hometown, Verrières, to pay homage to the relic of Saint Clement, Julien exchanges his cassock for a borrowed uniform and serves as a member of the honor guard. With his shiny epaulettes and spirited horse, “he was at the pinnacle of joy. His happiness knew no bounds as he trotted by the old ramparts, and the noise of the small cannon made his horse jump ... [F]rom this moment, he felt like a hero. It was as if he were Napoleon’s ordnance officer attacking a battery” (165). Like Henry Brulard in 1800 Italy, Julien is euphoric, playing dress-up as a toy soldier, engrossed in a Napoleonic fantasy. Far from an officer leading an attack, Julien is a pretend soldier in a ridiculous parade for a second-rate king, on a pilgrimage to worship a minor relic of an obscure saint in an insignificant town. After his brief stint as an honor guard, Julien must again put on his cassock: “Sighing, he took off his beautiful sky-blue uniform, saber, and epaulettes and put on his threadbare black suit” (165–66). Exchanging the uniform for the cassock, Julien takes social roles on and off with this change of wardrobe, trading military ordnance (weapons) for ecclesiastical ordinance (sacraments), and replacing one can(n)on with another.

Though he still longs to be a soldier, Julien is momentarily drawn to the campy fashion and social status of the young and wealthy Bishop of Agde who, during the foreign king’s visit to Verrières, entrusts Julien with his miter: “He felt proud to carry it ... he held it with respect” (169). Having traded his soldier’s sword for the bishop’s crown, Julien thrills at the feel of this new phallic power in his hands. He takes seriously the bishop’s warning that Julien “should not hold it down below your eyes as if it were an officer’s hat” and is mesmerized by this substitution of clerical for military power: “His ambition awakened by the bishop’s youth ... he no longer dreamed of Napoleon and military glory” (170–71). While Julien laments having to wear a priest’s cassock, he comes to understand that, during the Restoration, this is how one must dress for success: “[M]e, condemned to wear this sad black suit forever! Twenty years earlier, I would have worn a uniform! A man like me was either killed or a general by thirty-six ... Now, it is true, with this black suit, I will have one hundred thousand francs a year when I’m forty ... I know well enough to choose the uniform of my generation” (439). In terms of rapid advancement, Julien understands that the Bishop of Agde is the Marshal Lannes of the post-Napoleonic world. Blinded by ambition and seduced by the bishop’s youth, wealth, and phallic power, Julien resigns himself to the fact that the cassock is the new uniform of success.

Trying to tailor his military dreams to clerical garb, Julien reasons that “[u]nder Napoleon, I would have been a sergeant; among these future priests, I will become a great vicar” (258). But under the hem of his cassock, he continues to bear the marks of a soldier. Having changed back into black after his toy soldier parade, he neglects to see that “under the long folds of his cassock, one could make out the spurs of an honor guard” (166). Julien’s inner soldier refuses to be covered by his outer cleric.

Despite the momentary alterations of his ambition or his spurious quest to be a priest, Julien cannot hide his spurs or conceal the very fabric of his military identity.

While the Church launches his career, Julien learns that seduction and marriage can offer even greater wealth and status. Carefully hiding his admiration of Napoleon, Julien nonetheless uses military tactics to gain social and erotic entry into the rural bourgeoisie and Parisian nobility. Julien regards his employment in the Rênal household as a kind of military campaign. When offered a raise in salary, he boasts, “I won a battle ... I finally won a battle” (118) and then compares Napoleon’s rapid rise with his own advancement: “That was Napoleon’s destiny; will it be his own?” (119). Julien’s seduction of both Madame de Rênal and Mathilde de La Mole plays out in his imagination as scenes of military conquest. Faced with Madame de Rênal’s growing affections, Julien consults his Napoleonic library for advice on strategy: “He shut himself in his room, and gave himself over to the pleasure of reading about the exploits of his heroes ... he had forgotten while reading the *Bulletins of the Grande Armée* all of his [own] victories of the day before. He told himself, while descending to the salon: I must tell this woman that I love her” (109).

Julien treats the salon and boudoir like battlefields on which to conquer Madame de Rênal. Drawing again on military terms, Julien describes her as someone “raised in the enemy camp” with whom he must “have the courage to wage war but on his own field of battle” (155–56). Even on leaving her bedroom, Julien is described as “a soldier returning from inspection or parade” (148). His seduction of Madame de Rênal thus becomes a misogynist victory parade, a macho military celebration of erotic conquest.¹¹ For the social-climbing Sorel, Mathilde and Madame de Rênal are vehicles to social success. Here again, Julien substitutes one desire for another: “His love was still ambition: it was a joy for him—a poor, miserable, detested creature—to possess a beautiful and noble woman” (152). Even when Julien shoots Madame de Rênal, like an enemy on the field of battle, it is unclear if this is an act of passion or professional revenge for ruining his marital chances with Mathilde de La Mole and thus his social entry into the nobility.

Long before Julien leaves Madame de Rênal and seduces Mathilde de La Mole, he harbors a secret obsession for a phantom lover from his past. In a fit of jealous rage, Madame de Rênal seizes from Julien a hidden portrait of her suspected rival: “So Julien is in love, and I am holding here the portrait of the woman he loves!” (114). As she gazes at the portrait, “in the throes of all the horrors of jealousy” (114), Madame de Rênal discovers that her rival is not another woman but Napoleon, who inspires Julien’s deepest admiration and most private affections. Having been outed as a closet Bonapartist, Julien worries how this portrait reveals the “excess of my admiration” and “feelings of love” (114) for the Emperor. Julien is literally framed by this portrait, which reveals his most cherished secret: that his first love is

Napoleon.

When Julien becomes the Marquis de La Mole's secretary in Paris, his passion for the Emperor is again rekindled as he sees Paris through Napoleonic eyes: "I need not explain Julien's emotions at seeing Malmaison. He wept ... A profound distrust kept him from admiring the Paris of the day; he was only moved by the monuments left behind by his hero" (329). Unable to pay homage to Napoleon's grave on Saint Helena, Julien makes a pilgrimage to the grave of Marshal Michel Ney in Père-Lachaise cemetery. Just as the Emperor had wept for Lannes and Duroc, Julien weeps for Napoleon and Ney. Given his military affections, it is not surprising that Julien becomes the fast friend and riding companion of Mathilde's brother, Comte Norbert de La Mole, an army officer and *hussard* whom "he admired thoroughly" and by whom "Julien was completely seduced" (343). Having sublimated his military desire, Julien substitutes Mathilde for Norbert, and thus weds himself to the military, as a surrogate spouse or fraternal companion.

More than mere substitution, Julien's engagement to Mathilde secures him the military rank he has always desired when the Marquis de La Mole names him the Chevalier de La Vernaye and secures him a military commission. Overjoyed, Julien finally succeeds in entering the ranks of both the nobility and the military: "[T]he fifteenth *hussard* regiment, one of the most brilliant in the army, was stationed in Strasbourg. The Chevalier de La Vernaye rode a most beautiful Alsatian horse, which cost him six thousand francs. He was received as a first lieutenant, having never been a second lieutenant" (587). A *chevalier* and officer, Julien finally strips off his cassock to reveal the epaulettes underneath. Though still a novice soldier, he has won a rapid field-promotion for his ambitious work on the post-1815 battlefields of the seminary and salon. In a fit of self-congratulation, Julien regards his success as the culmination of "his life's ambition" (584), a meritocratic achievement worthy of a Napoleonic soldier or the protagonist of a novel: "After all, he thought, my novel is complete, and I deserve all the credit" (585). Like Napoleon's own victories, however, Julien's military triumph is fleeting. Following his attempted murder of Madame de Rênal for having denounced him to La Mole, Julien is stripped of his military commission and his aristocratic future with Mathilde, as he is imprisoned and sentenced to death.

Napoleonic Widow(er)

In retrospect, Julien's strategic conquest of the clergy and nobility represents a lifelong campaign for military commission and companionship. As a charlatan cleric and lover, Julien had worked to fulfill his dream of becoming a soldier and living among military men. In death, Lieutenant Sorel succeeds in joining the buried ranks of his beloved Emperor, surgeon-major, and Napoleonic soldiers, but this is a sad and inglorious reunion. Unlike many Napoleonic veterans, Julien waged his lifelong campaign alone. Despite early contact with his surgeon-major mentor, his friendship

with Norbert de La Mole, and his brief service with the regiment in Strasbourg, Julien is an army of one. He longs for a regimental life but is forced to survive on his own, carefully suppressing his desire for a community of comrades. Unlike his surgeon-major, Julien has no military honors, memoirs, or pension to bequeath, but he is nonetheless mourned by three widows: Madame de Rênal, who dies three days after Julien's execution; Mathilde de La Mole, who venerates Julien's severed head like Salomé; and Julien's childhood friend Fouqué, whose lifelong loyalty figures him as a kind of Napoleonic widow(er).

Like the Chevalier des Grieux's faithful companion Tiberge in Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731) or Lucien de Rubempré's hometown friend David Séchard in Balzac's *Lost Illusions* (1837–43), Fouqué is Julien's devoted childhood companion, whose unwavering and unconditional friendship back in Verrières serves as a constant source of support amid Julien's many adventures and failures in the outside world. Like Des Grieux and Tiberge or Lucien and David, Julien and Fouqué are provincial playmates who become lifetime friends. Unable to convince their ambitious friends to remain at home and make a simple life, Tiberge, David, and Fouqué continue to offer refuge, provide comfort, and pick up the pieces when their buddies return home battered by their own ambition and the cruelties of the outside world.

As representatives of competing discourses on country and city, the known and the unknown, obscurity and fame, these adolescent pairs are fixtures of the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* and its focus on social mobility, urban migration, and sexual maturity. But in the meta-military discourse of *The Red and the Black*, Fouqué serves as a figure of the military spouse, whose unfailing love and loyalty supports Julien amid his many campaigns, conquests, and defeats. Having begun his life with Fouqué, Julien will return to him again and again during those interim periods between the end of one failed venture and the beginning of a new one. As an *intime ami* and *pays*, Fouqué offers comfort and affection to his battered and weary soldier. Ultimately, it is to Fouqué whom Julien will turn for final comfort.

As a Franche-Comté woodsman and sawmill entrepreneur, Fouqué belongs to the same sawdust world as Julien's father and brothers, and is thus a more loving extension of Julien's brutish family. Despite their apparent differences, the butch laborer Fouqué and the femme intellectual Julien are a complementary hometown match, the proverbial boys next door. Attempting to keep Julien at home by asking him to "Stay with me [and] ... Be my partner," Fouqué proposes a union based on mutual advantage and future prosperity.¹² He reasons that with their combined skills, they can make their commerce grow: "You know arithmetic, you will manage the accounts. My business is growing" (131). While Fouqué will lend his masculine brawn to their lumber business, Julien will use his intellect to keep the books. This proposal echoes the terms of a marriage contract: Fouqué and Julien will combine

their complementary skills for the increase and multiplication of their fortunes as associates and partners.

More than mere business, Fouqué's proposal is based on a history of mutual affection between the two friends, whom Stendhal compares to ancient warrior lovers and combat companions, "like heroes out of Homer" (132). While Fouqué has "the greatest esteem" for Julien, who in turn esteems this "man who loved him" (132), Julien fears that Fouqué will smother him: "Fouqué had given up on marrying; he told me that solitude made him unhappy. It is obvious that if he wants a partner who has no capital to invest in the business, it is in the hope of making a companion who will never leave him" (132). Like Stendhal's Madame de Rênal and Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Julien fears the provincial suffocation of a secure but dispassionate marriage. Like Des Grieux to Tiberge and Lucien de Rubempré to David Séchard, Julien thus turns Fouqué down in favor of a more exciting if uncertain future.

Unable to keep his man at home, Fouqué nevertheless remains a source of support between Julien's ambitious campaigns and lengthy absences in Verrières, Besançon, and Paris. When Julien leaves to study in Besançon, Fouqué offers him money and a new suit. When Julien is abused and discouraged at the seminary, Fouqué bribes the guards to visit his friend, sends food to sustain him, and improves Julien's standing by "sending a deer and a wild boar to the seminary on the part of Julien's family" (284). When Julien leaves the seminary to set out for Paris, Fouqué once again begs Julien to be his partner in Verrières. Later, it is to Fouqué whom Julien sends Mathilde's letters for safe-keeping, Fouqué who consoles and counsels Julien in prison, and Fouqué who buries his childhood friend in the mountains of their youth. In Julien's world of family abuse, false flattery, and professional betrayal, Fouqué offers constant friendship.

When Julien is condemned to die, Fouqué tries to save his friend by offering to sell his business and bribe Julien's way out of prison.¹³ Faced with Fouqué's self-sacrifice, Julien is visibly moved: "All of Fouquet's mistakes in French, all of his vulgar gestures disappeared, [and Julien] threw himself into his arms. Never have the provinces seemed more inviting than Paris. Fouqué [was] delighted from the enthusiasm he saw in the eyes of his friend" (603). In contrast to the false friendship of Besançon and Paris, Fouqué is still willing to sacrifice everything for Julien, despite his many mistakes, failures, and rejections. In the end, Fouqué is associated with Julien's other widows, Madame de Rênal and Mathilde de La Mole. On the day of Julien's trial, all three register similar fears: "Finally, the day which Madame de Rênal and Mathilde dreaded, arrived. The strange mood in town redoubled their terror, and not even Fouqué's strong soul was without emotion" (624). During Julien's final days in prison, he is comforted by their successive visits: "Mathilde, already quite jealous of Madame de Rênal's visits," waits for her rival to depart

before she in turn spends time with the condemned Julien and then “leaves him alone, but at almost that very instant, Fouqué arrived.”¹⁴ For the day of his execution, Julien arranges for his three widows to be together, having “made advance arrangements so that, on the morning of his last day, Fouqué would escort Mathilde and Madame de Rênal” (659).

Although they all share the emotional anguish—and Romantic melancholy— of Julien’s trial, sentence, and execution, these three widow(er)s mourn Julien in widely divergent ways. Mathilde plays the Salomé drama-queen, kissing Julien’s decapitated head, organizing his elaborate funeral in the Jura mountains, and transforming Julien’s simple grave into a marble mausoleum. Madame de Rênal swoons like Chateaubriand’s Chactas on the death of Atala, expiring like Rousseau’s Julie in the horrified arms of her children. Like La Mole and Rênal, Fouqué is overwhelmed with sadness and “almost became mad with grief “ (660).¹⁵ But while Rênal and La Mole are engaged in high drama, Fouqué does the slow and painful work of mourning, as he collects Julien’s body from the executioner, sits vigil with his friend overnight, and fulfills Julien’s request to be buried in their beloved mountain grotto. Like a war widow in mourning or Walt Whitman keeping a “Vigil Strange” with his dead soldier at Gettysburg, Fouqué “spent the night in his bedroom with the body of his friend” (659–60).¹⁶

This solemn vigil represents the consummation of Fouqué’s and Julien’s unlikely Napoleonic friendship. Having become the chevalier and lieutenant of his dreams, Julien is now mourned by his partner, *pays*, and friend. After many long absences and campaigns of conquest, Julien has returned as a commissioned soldier to the mountains of his youth and the unconditional love of his faithful Fouqué. While Fouqué has not, like Madame de Rênal and Mathilde de La Mole, been the object of Julien’s erotic conquests, it is to Fouqué that Julien finally confides his body. In the end, Mathilde claims Julien’s head, but his body is entrusted to Fouqué who, having spent one final night with his fallen friend, buries his beloved soldier.

The Charterhouse of Parma (1839)

Written almost a decade after *The Red and the Black* (1830), *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) charts a similar if inverted trajectory. Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo both worship Napoleon and long to be soldiers, but while Julien uses the clergy and nobility as a means to the military, Fabrice abandons the military to rejoin the nobility and enter the clergy. *The Charterhouse of Parma* recounts the life of Fabrice del Dongo, from his brief military service at Waterloo, his wild youth and imprisonment in the Farnese tower, and his escape with the help of his beloved aunt Gina and her lover Mosca, to Fabrice’s ecclesiastical ascent to archbishop, his secret love affair with Clélia Conti, and— following the deaths of Clélia and their son Sandrino—his final monastic retreat to the charterhouse of Parma. Although the

Waterloo episode occupies fewer than three of the novel's twenty-eight chapters, it functions as a kind of epigrammatic parable for the text that follows. Fabrice's naive skirmishes and search for a regiment at Waterloo foreshadow the sidetracking mistakes and confused choices that he will make later in the novel in his quest for career and companionship. Similarly, the novel's military beginning anticipates its monastic end. Fabrice seeks to serve Napoleon and ends up serving God; he looks for a regimental platoon and finds a penitential order; he seeks brothers-in-arms and finds brothers-in-alms.

Like thousands of young men of his generation, Fabrice is seduced by fantasies of military glory and fraternity. Having grown up in French-occupied Italy (1800–1813), Fabrice spent his boyhood admiring Napoleon's officers, listening to their heroic tales, and longing to serve among them. As a young Italian, he represents the millions of foreign soldiers who, along with their French comrades, made up the ranks of the Grande Armée. And as a sixteen-year-old adolescent in 1815, Fabrice symbolizes the last generation of soldiers to serve in the Napoleonic Wars. His attempt to join Napoleon's army in the middle of the battle of Waterloo marks him as a decidedly late bloomer.¹⁷ Fabrice thus stands on the borderline between Napoleon's last recruits and the post-1815 wannabes like Julien Sorel who were born too late to fight.

Fabrice's Waterloo adventure is also a kind of microcosm of Napoleonic service. From his harried arrival, brief service, and ignoble departure, Fabrice goes through all the stages of military service in the short space of a single day. In the two months between his arrival in Belgium on May 15, 1815 and his return to Paris on July 25, he moves rapidly from enlistee to soldier to veteran. Speeding through his military infancy and adolescence, Fabrice has no time to mature before passing directly into retirement. In the pages of Napoleonic fiction, Fabrice can thus be thought of as Napoleon's last volunteer and youngest veteran.

Watershed Waterloo

While Fabrice's Napoleonic career is brief, Stendhal's Waterloo episode represents a major innovation in French military fiction. Unlike many earlier war narratives, Stendhal focuses on individual subjectivity and realist horror (rather than battlefield strategy and military glory) to describe Fabrice's chaotic and terrifying baptism by fire.¹⁸ By emphasizing the fragmentation, disorientation, and graphic violence of battle, Stendhal anticipates the tropes of modern military fiction more commonly associated with the First World War.¹⁹ Despite Fabrice's naive enthusiasm, he is lost in a landscape of carnage and confusion at Waterloo. Amid the chaos of smoke and artillery, Fabrice never sees the battle in which he so proudly takes part:

'Ah, here I am, finally in action! ... I saw the action! ... Here I am a

regular soldier.’ At this moment ... our hero understood that those were bullets that were flying in all directions. He had barely looked to the side where the bullets were coming from when he saw the white smoke of a battery at a great distance, and, in the middle of the equally continual roar produced by cannon-fire, he seemed to hear explosions that were much closer; he could make no sense of it. (43)

Stendhal juxtaposes Fabrice’s self-satisfaction with his total incomprehension. Even though Waterloo is synonymous with the fall of the Empire, the slaughter of fifty thousand men, and the most devastating French defeat since Agincourt in 1415, Fabrice’s Belgian blunderings are darkly comic, like those of Voltaire’s equally inept soldier Candide. While Fabrice’s initial enthusiasm recalls Henry Brulard’s Alpine euphoria in 1800, Fabrice’s growing disillusionment at Waterloo resembles Henri Beyle’s Russian suffering in 1812.

After his early exhilaration, Fabrice is faced with the more gruesome realities of combat. Having first loved the “enchantment of this curious spectacle” (40), Fabrice recoils in horror at a field “littered with cadavers” (42), a disemboweled horse trying to disengage “his hooves from his own entrails” (43), and the puddles of blood that “flowed in the mud” (43). With all the graphic detail of nineteenth-century Realism, Stendhal describes the spectacular horrors of combat, as Fabrice confronts the “convulsive movements” of wounded men crying “Shoot me” (47) and the unsettling gaze of an open-eyed corpse, where “[a] bullet, which entered next to the nose and exited at the opposing temple, disfigured the cadaver hideously” (38).

Fabrice concludes his Waterloo adventure in total confusion. Throughout the long day of combat on June 18, 1815, he wonders if—amid the smoke, noise, and fire—he has actually seen or even been in a battle. Early in the day, he asks a soldier, “[W]as this really a battle?” (44). After taking part in his first skirmish, he asks himself “‘Have I really taken part in a battle?’ He seemed to think yes, and would have been at the height of happiness if he were certain” (61). And as he leaves the battlefield behind, Fabrice still wonders, “[W]as that a battle, and in the second place, that battle, was it Waterloo?” (72). Implying that this could have been any battle, Stendhal offers his Waterloo as universally representative of the alternating terror and boredom, mass chaos and individual confusion, false exaltation and inglorious suffering of war. Stumbling amid the rotting corpses of Waterloo, Fabrice lays the groundwork for Stendhal’s literary and military modernity.

Paternal Failures

Initially, Fabrice sets out for Waterloo on a quest for paternal approval. Like Julien in *The Red and the Black*, Fabrice looks to military service as a way of escaping an abusive father and embracing an alternative model of paternal authority. In Stendhal’s *Lucien Leuwen* (1834–35), this preoccupation with paternal rejection

and approval is also linked to military service. Lucien accepts a commission as a second lieutenant in Nancy in order to flee his manipulative banker father in Paris. Though Lucien begins as a soldier, he later takes up a government post in Paris, before eventually accepting a diplomatic post in Rome. Lucien's three moves (to Nancy, Paris, and Rome) and his three occupations (as soldier, bureaucrat, and diplomat) represent a pattern of paternal refusal and return: Lucien flees his father, then returns, and flees again. For Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo, this paternal need is filled by their adoration of Napoleon.

Fabrice admires Bonaparte as the liberator of Italy. Despite the ravages of Napoleon's two Italian Campaigns and the devastation at Rivoli (1797) and Marengo (1800), Fabrice looks to Napoleon as the hero who liberated Italy from its Austrian oppressors: "I saw that great image of Italy rising out of the mire in which the [Austrians] wanted her to remain; she was extending her bruised and half-chained arms towards her king and liberator ... I will leave, I will go and die or conquer with this man ... who wanted to wash away our shame" (28). Like Fabrice, Stendhal's narrator praises Napoleon for bringing the Enlightenment to Italy, where "new and passionate ideas flourished ... The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the fall of old ideas ... [W]e toppled their statues, and all of a sudden found ourselves inundated by light" (3-4). Determined to serve as a soldier in Napoleon's armies, like his "uncles" Pietranera and Mosca had done before him, Fabrice tells his aunt Gina: "I will go and join the Emperor, who is also the king of Italy ... I will go and offer this great man what little I can, the help of my weak arm. He wanted to give us a nation and he loved my uncle" (26-27). Having transferred his love for Italy and his uncle Pietranera to Napoleon, Fabrice thus longs to be a soldier.

This paternal drama is further complicated by the fact that Fabrice's biological father is not the cold-hearted Marquis del Dongo, but a young French officer named Lieutenant Robert who had been billeted in the Marquise del Dongo's palace in Milan during Bonaparte's first Italian Campaign (1796-97). Fabrice's desire to join Napoleon's Grande Armée is thus figured as an instinctual drive, an ancestral inevitability, a search for paternal love. Doted on by his mother and aunt Gina, Fabrice is misunderstood by the cruel and tightfisted Marquis del Dongo who "professed a vigorous hatred for the Enlightenment" (16) and an equal hatred of Napoleon: "Imagine his delight when, at the beginning of 1813, he learned about the disasters of the Berezina [in Russia]! The invasion of Paris and the fall of Napoleon almost made him lose his head" (19).

Misunderstood by his father the Marquis, Fabrice looks to his uncle Pietra-nera, who encourages his nephew's love of the cavalry: "Fabrice knew nothing in the world except how to exercise and mount a horse. Often the Count Pietranera, who was as crazy about this child as his wife, would have him mount a horse and then take him on parade" (14). While the marquis delights at Napoleon's failures, the

count encourages Fabrice's Napoleonic dreams.²⁰ In juxtaposing one paternal madness for another, Stendhal underscores the Marquis del Dongo's hatred (losing his head over French defeats) and Count Pietranera's adoration (crazy for his nephew) of both Fabrice and Napoleon. Following his uncle's death in a duel over the honor of fellow soldiers, Fabrice is again left without any familial source of masculine affection and paternal approval. When he sets out in search of Napoleon, reminding his widowed aunt how Napoleon "loved my uncle" (27), Fabrice discloses his hope that the Emperor will also love him.

Imitating the chivalric fables that he loves, Fabrice leaves his wicked stepfather Del Dongo and sets out on a paternal quest for his idealized father Napoleon. Like the battle of Waterloo itself, Fabrice's paternal quest is ultimately a failure whose tragicomic proportions are exemplified by two nearmisses. When Fabrice finally gets a chance to see Napoleon on the battlefield, the Emperor gallops by too quickly and Fabrice is too drunk to make him out: "I couldn't see the Emperor on [the] battlefield because of those damned glasses of brandy!" (46). Having come all the way from Milan to see and serve him, Fabrice is left asking, "Was that the Emperor who just passed by?" (46). When Fabrice later finds himself in a regiment commanded by General Robert—who, unknown to him, is his biological father—the regiment is attacked, Fabrice's horse is commandeered to transport the wounded general away, and they never get the chance to meet. The only contact that Fabrice has with his biological father is in the form of insults that Fabrice screams at the retreating general and his aides-de-camp, whom he calls "Thieves, thieves!" (48). As his two phantom fathers gallop away, Fabrice's quest for paternal contact vanishes, leaving him disappointed, angry, and alone.²¹ When paternity fails the Stendhalian hero, fraternity becomes a desirable alternative.²² Failing to secure paternal approval from Napoleon or Robert, Fabrice longs for the fraternal acceptance of his new military comrades.

Fraternal Pursuits

Fabrice's quest for fraternal companionship, however, is equally disastrous. His first awkward attempt at joining a regiment in Waterloo lands him in prison as a foreign spy. Sharing neither the combat experience nor the native French accent of the soldiers he meets, Fabrice does not understand that, despite his Napoleonic passion, he is an outsider. His second attempt at joining a regiment is more successful, and he is thrilled at the approval of his new comrades:

What convinced Fabrice to remain was that his new comrades were so nice to him; he began to consider himself the intimate friend of the soldiers with whom he had been galloping for several hours. He saw between them and him that noble friendship of the heroes of Tasso and Ariosto ... The way they looked at him sent our hero to the height of happiness; he would

have done anything for his comrades; his soul and his spirit soared. Everything seemed to have changed since he was with friends. (46)

Yet amid his joy, Fabrice's enthusiasm at the mere hint of Napoleonic friendship is as naive as his first reactions to battle. Comparing his brief acquaintance with these men to the heroic friendships of sixteenth-century Italian poetry, Fabrice believes that he has become their intimate friend. Although he speaks with the vocabulary of Napoleonic friendship and tries to inscribe himself into the tradition of the *intime ami*, Fabrice does not realize that such intimacy and trust are cemented between soldiers who have spent more than several hours galloping together.

Far from intimates, these soldiers only befriend Fabrice in order to enjoy his eagerly shared brandy: "The bottle was past around; the last man to drink tossed it away. 'Thanks, comrade!' he said to Fabrice. All eyes looked on him with kindness" (45). As hungry for these looks of approval as these soldiers are thirsty for his brandy, Fabrice gains the same kind of fleeting satisfaction as his new comrades: "These looks removed a weight of a hundred pounds from Fabrice's heart; his was one of those fragile hearts which need friendship from those that surround them. Finally, he was no longer distrusted by his companions; he had a connection with them!" (45). Intoxicated both from the brandy and the soldiers' seemingly fraternal approval, "Fabrice felt completely inebriated" (45). He does not realize, however, that this ephemeral connection is an alcoholic affair that will evaporate along with the last vapors from his empty bottle.²³ Drunk on false friendship, Fabrice is sobered when his newfound comrades steal his horse and abandon him in the confusion of battle, leaving him "drunk with anger" (48).

Prefiguring Lucien de Rubempré in Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, Fabrice loses his illusions of idyllic Napoleonic friendship at Waterloo.²⁴ Angry and hurt, he cannot comprehend this fraternal betrayal "by that sergeant he loved so much and by those soldiers he looked on as brothers!" (48). As he begins to sob, Fabrice regrets "all those beautiful dreams of sublime and chivalric friendship ... To meet death was nothing when one is surrounded by heroic and tender souls, by noble friends who hold your hand at the moment of your last breath! But how can you remain heartened surrounded by such vile rogues!" (48). After a childhood built on fraternal fantasies, Fabrice now realizes that "[w]ar was no longer that noble and communal rush of souls in love with glory which he had imagined from Napoleon's proclamations" (49). While Napoleonic friendship may thrive between other soldiers at Waterloo, Fabrice does not understand that such friendship is built on shared pain as well as pleasure, and that it cannot be so easily won.

Lost and confused, Fabrice is saved by an unlikely mentor when a combatsavvy *cantinière* named Margot helps him survive. Like thousands of other women who followed Napoleon's armies across Europe—providing food, supplies, and other vital comforts—this benevolent *cantinière* or *vivandière* is a battle-experienced

camp-follower.²⁵ Fearing that Fabrice is an easy target for enemy fire, Margot cries, “Poor little one! He will be killed right away; By God, he will not last long. ‘You must absolutely come with me’ “ (37). Like Fabrice’s protective aunt Gina, the *cantinière* instructs Fabrice how to stay alive in combat. In addition to guiding him through the lines, Margot makes Fabrice face the reality of death. Confronted with a rotting corpse, she tells him: “Come closer ... you need to get used to this” (38). In protecting Fabrice from harm, Margot maternally nurtures him through combat and ushers him quickly through his military adolescence. As she introduces him to death, Margot gives birth to a new and more mature Fabrice, who leaves behind his childish innocence and faces the realities of human mortality. While he once believed in a glorious death “surrounded by heroic and tender souls” (48), Fabrice now looks on this abandoned corpse and understands the horrors of combat.

Having saved Fabrice from immediate danger, Margot then entrusts him to the care of Corporal Aubry, a battle-experienced soldier who teaches Fabrice how to fight. Even though he has never fired a rifle, Fabrice quickly learns to follow Corporal Aubry’s instructions and orders: “Move over there ... Load your weapon and stand behind this tree, and above all do not fire before my orders ... Throw away your saber ... [and] wipe the flint of your rifle with your handkerchief “ (51). When Fabrice survives his first Prussian assault, Aubry congratulates him in the rough—and homoerotic—language of an infantry soldier: “you’re a good b[ugger] ... you have fought well today.”²⁶ Following this military rite of passage, where they “buggered” their Prussian enemies together, Fabrice has earned Aubry’s respect and affection. When Aubry later tells the arrogant General Comte B*** to “Go f[uck] yourself ... you and all the generals [who have] betrayed the Emperor today,” he again employs this vulgar and eroticized language in order to protect his men.²⁷ Rather than follow the self-serving orders of the incompetent general and subject his men to unnecessary danger, Aubry rebels and risks his own career. Corporal Aubry thus demonstrates his loyalty both to his men and to Napoleon, whom he feels has been deceived by these “Bourbon sell-outs who betrayed the Emperor!” (53).

If Fabrice is shocked by Aubry’s language, he nevertheless chooses to follow this capable and protective mentor. Having survived his first Prussian assault by following Aubry’s orders, Fabrice now feels a greater sense of duty and affection for this corporal and begins to understand that Napoleonic friendship is less a heroic ideal than a necessity for survival in combat. Like Sergeant Bourgonne, Corporal Aubry embodies the gruff, protective, and experienced *sous-officier*. Despite his rough language, Aubry “has heart” (51) and mentors Fabrice just as Sergeant Pertelay mentored the young Marbot. When his hungry men are low on rations, Aubry “divided the bread in five pieces and took the smallest for himself” (54). Even as he barks out orders, “the corporal walked rapidly at the head of his ten men” (54), taking charge and care of his fellow soldiers.

Though there is a temptation to see the *cantinière* and corporal as Fabrice's surrogate parents, they are more like fraternal military mentors. Distinct from what Aubry sees as good military fathers (Napoleon) and bad ones (General Comte B***), Aubry himself is a kind of big brother to Fabrice and his men. Straddling the border between officer and foot soldier, Corporal Aubry plays, like many *sous-officiers*, a fraternal role with his men. In the same way, Margot is a fellow combatant and battle-experienced sister. Although she may serve a maternal role in the lives of young soldiers like Fabrice, she is also a kind of drill sergeant who first trains Fabrice how to survive in combat. Rather than in paternal or maternal terms, Fabrice speaks of his "tender friendship" (56) for Margot, responds to her help by exclaiming "What friendship!" (69), and refers to both her and Aubry as "his good friends" (61). For Fabrice, these fraternal friendships are ultimately more important than his paternal disappointments at Waterloo. As willing mentors, the *cantinière* and corporal provide fraternal care and protection long after Napoleon and General Robert have abandoned Fabrice and galloped away.

Yet, even though he is grateful for these fraternal mentors and longs for their approval, Fabrice does not fully understand the reciprocal sacrifices of Napoleonic friendship. While he "began to feel much friendship for them" (56) following their first engagements with the enemy, Fabrice later refuses to buy bread for his hungry new friends, complaining, "That's my money ... I'm not paying for you" (56). His inability to reciprocate military fraternity and integrate into Aubry's platoon reflects his failure to reconcile his expectations of military glory with the realities of combat. With more time, Fabrice may have come to understand more fully the pleasures and pains of Napoleonic friendship, but as Waterloo wanes and the Empire crumbles, he is forced to abandon his short-lived military career, as a disillusioned and solitary veteran.

The Happy Few

Appearing throughout his work—including *Lucien Leuwen*, *The Red and the Black*, and *The Charterhouse of Parma*—Stendhal's celebrated dedication "To the Happy Few" has been widely interpreted as an address to his readers. Balzac understood this when he wrote in his enthusiastic 1840 review of *The Charterhouse of Parma* that the novel's greatest drawback is that it "can find readers capable of appreciating it only among diplomats, ministers of state, observers, the most eminent society people, the most distinguished artists; in short, readers from among the twelve or fifteen hundred people who are at the head of Europe."²⁸ While there is critical consensus on the readerly destination of Stendhal's dedication, its sources have been widely debated.²⁹ Stendhal's phrase probably refers less to the notion that "many are called, but few are chosen" from the New Testament (Matthew 22.14) or the battle cry of "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers" in Shakespeare's

Henry V (4.3.60) than to a vicar's regret that his publications on marriage were "read only by the happy few" in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), a novel that Stendhal partially memorized and greatly admired.³⁰

As a dedication to those few readers who are capable of appreciating his work, Stendhal's "Happy Few" is an homage to deferred association, delayed pleasure, and future friendship. As he envisions those readers who will make up his "Happy Few," Stendhal imagines a future date when his work will find an appreciative readership: "I could write a work that pleases only me, but which would be considered beautiful in 2000."³¹ Content to write for a later audience, Stendhal imagines these sympathetic readers as future friends: "I am writing this—without lying or false illusions, I hope—with pleasure, like a letter to a friend. What will this friend's ideas be in 1880? How different will they be from our own!"³² Here, Stendhal places his hope in delayed understanding and future fellowship—across time and ideology—between him and the readerly friends who will make up his "Happy Few."

Stendhal's notion of deferred friendship reflects Fabrice's search for Napoleonic friendship at Waterloo. Unable to understand and reciprocate military friendship, Fabrice never finds the fraternal union he longs for among the soldiers of the Grande Armée. When he leaves Waterloo, Fabrice defers his fraternal fantasies to a later date. In an inverse trajectory from Julien Sorel who looks to the Church as a vehicle to the army, Fabrice leaves behind his military ambitions in order to join the clergy, and ultimately finds fraternal comfort in the monastery at Parma. Trading Napoleonic for monastic fraternity, he retreats to the charterhouse after the worst disaster of his life: the deaths of his beloved Clélia and their son Sandrino. In this monastic retreat, Fabrice finds the kind of fraternal support that had eluded him at Waterloo and understands at last that fraternal love stems from mutual suffering and comfort, rather than shared glory. Like his early hero Napoleon, Fabrice now knows the pain of loss and retreat, in exile among fellow brothers.

Whether monastic or military, this sense of intimate fraternity would not have been lost on the apostle Matthew, Goldsmith's vicar, or Shakespeare's Henry V. In the parallel universes of Shakespeare's 1415 Agincourt and Stendhal's 1815 Waterloo, the "happy few" are a community of shared suffering, support, and friendship. In Shakespeare's Agincourt, Henry's "happy few" are an unhappy group of frightened soldiers who are reminded by the king that collective suffering will lead to mutual glory. To rally his men, Henry addresses them as both soldiers and future veterans:

He that outlives this day and comes safe home
Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall see this day and live t'old age
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors

And say, "Tomorrow is Saint Crispian."
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars
And say, "These wounds I had on Crispin's day."³³

This promise of deferred pleasure and glory is a veteran's vision. In the extraordinary act of pledging royal brotherhood to the feudal soldiers in his army, Henry reminds them that their shared suffering and victory will be remembered as a veteran's tale:

This story shall the good man teach his son,
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by
From this day to the ending of the world
But we in it shall be remembered,
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.³⁴

In Stendhal's version of "The Happy Few" and his vision of future sympathetic readers, Stendhal himself is the deferred fraternal reader of literary predecessors like St. Matthew, Goldsmith, and Shakespeare. Like Balzac, whom Georg Lukács calls Stendhal's "comrade-in-arms," St. Matthew, Goldsmith, and Shakespeare are Stendhal's band of literary brothers.³⁵ More than mere metaphor, this Stendhalian vision of "The Happy Few" is a reminder that Fabrice's desire for fraternal fellowship at Waterloo becomes a veteran's hope for deferred brotherhood. Only later, in the fraternal communion of the monastery, will Fabrice understand the pains and comforts of Napoleonic friendship. Among his monastic brothers, Fabrice finally finds those "heroic and tender souls of noble friends" (48) who will hold his hand when he dies, as he had envisioned in his boyhood fantasies. Having longed in his youth for the fellowship of soldiers, Fabrice at last finds a welcome band of brothers. Like Julien Sorel, Fabrice del Dongo is born too late to find such friendship in the Grande Armée, but their longing for fraternal intimacy following 1815 represents the persistent memory of—and desire for—Napoleonic friendship.



Grave Friendship *Hugo's Miserable Waterloo*

In March 1811, shortly after his ninth birthday, Victor Hugo set out from Paris with his mother, Sophie, and brothers Abel and Eugène on a journey across France and Spain to join their father, General Léopold Hugo, in French-occupied Madrid. For his service as an exemplary aide-de-camp to Joseph Bonaparte—who had been crowned King of Spain in 1808 by his younger brother Napoleon—General Hugo had been named Comte de Sigüenza in 1809. But as with his colleague General Junot, who was named Duc d’Abrantès for his own service in Portugal and Spain, Hugo’s new title was a dubious honor. Also known as the Peninsular War, Napoleon’s Iberian Campaign (1807–14) was a bloody and protracted conflict, bogged down by crippling summer heat, fierce guerilla fighting, hostile civilian resistance, and the constant naval threat of the English. For Napoleon’s officers, assignment to Spain was synonymous with imperial disfavor and exile, a fate from which not even Napoleon’s closest friends were exempt.

All of those who served in Spain and Portugal faced the same grave dangers and frustrations, but for officers like Lannes, Junot, and Hugo, the Iberian quagmire must have felt like imperial purgatory or a season in Napoleonic hell. In an effort to thwart the French occupation, Spanish guerillas ambushed, captured, and tortured French soldiers on deserted roads, in provincial villages, and along remote mountain passes. Gruesome accounts circulated of mutilated bodies, lopped-off limbs, and gouged-out eyes, as well as castrated and disemboweled soldiers left to choke on their own viscera or drown in their own blood.¹ These grisly acts of Spanish resistance were met by merciless French reprisals on the civilian population, which in turn fueled even greater violence between Spanish patriots and Napoleon’s occupying troops.

As French soldiers slipped away at night and deserted Spain by the thousands, Sophie Hugo and her three young boys were on the road to Madrid, traveling in a heavily armed convoy of French reinforcements. In her intimate biography of her husband, Adèle Hugo reports that the young Victor and his brothers saw the perilous journey in 1811 as a great adventure, during which they played in the ruins of burned-out villages and dodged the bullets that occasionally reached their carriage.

As their convoy inched closer to Madrid, however, they were confronted with the disconcerting sight of wounded French soldiers marching in the opposite direction, on their way out of the Iberian horror:

The infantry was mixed with the cavalry: dismounted cavalrymen trotted on their own feet, while crippled infantrymen rode on mules or donkeys. In this regiment of cripples, there were samples of every kind of uniform and specimens of every kind of wound. Some had bandages over their eyes, others had their noses blown off; here there was a wooden leg, there an arm in a sling ... [A]ll of these soldiers had on their shoulders, in place of their epaulettes, a monkey or a parrot ... This broken fragment of the army was coming from Portugal. They had gone there looking for glory, and had come back with monkeys and parrots. The convoy began to laugh at the sight of these cripples. The cripples laughed too, at themselves. The soldiers in the convoy laughed at the thought that soon they would be the same way. It was one great laugh.²

Despite the general amusement, this unsettling laughter belies the horror of this troubling scene. The soldiers' mismatched uniforms, ragged appearance, and companion donkeys, monkeys, and parrots all invite comparisons to a traveling circus or, as Adèle Hugo writes, a "burlesque fantasy."³ But the juxtaposition of these comic elements with amputated limbs and disfiguring wounds transforms this carnivalesque scene into a grotesque and macabre nightmare.

While the children find the monkeys and parrots entertaining, the retreating and invading soldiers are less amused. If, as Madame Hugo reports, these two groups of travelers laugh in unison, they seem to be laughing for very different reasons. Instead of mocking their wounded comrades, the nervous laughter of the invading soldiers may be an attempt to hide their growing fear. Instead of laughing at themselves, the retreating soldiers may be laughing at the convoy's ignorance of the grave dangers ahead. Having survived the Iberian bloodbath, these veterans must have found it absurd that anyone would voluntarily report for service in Spain.

Like pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela, these travelers on the road between France and Spain recall those from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1387–1400) and Marguerite de Navarre's *L'Heptaméron* (1558–59), whose comic and cautionary stories prefigure Hugo's disturbing Napoleonic tale. In exchange for their hacked limbs and dead friends, these wounded soldiers return to France with monkeys and parrots, symbols of the absurd circus of Napoleonic ambition and warfare. Merely aping their former grandeur, these broken men have become the chimps and chumps of the Grande Armée. Having for many years parroted the propaganda of Napoleonic victory (*Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor!*), these soldiers are now haunted by their repetitive memories of Napoleonic defeat (*Vimeiro! Cintra!*)⁴ Like

Loulou in Flaubert's *A Simple Heart* (1877), these Iberian parrots are the haunting incarnation of memory, disaster, and death.

In June 1811, Madame Hugo and her boys arrived in Madrid where they were reunited with General Hugo and remained relatively insulated from the escalating hostilities outside the city. But as the situation in Spain worsened during the next year, Léopold Hugo decided to send Sophie and their two youngest sons back to safety in France. Bidding farewell to Léopold and Abel—who remained behind with his father in Madrid—Sophie, Eugène, and Victor fled Spain in March 1812, along with the military escort of Marshal Claude-Victor Perrin. Amid the renewed violence of the Spanish resistance and the imminent collapse of the French occupation, the treacherous journey out of Spain was marked by atrocities that remained with Victor Hugo for the rest of his life. In Vitoria, Hugo saw the mutilated corpse of an executed Spanish guerilla, whose blood dripped from his crucified and dismembered body onto Hugo's carriage.⁵ And at Burgos, Hugo witnessed a public execution that would later inspire his novel *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* (1829) and his future political engagement against the death penalty in France.

These graphic scenes of ruthless brutality marked the end of the young Hugo's war-zone amusements. While Victor and his brothers had once laughed at retreating amputees, they now blanched at the horror of disfigured soldiers. By June 1813, the English and Spanish had expelled the French from Spain, only six months after Napoleon's equally disastrous campaign in Russia. In the broader context of the Napoleonic Wars, the Iberian Campaign (1807–14) and the Russian Campaign (1812–13) were preludes to the final defeat at Waterloo (1815). The young Victor Hugo was thus a first-hand witness to the early decline of imperial power, the impending defeat of the French military, and the future fall of Napoleon. Despite his mere ten years of age in 1812, Hugo returned to Paris a weary Napoleonic veteran.

In his celebrated account of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862), Hugo evokes both personal and historical memory to honor the courage of Napoleonic soldiers at the end of the Empire, the suffering of Napoleonic veterans during the Restoration and July Monarchy, and the survival of Napoleonic friendship in post-1815 France. Moving from epic defeat and death to individual suffering and survival, Hugo dramatizes the relationship between Colonel Pontmercy and Sergeant Thénardier, two veterans bound by military friendship who represent opposing archetypes of the Napoleonic veteran: the wretch and the rogue. From their grave meeting at Waterloo to their miserable lives in post-imperial France, Pontmercy and Thénardier illustrate the continued role of Napoleonic friendship among veterans, whose miseries during the Restoration lead to a new era of republican revolt and a new generation of fraternal soldiers—like their sons Marius and Gavroche—on the Parisian barricades of the 1830s.

Hugo's Waterloo

Although Victor Hugo was neither a soldier nor a direct witness to Napoleon's defeat in 1815, his epic portrait of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862) is, in many ways, a work of military memory. Born into a distinguished military family in 1802, Hugo grew up surrounded by Napoleonic officers, including his father and all four of his paternal uncles, who served in both the armies of the Revolution and Napoleon's Grande Armée. Like Napoleon, Léopold Hugo had entered the military at the end of the Ancien Régime and risen rapidly through the ranks as a young officer during the Revolutionary Wars. In 1793, Léopold Hugo met his royalist Catholic wife Sophie-Françoise Trébuchet while stationed in Brittany where he had been sent to fight counterrevolutionary resistance. Léopold Hugo eventually became one of Napoleon's most loyal officers, serving as a major in Bavaria (1799–1800) and as a colonel and aide-de-camp to Joseph Bonaparte in Naples (1805–8), before his promotion to general in Spain (1808–12).

Victor and his brothers Abel and Eugène were thus raised as army brats, following their father to military posts in Nancy and Besançon, Corsica and Elba, Italy and Spain. By the age of ten, Victor Hugo had lived the life of an itinerant soldier, crisscrossing Europe with Napoleon's armies. In 1807, Léopold Hugo had his sons officially enrolled in his regiment in occupied Italy which, in addition to his later experiences in Spain, led Victor Hugo to declare much later in 1827 that "I ... was a soldier when I was a child!"⁶ Hugo's military childhood doubtless influenced his complex feelings about Napoleon, future political life, and prolific output of military literature, from his homage to Napoleon and the Grande Armée in "Ode to the Place Vendôme Column" (1827), to his simultaneous admiration of Napoleon and chastisement of Napoleon III in *Les Châtiments* (1853), and his epic account of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862).⁷

Neither Victor nor Léopold Hugo was at the battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815. On that day, General Hugo was defending the French border from Prussian invaders 200 kilometers away in Thionville, which he held until November 1815, an achievement that earned him the distinction of being one of Napoleon's last officers standing.⁸ While General Hugo defended the French frontier, the thirteen-year-old Victor remained in Paris where, after retreating from Spain in 1812, he had lived with his mother and brother Eugène in the shadow of the Panthéon, on the Impasse des Feuillantines, from 1813–14, before being placed in 1815 by his father in a dismal boarding school named the Pension Cordier. Despite his absence at Napoleon's defeat, however, Hugo's Waterloo account in *Les Misérables* can be thought of as a work of personal, historical, and narrative memory.

As a work of personal memory, Hugo's Waterloo relies on his intimate childhood familiarity with Napoleonic soldiers, warfare, and defeat. As a work of historical memory, Hugo's Waterloo recounts the battle retrospectively, from the viewpoint of

a visitor to the battlefield a half-century later in 1861.⁹ Hugo's narrator admits to being a "distant witness," who has visited the Belgian battlefield, seen the scars left on the physical landscape, and spoken with local villagers, survivors, and witnesses in order to reconstruct a grand and totalizing vision of the battle from the vantage point of history.¹⁰ As a work of narrative memory, Hugo's Waterloo represents an important flashback, interruption, or digression in the linear order of his voluminous five-part novel, inserted between Part 1 (*Fantine*) and Part 2 (*Cosette*) of *Les Misérables*.¹¹

Refuting criticism that Hugo's Waterloo is a gratuitous digression, some compare Napoleon with the novel's central hero Jean Valjean, and draw parallels between Napoleon's struggle at Waterloo and Valjean's later struggles against the miseries of the Restoration.¹² Victor Brombert argues convincingly that Hugo's Waterloo was central to the genesis and structure of the novel, since it was the episode with which Hugo considered opening *Les Misérables*, even though it was in fact the episode that he completed last, in 1861, before publishing the novel in 1862.¹³ Hugo's Waterloo thus functions as a triple flashback, to the Napoleonic warfare of Hugo's youth, to the events of 1815, and to the genesis of the novel itself.¹⁴ Finished last, it represents the novel's completion. Inserted between Parts 1 and 2, it stands at the novel's center. Echoed in the novel's opening words ("In 1815 ...") and planned as the novel's opening episode, it marks the novel's beginning. As the product of personal, historical, and narrative memory, Hugo's Waterloo is no mere digression, but the novel's memory, shadow, and conscience.¹⁵

Unlike Stendhal's Waterloo in *The Charterhouse of Parma*, which focuses on the fragmented chaos of the battle and on Fabrice's individual confusion, Hugo's Waterloo mythologizes the battle in colossal proportions. Recounting Napoleon's defeat on a grand scale, Hugo tries to reclaim this debacle as an act of victorious defiance and to exalt Napoleon as an epic hero toppled by the Divine. Hugo begins this grandiose assessment by broadly contextualizing Waterloo within the series of historical French defeats and English victories at Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415) during the Hundred Years' War (1: 432). Beyond this already broad historical frame, Hugo later envisions Waterloo on an even grander scale, as a titanic battle between the gods and a mortal with designs on divinity.

Famously, Hugo attributes Napoleon's defeat not to the skill of the English and Prussian generals Wellington and Blücher, but to God himself who sent rain to confound Napoleon's artillery.¹⁶ Napoleon's defeat is thus colossal because he was a colossus: "It was time that this vast man fall ... Napoleon had been denounced in the heavens and his fall had been decided. He irritated God" (1: 437).¹⁷ In this way, Hugo reasons, Napoleon's downfall in 1815 is a defeat of cosmic proportions: "Waterloo is no mere battle; it is the transformation of the universe" (1: 437). While Stendhal foregrounds the confused individual amid the chaos of the whole, Hugo

offers cosmic totalization to contextualize the individual.¹⁸ This grand Hugolian vision, however, characterizes only the beginning of Hugo's Waterloo, which moves from immortal to mortal, from divine to human, from total to individual subjectivity. In narrowing his focus, Hugo also moves from Napoleon's colossal downfall to the collective defeat and individual suffering of Napoleon's soldiers.¹⁹

This turning point in Hugo's Waterloo centers on a specific moment when Napoleon's cavalry—galloping into battle with flag-waving confidence and earthshaking speed—tumbles into a hidden trench along the sunken road to Ohain. In an instant, these windswept warriors are buried in a massive open grave: “That instant was terrible. An unexpected ravine was there ... [N]o way to turn back, all of the column became one massive projectile; the acquired force, which had been intended for the English, crushed the French; the inexorable ravine was packed full of cavalymen and horses which rolled pell-mell one on top of another, making one flesh in this abyss” (1: 435–36). From the heroic collectivity of one unified assault, these men become one great heap of crushed flesh, a grotesque pile of human and equine bodies, mangled and buried in a mass grave.

Following this massacre in the Ohain trench, which “began the loss of the battle” (1: 436), Hugo's Waterloo begins to move from heroism to humiliation. In this intermediary stage of the battle, the text still focuses on a totalized vision of combat, but it has moved from collective glory to collective suffering. While the cavalry is packed in a mass grave, the rest of the Grande Armée is trampled in the chaos of mass retreat: “Men crushed one another, trod on each other, marched on the dead and the living. Men were frantic. A venous multitude clogged the roads, footpaths, bridges, plains, hills, valleys, and woods, which were encumbered by this flight of forty thousand men. Shouts of despair, packs and guns discarded in the fields ... [N]o more comrades, no more officers, no more generals, [only] an inexpressible horror” (1: 448). Recalling Sergeant Bourgogne's account of the Russian retreat in 1812, the chaos at Waterloo gives way to a panicked struggle for self-preservation, when Napoleonic friendship is trampled underfoot along with fallen and abandoned comrades.

In Bourgogne's 1812 Russia, there were still acts of selfless compassion between comrades who had served many years together. But here in Hugo's 1815 Waterloo, the bonds of Napoleonic friendship are, in many cases, untested and weak. Like Stendhal's Fabrice, thousands of soldiers at Waterloo were recent adolescent recruits, who had been dredged from a France depleted of soldiers and hastily trained in the brief hundred-day period in 1815 following Napoleon's first exile to Elba and his sudden return to power. Before they could develop stronger bonds of Napoleonic friendship and skills for mutual survival, many of these inexperienced soldiers were butchered at Waterloo where, Hugo writes, “there was more massacre than battle” (1: 458).

Amid such slaughter, heroism is redefined as courage in the face of certain death and defeat. For Hugo, Napoleon's heroic ambition is replaced with General Pierre Cambronne's celebrated defiance, as he faces the oncoming slaughter by exclaiming "Merde!" (1: 451). Like Leonidas at Thermopylae, Cambronne at Waterloo boldly confronts death so that others may live. While *merde* (shit) is often used as an expression of disappointment, frustration, and even fear, Hugo interprets Cambronne's exclamation as a courageous cry of resistance: "To say this word, and then die. What is greater! ... The man who won the battle of Waterloo is not the routed Napoleon, or Wellington ... it is Cambronne. To strike down with such a word the very thunder that kills you is to vanquish" (1: 451). Unlike the Napoleonic cry of *Vive l'Empereur!*, Cambronne's *Merde!* is an unapologetic condemnation of violence. With his scatological outburst, Cambronne denounces Waterloo as both water-closet and loo, cesspool and sewer, slaughterhouse and grave.²⁰ Faced with such carnage on this final battlefield, Cambronne condemns the accumulated violence of twenty years of Revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare.²¹ More than mere *merde*, Cambronne defines war as human waste, an excremental mass of rotting bodies, broken limbs, and spilled blood. With a single word, Hugo thus expresses more broadly the suffering of those he collectively calls "les misérables," the social refuse who live and die in abject poverty and misery, from battlefield trenches and military graves to urban sewers and slums in nineteenth-century France.²²

Grave Friendship

As Hugo's leitmotif for impending death at Waterloo, Cambronne's "Merde!" might also seem to sound the death knell for Napoleonic friendship. In "The Expiation" (1853), Hugo's poetic elegy on Waterloo, Napoleonic soldiers march side by side, facing defeat and death together: "They went [with] weapons in hand, heads high, grave, stoic. / Not one turned back."²³ In *Les Misérables* (1862), however, Hugo writes that there were "no more comrades" (1: 448) in the mass confusion of the Grande Armée's panicked retreat. These seemingly contradictory accounts describe two very different camps of Napoleonic soldiers at Waterloo. While some of these troops included loyal, long-term, battle-tested soldiers who had served with Napoleon since his Egyptian Campaign in 1798–99, many were new recruits who, having never known the bonds of friendship forged during years of combat, fled the field that day leaving comrades to face defeat and death alone. As latecomers (like Stendhal's Fabrice) deserted loyal soldiers (like Corporal Aubry), they abandoned Napoleonic friendship itself to perish and rot along with the dead on this final field of battle.

Despite such challenges, however, Napoleonic friendship does not die and decompose at Waterloo. Like Marshal Lannes and General Duroc, the dead on the

field at Waterloo are mourned, not only by their families and the nation but by those surviving comrades who openly weep for them. Lying side by side in muddy trenches and mass graves, thousands of these fallen soldiers become one another's ultimate military bedfellows in a final and macabre gesture of fraternal intimacy. In this landscape of death, disembodied voices speak out from the grave and bear witness to the final comforts of Napoleonic friendship.

As the noise of battle recedes into the silence of aftermath, Hugo's Waterloo is clogged with the dead: "Dawn following a battle always breaks on nude cadavers" (1: 465). On both the eve and first morning of post-Napoleonic Europe, the veterans of Waterloo are a mass of broken and denuded masculinity whose mangled bodies litter the bloody field:

Cadavers leveled the road with the plain and came right up to the brim of the road like a bushel of well-measured barley. A pile of dead on the hill, a river of blood at the bottom; this was how the road looked on the night of June 18, 1815. Blood flowed right up to the Nivelles road and pooled there in a great lake ... It was, as people remember, on the opposing side, towards the Genappe road, where the collapse of the cavalry took place. The thickness of this mass of cadavers was proportionate with the depth of the trench. (1: 468–69)

Here, Hugo draws a new map of Waterloo. The blood of the dead creates new rivers and ponds, new routes connecting the towns of Nivelles and Genappe. The thick piles of cadavers fill in the ditches and trenches, leveling out the land. Newly paved with men, Waterloo is a landscape of death, an Hieronymus Bosch panorama, a scene of cartographic horror.

In the decades following 1815, long after Waterloo gives way to a haunting silence and an eerie and "earthly calm" (1: 458), these rotting veterans still leave their mark on the landscape at Waterloo where, Hugo writes, "the sixty thousand men who fell ... rotted tranquilly" (1: 463–64). Amid the ruins of farmhouses, stone walls, orchards, and wells, there are residual traces of rotting men. In the ruins of the Château Hougomont, whose "walls agonize, stones fall, breaches scream" (1: 406–7), Hugo discovers visible scars: from the main gate, where "for a long time after, one could see ... the imprints of bloody hands," to the courtyard where "the violence of the battle is petrified ... like it was yesterday," to the orchard where "fifteen hundred men fell in less than an hour" and the "grass was wet with blood" (1: 411). Like a gutted soldier, the château itself is wounded: "one wing of the château ... is collapsed or, one could say, disemboweled" (1: 407). Hougomont is not only a ruin, but a rotting corpse. In personifying the Château Hougomont, Hugo reminds us that Waterloo is a cemetery whose "entire plain is a sepulcher" (1: 428). Echoing Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and Civil War *Drum-Taps* (1865), Hugo explains

that Waterloo's hills and gullies are shaped by the landfill of men that lie underneath in "this earth of petrified human flesh" (1: 415).

In Hugo's Waterloo, the dead speak in muffled voices from these mass graves. Describing the calamitous fall of Napoleon's cavalry into the Ohain trench, Hugo's narrator imagines himself in the position of these cavaliers as they tumble into their collective tomb. From this intimate perspective, he gives voice to these men crying out from the grave:

[T]o live, to see the sun, to be in full possession of one's virile strength, to have health and joy, to laugh valiantly, to run towards future glory; to feel inside one's chest a lung that breathes, a heart that beats ... to think, hope, love, to have a mother, a wife, children, light; and all of a sudden, in an instant, in less than a minute, to collapse into the abyss, to fall, roll, crush, be crushed, see ears of wheat, flowers, leaves, branches ... to feel men underneath, and horses above ... to suffocate, scream, writhe, to be underneath [all this], and to say to oneself: just now, I was alive! (1: 468)

Moving from the objective narrative position of what "one" might feel to the subjective position of what "I" felt, the narrator enters the grave alongside Napoleon's men and their horses, feeling the crush of their bodies above and below him. In this literal and figurative fall, Hugo moves from aerial to burial, life to death, heroic glory to epic defeat. Buried along with these men, in a narrative gesture of Napoleonic friendship, the narrator becomes their sepulchral bedfellow, bearing witness and giving voice to their mutual suffering from inside their collective grave.

At the Château Hougomont, Hugo discovers another mass grave at the bottom of a well. Like the graves in the château's courtyard and orchard, this well is "full of skeletons" (1: 408), a makeshift grave, a tomb: "After the battle, they were in a hurry to bury the cadavers ... This well was deep, so they made it a sepulcher. They threw three hundred dead men in there. Perhaps with too much haste. Were they all dead? The legend says no. It seems that on the night following their burial, one could hear weak voices calling out from the well" (1: 409). Like the Ohain trench, the Hougomont well speaks. While Hugo personifies the ruined château as a wounded soldier, the well is its disembodied voice. Like those buried in the Ohain trench, these men in the Hougomont well are a haunting reminder that Napoleon's first veterans were piled in mass graves, where the bonds of Napoleonic friendship are grotesquely cemented into fused bones, overlapping flesh, and pooling blood. Having shared barracks and bivouacs, these military bedfellows now occupy collective graves in which they share death, as they shared life, with their comrades.²⁴

Following his discussion of these mass graves, Hugo narrows his epic scale to

focus on the individual figure of a particular wounded soldier left for dead. Like General Marbot and Balzac's Colonel Chabert, Hugo's Colonel Pontmercy is mistaken for a corpse before he is revived by an unlikely comrade, Sergeant Thénardier. Like those buried in the graves of Ohain and Hougomont, Pontmercy hovers between life and death, after a lifetime of loyal service to Napoleon and his fellow soldiers. Sergeant Thénardier is his antithesis: a war profiteer and thief, he roams the silent battlefield of Waterloo stealing from corpses and robbing the dead. When he yanks Pontmercy's ring from the colonel's finger, Thénardier jolts the wounded officer back to consciousness, inadvertently saving his life and setting up the tension much later in the novel when Pontmercy's son Marius will be obligated to repay his father's debt to the felonious Thénardier.

In *Les Misérables*, Hugo draws a connection between the humiliations of defeat at Waterloo and veteran abuse during the Restoration. This dual model of abused and abusive veterans figures Pontmercy as an archetype of the veteran wretch and Thénardier as a paragon of the veteran rogue. As the refuse of the Grande Armée, Pontmercy and Thénardier represent veteran survivors who, like the discarded dead in mass graves, are treated like human waste or extensions of Cambronne's *merde*.²⁵ Socially rejected by the Restoration, they are regarded as imperial garbage (Pontmercy) and white trash (Thénardier). From the carnage and graves of Waterloo to the slums and sewers of Restoration Paris, Hugo's veterans are either wholly neglected or manipulatively exploited because of their continued dedication to Napoleonic friendship.

Colonel Pontmercy

What little we know of Colonel Georges Pontmercy begins at Waterloo. When Thénardier steals Pontmercy's ring from his broken body, the colonel is little more than a hand stretching out from the grave: "from out of the ditch ... appeared an open hand, illuminated by the moon" (1: 469). Like Auguste Rodin's *Hand Coming Out of the Tomb* (1910), Pontmercy's hand reaches out from the grave toward lunar transformation, resurrection, and rebirth. Like branches that bend toward the sun, this hand grows out from the darkness of the earth toward the light of the moon. The only visible part of his buried body, the colonel's hand is a synecdochic figure for Pontmercy himself, outstretched in a gesture toward reprieve, a bridge to mercy, a *Pont/mercy*. Above all, Pontmercy's hand extends out to the living in an open invitation for another to help him out of this premature grave. Like Sergeant Bourgogne fallen into the deadly waters of an icy Russian river, Pontmercy reaches out at Waterloo for a comrade's lifesaving hand.

This reflex signals Pontmercy's instinctive will to survive, but it also demonstrates his confidence in his comrades after a lifetime spent among helping military hands. Even half-buried in a tangle of corpses, Pontmercy owes his survival to the intimate protection of fellow soldiers: "A terrible saber blow had gashed his

face which was covered with blood. For the rest, it didn't appear that he had any broken limbs ... the dead bodies around him had buttressed themselves so as to protect him from being crushed" (1: 470). Cushioned from harm by the soft-tissue of their bodies, Pontmercy survives the grave with the continued help of his comrades. While these corpses cradle the colonel's body, Thénardier pulls Pontmercy back into consciousness.

As a grave robber and profiteer, Thénardier may be an unlikely candidate to lift Pontmercy from the grave, but it is nonetheless he who "returned again, reached into the pile, removed the obstacles in the way, grabbed this hand, took hold of a shoulder, disengaged the head, pulled on the body, and several instants after, held in the shadows of this ditch an inanimate man" (1: 469–70). Hugo describes Pontmercy's resurrection in terms of rebirth. Like a midwife, Thénardier delivers the colonel's fragile body from this unlikely womb. Having left behind his stillborn brothers in their communal womb/tomb, Pontmercy reenters the world in the arms of this new comrade. With nothing to offer Thénardier (since the thief had already stolen the colonel's purse and watch), Pontmercy thanks the sergeant with his first word: "*Merci*, he said feebly" (1: 470). While Cambronne's *merde* announced impending death, Pontmercy's *merci* signals new life. For Thénardier's act of mercy, the colonel offers his own *merci*. In this simple word of thanks, Pont/mercy offers half of himself—embodied by both his name and his son—and thus the future gratitude and loyalty of Marius, who will one day repay this debt.

Like Napoleon, Pontmercy had entered the military during the Ancien Régime as a soldier of the Royal Army before fighting in the armies of the Revolution and the Empire. During the Napoleonic Wars, he fought at the battles of Lodi, Austerlitz, and Eylau, and accompanied the Emperor into exile on Elba in 1814 (1: 776–78). At Waterloo, Napoleon is so impressed with Pontmercy's bravery despite a serious saber-wound to the face, that he awards this loyal soldier a triple field promotion: "You are a colonel, a baron, an officer of the Légion d'Honneur!" (1: 778–79). But with Napoleon's exile to St. Helena in 1815, Pontmercy's field promotions are unrecognized and forgotten. In defiance of the Restoration, which confines him to a forced retirement in his native town of Vernon and sends his meager half-salary pension mis-addressed to "Commandant Pontmercy," the proud veteran takes every opportunity to assert himself as "Colonel Baron Pontmercy" (1: 779) by wearing in public his cross of the Légion d'Honneur.

More than his titles and pension, the Restoration has also robbed Pontmercy of his son Marius. Ashamed of his Bonapartist son-in-law, Pontmercy's estranged royalist father-in-law Gillenormand agrees to raise his grandson Marius under the condition that Pontmercy have no contact with the boy. Out of love for his son, the destitute and dishonored colonel sacrifices his own relationship with Marius so that he can grow up with means and respect in his grandfather's house. The result of Pontmercy's self-sacrifice is that Marius "knew he had a father, but nothing more ...

he eventually came to think of his father only with shame and a closed heart” (1: 781). Unaware of his father’s sacrifice and love, Marius assumes that his father “did not love him; this was evident, since he had abandoned him and left him with others. Not feeling loved, he did not love in return” (1: 791). The troubled relationship between these three generations of men serves as an allegory for France’s political crises of the early nineteenth century: the grandfather Gillenormand represents the older, royalist power of the Ancien Régime, newly restored during the Restoration; the war-weary father Pontmercy stands in for the Napoleonic Empire, born from the principles of the Revolution, and now displaced by the restored monarchy; and the son Marius symbolizes the present generation, raised in the neo-royalist order of the Restoration, but poised to take arms against the monarchy in the future insurrections of 1830, 1832, and 1848, in an effort to reinstate the 1789 Revolution’s dreams of a democratic French Republic.

Recalling Stendhal’s Julien and his preoccupation with the military and the Church, the forgotten and lonely Pontmercy finds solace in the comfort of a clerical comrade, the Abbé Mabeuf, who takes pity on the old veteran. Hugo describes these two bachelors as fellow soldiers, who comfort one another with tenderness and affection: “The priest treated him with veneration and tenderness, and the colonel in turn took the priest into his affections. After all, when they are both sincere and true, nothing penetrates and amalgamates more easily than an old priest and an old soldier. At bottom, they are the same man. The one is devoted to the nation below, while the other is devoted to the nation above; there is no other difference” (1: 782). Like two old soldiers in service to their respective nations, Pontmercy and Mabeuf offer mutual comfort against the miseries of the Restoration. Recalling Montaigne and La Boétie’s intestinal intimacy, this pair of bachelors shares—in both the emotional and even erotic terms of Hugo’s text—a penetrating friendship in which they are each other’s bottom line, fused as one man in a union of mutual veneration, tenderness, and affection.

When Pontmercy is dying and sends for his now grown and estranged son, Marius arrives too late, but eventually comes to understand his father’s love for him and for France, through the help of the Abbé Mabeuf. Through this surrogate clerical “father” and the care of this veteran couple, Marius comes into both personal and political consciousness, and is reborn as a revolutionary and a republican. In defiance of his royalist grandfather, the young man declares his new dedication to the memory of his father and the future of France:

My father ... was a humble and heroic man who gloriously served the French Republic, who was great during one of the greatest times in history that men have ever seen, who lived a quarter century on bivouac, spending his days under fire, his nights in the snow, mud, and rain ... who suffered twenty wounds, died forgotten and abandoned, and never had any fault but

one: that is, he loved two ingrates too much, his country and me! (1: 813)

In acknowledging his father's sacrifice, Marius condemns the national neglect of Napoleonic veterans. In confessing his own guilt, he articulates the guilt of the entire nation in its mistreatment of veteran wretches like his father. And in admiring his father's Napoleonic idealism, Marius lays the foundation for his own revolutionary future.

Admittedly, Marius's new Napoleonic enthusiasm is naïve. With the Empire over and Pontmercy and Napoleon dead, Marius must learn, through the help of his comrade Combeferre, to translate his Bonapartist enthusiasm into republican idealism (1: 848–49). To do this, he must first break with the royalism of his grandfather Gillenormand in a kind of personal and political declaration of independence, where he loses his grandfather's inheritance but inherits his father's name.²⁶ In assuming his father's title as "Baron Marius Pontmercy" (1: 812), the young man gains a family and an identity, and expresses his new political conviction to fight monarchical tyranny as a future revolutionary soldier on the barricades of 1832.

However, Pontmercy's death also creates a paternal crisis for Marius that reflects the broader anxieties over national paternity in post-Revolutionary France. Like the nation itself—which faced a string of successive patriarchal substitutions, from Louis XVI to Napoleon, Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Louis-Philippe—Marius must now struggle with his loyalties to a series of paternal figures, including Pontmercy, Gillenormand, Valjean, and Thénardier. In his will, Colonel Pontmercy passes on to Marius not only his name but his debt of gratitude to the man who revived him in 1815: "At [the] battle of Waterloo, a sergeant saved my life ... If my son meets him, he will do all that he can for Thénardier" (1: 794). Later in the novel, this hereditary debt forces Marius, out of duty to Thénardier, to betray Jean Valjean. Since the convict Valjean and the criminal Thénardier are both foster-fathers to Marius's beloved Cosette, the young man must choose between these two potential—though unlawful—fathers-in-law in order to honor his own father's dying wish.

This paternal crisis is resolved when one of these outlaw in-laws becomes Marius's new military father. While Thénardier fails to secure the young man's loyalty, Valjean saves the wounded Marius on the revolutionary barricades in 1832 and carries him to safety through the sewers of Paris. In the end, Marius may not succeed in repaying his father's deathbed debt to Thénardier, but he finds a substitute military father in Valjean, who saves Marius in battle just as Thénardier had—more dubiously—revived Pontmercy at Waterloo. Having missed the chance to console Pontmercy on his deathbed, Marius later comforts Valjean when he dies at the end of the novel. Long after 1815 and the deaths of both Pontmercy and Napoleon, Marius discovers in the figure of Jean Valjean both paternal military affection and fraternal Napoleonic friendship.

Sergeant Thénardier

From his first appearance in *Les Misérables*, Sergeant Thénardier's dubious military past is framed as self-promotion. In 1818, when the desperate Fantine is forced to leave her daughter Cosette at Thénardier's tavern in Montfermeil, Fantine's first impression of this veteran rogue comes from his tavern's street sign, a painting which advertises his business and his military past: "Above the door, there was ... painted something which resembled a man carrying on his back another man, who had the large epaulettes of a general with wide silver stars ... the rest of the painting was filled with smoke, which probably represented a battle. At the bottom was this inscription: THE SERGEANT OF WATERLOO" (1: 210). Within Hugo's narrative frame, the "Sergeant of Waterloo" is a painting, a tavern, and a veteran, or more simply, a sign, a place, and a person that collectively represent Thénardier's role as a veteran rogue.

As a painting, the "Sergeant of Waterloo" is, on at least three levels, a lie. First, the painting is a fake. While Thénardier claims that "[t]his painting which you see was painted by [Jacques-Louis] David in Brussels" (2: 92), the narrator confirms that "the painting by David ... was none other ... than the sign of [Thénardier's] tavern, painted by himself" (2: 93). Second, Thénardier falsely suggests that his sign "represents me" carrying a wounded general to safety during the battle: "David had wanted to immortalize this military feat. I have this general on my back, and I am carrying him under fire. That's the story" (2: 92). In Thénardier's gross exaggeration of the events, his colonel has become a general, and the safe aftermath of the battle has become the dangerous line of fire. Third, Thénardier claims to have "saved his life at the risk of my own" (2: 92), when in fact he inadvertently revived the man while robbing his corpse.

Like much commercial advertising, Thénardier's sign initiates a discourse of half-truths, indeterminate promises, and vague associations in an attempt to seduce the consumer. Unlike Pontmercy, who wears his Légionnaire's cross as an outward sign of honor, Thénardier hangs his sign to attract Bonapartist clients, and exaggerates his military service for commercial profit. Yet, while Pontmercy's well-deserved decoration is contested by the Restoration regime, Thénardier's deceptive painting goes unchallenged. More than a sign for Thénardier's business, the "Sergeant of Waterloo" is a representation of Restoration corruption and exploitation.

As a tavern, the "Sergeant of Waterloo" is the commercial field on which this exploitation takes place, an entrepreneurial battlefield where Sergeant Thénardier swindles and conquers his clients. Like cannon fodder, they do not stand a chance against Thénardier's merciless tactics. Hoping to find comfort and accommodation, Thénardier's guests are inconvenienced and fleeced by an innkeeper who considers it his commercial duty "to sell to the first one who shows up some grub, rest, light, fire, dirty sheets, the maid, fleas, and a smile; to stop passersby, empty their little purses and lighten the large ones, harbor traveling families, fleece the men, feather

the women, and husk the children” (1: 498). Among his other commercial tactics are “to charge for the open window, the closed window, the place by the fire, the armchair, the chair, the stool, the step-ladder, the featherbed, the mattress, and the box of straw; to know how much the customer uses the mirror and charge for that, and ... to make the traveler pay for everything, right up to the flies that his dog eats” (1: 499). Among other travelers, Thénardier exploits veterans, who are seduced by his false advertising into believing he is a fellow Napoleonic comrade. The corrupt sergeant, general, and emperor of his inn, Thénardier continues to rob veterans in the same way that he plundered their comrades’ corpses at Waterloo.

Thénardier’s tavern is thus the post-1815 extension of his military field of operations, where he acquired his criminal training: “Thénardier belonged to that variety of marauding camp-followers ... who wandered the battlefields, selling to some, stealing from others ... always intuitively attaching himself to the winning army” (1: 496). Having perfected his entrepreneurial skills during the Napoleonic Wars, Thénardier transforms easily from *cantinier* to *gargotier*, camp-follower to innkeeper, war profiteer to civilian crook: “With this campaign over ... he opened a tavern in Montfermeil. This booty of purses, watches, gold rings, and silver crosses, all collected at dawn from battlefield cadavers, did not add up to much and had not taken this camp-follower any further than becoming an innkeeper” (1: 496). Financed with booty stolen from dead soldiers, the “Sergeant of Waterloo” is thus—as both a painting and a tavern—a symbol of veteran abuse.

Finally, this “Sergeant of Waterloo” is a dubious veteran. While Pontmercy confirms that Thénardier was present at Waterloo, it is unlikely that, as a “marauding camp-follower” (1: 496), Thénardier was either a sergeant or even a soldier, unless he was a roving deserter. In a confrontation with Marius and Valjean later in the novel, Thénardier claims that “I’m a French veteran, I should be decorated! I was at Waterloo! And in the battle, I saved a general named Count-I-don’t-know-what!” (2: 92). But as with Thénardier’s misleading painting and inhospitable tavern, his specious claims that “I’m a soldier from Waterloo” (2: 92) are likely untrue.

In Hugo’s Waterloo, Thénardier is characterized as “neither English nor French, neither civilian nor soldier, less a man than a ghoul, attracted by the scent of the dead” (1: 466). Repeatedly described as a prowler or “rôdeur” (1: 469–71), he is a roving profiteer without national or military identity, a specter devoid of human form and compassion, a parasite who feeds off battlefield corpses and the profits that he reaps from their pockets. When the wounded Pontmercy asks who he is, Thénardier responds, “I was, like you, in the French army,” but his ambiguous use of the past tense and his fear that “[i]f they caught me, they would shoot me” (1: 471) implies that he is either a deserter or—in the immediate aftermath of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic Wars—a very new veteran.

A false painting, an unaccommodating tavern, and a fake soldier, the “Sergeant of Waterloo” is a metaphor for deception itself. In a kind of *mise-en-abîme* of fallacious representation between an empty referent and a series of false signifiers, Thénardier’s tavern is fronted by a painting of a soldier who never existed: “You’ll remember that he pretended to have served in the army; he recounted with some exaggeration how at Waterloo, as a sergeant of the 6th or 9th or some such light brigade, he had—alone, against a death squad of hussars—covered with his body and saved under fire ‘a dangerously wounded general.’ From this story came, for his wall, his flamboyant sign, and for his tavern ... the name of the ‘Cabaret of the Sergeant of Waterloo’ “ (1: 495). Thénardier’s painting, tavern, and identity are thus a series of deceptive simulacra: representations of a representation for which there is no original.²⁷

As the embodiment of this false trinity, Thénardier is more demon than divine, an insidious shape-shifter who charms with false flattery and deceit: “Thénardier ... had the look of a sick man, but carried himself marvelously; his deceitfulness began there. He always smiled as a precaution, and was polite to almost everyone, even with the beggar to whom he refused a farthing” (1: 495). Thénardier’s inviting smile and outwardly good manners disguise his sickly pallor and inner corruption. In gesture, word, and sentiment, he is a malevolent seducer: “In Thénardier’s words, accent, and gestures, in his fiery look ... in his mix of bragging and abjection, arrogance and modesty, in his false sentiments, in his immodesty and love of violence, in the insolent nudity of his ugly soul, in his passion for all kinds of suffering and all forms of hatred, there was something which was hideous, like evil” (2: 93).

Despite his sins, Thénardier is also a compelling Napoleonic anti-hero. An unlikely soldier, he is nevertheless a veteran of Waterloo and a survivor of the Napoleonic Wars who, in his pursuit of profit, underscores the even greater injustices inflicted on soldiers and veterans by the Empire and Restoration. Next to the crimes of Napoleon and Louis XVIII—including those inflicted on the millions of soldiers who were killed or maimed during the Empire and who are now rejected and abused by the Restoration—Thénardier’s crimes seem trivial. In refusing both Bonapartist and Bourbon allegiances, Thénardier tacitly mocks the kind of Napoleonic and Restoration idealism that condemned millions to violent deaths and miserable lives, all in the service of an irresponsible emperor and indifferent king. Even as he robs fallen soldiers at Waterloo and fleeces veteran clients in Montfermeil, one can empathize with Thénardier’s refusal to be seduced by the very ideologies that claimed the lives and livelihoods of these miserable soldiers. A veteran rogue, criminal, and liar, Thénardier is also a survivor, a self-made man, a creator of autobiographical fiction and self-portraiture who cleverly exploits his own personal narrative in order to ensure his survival in an absurdly violent and ruthless

world.

Thénardier is thus Pontmercy's alter ego. A veteran wretch and an inveterate rogue, an idealist and a realist, a hero and a cad, Pontmercy and Thénardier are proof that war makes strange bedfellows. While Pontmercy dedicated his life in honorable service to an ungrateful nation, Thénardier profits from the dishonorable exploitation of Napoleonic soldiers and veterans, both living and dead. Together, Thénardier and Pontmercy represent the worst of veteran abuse in post-Napoleonic France. Rejected and forgotten, the selfless Pontmercy dies a veteran wretch, while the self-serving Thénardier thrives and profits as a veteran rogue.

Amid such veteran abuse, Thénardier and Pontmercy nevertheless illustrate the survival of Napoleonic friendship during the Restoration. Admittedly, Thénardier is uninterested in the bonds of friendship. Whereas Stendhal's naïve Fabrice longs to share such bonds but arrives too late at Waterloo to form them, the shrewd Thénardier has no interest at all in such communal relationships, which would only hinder his pursuit of individual profit. While Thénardier is a false friend, whose veteran abuse represents the very antithesis of Napoleonic friendship, Pontmercy's naïve trust in him signals the colonel's continued faith in military comrades. Believing that Thénardier is a fellow soldier and lifesaving friend, Pontmercy transfers his affections for his fallen comrades in the Ohain trench to this so-called sergeant, to whom he bequeaths the continued loyalty of his son Marius. Thénardier is only able to exploit this loyalty for his own profit because of Pontmercy's genuine—if badly placed—gratitude, affection, and dedication to Napoleonic friendship. Despite the manipulation and abuse of his false friend Thénardier, Pontmercy finds new friendship and comfort—during his otherwise miserable retirement—with his true friend and fellow (Christian) soldier Mabeuf, to whom he entrusts the paternal stewardship of his son.

Gavroche

While Pontmercy and Thénardier demonstrate the exploitation of Napoleonic friendship, their sons Marius and Gavroche announce the rebirth of republican fraternity. Disillusioned by the abuses of the Restoration and the July Monarchy, this new generation takes up arms on the barricades of Paris in 1832—like the previous generation had done at the Bastille in 1789—to fight monarchical oppression and embrace fraternal republican democracy. In this new revolutionary struggle, these young soldiers attempt to recreate the military fraternity of the Revolution and the Napoleonic friendship of the Consulate and Empire. In the absence of their imperial fathers, Marius and Gavroche find fraternal support from other Napoleonic veterans.

Even before he joins his republican brothers in open revolt on the barricades, the twelve-year-old Gavroche survives the miseries of urban poverty with the help of a Napoleonic friend. Homeless on the streets of Paris, he finds shelter in the arms of an unlikely veteran. Desperate and cold, like Napoleon's soldiers in Russia,

Gavroche sleeps inside the carcass of a rotting imperial monument, “in the south-west corner of the Place de la Bastille ... a bizarre monument which has since been erased from Parisians’ memory ... an elephant, forty feet tall” (2: 281). Designed by Jean-Antoine Alavoine and erected in 1814 on the site of the demolished Bastille Prison, the monumental elephant celebrated both Revolutionary and Napoleonic victory, and evoked exotic images of Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt in 1799, his crossing of the Alps into Italy in 1800, and his ambitious plans for the conquest of India.²⁸ Modeled in plaster, the elephant was to be replaced by a more permanent version, cast in bronze supplied by captured enemy cannon from Spain. But as the Iberian Campaign deteriorated and the Empire crumbled, the plaster elephant remained, rotting away in the rain until 1846. Like Shelley’s “Ozymandias” (1818), the once triumphant elephant thus symbolized Napoleonic conquest and defeat, grandeur and decay.

Hugo describes the old elephant as a spectacular ruin, “Long ago painted green ... but now painted black by the sky, the rain, and the passing of time ... It was falling in ruins; each season, chunks of plaster detached from its flanks and gave it hideous sores ... crevasses zigzagged its belly, the frame stuck out from the tail, and tall weeds grew between its legs” (2: 281–82). Like Napoleon’s soldiers rotting in mass graves at Waterloo, this monumental veteran is a decomposing corpse, “repulsive and superb, ugly in the eyes of the bourgeois, melancholy to the eyes of the thinker” (2: 282). But unlike Napoleon’s buried and forgotten soldiers, this imperial veteran rots in full view, a visual incarnation of Cambronne’s *merde* flung in the face of Parisians, a spectacular reminder of the once glorious imperial past now in ruins, and a colossal symbol of the neglected Napoleonic veteran. Just as he had praised another Napoleonic monument in his celebrated “Ode to the Place Vendôme Column” (1827), Hugo honors the Place de la Bastille elephant as a powerful reminder of the Grande Armée, the sacrifices of its soldiers, and the shameful abuse of its veterans during the Restoration and July Monarchy. Having evoked his own Napoleonic childhood in the ode on the Vendôme ²⁹column, Hugo foregrounds the revolutionary Gavroche in this novel’s chapter on the Bastille elephant.

While wealthy Parisians complain of an eyesore or a shelter for rats and weeds, Gavroche owes his survival to this elephantine wreck: “This exaggerated monument, which was born in the mind of the Emperor, had become the home of a street-urchin ... It saved him from cold, frost, rain, and the winter wind, kept him from sleeping in the mud which causes fevers, and in the snow which causes death, this little creature without father, mother, bread, clothing, or shelter. It saved this innocent boy from the society that had rejected him” (2: 285–86). Reminiscent of Jonah in the belly of the whale, Pontmercy in his Waterloo womb/tomb, or the young Hugo amused by military parrots and monkeys, Gavroche finds shelter and comfort in the protective care of this Napoleonic friend.³⁰

Like this mammoth comrade, the diminutive Gavroche is an unlikely soldier. A runaway waif, Gavroche is an urban soldier of fortune whose fight to survive on the streets of Paris amounts to a kind of individual battle against bourgeois neglect and monarchical indifference in post-1815 France. Gavroche's individual struggle culminates in the collective combat on the Parisian barricades in 1832. In an echo of the Revolution of 1789–99 and the July Revolution of 1830, this armed rebellion in June 1832 erupted at the funeral of the leftist opposition leader and Napoleonic veteran General Maximilien Lamarque, when republican students and demonstrators took to the barricades to oppose the July Monarchy, but were brutally massacred by the National Guard. Having lived his entire life in misery, Gavroche joins the doomed republican struggle, using his street smarts to dart between bullets and collect unused ammunition for his comrades: "Twenty dead men were lying here and there on the pavement, along the length of the street. Twenty ammunition pouches for Gavroche. A provision of cartridges for the barricade" (2: 596). Like the "Artful Dodger" Jack Dawkins in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837–39), Gavroche is an urban survivalist whose agility at picking pockets now makes him an invaluable munitions soldier. Like his father Thénardier, who scavenged the battlefield at Waterloo, Gavroche is a skilled military forager.

As a veteran of the streets, Gavroche braves the barricades, fights on the same urban battlefield where he has waged war his entire life, and sings in the face of death: "The barricade trembled; Gavroche sang. He was not a child, he was not a man; he was a strange street urchin fairy. One might have called him the invulnerable dwarf of the battle. Bullets flew at him, but he was more nimble. He was playing a frightening hide-and-seek game with death" (2: 598). Like Napoleon himself, Gavroche is a natural soldier, stoic in battle, and unafraid in combat. Described as a supernatural elf or urban sprite, Gavroche becomes a mythological figure. When he is hit by a bullet, this mythic elf falls like a mighty Titan, "for as the boy touched the pavement, it was like a giant touching the earth" (2: 598) or like the collapse of the colossal Napoleonic elephant on the Place de la Bastille.

Gavroche's thunderous fall sends shock waves throughout the soldiers on the barricade, who "let out a cry" (2: 598) of collective mourning. Matching Napoleon's "excessive weight" at Waterloo where "this vast man fell" (1: 437), Gavroche hits the ground like a colossus on this urban battlefield. Recalling the thunderous advance "like an earthquake" (1: 435) of Napoleon's cavalry at Waterloo, Gavroche strikes the pavement with tremendous force. The catastrophic fall of Napoleon, the Empire, and the Grande Armée at Waterloo is all condensed here in the fall of a young boy, whose death—in the epic landscape of *Les Misérables*—is as earthshaking as the destruction of armies and empires.

Too young to have served in the Napoleonic Wars, Gavroche and Marius fight on the barricades in 1832 as their fathers had done at Waterloo in 1815. Unlike his father Thénardier, Gavroche scavenges the field not for personal profit, but to supply

and support his fighting comrades. Having lived his entire life in misery, Gavroche takes part in a collective and fraternal struggle before he dies. Like his own father, Colonel Pontmercy, Marius too is gravely wounded. But before he is shot on the barricades, Marius finally has the chance to oppose his royalist grandfather, avenge his Napoleonic father, and combat the humiliations of the Restoration and July Monarchy.

Unable to save the wounded Gavroche, Marius nevertheless carries this young comrade from the field and thus fulfills his father's dying wish that he do all he can for (a) Thénardier: "Alas, he thought, what Gavroche's father had done for his father, he now did for his son; only Thénardier had brought back his father alive; he brought back the child dead" (2: 609). While Marius cannot save Gavroche, Jean Valjean does save Marius, as he carries the wounded revolutionary out of danger and through the Paris sewers to freedom. Just as Colonel Pontmercy is reborn from a mass grave at Waterloo, Marius reemerges from the sewers of Paris to begin a new life. Despite the veteran abuses of the Restoration and July Monarchy—exemplified by Thénardier's exploitation of Pontmercy—Gavroche and Marius demonstrate, through their fraternal selfsacrifice in 1832, both the survival and the legacy of Napoleonic friendship in post-1815 France.



FROM 1789 to 1871, France's multiple regime changes reflected the nation's alternating desire for fraternal democracy and paternal authority, a persistent pursuit of a republic (in 1792, 1848, and 1871) interrupted by repetitive returns to monarchy and empire (from Napoleon to Louis XVIII, Charles X, Louis-Philippe, and Napoleon III). Few understood this paternal/fraternal struggle as well as Victor Hugo, the son of a Napoleonic military father and royalist mother, who forged a complex literary and political career during which he once collected a royal annuity from Louis XVIII (1822), was the official poet at the coronation of Charles X (1825), spent nineteen years in exile during the Second Empire for his opposition to Napoleon III (1851–70), and dedicated the rest of his life to republican service as a democratically elected member of parliament (1871) and senator (1876) during the Third Republic. In *Les Misérables*, Hugo allegorizes this complex political struggle between paternity and fraternity in nineteenth-century France. In their rejection of Thénardier and Gillenormand and their enthusiasm for Pontmercy and Valjean, Gavroche and Marius reject paternal anarchy and monarchy in order to embrace a fraternal vision of revolutionary and republican democracy. This political idealism, however, comes at an enormous price.

From the Waterloo battlefield in 1815 to the Paris barricades in 1832, Hugo's veteran wretches and rogues struggle to survive amid the indignities, neglect, and abuse of monarchical indifference and national ingratitude. Dredged through successive variations of Cambronne's *merde*—from muddy battlefields and mass

graves to rotting monuments and urban sewers—these Napoleonic veterans are treated as human refuse and waste. Despite such humiliation and suffering, their commitment to revolutionary fraternity and Napoleonic friendship persists, not only in their relationships with one another, but in the renewed commitment of their sons. Though he longs for military fellowship, Stendhal's child soldier Fabrice is incapable of understanding the mutual suffering and sacrifices that such attachments require. Having suffered his entire life and survived with Napoleonic support, Hugo's child soldier Gavroche readily sacrifices himself to help his combatant comrades.

Far from the circus amusements of most children, Hugo's macabre menagerie of parrots, monkeys, and elephants represents the miseries of veteran suffering and the necessities of fraternal support, from the disastrous campaigns at the end of the Empire to the post-1815 abuses of the Restoration and July Monarchy. Despite radical regime change and gross veteran abuse, Napoleonic friendship survives amid the persistent fraternal loyalty of imperial veterans and the neo-revolutionary solidarity of their republican children. From his boyhood retreat out of Spain in 1812, to his literary celebration of the Paris barricades in 1832, to the publication of *Les Misérables* in 1862, Hugo participated in this tradition of Napoleonic suffering and survival, solidarity and friendship. Having been a child soldier, Hugo mourns Gavroche as a fallen comrade, fellow revolutionary, and Napoleonic friend.



An Army of Bachelors *Napoleonic Veterans from Blaze to Balzac*

After many long years of service in the armies of Napoleon, a battleweary captain in the French imperial cavalry dismounted his horse and proposed to his regimental bugler. Following the defeat at Waterloo, the collapse of the Empire, and the hardships of the Restoration, this gallant officer made what one witness called a “singular proposition” to his bugler buddy: “My friend ... I am going to retire to the countryside; I possess a small house, several acres of land, and my pension; with all that, I hope to live in comfort. If you want to accompany me, we will plant our cabbages and we will eat them together.”¹ Content as Voltaire’s *Candide* and Cunégonde to retire to the country and make their garden grow, these two soldiers agree to live out their veteran lives together. Echoing Olivier’s call for Roland to blow his horn in (the medieval military epic) the *Song of Roland*, this Napoleonic captain asks his bugler to herald their retired days together with the same devotion as during their years on campaign: “You will do the same service at home in the countryside as you did with the regiment. You will sound reveille, roll-call, inspection, drill, and review” (318). Promising his comrade that “I will sound everything you want” (318), the delighted old bugler accepts the captain’s proposal and agrees to sound out the remaining days of his life with those of his beloved friend.

Documented in the memoirs of Captain Elzéar Blaze, this proposal between a captain and his bugler exemplifies a widespread phenomenon that grew out of the tradition of Napoleonic friendship established during the Empire: the shared retirement of many Napoleonic veterans during the Restoration and July Monarchy. Faced with a double *retraite* (retreat and retirement), veteran comrades like this captain and his bugler often stayed together, relying on friendships formed during the Napoleonic Wars to navigate the political disfavor and material hardships of post-1815 France. In the context of this captain’s proposal, the near-homonyms *campagne* (campaign), *campagne* (countryside), and *compagne* (companion) represent the terms by which Napoleonic friendship helped many men to survive the transition from their years as active-duty soldiers to those as postwar veterans. In the move from campaign retreat to countryside retirement, numerous Napoleonic

soldiers—like this bugler and his captain—continued to rely on their military companions and to live in homosocial pairs.

Published in his non-fiction memoirs, Captain Blaze's account of the captain and the bugler may nonetheless be a kind of military fiction² At the end of the memoir, Blaze explains: "As for me, dear reader ... I will admit to you that I resemble this worthy captain a bit. I have no bugler under my command, which I quite often regret; but as compensation, the cabbages that I plant grow in Chenièvres-sur-Marne" (320). While it is possible that Blaze was a witness to the proposal of a captain and a bugler in his regiment, this passage implies a more personal and melancholy alternative. Admitting that he resembles the sympathetic captain and regrets the absent bugler, Blaze suggests that this story of cabbages and companionship is for him an unfulfilled fantasy, a dream of veteran camaraderie, a vision of enduring Napoleonic friendship. Although they may be a fictional pair, Blaze's captain and bugler represent many Napoleonic veterans who—both in fiction and in non-fiction accounts—survived the humiliations of the Restoration with each other's help, and lived out their retirement in each other's company.

Captain Blaze reasons that friendships forged in combat are lifetime commitments: "This fraternity of peril had strengthened friendship for some and created new friendships for others. Friendship that forms on the field of battle is one of lasting duration" (43). For some veterans, these battle-tested friendships would long outlast Napoleon, the Grande Armée, and the Empire itself. As the Bourbon Restoration demobilized Napoleon's soldiers, tens of thousands of veterans were offered meager *demi-solde* or half-pay pensions, placed under surveillance by local royalist authorities, and denied the respect and support to which they felt entitled after years of sacrifice and service to France. Faced with a bleak and disappointing future, many veterans relied on each other during their retirement, sharing their modest homes, tables, and pensions in the same way that they had endured the privations of Napoleon's final disastrous campaigns.

The fictional ambiguity of Captain Blaze's memoirs also reflects the voluminous production of Napoleonic fiction—notably by Balzac—on soldier couples and veteran pairs following 1815. Written and published simultaneously during the July Monarchy, military memoirs and fiction—such as Blaze's *Military Life During the Empire* (1837), Bourgogne's *Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne* (1835), and Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* (1830) and *The Country Doctor* (1833)—resonate intertextually. Balzac was inspired by stories he heard from veterans like Captain Nicolas-Louis Périolas, who advised him in 1832 that "you will learn more chatting with old foot soldiers than consulting with officers."³ While Bourgogne writes with the skill of a novelist about barn-burning atrocities and lifesaving buddies in Russia, Balzac recounts similar stories of burned barns and veteran couples in his Napoleonic fiction. While Blaze dreams of a companion to share his retirement, Balzac's

veterans either live in pairs or seek out the support of military friends amid the social rejection and neglect of the Restoration and July Monarchy. Like the alliterative echo of their names, Blaze and Balzac offer parallel images of Napoleonic veterans and a literary bridge between Napoleonic memoir and fiction. Before Blaze and Balzac, however, the primary model of veteran friendship was the post-1815 fidelity between the deposed Bonaparte and his devoted friend Bertrand.

Bonaparte and Bertrand

The most famous of all Napoleonic veterans was Bonaparte himself, whose final defeat and exile were the results of his last calamitous campaigns. For Napoleon, the series of military disasters during the last three years of the Empire played out like one long retreat. Following the catastrophic Russian Campaign (1812–13), the end of the protracted Iberian Campaign (1807–14), and the collapse of the Saxon Campaign at the battle of Leipzig (1813), Napoleon was finally forced to retreat to France. As the allied coalition—including the major powers of Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Britain, along with Sweden, Spain, and Portugal—regained their own lands and moved on France, Napoleon’s Empire continued to shrink. Unable to defend his own borders during the defensive “Campagne de France” (1814), Napoleon retreated again to Paris, which was occupied by the Allies in March 1814. After almost twenty years of invasion and conquest, Napoleon was now at the mercy of his former captives. Retreating yet again to Fontainebleau where he was forced to abdicate, Napoleon reluctantly agreed to yet another humiliating withdrawal, in exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba. Even after his triumphant return to France and Hundred Days of power in 1815, Napoleon’s inability to defeat the English and Prussian Allies at Waterloo marked the end of his military career and political power. Having conquered cities from Cairo to Moscow and formed a vast empire that stretched from Florence and Geneva to Brussels and Hamburg, Napoleon was now forced to retreat to his final exile on St. Helena, a rocky and remote island in the chilly South Atlantic. From here, the only further retreat for Napoleon would be his ultimate death and island burial, in four nested metal and mahogany caskets, in an unmarked grave, in 1821.⁴

Despite the triumphant return of his remains to France in 1840, when the Emperor was ceremoniously buried in the marble mausoleum under the gilded dome of the Invalides in Paris, Napoleon’s almost six-year exile on St. Helena between 1815 and 1821 was a miserable and solitary retirement. Although Napoleon was accompanied in exile by a few of his senior officers, along with some of their wives and children, almost none of these men could be said to represent the kind of ideal Napoleonic friendship embodied by Marshal Lannes or Generals Duroc and Junot. Following his initial promise to remain by Napoleon’s side in exile, the opportunistic naval officer Emmanuel de Las Cases abandoned the Emperor in 1816 and was later accused of using his short stay of only eleven months on the island primarily to collect material

for his best-selling *Memorial of Saint Helena* (1823).⁵ Similarly, General Gaspard Bourgaud, who had loyally served Napoleon in Austria, Iberia, and Russia before disloyally serving Louis XVIII during Napoleon's first exile to Elba in 1814, soon tired of the tedious and petty jealousies on St. Helena and asked the island's English commander General Hudson Lowe for permission to return to France in 1818. Worst of all, General Tristan de Montholon ingratiated himself with Napoleon while in exile and secured an enormous bequest of two million francs in the Emperor's will—far more than Bonaparte left to his own wife, son, or brothers—before in all likelihood murdering Napoleon with arsenic.⁶ Far from the devoted friendship and affection of Lannes, Duroc, and Junot, Napoleon's final companions Las Cases, Bourgaud, and Montholon could be said to represent the nadir of Napoleonic friendship.

General Henri-Gratien Bertrand, however, remained loyal to the very end, and beyond. Unlike the opportunistic Las Cases, sulking Bourgaud, and treacherous Montholon, General Bertrand accompanied Napoleon into exile and remained with him, after a lifetime of genuine, intimate, and faithful service. Having served with Bonaparte from the very beginning, in his early Italian and Egyptian Campaigns between 1797 and 1799, Bertrand later preceded Junot as governor of the Illyrian Provinces in 1811 and succeeded Duroc as Grand Marshal of the Imperial Palace in 1813. Entrusted with the intimate responsibilities of the Emperor's household and the personal protection of Napoleon's family, Bertrand succeeded Lannes, Duroc, and Junot in the Emperor's trust and affections. Bertrand was the only one of Napoleon's officers to accompany him twice into exile, first to Elba in 1814 and then to St. Helena in 1815, where he remained—despite personal hardships, his wife's objections, and Napoleon's abuses—for the entire five-and-a-half years of their exile. Like Blaze's captain and his bugler, Bonaparte and Bertrand sounded out their veteran days together, amid the isolation of exile and the disgrace of defeat.

At Napoleon's deathbed on May 5, 1821, Bertrand remained at his side, kissing his hand, and offering the same kind of comfort that Napoleon had provided for the dying Lannes and Duroc.⁷ Having shared the humiliations and hardships of the Emperor's exile, Bertrand demonstrated how Napoleonic friendship persisted among post-1815 veterans. Long after the Emperor's death, General Bertrand's veteran loyalty extended as far as 1840, when he made the long voyage back to St. Helena with Louis-Philippe's naval captain son, the Prince de Joinville, to bring Napoleon's remains home to France. Having personally cared for his beloved Bonaparte and laid him to rest in Paris, Bertrand was later buried in 1847 near Napoleon in the Invalides. After a lifetime serving his *mentor* Napoleon—as a faithful soldier, veteran *intime ami*, and repatriating *pays*—Bertrand proved to be one of Napoleon's ultimate *camarades de lit*.

Napoleonic Veterans and the Restoration

Like Bonaparte and Bertrand, thousands of Napoleonic veterans survived the difficult years following Waterloo by relying on one another in the face of defeat. After almost twenty years of Napoleonic combat, many of these beleaguered soldiers returned to a Restoration France that would not honor their service. For older soldiers, some of whom had spent decades on campaign, this meant adjusting to a civilian life that was disconcertingly unfamiliar. Faced with the abrupt and unwelcome end to their military futures, many younger veterans slipped into resentment, boredom, and crime. For all of these soldiers, the word *retraite* represented both a humiliating retreat and an unwanted retirement in the hostile and unwelcoming world of the Restoration.

Some veterans were able to reintegrate into civilian life by marrying, having families, and finding ways to supplement their meager pensions.⁸ Many veterans, however, were not as lucky. Despite the marital success and financial stability of men like General Marbot, Captain Coignet, and Sergeant Bourgogne who all lived to an advanced age, thousands of other Napoleonic veterans lived out lonelier, poorer, and shorter lives, for which both the military afflictions of the Empire and the anti-militarism of the Restoration were to blame. Enfeebled and disabled veterans like Bourgogne's handless grenadier and Old Eliot would suffer the lifelong effects of their battle wounds as *invalides* and *mutilés de guerre*.⁹ Able-bodied veterans still faced the humiliation of early retirement, government surveillance, and institutional poverty. Eager to defuse any residual threat of military mutiny by Napoleon's loyal forces, Louis XVIII disbanded the Grande Armée and decommissioned its soldiers, who became popularly known as *demi-soldes* for their paltry half-salary pensions. With their bodies mutilated and incomes slashed, veterans were materially cut off, socially severed, and psychologically emasculated.

The year 1815 thus marked the end of an entire era of resplendent Napoleonic grandeur and virile military manhood.¹⁰ While Louis XVIII was careful not to provoke Napoleon's numerous battle-hardened veterans, he and his ministers were as eager as the war-weary French people to leave behind the violent militarism of the Napoleonic past. After twenty-three years of almost continual warfare between 1792 and 1815, France was tired of Napoleon's incessant wars and the costly *impôt de sang* (blood tax) exacted on the nation's able-bodied sons, husbands, and fathers. During the Empire alone, thirty-two different levies conscripted almost two million French men and a third million foreign and allied soldiers into the ranks of Napoleon's Grande Armée. Of these three million men, anywhere from 450,000 to 1,750,000 perished in battle or later died of combat wounds and disease.¹¹ Those who survived returned to a France that was now hostile to Napoleon, the so-called ogre who, in his voracious quest for power, had devoured his children through conscription, leaving millions of grieving mothers, widows, and orphans. While

thousands had publicly celebrated Napoleon's return from Elba, many were also relieved—after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo and exile to St. Helena—to see the end of more than two decades of violence.

In the absence of the exiled Emperor, veterans bore the brunt of the Restoration's anti-militarism. Once admired for their victories and fêted by the nation, veterans were now characterized as criminals and regarded by Restoration society as objects of public disdain.¹² In his *Essay on Military Life* (1828), Captain Adolphe de Montureux argues, "In every class of society, there is an almost fashionable and disdainful aversion to the military profession."¹³ General Jean Maximilien Lamarque recounts in his volume *On Military Life in France* (1826) how many military officers ceased wearing their uniforms in Paris salons: "The officer seems to want us to forget that he is a member of the military ... [D]isdained in uniform, he will be treated with courtesy dressed in a black suit. At one time, an officer was admired and regarded as a thing of beauty in the salons; today, it's the black suit."¹⁴ Following 1815, soldiers were thus not only out of work and out of favor but quite literally out of fashion.

Invalids, Vagrants, and Rogues

In France, veterans have long been associated with brigands and beggars. As the historian Isser Woloch has documented, the demobilized soldier has been a figure of great neglect and public concern in France since at least the sixteenth century, when drunk, disabled, and destitute veterans begged and brawled in the streets of Paris.¹⁵ Louis XIV founded the Hôtel des Invalides in 1670 in an attempt to ensure public order and alleviate veteran suffering. Located on Paris's left bank near the École Militaire and named for the infirm or "invalid" soldiers that it planned to house, the Invalides became, upon its completion in 1674, France's primary institution for the care of veterans. With a maximum capacity of between three and six thousand, the Invalides never had sufficient space to accommodate all of France's eligible veterans. To remedy this problem, Louis XV's War Minister, Étienne François de Choiseul, created France's first uniform military pension system in 1764, doling out what were called *pensions d'invalides* to qualifying soldiers: full pay (*solde*) for veterans with at least twenty-four years of service, and half-pay (*demi-solde*) for those with at least sixteen years of service. Soldiers who had served fewer than sixteen years did not qualify, which left thousands with no resources and thus exacerbated the social problems of poverty, homelessness, and alcoholism that already plagued the French veteran.¹⁶

A century after Louis XIV's founding of the Invalides and a decade after Choiseul's creation of the pension system, these veteran resources underwent numerous reforms at the end of the Ancien Régime, and even more during the Revolution, Consulate, Empire, and Restoration. From 1775 to 1777, Louis XVI's

War Minister, Claude Louis de Saint-Germain, discouraged applications to the Invalides and emphasized the pension system as a way to integrate veterans back into productive civilian lives. New laws in 1793 and 1799 reformed the distribution of military pensions to reflect the more egalitarian and meritocratic ideals of the Revolution. To administer veteran affairs during the Consulate, Bonaparte appointed General Jean-Gérard de Lacuée, who renamed the old *pensions d'invalides* (invalid pensions) as *soldes de retraite* (retirement salaries). And as First Consul and Emperor, Napoleon created regional veteran institutions, based on the model of the Invalides. Located in Provence and Maine-Anjou, at Versailles and St-Cyr, and in French-occupied Italy, Belgium, and the Rhineland, these annex institutions largely failed, however, since most veterans wanted to retire in Paris.¹⁷

With the failure of these regional projects, Napoleon focused on improving the Invalides in the French capital. In addition to providing better uniforms, bread, and wine for the veterans who lived there, Napoleon ordered the renovation of the Invalides in 1811, including the addition of a new library and throne room and an embellishment of the dome. Napoleon also improved the institution's public image by making no fewer than six state visits and staging important imperial ceremonies at the Invalides, including his first July 14th celebration as First Consul in 1800, the first distribution of the Légion d'Honneur in July 1804, and—as Jacques-Louis David's celebrated painting illustrates—the distribution of the Grande Armée's regimental eagles in December 1804.

These improvements and visits to the Invalides, however, did more for Napoleon's reputation than for the daily living conditions of the veterans who lived there.¹⁸ While 100,000 francs had been allocated for the addition of a throne room to accommodate the Emperor's occasional visits, only 30,000 francs had been set aside to rebuild the noxious latrines for the veterans' daily use. As a kind of imperial sequel to the revolutionary Fête de la Fédération, the first distribution of the Légion d'Honneur celebrated with great ceremony those soldiers who had distinguished themselves in battle. The generation of boys represented by the children's battalions at the Fête de la Fédération in 1790 had grown up to serve in Napoleon's armies and aspire to the nation's highest honors, like those distributed at the first Legion of Honor ceremony in 1804. While these younger men were decorated by Napoleon at the Invalides, however, the elderly and disabled veterans who lived there benefited little from this imperial pomp. As Jean-Baptiste Debret dramatizes in his painting of the *First Distribution of the Decorations of the Legion of Honor* (1812), these Invalides veterans merely looked on from the shadows, relegated to the background of ceremonial and imperial priorities.

Exploited for propaganda during the Empire, veterans faced even greater misuse following 1815. The Restoration made major cutbacks in the size of the French military through a system of forced retirement for officers, *sous-officiers*, and

soldiers who had reached a fixed age or served a fixed number of years, or who were married or infirm. Like Napoleon, Louis XVIII used the Invalides as a propaganda tool, renaming it the Hôtel Royal des Invalides in honor of its founder and his Bourbon ancestor Louis XIV, replacing the tricolor flag with his royal white banner, and making at least one personal visit in 1822.¹⁹ The Restoration thus managed to reduce the threat of military power while appearing to show interest in the welfare of soldiers. While publicly pledging its continued support of the Invalides, the monarchy effectively in-validated the lives, service, and threat of France's former combatants.

As Louis XVIII demobilized the Grande Armée, he was at first careful not to instigate the wrath of the nation's volatile Napoleonic veterans. Despite their own disillusionment with Napoleon and his incessant wars, veterans still posed a threat to the Bourbon monarchy, as their jubilant reaction to Napoleon's return from Elba had made clear in 1815. To appease and pacify these men, Louis XVIII honored military pensions, even those that Napoleon granted during his brief One Hundred Day comeback. While the Restoration honored existing pensions, it did not grant new ones to the many thousands of "non-official" veterans who, lacking proper written proof of their service and field promotions, received nothing.²⁰ Among those who qualified for pensions, many could not survive on their meager half-pay, but were forbidden by both the legal and pension systems from pursuing supplemental employment and income. Even without such impediments, thousands of wounded and disabled veterans were unable to work since they suffered from chronic pain and were in constant need of medical care that they would never in fact receive.

The Restoration also used the pension system as a form of surveillance and control. Veterans were not officially discharged from service, but placed on inactive reserve duty and thus required to report back to their home departments in order to register with local royalist authorities and receive their half-pay salaries. In theory, this was to keep track of them in case they needed to be mobilized. But in practice, this system monitored potential troublemakers, dispersed a large mass of dangerous men in the capital into smaller groups across distant towns and villages, and eliminated the menace of another Bona-partist military uprising. The Restoration's apparent benevolence in honoring military pensions was thus a clever front to downsize the army and defuse a potential threat.²¹

In addition to crushing poverty, government surveillance, and institutional exploitation, veterans were also faced with an overwhelming sense of boredom. While many older and infirm *demi-soldes* were content to be relieved from labor, younger able-bodied veterans were demoralized by their inability to work legally. With little to do, many of these younger men spent their days idly drinking with other veterans in cafés and brasseries, which often led to alcoholism and violence.²² Almost 150 years after the founding of the Invalides and 50 years after the invention

of the pension system, veterans were still condemned to lives of begging, vagrancy, and petty crime. Ultimately, the Restoration's restriction on veteran employment was perhaps its greatest mistake, since this policy led to a higher crime rate among disgruntled *demi-soldes* and allowed Bonapartist nostalgia and tension to spread in the nation's brasseries and bars.²³

The political force of Bonapartist nostalgia gained power during the Revolution of 1830, with the end of the Bourbon Restoration and the beginning of Louis-Philippe's July Monarchy (1830–48).²⁴ This nostalgia infused new energy into the Napoleonic legend, which, according to Jean Tulard, reached its apex with the repatriation of Napoleon's remains from St. Helena in 1840.²⁵ The rise of Bonapartism during the July Monarchy would in turn propel Napoleon's nephew, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, to win the nation's first presidential election by universal male suffrage since the French Revolution, and become President of the Second Republic in 1848. This Bonapartist support would in turn ensure his victories in the national plebiscites confirming him as Emperor Napoleon III of the Second Empire between 1851 and 1852. Humiliated, impoverished, and repressed, Napoleon's discontented veterans thus contributed to the perpetuation of imperial nostalgia, the rise of Bonapartism, and the creation of a neo-Napoleonic empire. During the early years of the Restoration, however, powerless veterans looked to one another for mutual support.

In the absence of the exiled Emperor, Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout was a prominent figure of continued Napoleonic friendship and veteran resistance in Restoration France. Although he served in Louis XVIII's army beginning in 1817 and became a royal peer of France in 1819, Davout remained devoted to his imperial comrades and less fortunate Napoleonic veterans. Davout's daughter, the Marquise de Blocqueville, recalls that "[m]ore than once, [he] returned home without his jacket or suit, wrapped in his overcoat, after having met a soldier from his old army division, who was barely clothed and to whom he gave all the money he had with him."²⁶ When Davout died in 1823, many of the miserable veterans he had helped showed their love for the old marshal by attending his funeral in Paris, despite great difficulty. As the Viscount d'Avout explains, the monarchy—fearing a Bonapartist riot—forbade veterans from attending the funeral and placed them under house arrest: "[T]he old soldiers ... residents of the Invalides, were shut up inside the building under the orders of their superiors. Resenting this restriction, a few climbed the walls and made it to the ceremony. These survivors of the Empire moved closely in around the funeral procession."²⁷ Risking livelihood and limb, these feeble old-timers scaled the walls of their Restoration prison to honor a beloved, benevolent, and fellow Napoleonic veteran.

Like Napoleon at the death of Lannes, these battle-hardened men wept openly at Davout's funeral in the Église Sainte-Valère and at his burial in Père-Lachaise Cemetery.²⁸ While Davout had delivered Marshal Lannes's funeral oration at the

Panthéon in 1810, Davout's friends took great risks to honor him at his own memorial service. Unable to mourn Napoleon when he died in exile in 1821, these defiant veterans risked their pensions and residency at the Invalides to honor Davout in 1823. Marshal Davout's funeral thus epitomizes the realities of veteran life during the Restoration when impoverished and disempowered veterans depended on one another for material and emotional support. More than mere loyalty, this sense of mutual devotion among veterans sprang from their need for empathy and companionship, especially in the absence of traditional marriages and families.

An Army of Bachelors

From as early as the seventeenth century, French military policy openly discouraged marriage since bachelors were considered ideal soldiers. Louis XIV's War Minister, the Marquis de Louvois, argued, "One turns a good soldier into a lousy one by letting him marry."²⁹ It was generally believed that married soldiers took fewer risks in battle, suffered more from homesickness, drained morale, and deserted in greater numbers. Soldiers concerned about the fate of their wives and children would be less likely to engage in dangerous combat that risked making widows and orphans of their families. This seventeenth-century military bias against marriage extended well into the nineteenth century.³⁰ In 1857, General Anne-Joseph Théodore Peyssard argued, "The officer loses his carefree concern for the future, his ability to change places, his resignation faced with suffering, all virtues which are easy for a single man, but almost impracticable for a man chained to marriage and paternity."³¹ And in 1859, Colonel Laperche reiterated that, because of commitments at home, a married man is often paralyzed in combat: "[O]ne thinks of his wife, of her worries, of the pain of having to leave her; one is emotionally paralyzed."³² All of these military attacks on marriage are built on the brutal fact that young, reckless, unattached men are more willing to engage in dangerous combat, and that an army increases its chances to win with regiments of young soldiers who have nothing to lose.

Women were often blamed for this marital drain on military morale. Despite the respect and affection that many individual soldiers and officers felt for their wives, mothers, and other female family members and acquaintances, the army regarded women as unwelcome distractions and serious impediments to effective military service. This institutional misogyny ignored the innumerable contributions and sacrifices that women like the Empresses Josephine and Marie-Louise, the Duchesse d'Abrantès, and millions of other French women made in such roles as sovereign advisors and salon diplomats, journalists and writers, mothers and widows, wives and lovers, prostitutes and camp-followers, and cross-dressing soldiers in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. If Napoleon's was an army of bachelors, this

had as much to do with military misogyny and homosociality as with the army's ignorance of the vital and incalculable military contributions of women.³³

For men, the many official restrictions placed on marriage and prostitution ostensibly relegated them to an enforced celibacy and perpetual bachelorhood. Although many active-duty soldiers and postwar veterans continued to seek out the company of prostitutes following 1815, this behavior was officially prohibited and demanded that officers exercise absolute discretion. Officers who frequented prostitutes or regular lovers risked punishment, discharge from the military, and imprisonment.³⁴ Such official restrictions did little to stem the demand for and exploitation of prostitutes by military men, but these regulations demonstrate the army's institutional bias against intimate contact and relationships between soldiers and women.³⁵ These official constraints on their sexuality effectively emasculated French soldiers, who were expected to repress their emotional and erotic lives to maximize their performance in battle. Like those exacted on the clergy by the Roman Catholic Church, the marital policies imposed by the military amounted to the institutional repression of heterosexuality on a grand scale for soldiers in nineteenth-century France.

Attempts at reforming the military's marital policies ultimately failed. While the Revolution granted soldiers the right to marry freely, the Consulate and Empire reinstated the requirement that soldiers seek the permission of their superior officers, in an attempt yet again to suppress military marriages.³⁶ Even if a soldier succeeded in finding a woman willing to marry him and an officer willing to grant permission, he still had very little material wealth to bring to a marriage. With its low salaries and long absences, military service made successful married and family life virtually impossible.³⁷ Faced with the high probability of solitude, poverty, and widowhood, many women were understandably reluctant to marry soldiers. Women who did were often forced to seek out other forms of income for themselves and their children during the long absences of their husbands, including life-threatening labor, prostitution, and—in cases where they believed their husbands had been killed—remarriage.³⁸ Wounded, weary, and destitute, many of the veteran bachelors who survived the Napoleonic Wars had very little to offer a prospective bride.

Unsurprisingly, this restriction on military marriages did not apply to Napoleon, who flagrantly ignored such regulations when he wed Josephine de Beauharnais on the eve of his first Italian Campaign in 1796, and later married Marie-Louise of Austria in the hopes of producing an heir. On the celebration of his wedding to Marie-Louise in 1810, the Emperor offered six thousand dowries to war veterans who wanted to marry.³⁹ Recalling the regional celebrations of the Fête de la Fédération in 1790, the veteran weddings would take place in cities and towns all across France on the same day as the ceremony for Napoleon and Marie-Louise in Paris, and would thus serve as surrogate celebrations of the imperial wedding for all

French citizens. Despite this ostensible generosity, Napoleon's veteran dowries were in fact a dubious public relations tool that only exacerbated the matrimonial desperation of eligible veterans. Since the 600-franc dowries were offered only three weeks in advance of the imperial wedding, many of the veterans selected by local town councils and mayors had no one to marry, either because they were too old or infirm to attract a willing mate or because they had never considered marriage within their economic reach. More importantly, the frenzy created by Napoleon's one-time dowries revealed that military pensions were barely sufficient for veterans' needs and certainly not enough to provide for wives and children.

The Restoration added new financial impediments during the 1820s, when veterans were required not only to gain the permission of their commanding officer but to secure a minimum 12,000-franc dowry from their prospective brides.⁴⁰ The July Monarchy reduced this figure tenfold to 1,200 francs in 1843, but this exorbitant sum was still a major obstacle to military marriages.⁴¹ As the Restoration and July Monarchy shifted the financial burden from soldiers and the state onto young women and their families, the many disadvantages of marrying a soldier were now increased by the absurdly high cost of obtaining one.

In addition to financial restrictions, the military also required its officers to marry women of prominent social status.⁴² Forbidden from marrying the daughters of peasants, laborers, and merchants, officers were faced with the difficult task of convincing women of higher social rank—who often had better offers—and their understandably skeptical parents to take their chances with a military husband. One wealthy nineteenth-century father railed against the idea of marrying his beloved daughter to “a soldier, a man whose life is continually at the mercy of a bullet or cannon.”⁴³ Facing the equally distasteful prospect of a military son-in-law, a less affluent teacher complained, “What? [My] adoptive daughter wants to marry a dragoon, follow her husband from garrison to garrison, go and die perhaps in Africa or Germany or Italy! And it is for this miserable destiny ... that [I] raised her with such tenderness!”⁴⁴ From restrictive policies to financial and social constraints, these matrimonial impediments significantly increased the number of unmarried fifty-year-old officers during the Restoration and July Monarchy, from 28 percent in 1825 to 38 percent in 1840.⁴⁵

These military bachelors or *célibataires militaires* haunted the drawing rooms, boarding-houses, and novels of post-1815 France. In an extraordinary statement of personal disclosure, one of these military bachelors, General Édouard Collineau, admitted in 1857 that he was opposed to marriage because of its unfair demands on the army, women, families, and himself:

I neither like nor dislike marriage. I am simply indifferent to it, for two reasons. The first is that ... [w]ithout fortune or support, my continual

search for perilous enterprises imposed on me the obligation to remain alone in life and instilled in me the duty of an honest man not to attach to my risky fate the future of a family that my death would plunge into misery. The second is that, without noticing it, I have developed a taste for this carefree life of a bachelor ... I could even add a third reason ... that I have never felt for any woman a sufficiently strong movement of the heart to wish to unite her to my destiny.⁴⁶

In his desire to spare a wife and children the pain of losing a husband and father, Collineau distinguishes himself as one of those rare military officers who was personally concerned with the welfare of women, wives, and widows. But in his frank admission that he is content with bachelorhood, Collineau serves as a kind of archetype for the nineteenth-century military bachelor who has assimilated the military's marital policies and homosocial culture with his own private needs and happiness. For officers like Collineau, bachelorhood is not a bitterly resigned fate but an accepted and even welcome choice.

The French military's institutional bias against marriage fostered an implicit understanding that soldiers were expected to live out their lives in the exclusive company of men. From their earliest days as recruits and their many years on campaign, to their postwar retirement, soldiers were continuously reminded of the military's many impediments to matrimony. This did not prevent many soldiers and officers—such as Marshal Lannes, Generals Junot, Duroc, and Marbot, Captain Coignet, and Sergeant Bourgogne—from marrying and having families. But for thousands of others, military life was synonymous with bachelorhood.⁴⁷ Deprived of the company of women, many men sought out comfort and companionship among their fellow soldiers and veterans.

For some, this meant bunking with their long-term buddies, both in public institutions and in private homes. In 1837, when the population of the Invalides exceeded its maximum capacity, almost fifty officers were required to double up in the barracks.⁴⁸ For these bachelor veterans, military life ended as it began, in the arms of military bedfellows. Many of those veterans who did not qualify for a bunk in the overcrowded Invalides nonetheless lived in communal pairs all over France, where they faced together the financial challenges and social rejection of the Restoration and July Monarchy. Like Sergeants Bourgogne and Grangier, who combined the contents of their purses, or like Captain Blaze's bugler, who planned to share his captain's home and garden, some veterans combined their half-pay pensions to create one full salary, one household, one life together.⁴⁹ While Sergeant Bourgogne and Captain Blaze document such pairs in their military memoirs, Honoré de Balzac dramatizes these veteran couples in his military fiction.

Bonaparte and Balzac

In the summer of 1828, Balzac was in full retreat. Fleeing his many creditors, Balzac left his home near the Seine in the center of Paris and moved into a secluded apartment south of the Latin Quarter, hidden between a convent, the tree-nursery of the Luxembourg Gardens, and the Paris Observatory. With the help of a few friends, Balzac furnished his new apartment handsomely, decorating his study with plush blue rugs, mahogany furniture, leather-bound books, and a small plaster statue of Napoleon. On the end of Bonaparte's saber, Balzac allegedly attached a small piece of paper on which he had written: "What he began with the sword, I shall accomplish with the pen."⁵⁰ Like Napoleon on campaign, Balzac had made a strategic retreat in order to regroup. During the next year, he would write the military novel *The Chouans* (1829), which was the very first text published under his own name, the first of his *Scenes of Military Life*, and the first of his many celebrated novels in *The Human Comedy*. Here, in his Napoleonic retreat, Balzac launched his ambitious campaign of literary conquest.

Attested to by several of Balzac's friends, including the playwright Virginie Ancelot, the editor Edmond Werdet, and the journalist Léon Gozlan, this anecdote about the writer's plaster Napoleon has been widely mythologized as a symbol of Balzac's Napoleonic admiration and literary ambition.⁵¹ While Victor Hugo looked elsewhere for inspiration, declaring in 1816 "I want to be Chateaubriand or nothing," Balzac modeled himself on Napoleon despite the novelist's contradictory political support of Bourbon legitimism and the Restoration.⁵² Entrenched in his new quarters, Balzac set out in 1828 to begin a new literary project of Napoleonic proportions. In time, Balzac's military texts would bear witness to the suffering and solidarity of Napoleon's soldiers and veterans during the Empire, Restoration, and July Monarchy.

In his funeral oration for Balzac at Paris's Père-Lachaise Cemetery on August 21, 1850, Victor Hugo compared the novelist to Napoleon, arguing that "Balzac is part of that powerful generation of nineteenth-century writers who came after Napoleon ... as if, in the development of civilization, there was a law that ensured that conquerors by the sword were succeeded by conquerors of the spirit."⁵³ Echoing Balzac's determination in 1828 to complete in print what Napoleon began on campaign, Hugo also implies—with his own personal understanding of war and commitment to peace—that what Napoleon was to military destruction, Balzac was to literary creation. Despite his deceased friend's well-known Bourbon loyalties, Hugo concludes that Balzac's emphasis in *The Human Comedy* on both the achievements of the Empire and the injustices of the Restoration qualifies Balzac as a revolutionary, like his hero Napoleon: "[W]hether he wanted to or not, consented or not, the author of this immense and strange work is of that great race of revolutionary writers."⁵⁴ Following Hugo's example, frequent comparisons of Balzac with Bonaparte have contributed to the ubiquitous designation of Balzac as

the “Napoleon of letters.”⁵⁵

Some have tried to reconcile the contradiction between Balzac’s literary admiration of Napoleon and his legitimist support of the Restoration by speculating on the shifting political loyalties of Balzac’s father. During the Empire, Bertrand-François Balzac had worked as an imperial functionary, but on the eve of Napoleon’s first exile in 1814, he published a royalist pamphlet advocating the erection of a monument to Henry IV.⁵⁶ This transparent homage to Louis XVIII’s ancestor was the elder Balzac’s attempt to flatter the new regime and thus hold on to his bureaucratic post.⁵⁷ As with his father, it was never clear if Honoré de Balzac’s simultaneous admiration of Napoleon and support of the Bourbon monarchy was ideological or merely practical. In the *Preface to The Human Comedy* (1842), Balzac argues that “I write in the service of two eternal Truths: Religion and the Monarchy, two necessities that contemporary events demand, and for which every writer with good sense should endeavor to remind the nation.”⁵⁸ Despite Balzac’s stated commitment to God and King, his insistence here on political necessity and common sense suggest more pragmatic motives for his dual Catholicism and monarchism.⁵⁹

In addition to his father, Balzac may also have been swayed by his friends and lovers. While Balzac’s future wife, Éveline Hanska—a Polish Catholic countess—may have influenced his religious and royalist positions, Laure Junot may have inspired Balzac’s Napoleonic sympathies and admiration.⁶⁰ Having advised the Duchesse d’Abrantès on the writing and publication of her celebrated memoirs, Balzac was also acutely aware of the commercial potential for Napoleonic non-fiction. In 1838, Balzac edited a collection of *Napoleon’s Maxims and Thoughts* in which he lists over five hundred aphorisms attributed to the Emperor. While this book demonstrates Balzac’s intimate acquaintance with Napoleon’s strategy and philosophy, it is unclear if Balzac hoped to celebrate Napoleonic wisdom or merely profit from popular sales.⁶¹ Whether Balzac is motivated by personal conviction or profit, political passion or expediency, he publicly remains loyal to God and King while openly admiring the Emperor.

Napoleon is seemingly everywhere in Balzac’s work. He is a ubiquitous figure and recurring theme throughout *The Human Comedy*, which reflects Balzac’s Napoleonic admiration and the inescapable legacy of the Empire in Restoration France.⁶² After twenty-three years of Revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare (1792–1815), France could not easily forget the painful memories of the recent past, erase the loss of so many killed in battle, or avoid the familiar sight of Napoleonic veterans and widows in the nation’s cities and villages, streets and cafés.⁶³ While Napoleon himself makes only rare appearances in *The Human Comedy*, he exerts an omniscient influence over Balzac’s characters, many of whom were once the Emperor’s soldiers and subjects. Alternately characterized as a heroic warrior, magnanimous leader, beloved emperor, and monstrous tyrant, Napoleon is omnipresent in Balzac’s

universe.⁶⁴ As broad as the scope of *The Human Comedy* itself, these competing Napoleonic identities are summarized in this celebrated passage from Balzac's *Another Study of Woman* (1842):

Who could ever explain, depict, or understand Napoleon? A man who is represented with his arms folded, but who did everything, who was the most beautiful, concentrated, mordant, and acidic power ever known. A singular genius who spread military civilization everywhere, without [permanently] fixing it anywhere. A man who could do everything because he wanted everything. A prodigious phenomenon of will, who subdued a disease with a battle, yet would die of sickness in his bed after having lived in the middle of bullets and cannonballs. A man who had in mind a code and a sword, word and action, and a clear-sighted spirit that predicted everything, except his fall ... In the end, he improvised monuments, empires, kings, legal codes, verses, a novel, and all with more range than accuracy. Didn't he want to make all of Europe [into] France? And, after having made us weigh on the earth in such a way as to change the laws of gravity, he left us poorer than the day when he first laid hands on us. He, who had created an empire with his name, lost his name at the border of his empire, in a sea of blood and soldiers.⁶⁵

While Napoleon is praised as a genius who creates art, government, law, and literature, he is simultaneously condemned as a great destroyer who brings violence, war, and death. To the question, "Who could ever explain, depict, or understand Napoleon?" Balzac implies that only a prolific writer such as himself could possibly describe or surpass such a prodigious man.

As Hugo had suggested at his friend's funeral, Balzac's desire to complete with the pen what Napoleon began with the sword could be interpreted as a celebration of literature and language over warfare and violence. This bold stroke of poetic defiance against human brutality echoes a literary tradition stretching back to Robert Burton's citation in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) of "the pen mightier than the sword" and forward to Edward Bulwer-Lytton's near-identical argument in *Richelieu* (1839) that "the pen is mightier than the sword."⁶⁶ Balzac's determination to match Napoleon, however, seems less of a pacifist project in favor of pens over swords or words over weapons than an ambitious desire to match the Emperor's genius with his own. Bonaparte and Balzac thus form a complementary pair, whose military and literary ambitions permeate *The Human Comedy* and its homage to soldier pairs, veteran couples, and Napoleonic friendship.

***The Human Comedy* (1829–50)**

Balzac's military fiction must be understood within the greater context of *The*

Human Comedy and its genesis. It is often overlooked that Balzac's *Human Comedy* opens with a war novel. Published in 1829, *The Chouans* was the first novel that the young, thirty-year-old writer signed "Honoré de Balzac" and the first of some 137 works he intended to incorporate into this ambitious project that he later described as an immense "plan which, at the same time, embraces society, the analysis of its evils, and a discussion of its principles."⁶⁷ As early as 1833, Balzac first proposed a project called *Studies of Nineteenth-Century Manners*, which was to be divided into four parts: *Scenes of Private Life*; *Scenes of Provincial Life*; *Scenes of Parisian Life*; and *Scenes of Country Life*.⁶⁸ But by 1842, the project had grown considerably, folding the already ambitious *Studies of Nineteenth-Century Manners* into an even more grandiose design.⁶⁹

In his 1842 *Preface to The Human Comedy*, Balzac outlines his desire to "paint the two or three thousand salient figures of an age" in a series of texts to be divided into three parts: *Studies of Manners*; *Philosophical Studies*; and *Analytic Studies*. Of these three, the *Studies of Manners* would be the most voluminous, containing some 105 titles and divided into six categories or what he calls *Scenes of Private Life*, *Provincial Life*, *Parisian Life*, *Political Life*, *Military Life*, and *Country Life*.⁷⁰ Mirroring Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Balzac's *The Human Comedy* attempts to examine every aspect of contemporary French society and analyze how its various institutions—from monarchy, medicine, law, religion, marriage, family, finance, and government to the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, peasantry, proletariat, clergy, and military—influenced and transformed France during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In his eulogy for Balzac in 1850, Victor Hugo described *The Human Comedy* as a vast history of contemporary France: "All his books form one single book, a living, luminous, profound book, where one sees coming and going and walking and feeling ... all of contemporary civilization; a marvelous book that its poet titled a comedy, but which could have been titled a history."⁷¹ Like Hugo, Balzac considered himself as much an historian as a novelist.⁷² In Balzac's ambitious attempt to classify, examine, and question all aspects of French life, *The Human Comedy* followed in the tradition of Diderot and the *Encyclopédie* (1751–72). As a multi-volume work with recurring characters, interconnected texts, and a grand narrative scope, *The Human Comedy* inspired later monumental works, from Émile Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* (1871–93) to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913–27). And as an analysis of French social institutions, *The Human Comedy* prefigured Michel Foucault's collective work on the histories of the prison, the clinic, madness, knowledge, language, and sexuality (1961–84).

In his *Preface to The Human Comedy*, Balzac describes his literary and historical project as a kind of scientific study of human zoology, taxonomy, and classification: "Doesn't society make ... as many different kinds of men as there are varieties in

zoology? The differences between a soldier, worker, administrator, lawyer, loiterer, scholar, politician, shop-keeper, sailor, poet, pauper, priest, are, although difficult to understand, as considerable as those that distinguish [between] the wolf, lion, ass, crow, shark, seal, sheep, etc. There has existed and will exist for all time social species, just as there are zoological species.”⁷³ In Balzac’s great social study, human species are associated with institutions (lawyers with the law, soldiers with the military) and are classified by the diverse contexts in which they live: “My work has its [own] geography and genealogy, its [own] families, places and things, characters and deeds ... nobles and bourgeois, artisans and peasants, politicians and dandies, army and entire world!”⁷⁴ Echoing Genesis, Balzac attempts to populate *The Human Comedy* with a broad spectrum of human species, and thus succeeds with his ambitious plan not only to “explain, depict, [and] understand Napoleon,” but to “accomplish with the pen” what Bonaparte “began with the sword.”

Scenes of Military Life (1829–50)

Among the many social species in *The Human Comedy*, the soldier occupies a distinct and central category. While the worker, lawyer, priest, and poet are also listed in Balzac’s preface as unique species in his social landscape, Balzac created no distinct “Scenes of Working, Judicial, Ecclesiastic, and Literary Life,” even though these professions are abundantly represented in *The Human Comedy*. Only the soldier is afforded an entire sub-genre, which Balzac calls his *Scenes of Military Life*. And even though these military scenes contain few completed works, it is nonetheless significant that for Balzac (1799–1850)—who grew up during the height of Napoleon’s power (1799–1815)—the military was a vital social category.

In Balzac’s defining 1845 catalogue for *The Human Comedy*, his original plan for the *Scenes of Military Life* contained numerous titles, including three trilogies and many other single-volume works: *The Soldiers of the Republic* (in three episodes); *The Start of the Campaign*; *The Vendéens*; *The Chouans*; *The French in Egypt* (in three episodes, titled *The Prophet*, *The Pasha*, *A Passion in the Desert*); *The Mobile Army*; *The Consular Guard*; *Vienna* (in three episodes, titled *A Combat*, *The Besieged Army*, *The Plains of Wagram*); *The Innkeeper*; *The English in Spain*; *Moscow*; *The Battle of Dresden*; *The Stragglers*; *The Partisans*; *The Pontoons*; *The Campaign for France*; *The Last Field of Battle*; *The Emir*; and *The Algerian Privateer*.⁷⁵ From these titles, one can surmise Balzac’s vast military vision, from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815), to the French colonial conquest of Algeria (1830). Of these many planned works, only two were completed: *The Chouans* (1829) and *A Passion in the Desert* (1830). One can only speculate on the extraordinary pages that might have emerged from the rest of these unrealized military texts. Had Balzac’s so-called “vital fluids” not given out when he died of exhaustion in 1850, many other regiments, divisions, and armies might have been

added to the several dozen officers and soldiers who populate the completed texts of his *Scenes of Military Life*.⁷⁶

Among the many military projects that were never completed was Balzac's plan for a great war novel tentatively titled *The Battle of Dresden* or simply *The Battle*. Despite dozens of references to this novel in Balzac's correspondence, all that remains of this project is a title, chapter heading, and partial first sentence:

THE BATTLE
CHAPTER ONE
GROSS-ASPERN

On May 16, 1809, towards the middle of the day ...⁷⁷

While this fragment is all that survives, much more is known about Balzac's plans for the novel.⁷⁸ First, his desire to write a war novel preceded the genesis of *The Human Comedy*. Second, this novel was to focus principally on the battle of Marengo, before Balzac switched to the battles of Wagram, and then Essling, before finally settling on Dresden. Finally, Napoleon was to figure prominently in the text.

In an early sketch from 1830, Balzac describes his project as an epic war novel with Napoleon at its center: "I want to create a novel called *The Battle*, where one can hear the firing cannons on the very first page and the cry of victory on the last page, and during which the reader believes he is taking part in a real battle, as if he saw it from the top of a mountain, with all of its accessories, uniforms, casualties, details; the eve of battle and the aftermath; [and] Napoleon dominating all of this."⁷⁹ This sketch evokes the grandiose proportions of a war novel, the meticulous detail of an historical novel, and the graphic horror of a realist novel. In this ambitious project, whose use of both panorama and detail would have prefigured Stendhal's and Hugo's Waterloos, Balzac hoped to bring readers into intimate contact with Napoleonic warfare.

In an 1833 letter to his future wife, Éveline Hanska, Balzac discusses his decision to change the location of the battle from Wagram to Essling and describes some of the strategic, sensory, and military details that he hoped to include in the novel:

Here, I undertake to initiate you to all of the horrors and beauties of a field of battle, my battle, Essling ... I want a detached [reader], sitting in his armchair, to see the campaign, terrain, masses of men, strategic events, the Danube, the bridges, to admire both the details and the totality of this struggle, to hear the artillery, to take an interest in the movements on this chessboard, to see all, to feel in every articulation of this great body the presence of Napoleon, whom I will not show, or will allow being seen at night crossing the Danube in a small boat. No women, but cannons, horses, two armies, uniforms. On the first page will be the sound of cannon, which

will go silent on the last page. You will read through the smoke itself, and when you close the book, you should have seen everything intuitively and remember the battle as if you had taken part.⁸⁰

Here again, Balzac articulates his desire to bring the reader into a kind of intimate textual contact with the sights and sounds of Napoleonic battle. But in this later sketch from 1833, the central figure of Napoleon, who was envisioned as “dominating all of this” in 1830, has now faded into the background. Rather than leading a charge or directing the action on the field, the Emperor is to be seen only in passing, amid the smoke of battle or the evening fog on the Danube. Napoleon is to be the invisible conscience of the novel, a behind-the-scenes stage-manager for the theater of battle, an omniscient narrator, a substitution for Balzac himself. In this sense, Napoleon’s battle at Essling becomes, in Balzac’s words, “my battle” and Balzac becomes Napoleon.

This association of the writer with the emperor again echoes Balzac’s ambition to complete with the pen what Napoleon began with the sword. With this project for a great war novel, Balzac hoped to write the battle that Napoleon could no longer fight. As Bonaparte becomes a smoke-screen soldier on this literary battlefield, Balzac becomes his ghost writer. Relegating Napoleon to the background, Balzac foregrounds his own literary talent. Although he never completed *The Battle*—which could thus qualify this failed novel as his literary Waterloo—Balzac’s 1830 and 1833 sketches of blinding smoke and combat confusion prefigure the realist techniques that Stendhal would later employ in *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839), a work that Balzac openly admired.⁸¹

In a series of letters and reviews, Balzac expressed his great admiration for Stendhal’s innovative interpretation of Waterloo. On March 20, 1839, a candidly envious Balzac wrote to congratulate Stendhal and admitted: “I’ve already read in *Le Constitutionnel* [17 March 1839] an extract of *The Charterhouse* that made me commit the sin of envy. I was seized with an excess of jealousy by this superb and realistic description of battle, which I was dreaming about for my *Scenes of Military Life*, the most difficult part of my work. This extract of yours delighted, distressed, [and] enchanted me, [and] drove me to despair.”⁸² On April 14, 1839, Balzac wrote to Éveline Hanska, “Beyle has just published the most beautiful book to appear in fifty years.”⁸³ In the inaugural volume of *La Revue parisienne* in 1840, Balzac publicly praised Stendhal’s decision to allow details to suggest the confusion of the whole at Waterloo: “It is impossible for the literary arts to paint military feats beyond a certain limitation. In a recent masterpiece, Monsieur Beyle has addressed these impossibilities I speak of by creating a magnificent military sketch ... This episode announces the writer’s understanding of military peril.”⁸⁴ And in *La Revue parisienne* on September 25, 1840, Balzac again applauded Stendhal, arguing “In my eyes, *The Charterhouse of Parma* is, for our age and up until the present, the

masterpiece of the literature of ideas.”⁸⁵ Counting himself among Stendhal’s “Happy Few,” Balzac continues, “Monsieur Beyle has created a book where the sublime explodes from chapter to chapter. In an age where men rarely find grandiose subjects ... he has produced a work which cannot be appreciated except by truly superior souls.”⁸⁶

Balzac’s reaction to Stendhal’s *Waterloo* in 1839–40 reflects his own goals for *The Battle* in 1830–33. In rendering all the chaos and confusion of Napoleonic warfare from the viewpoint of an individual soldier, Stendhal accomplished in *The Charterhouse of Parma* what Balzac set out to do in *The Battle* and thus created a new realist model for war fiction in France. Even so, Stendhal’s relatively short *Waterloo* episode in *The Charterhouse of Parma*—like Hugo’s *Waterloo* in *Les Misérables*—does not constitute a full-length war novel. It was only with Émile Zola’s *The Debacle* that the great nineteenth-century war novel would be published, linking Balzac, Stendhal, Hugo, and Zola in a tradition of Napoleonic military fiction. Stretching back from Zola’s *The Debacle* (1892), to Hugo’s *Les Misérables* (1862), and Stendhal’s *Charterhouse of Parma* (1839), the modern French war novel could thus be said to find its origins in Balzac’s 1830s sketches for *The Battle*.

While most of the projects listed in Balzac’s planned *Scenes of Military Life* were never completed, *The Human Comedy* nevertheless includes many military texts. *A Murky Business* (1840–43), categorized by Balzac as a *Scene of Political Life*, features some of the most intimate appearances by Napoleon in the entire *Human Comedy*, including a celebrated scene where the novel’s protagonist, Laurence de Cinq-Cygne, confronts the Emperor in his bivouac tent at the battle of Iéna (Jena) in 1806. In *Domestic Peace* (1830), from the *Scenes of Private Life*, Balzac describes an opulent imperial ball, peopled by crown princes, diamond-covered marquises, and sharply dressed officers all paying homage to Napoleon at the height of his power in 1809. *The Thirty-Year-Old Woman* (1830–34), listed by Balzac as a *Scene of Private Life*, opens with a spectacular description of Napoleon mounted on horseback alongside his gold-tasseled officers at the head of the Grande Armée as they parade under the Arc de Triomphe du Carroussel before setting out for the Saxon Campaign in 1813. To these could be added three short stories from Balzac’s *Philosophical Studies*, including *The Requisitioner* (1831), in which a mother awaits word from her son during the Revolutionary Wars in 1793; *Adieu* (1830), an account of the Grande Armée’s crossing of the Berezina River during the Russian retreat in 1812; and *El Verdugo* (1830), which chronicles war atrocities during the Iberian Campaign in 1809.

In *A Passion in the Desert* (1830), Balzac recounts the adventure of a Napoleonic soldier who, while trying to escape his captors during the Egyptian Campaign in 1799, finds shelter in the verdant palms of a desert oasis, where he faces an even deadlier adversary in the form of a wild panther who jealously attacks the soldier

when his attentions turn to a Napoleonic eagle. Separated from his comrades in this isolated oasis, the soldier looks to the palm-trees, panther, and eagle as substitute buddies and bedfellows, who offer him comfort, pleasure, and hope as personified figures of erotic and exotic friendship. Published in 1830, following the French conquest of Algeria, *A Passion in the Desert* can be read as an allegory on military conquest and colonial occupation, as well as a metaphor for Napoleonic friendship.⁸⁷

To this list of Balzac's military short fiction must be added his military novels, *The Chouans* (1829), *Colonel Chabert* (1832), *The Country Doctor* (1833), and the third volume of *The Bachelors* (1840–43), which all center on Napoleonic soldiers and veterans. While these novels belong to his various *Scenes of Military, Private, Provincial, and Country Life*, they feature some of Balzac's most illustrious military characters and collectively celebrate the intimate friendships between these soldiers and veterans, from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to the Restoration and July Monarchy.⁸⁸ Forged during wartime, these military friendships extended into retirement and civilian society where, like many of their flâneur, dandy, and criminal counterparts, veteran outcasts lived at the margins of mid-nineteenth-century France. From the veteran friendship of Bonaparte and Bertrand to the veteran fiction of Blaze and Balzac, these soldiers lived out their retired lives as they had lived on campaign, facing hardship and adversity amid the intimate care and comfort of Napoleonic friends.

PART III



*Restoration to
Second Empire
1815–70*



Combat Companions & Veteran Bedfellows Balzac's Major Hulot and Colonel Chabert

Distinguished, wealthy, and handsome, the veteran had died a bachelor. An imperial count, military marshal, and royal peer of France, Marshal Hulot had served for more than forty years in the armies of the Revolution, Empire, Restoration, and July Monarchy. When he died in 1841, Hulot was honored with a grand state funeral in Paris. As the cortège wound its way through the streets of the capital, more than a few mourners must have remarked on what a shame it was that the old soldier had never married or fathered a family. Charming, vibrant, and virile to the end, the spry seventy-five-year-old Hulot possessed both a reputation and fortune that made him, even during the last years of his life, a most attractive and eligible bachelor. Having never wed, despite the attentions during his later years of an affable woman half his age, Marshal Hulot had, in the eyes of most civilians, ended his life alone. But as the throngs of military mourners at his funeral made clear, Marshal Hulot ended his life as he had lived it, in the intimate company of soldier comrades and friends.

Having suffered the devastating loss of not only one but two of his most beloved companions during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars—Adjutant Gérard and Lieutenant Gudin—Hulot served in the armies of the Empire and lived out his retirement during the Restoration and July Monarchy in the company of his third companion, Sergeant Falcon. Following shortly after Napoleon's state funeral in 1840, when the Emperor's remains were ceremoniously repatriated to France and laid to rest under the dome of the Invalides in Paris, Hulot's funeral in 1841 was attended by numerous officers and veterans, who came to honor a man who had lived his entire life in the service of his fellow soldiers. Despite the outward appearance of his bachelor life, Marshal Hulot had neither lived nor died alone, but amid the constant and affectionate friendship of military companions.

Balzac's *The Chouans* (1829)

Hulot appears first and most prominently in Balzac's *The Chouans*, a historical novel that centers on the civil conflict between French Republican soldiers and Breton loyalist guerillas during the Revolution and Consulate in 1799. Devoutly

royalist and Catholic, these counter-revolutionaries in Brittany were known as *Chouans* because of the way they imitated the hooting of an owl (*chat-huant* or *chouan* in regional dialects) as a warning signal and battle cry.¹ First published as *The Last Chouan or Brittany in 1800* (1829), Balzac's novel was later published as *The Chouans or Brittany in 1799* (1834) and finally as *The Chouans* (1845). In his preface to the 1845 edition, Balzac contextualizes the novel within the broader scope of *The Human Comedy*: "This work is my first, and its success has been slow in coming ... Of several *Scenes of Military Life* that I am preparing, this is the only one that has been completed. It shows one side of civil war in the nineteenth century: that of the partisan."² *The Chouans* was thus the first novel that Balzac published sans pseudonym, the first of his *Scenes of Military Life*, and the first completed novel of *The Human Comedy*. Published a decade before Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) and over thirty years before Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862), *The Chouans* effectively introduced the Napoleonic soldier to French realist fiction.

In an attempt to emulate the historical novels of Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper, whom he admired, Balzac researched both published and eyewitness sources before beginning *The Chouans*. In May 1828, he read Jean-Julien Savary's *La Guerre des Vendéens et des Chouans contre la République française* (1824–27) and in September and October 1828, at the invitation of his veteran friend General Gilbert de Pommereul, Balzac spent several weeks at Fougères in Brittany, where he did further research on Breton geography and customs. As an historical novel, *The Chouans* builds on the military memories of Savary and Pommereul and thus creates a bridge between the genres of Napoleonic memoir and fiction. The son of General François de Pommereul (1745–1823), who served in the Royal Army of the Ancien Régime, General Gilbert de Pommereul (1774–1860) had been an officer in the Revolutionary Army during the *Chouan* uprisings and had fought with Napoleon at Eylau, Austerlitz, and Wagram. As both a Napoleonic veteran and Balzac's host in Brittany, Pommereul was a valuable source and one of Balzac's models for the novel's central military figure, Hulot.³

Major Hulot

Like Pommereul, Major Hulot is a veteran of the Revolutionary Wars, during which he served under General Hoche at Jemappes in 1792 and at Mainz in 1793.⁴ Commanding officer of the *Mayençaise demi-brigade* during the *Chouan* insurrection, Hulot later distinguished himself during the Napoleonic Wars in the Iberian and Austrian Campaigns, for which the Emperor named him Comte de Forzheim. Despite his continued loyalty to Napoleon and bravery at Waterloo in 1815, Hulot remained in the army during the Restoration, which appointed him the military commandant for Brittany and—in honor of his twenty-seven battle-wounds,

thirty campaigns, and lifelong service—later named him a marshal and royal peer of France in 1838. Marshal Hulot later appears as a prominent Napoleonic veteran in Balzac's *Cousin Bette* (1846) where, despite the attentions of Lisbeth Fischer, he remains a bachelor until his death in 1841.

When *The Chouans* opens in 1799, the active-duty Hulot is already described as a veteran of the Revolutionary Wars, “an old officer” and “devoted soldier” (910) who “presented a lively image of that energetic Republic for which this old soldier was fighting, and whose severe face, weathered blue and red uniform, and blackened epaulettes painted so well his needs and his character” (936). Even as a young man of thirty-three, Hulot's tattered uniform and hardened face demonstrate his years of combat experience, for which he is later described as “a brave veteran” (1155). In this inaugural text of *The Human Comedy* and his *Scenes of Military Life*, Balzac thus presents Hulot as an emerging archetype of the Napoleonic veteran in French realist fiction. More importantly, Hulot's intimate combat friendships with Gérard, Gudin, and Falcon serve as models for the many soldier pairs that populate *The Chouans* and Balzac's other Napoleonic fiction.

Some have argued that *The Chouans* is less of a war novel than a love story, in which the romance between the *Chouan* leader, the Marquis de Montauran, and the Republican spy Marie-Nathalie de Verneuil upstages the military conflict between Montauran and his royalist *Blancs* (named for the monarchy's white flag) and Hulot and his Republican *Bleus* (so-called because of their blue uni-forms)⁵ *The Chouans* conflates these two genres, however, not only by dramatizing the civil war romance between Montauran and Verneuil, but by emphasizing the intimate friendships between the many soldier pairs, buddies, and comrades in both the Republican and *Chouan* camps. In foregrounding the military love affair between Hulot and his men, Balzac recreates, in *The Chouans*, the Napoleonic love affair between Bonaparte and the soldiers of the Grande Armée, and thus reminds us that the intimate respect that binds men to a trusted commander also ties soldiers to one another.

Hulot's Men

Since Hulot quite literally provides a name and a face for the Napoleonic soldier in Balzac's inaugural text of *The Human Comedy*, it is appropriate that Hulot's name and face should so intimately link him to both his officers and his adversaries. In its echo of the words *hulotte* (owl) and *hululer* (to hoot), Hulot's ornithological name links him to the principal Republican soldiers of his flock, Captain Merle (blackbird) and Sergeant Falcon, as well as to his *Chouan* adversaries and their *chat-huant* (barn owl) name.⁶ These nominal similarities reflect deeper bonds of respect and affection between Hulot and his fellow combatants.

Hulot is adored by his men, who look to him for leadership, direction, and comfort. Relying on their intimate familiarity with their commandant, Hulot's men

look to the contours of his face for instruction in combat. Amid the impending danger of a *Chouan* ambush near Mont Pèlerine in eastern Brittany, Balzac writes, “Hulot made one of his characteristic grimaces” (911). While Hulot’s men are distracted by the beauty of the Breton woods, Hulot “shook his head in a negative gesture, and contracted his two great black brows, which gave him a severe look” (914). Like storm clouds hovering over the Breton landscape, Hulot’s face betrays his fear of a bloody civil war: “He could not let go of the stormy expression on his face when he considered that he was already surrounded by the horrors of a war whose atrocities would have been perhaps renounced by cannibals” (921). While “Captain Merle and Adjutant Gérard tried to understand the concern ... on the face of their leader,” (921), the comic Sergeant Falcon quips “What the devil have we gotten ourselves into, that this old trooper Hulot should have such a murky expression?” (925). Despite the sergeant’s humor, the major’s face also commands respect: “When Hulot gave ... a severe look, silence ... suddenly reigned” (925).

Having first been hypnotized by the beauty of the Pèlerine woods, Hulot’s men now fix their gaze on their commander’s face: “Like dogs who try to guess the intentions of their [masters] ... these soldiers looked alternately at the Couesnon valley, the woods by the road, and the severe face of their commandant, in an attempt to read their fate” (925). Balzac’s canine comparison here implies a kind of studied intimacy and affection that grows between dogs and their masters. In this sense, the interpretive exchange between Hulot’s face and the eyes of his men constitutes a form of intimate communication based on discipline and mutual trust. A thoughtful and effective leader, Hulot is aware of the power of his expression. Knowing that his men are looking to him, “The major, more accustomed to danger than his two officers, prided himself on remaining calm” (928). Whether a sign of masculine bravado, nerves of steel, or grace under fire, Hulot’s deliberate calm shields his soldiers from premature fear. Having taken instruction and comfort from Hulot’s face, his men silently pass on this information to each other, as “They consulted one another with their eyes, and ... smile[s] multiplied from mouth to mouth” (925). More than an effective form of communication during combat, these exchanged glances also demonstrate a sense of shared intimacy between these men. Their familiarity with Hulot’s and one another’s faces constitutes a form of intimate eye-to-eye and mouth-to-mouth contact.

From silent to oral communication, Hulot’s ability to command with his face extends to his speech. Despite his characteristic elegance, Hulot also knows how to use what Balzac calls “the picturesque language of the soldier” (926). Having already told his men “good [lads] like us should not allow ourselves to be confounded by the *Chouans*” (926), Hulot later commands, “ ‘Come on, my [lads]! Are we going to allow ourselves to be *confounded* by these brigands?’ The verb that we use here to replace the brave major’s expression is only a weak equivalent, but veterans will know how to substitute the real word, which is certainly of a higher

soldierly taste.”⁷ Later, in the heat of battle, Hulot again shouts to his men, “‘Thunder of God! [The *Chouans*] are confounding us!’ When the major [used] this military expression ... this always announced an impending storm. The diverse intonations of this phrase ..., for the brigade, were a kind of thermometer of the patience of its leader” (961).

In all three of these passages, Hulot uses the euphemism “confounded” in order to challenge his men to take an active role in combat and thus avoid getting sodomized and screwed, invaded and penetrated by the enemy. Like Stendhal’s Corporal Aubry, who in *The Charterhouse of Parma* tells an incompetent general to “go f[uck] yourself” for having betrayed Napoleon and put his men in danger, Hulot’s vulgar language here demonstrates his intimate connection with his men and his concern for their welfare.⁸ While Hulot’s rough speech may sound like military bravado or machismo, his colorful words also represent the mutual respect and affection between him and his men: “the candor of this old soldier made him so well known that even the lowliest [soldier] soon knew his Hulot by heart, from observing the variations of [his] little grimace” (961). From Hulot’s face to their hearts, these men internalize their commandant’s facial and verbal expressions as signs of emotional intimacy.

Loved by his men, Major Hulot is also respected by his enemies. When Hulot and his soldiers finally capture Montauran and defeat the *Chouans* by emulating their guerilla tactics and infiltrating their ranks disguised in Breton dress, Hulot nonetheless respects his adversary’s dying request to contact his exiled brother in England: “‘It will be done,’ said Hulot while holding the hand of the dying man ... The marquis could still thank his adversary with a movement of his head, which showed the esteem that soldiers have for loyal enemies” (1210–11). Playing the role often accorded to a soldier’s *pays* by promising to pass on Montauran’s final words to his family, Hulot compassionately displays the magnanimity of an officer who identifies with, rather than revels in, the death of a fellow soldier. Hulot is thus the model officer: dedicated to his comrades and respectful of his enemies. Recalling Achilles and Hector in Homer’s *Iliad* or Aufidius and Caius Martius in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Hulot holds Montauran’s hand in a gesture of homosocial empathy common to warrior adversaries. In turn, Montauran utters his last words not to his lover Mademoiselle de Verneuil, but to his enemy Hulot in whom he confides his final wishes.

When Hulot himself dies decades later in 1841—out of dishonor and shame over his brother Hector’s treasonous embezzlement of state funds—Hulot’s funeral is attended not by his own brother, whom he has expressly forbidden, but by Montauran’s brother instead: “Behind the marshal’s casket, one could see the old Marquis de Montauran, the brother of the one who, during the *Chouan* uprising in 1799, had been Hulot’s unfortunate adversary.”⁹ In this fraternal substitution, Hulot

is again distinguished as an honorable enemy and brother-in-arms. In turn, the Republican Hulot receives at his funeral “the homage of the old French nobility” for his earlier compassion toward a worthy and—in both senses of the word—noble adversary.¹⁰

Just as Hulot’s name links him to his comrades and enemies, the military nicknames of both the Republican soldiers and Breton guerillas demonstrate their affectionate connection to one another. While Major Hulot and Captain Merle are addressed by their formal names, the soldiers in their ranks are principally known by their nicknames or *noms de guerre* (war names), including Sergeant Jean Falcon, who is more commonly called *Beau-pied* (Beautiful Foot), and his comrades Sergeant *La-clef-des-cœurs* (Key of Hearts), *Vieux-chapeau* (Old Hat), and Corporal *Larose* (The Rose). These war names are mirrored by those of the *Chouan* guerillas, including *Marche-à-terre* (Walks on Earth), *Pille-miche* (Plunder Loaf), and *Galope-chopine* (Galloping Bottle). Even the *Chouan* leader Montauran is known as *Le Gars* (The Guy), an ancient Breton word signifying bravery, strength, and military leadership.¹¹

While the *Chouan* nicknames help the royalist guerillas shield their identities from their Republican enemies, they also reflect—like Natty Bumppo’s warrior name “Hawkeye” in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)—both the natural world that surrounds them and their passion for the food, drink, and culture of their native Brittany. In contrast, the nicknames of the Republican soldiers, which were undoubtedly conferred on one another in both a teasing and affectionate manner, refer to their bodies, uniforms, and peacetime romances. Unlike Balzac’s later use of nicknames—such as Vautrin’s death-defying “Trompe-la-Mort,” which is used to enhance his sense of danger in *Old Goriot* (1834–35)—these “war names” remove the anonymity of rank and soften the images of violence often associated with soldiers, in order to humanize these men who cherish peacetime pleasures, good humor, and shared friendship. While such nicknames signify collective camaraderie, these soldiers also look to individual friendships for comfort amid the dangers of combat.

Hulot’s Pairs

Like the Napoleonic friendships in the memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne, the officers, soldiers, and guerillas in *The Chouans* are matched in conspicuous pairs. Captain Merle and Adjutant Gérard, for example, are described as complementary companions. While Merle (the blackbird) is a whistling optimist, Gérard (the *gérant* or manager) is serious and imposing. Describing Merle as a model of the cavalier French soldier, Balzac writes, “this gay soldier corresponded exactly to the ideas that one has of French troopers, who know how to whistle in the middle of gun-fire” (1045). In contrast to Merle, “Gérard was imposing. Grave and

full of sang-froid, he appeared to have one of those truly Republican souls which, at that time, could be found in droves throughout the French armies” (1045). Paired in the novel as comrades and companions, the whistling Merle and stern Gérard thus represent opposing stereotypes of Republican soldiers. Inseparable until death in combat, they are an odd couple, an attraction of opposites, a complementary pair.

The same can be said for *Beau-pied* and *La-clef-des-cœurs*, *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*, *Marche-à-terre* and *Pille-miche*. Admittedly, these pairings are often challenged by the introduction of a third party, such as Hulot with Merle and Gérard, and *Galope-chopine* with *Marche-à-terre* and *Pille-miche*. But in their common ranks, similar roles, and shared deaths, these military matches recall the friendships between bedfellows, buddies, hometown friends, and mentors that are so common in Napoleonic memoirs. Merle and Gérard, for example, are both killed in the aftermath of the massacre at the Château de la Vivetière. *La-clef-des-cœurs* is also killed at La Vivetière but his buddy *Beau-pied* survives and continues to serve under Major Hulot. After they murder their comrade *Galope-chopine* for treason in 1799, *Marche-à-terre* and *Pille-miche* disappear amid the chaos of the novel’s final skirmish. *Pille-miche* is later arrested and executed in the presence of *Marche-à-terre*, who in 1827 was, as the novel’s earlier title indicates, *The Last Chouan*. But of all these pairs, the two soldiers who perhaps most haunt the novel are the ill-fated comrades *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*.

What little we know about this rose and his old hat is framed by the spectacle of their death on the Pèlerine plateau. As *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau* set out into the woods on a dangerous mission to scout out enemy territory, “[i]t was not without a secret emotion that the company watched them disappear, side by side, from the road. This anxiety was shared by [Hulot], who believed he was sending them to a certain death ... Both the officers and soldiers listened to the gradually fading sound of their steps in the dried leaves ... There are scenes in war where the peril of four men causes more alarm than the thousands of dead strewn on [the battlefield]” (927). As Hulot’s soldiers watch *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau* disappear into the woods, these watchful soldiers serve as doubles for Balzac’s readers, who share both their gaze and concern for these comrades. In this way, Balzac helps his readers identify with the loss of friends in battle and understand the individual suffering of combat. Here, war is not abstracted in statistics or incalculable loss, but is made more personal and individual. Perhaps borrowed from veteran accounts and memoirs, this technique can be seen in Balzac’s subsequent military fiction and in later war narratives by Stendhal, Hugo, and Zola.

Importantly, Balzac’s first attempt at humanizing individual suffering in war focuses on a soldier pair. Mirroring the concern on Hulot’s face for *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*, the faces of their comrades display a range of emotional responses: “These military faces have expressions that are so varied and so fleeting that ... [they] could never be fully described” (927). This facial tension changes from fear to

relief and then horror as *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau* reemerge from the woods: “Silence suddenly returned [as they] saw the two soldiers ... descend the embankment with difficulty ... The one who was less wounded carried his comrade, who soaked the ground with his blood. The two poor soldiers had succeeded in getting halfway down the slope when *Marche-à terre* ... killed them with one single shot, and they rolled heavily down into the ditch” (931–32). In this moment, the entire regiment bears witness to *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*’s care for one another, their attempt to carry each other out of danger, and their shared bullet, death, and burial in each other’s arms. Sharing the brutality of warfare and the intimacy of the grave, Balzac’s *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau* recall the caring buddies and fallen bedfellows of Napoleonic memoirs and thus project the military pair into the nineteenth-century realist novel.

While all of Hulot’s regiment mourns *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*, their death is particularly painful for *Beau-pied*, the company clown who, like the comical Picart in the memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne, often uses humor to boost the morale of his comrades.¹² While drinking with *La-clef-des-cœurs* before the later massacre at the Château de la Vivetière, *Beau-pied* admits to his own buddy, “You can say again that this is good cider, but I take no pleasure in drinking it ... I seem to keep seeing *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau* falling into that Pèlerine ditch. I will remember for the rest of my life” (1044). Here in 1799, the sergeant speaks of his combat trauma in terms that twentieth-century psychoanalytic discourse will later describe as shell shock or post-traumatic stress disorder. While *La-clef-des-cœurs* teases *Beau-pied* for having “too much imagination for a soldier” (1044), *Beau-pied* has, on the contrary, exactly the kind of interior life common to soldiers who are haunted by the suffering and death of their comrades. In confiding his grief to his own buddy, *Beau-pied* simultaneously affirms his friendship with *La-clef-des-cœurs* and honors the memory of *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*.

In this army of pairs, Hulot seems to stand alone. Despite the isolating demands of leadership, however, Hulot develops intimate friendships with three of his soldiers in Brittany: Adjutant Gérard, Lieutenant Gudin, and Sergeant Falcon. As second in command, Gérard the managing *gérant* shares a passion for strong leadership with Hulot and Napoleon, whom Hulot praises for his attention to business before pleasure: “Look at the First Consul, now there’s a man: no women, always at work” (964). By contrast, Hulot is critical of the Revolutionaries Danton and Barras for their erotic distractions: “When I saw Danton and Barras with their mistresses, I told them: ‘Citizens, when the Republic asked you to govern, it was not so that you could enjoy the amusements of the Ancien Régime’ “ (964). Having defined Napoleonic manhood in terms of heteroerotic reserve, Hulot associates heteroerotic excess with royalist decadence. Hulot later admits to Gérard that “good [lads] ... need ladies and good women,” but he believes that political and military leadership requires

heteroerotic sacrifice so as not to “dishonor good and brave patriots like us, by chasing skirts” (963).

Much of Hulot’s discomfort with women is related to the challenge that Mademoiselle de Verneuil poses to his authority. Having been sent from Paris with the spy Corentin, Verneuil is empowered by Napoleon’s police chief Fouché to supersede Hulot’s authority in matters of state. No blushing flower, Verneuil asserts her power, stating, “I warn you that I like subordination and do not like to be challenged” (995). When he reads her credentials, the emasculated Hulot symbolically breaks his sword, tenders his resignation, and apologizes, explaining, “I do not know how to serve where beautiful ladies are in command” (990). After a lifetime of homosocialization in the misogynist military, Hulot is emasculated by this feminine shift in power. But as Captain Merle explains to Mlle Verneuil, Hulot’s behavior may also have to do with his personal disinterest in women: “Excuse me, Mademoiselle, Hulot is not afraid. But women, you see, are not his affair. And it ruffled him to find his general in a bonnet” (995). Beyond his refusal to serve a bonneted superior, Hulot is wholly disinterested in women, a stunning assertion that prefigures the infamous open secret whispered about Vautrin in Balzac’s *Old Goriot* that “he doesn’t like women.”¹³ It is unclear if Hulot’s disinterest in women represents military misogyny or heteroerotic restraint, but his suite of male military companions confirms that his main emotional attachments are with men.

While Adjutant Gérard and Captain Merle are both described as “his two friends” (1067), Hulot is acutely moved by the death of Gérard, with whom he had shared a more intimate relationship. Echoing Napoleon’s grief at the deaths of Lannes and Duroc, Hulot speaks of seeking revenge on Montauran since “he killed my poor Gérard” (1185). Hulot’s double use of the French possessive (“il m’a tué *mon* Gérard”) indicates a particularly personal loss, in which Montauran has not only killed his adjutant but his beloved friend. And in placing himself as a direct object in this grammatical construction (“il m’a tué”), Hulot also implies that, in killing Gérard, Montauran has symbolically killed (a part of) Hulot himself. Hulot’s desire to avenge the deaths of Gérard and Merle inspires him to rescind his resignation to Verneuil and return to command in Brittany: “The massacre at La Vivetière and the desire to avenge his two friends were ... responsible for Hulot’s return to command the brigade” (1067–68). This return of the hero recalls Achilles who, having neglected the war against Troy, takes up his sword again to avenge the death of his warrior lover Patroclus. Similarly, Hulot returns to Brittany out of devotion to the Republic and military friendship: “These threats to the nation, his hatred of the aristocracy ..., and friendship had all contributed to rejuvenate the old soldier with the fire of his youth” (1068). Mourning his Gérard, Hulot returns to the front.

Following Gérard’s death, Hulot’s affections turn to Corporal Gudin. A mere

conscript at the opening of the novel, this young native Breton distinguishes himself by advising Hulot on the movements of the *Chouans*. Like a battalion flag-bearer or *guidon*, Gudin guides Hulot to the enemy and is thus promoted both in rank and in Hulot's esteem: "Well, Gudin, I am making you the corporal of your [men]. You seem to me a solid man ... you will take your place at my side" (933). Hulot's promotion of Gudin recalls Napoleon's promotion of Junot at the siege of Toulon in 1793. In a similar scene of military seduction, Gudin impresses, seduces, and earns his place at the right hand of his commander.

With Hulot's return to command and Gudin's later promotion to second lieutenant, the two become even closer. While preparing for their final assault on the *Chouans*, Hulot's affection and concern for Gudin grows: "Hulot ... walked through the ranks asking for information from Gudin, on whom he had bestowed all of the feelings of friendship which he had earlier pledged to Merle and Gérard" (1156). Merle, Gérard, and Gudin thus represent a continuum of Napoleonic friendship in Hulot's life. Having ordered Gudin on a mission, Hulot marvels at his skill and recalls his beloved Gérard: " 'Thunder of God, how he runs!' he said while watching Gudin depart and disappear as if by magic. 'Gérard would have liked that boy!' " (1158). Seduced by Gudin's athletic prowess, Hulot is reminded of Gérard's own vitality. Just as his fallen friend had been "my Gérard," Gudin is now "my boy" and "my child" (1194). When Gudin's royalist uncle is killed in battle, leaving the young man an orphan, "Hulot supported his young friend" (1171), comforted Gudin in mourning, and became his surrogate family. These scenes of tenderness recall the affectionate care of military pairs like Pertelay and Marbot, Renard and Coignet, Picart and Bourgogne. Fearing that any harm might come to Gudin, Hulot laments, "If I lose that young man ... I no longer want to make any friends" (1170). When Hulot learns from *Beau-pied* that Gudin has, in fact, been killed in the final assault against the *Chouans*, the novel abruptly ends, along with Hulot's desire to care deeply for another comrade.

In *Cousin Bette*, however, we discover that Hulot has had "a retired, sixty-year old soldier as his servant for the past thirty years" (338) who is none other than *Beau-pied*.¹⁴ In the intervening years between 1799 and 1841, Hulot has quite possibly spent all of his time in the company of his beautiful-footed old Sergeant Falcon, from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to their continued service and retirement during the Restoration and July Monarchy. Described as "his factotum, the old soldier who served him for thirty years" (349), *Beau-pied* is characterized as more of a servant than a friend. Yet this old soldier has been, even more so than the ill-fated Gérard and Gudin, Hulot's long-term companion.

After more than forty years, *Beau-pied* is perhaps the only person who intimately understands Hulot and speaks his language. When Hulot sends him on an important errand in 1841, he speaks to *Beau-pied* in the military argot of 1799: " 'And go

faster-than-that!' he said, using an old Republican military expression that he had often uttered long ago. And he made a terrible face that used to get the attention of his soldiers when he inspected them in Brittany in 1799" (349). As his last and longest companion, *Beau-pied* knows Hulot better than any other, from the subtleties of his military speech to the contours of his face. More than a servant or factotum, *Beau-pied* is Hulot's oldest friend, lifetime companion, and virtual spouse.

It is perhaps for this reason that Hulot remains a bachelor. Dedicated to his younger brother Hector and adored sister-in-law Adeline, Hulot never marries since "he had wanted to meet a second Adeline, for whom he unsuccessfully searched in twenty countries and twenty campaigns" (78). Yet Hulot's tenderness for Adeline is—like his relationship with his brother "for whom he always had the affection of a father" (78)—more paternal than erotic. For Hulot, Adeline is less an object of desire than of admiration: "This old soldier's heart sympathized with that of his sister-in-law; he admired her very much as the most noble and saintly creature of her sex" (78). This sympathetic and saintly admiration marks the limits of Hulot's relationship with Adeline and thus the only woman he had ever envisaged as his wife.

As for other marital prospects, Hulot must have had more than a few. Unlike thousands of veterans who returned from the Napoleonic Wars mutilated and penniless, Hulot is still a great catch. Lauded by Napoleon, who called him "that brave Hulot" (78) and named him Comte de Forzheim, and honored by Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Louis-Philippe, who made him a marshal and royal peer, Hulot remained handsome, virile, and wealthy until an advanced age. Living in "a magnificent mansion, situated on the rue de Montparnasse where there are two or three princely houses" (337), Hulot is physically fit and socially active, with "a beautiful face that had become stern with the years and an abundance of gray hair ... Small, stocky, and lean, he lived out his early old age with a saucy spirit. And since he continued to be excessively active ... he split his time between reading and walking" (98). Hulot's thick shock of hair, stocky build, and energetic spirit create an overall image of a robust and virile man in the youth of his old age.

In addition to his physical and material assets, Hulot is charming and urbane: "His gentle manners could be seen on his face, in his appearance, and in his honest and sensible conversation. He never spoke of war or campaigns ... In the salon, he limited his role to the continual observation of women's desires" (98). Even after almost half a century in the rough company of soldiers, Hulot is elegant, well read, and erudite. Politely attentive to the social desires of women, Hulot nonetheless expresses no desire *for* women. Pressured by his family into an engagement with the social-climbing Lisbeth (Bette) Fischer, Hulot dies a month later in 1841.

If anyone besides *Beau-pied* might have better suited Marshal Hulot as a sympathetic companion, it is Marshal Cottin who is Hulot's near equal in age, rank, title, and experience. The last living survivor of the Emperor's first imperial

marshals from 1804, Cottin was named Prince de Wissembourg by Napoleon, and Minister of War by Louis-Philippe. For these accomplishments, the fictive Cottin resembles Napoleon's real-life Marshal Soult.¹⁵ As a stalwart and energetic senior officer, Cottin resembles Hulot: "The seventy-year-old marshal had white hair and the weathered face of men his age ... Underneath his gray dome, covered with snow and shaded by pronounced brows, shined two Napoleonic blue eyes which were sad and full of thoughts and regrets" (341). Like Hulot, Cottin carries the elegant marshal's baton while also knowing how to speak the rough language of soldiers: "When he was mad, the prince became a soldier again, and spoke the language of second lieutenant Cottin" (341). And like Hulot, Cottin maintains the calm reserve of an experienced combat officer under fire, who has both "the sang-froid of a captain and the profound pity inspired by the spectacle of battlefields" (347). Speaking the same language and sharing the same temperament, Marshals Cottin and Hulot make an ideal pair.

Hulot is therefore mortified when, faced with the dishonor of his family name, he is disgraced in front his old friend Cottin. Raging at his irresponsible brother Hector whose embezzlement has brought on this family shame, Hulot later laments, "I was humiliated in front of ... the man whom I esteem the most ... the Prince de Wissembourg!" (350). In the aftermath of this disgrace, Hulot collapses and "for the first time in his life perhaps, two tears rolled from his eyes and down his cheeks" (350). After twenty-seven battle wounds, thirty campaigns, and over forty years in the army, Hulot is finally defeated by this public humiliation in front of his most admired Napoleonic friend. Having maintained his sang-froid in the face of battle and the deaths of his comrades, he is now—like Bourgonne's Old Eliot in Russia—reduced to tears. Attempting to save face by repaying his brother's debt, Hulot nevertheless loses his dignity and his will to live.

When he embraces his friend Cottin one last time, Hulot symbolically bids farewell to his honor, his life, and all those men he has held in Napoleonic friendship: " 'Adieu, Cottin,' said the old man as he shook the hand of the Prince de Wissembourg ... Then after taking one step, he turned again, looked at the Prince whom he saw was visibly moved, opened his arms to embrace him, and the Prince [in turn] embraced the marshal. 'It seems to me that I am saying goodbye,' he said, 'to the entire Grande Armée through you ... for I am going to the place where are all of those soldiers that we have mourned' " (352). In Cottin's arms, Hulot laments the loss of all his soldier pairs—from Merle and Gérard to *Larose* and *Vieux-chapeau*—and bids farewell to all his military companions, from Gérard and Gudin to *Beau-pied* and Cottin. More than subordinates or colleagues, these men have been his companions and family, as he has been their paternal commanding officer and fraternal regimental friend, their father and brother, peer and *père*, in a succession of complementary pairs. Having embraced his most esteemed friend and the last of

Napoleon's marshals, Hulot seems to say goodbye to Napoleonic friendship itself.

At Hulot's funeral, however, throngs of veterans, soldiers, and citizens turn out to honor him: "For the Republicans, the marshal was the ideal of patriotism, and they all came out for his funeral, which was attended by an immense crowd. The Army, the Administration, the Court, the People all came to render homage to this man of great virtue and integrity" (353). Admired by both Republicans and royalists, Hulot is universally respected for having dedicated his life to the nation and to the men with whom he served. Conscious of the miserable conditions in which most Napoleonic veterans lived after 1815, the more fortunate Hulot had continued to honor these abused and forgotten men. During Hulot's walks in Paris, "every *invalid*, on seeing him approach, would stand at attention and salute him; and the marshal repaid the old soldier with a smile" (338). Like those veterans who defied the Restoration and July Monarchy to attend Marshal Davout's and General Lamarque's funerals in 1823 and 1832, these veterans at Hulot's funeral honor both his distinguished military service and his long-term Napoleonic friendship.

More important, Hulot's December 1841 funeral recalls the December 1840 funeral of Napoleon, an event that Jean Tulard has called the apogee of the Napoleonic legend and the beginning of a Bonapartist movement that would "assure the success of Napoleon III" and his Second Empire in 1852.¹⁶ The funerary service, ceremony, or *culte* for Hulot thus stands in for the greater cult of Napoleon. Buried in the collective crypt of Napoleonic friendship, Hulot and Napoleon thus become each other's bedfellows. In the end, Hulot is symbolically paired with Napoleon himself.

While Marshal Hulot is mourned with great public ceremony and almost universal respect, Balzac's Colonel Chabert ends his life in total obscurity and disgrace. Yet these two Napoleonic veterans share the honor of having lived their entire lives in the company of military comrades and the care of Napoleonic friendship. For Hulot, his three military mates offer continual support during his long career and meteoric rise to the rank of imperial marshal. For Chabert, his three sets of military bedfellows help him survive his equally meteoric descent, from an honored imperial officer and count, to an anonymous corpse, mutilated veteran, and imprisoned vagrant during the Restoration and July Monarchy. While Hulot buries his fallen comrades and is honorably buried by his friends, Chabert struggles out of the grave and against his nation's abuse with the help of his veteran companions.

Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* (1832)

The ground was littered with bodies and the snow was stained with blood. Fought in Poland on Prussian territory against a Russian enemy, the battle of Eylau in February 1807 was, by any standard, a massacre. What began in the dazzling white of a winter blizzard on an early February morning ended in a frozen landscape of human carnage. Describing the gruesome aftermath, infantryman Jean-Baptiste

Barrès writes: “A horrifying spectacle was laid out on this field, recently so full of life, where one hundred and sixty thousand men had breathed and shown such courage! The countryside was covered with a thick layer of snow under which could be seen, here and there, the dead, wounded, and debris of every kind. Everywhere, large traces of blood stained the snow, yellowed by the trampling of men and horses ... Any way you looked, you could see cadavers and wounded wretches, and hear heart-wrenching cries for help.”¹⁷

The Emperor’s official report in the *58th Bulletin of the Grande Armée* described the battle as a victory, but in a letter to the Empress Josephine, Napoleon wrote: “My friend, a great battle took place yesterday. Victory was mine, but I lost many men. The enemy’s losses, which were even greater, do not console me.”¹⁸ While the propagandistic *Bulletin* reported only 7,600 French dead and wounded, some estimates claim as many as 40,000 French and Russian casualties.¹⁹ Surveying the carnage, Marshal Ney muttered, “What a slaughter. And what did we achieve? Nothing!”²⁰ Privately, Napoleon agreed, as he later admitted to Marshal Bessières: “What a massacre! And with no clear outcome! This is a spectacle to inspire in princes a love of peace and a horror of war.”²¹

In *Colonel Chabert* (1832), Balzac’s title character is buried alive in the aftermath of Eylau along with his fallen comrades. Perhaps the most famous of Balzac’s veterans, Chabert epitomizes the forgotten and forsaken soldier. Gravely wounded, left for dead, and buried in a mass grave, Chabert narrowly escapes with his life and spends the next ten years in German hospitals and prisons before finally returning to Paris in 1817. Disfigured by his wounds and officially listed among the dead, Chabert returns to a France that he does not recognize and that will not recognize him. After his lengthy absence, Chabert discovers that Napoleon and the Empire have been replaced by Louis XVIII and the Restoration, and that his widowed wife Rose has mourned, married, and mothered two children with her new husband, the Comte Ferraud. Unable to convince anyone that he is the long-lost Chabert, the old veteran looks to a Parisian lawyer named Derville in a desperate effort to regain his marriage, estate, and identity.

Published in 1832, Balzac’s *Colonel Chabert* prefigures the publication of Hugo’s *Les Misérables* (1862) and Marbot’s *Memoirs* (1891) in which Colonel Pontmercy and General Marbot are similarly stripped and left for dead at Waterloo and Eylau. Like Marbot, Balzac’s friend General Gilbert de Pommereul was a veteran of Eylau and may have told the novelist about General Marbot’s survival story before Balzac embarked on his *Scenes of Military Life* in 1828.²² As with the friendship and collaboration between Balzac and the Duchesse d’Abrantès, military memoir and fiction may have exerted mutual influence. Although there is little evidence to link them, Chabert, Pontmercy, and Marbot nonetheless seem to share the same mass grave on the literary field of Napoleonic carnage.²³ As intertextual bedfellows, they

collectively bear witness to the horrifying intimacy of military graves.

Like Marbot and Pontmercy, Colonel Chabert embodies the mistreatment, cruelty, and neglect suffered by many Napoleonic soldiers during the Restoration. Having died for France, Chabert returns to a wife, king, and country that neither appreciate nor honor his sacrifices.²⁴ “Rebuked for ten years by his wife, the justice system, and society as a whole,” Chabert is forced to join the ranks of military beggars and vagrants that haunt the streets and institutions of post-Napoleonic France.²⁵ For these beleaguered soldiers, there are no homecoming parades, waiting wives, or military honors. Having survived the trench and grave, they return home in search of warm beds, only to find those sheets empty or occupied by other lovers and husbands. Many like Chabert also faced the long-term physical and psychological trauma of their combat wounds.²⁶ Long before twentieth-century discourses on shell shock and post-traumatic stress disorder, Napoleonic veterans like Balzac’s Sergeant Falcon and Colonel Chabert suffered the lingering emotional effects of combat, from the death of friends to the horrors of burial alive. Confronted with the transition from military to civilian life, these veterans faced the combined ravages of combat trauma, political persecution, and social rejection.

Rejected from his wife’s household, affections, and bed, Chabert finds comfort in the bunks of his military mates. Having spent his entire life in the company of male bedfellows—from his childhood orphanage to his many years in military barracks and bivouacs—Chabert seeks out solace and shelter in the postwar homes of veteran comrades, before ultimately ending his days at the Bicêtre hospice for elderly and indigent men. Unlike the fleeting comforts of Chabert’s marriage, the homosocial institutions of the orphanage, military, and hospice are constant—though harsh—sources of institutional support.

Colonel Chabert is thus a story about a veteran soldier’s search for a sympathetic bedfellow. Displaced from the comfort(er)s of civilian life, Chabert finds friendship and compassion in the arms of his veteran comrades. Divided into three parts—“A Law Office,” “The Transaction,” and “The Old-Age Hospice”—*Colonel Chabert* is organized around what could be called the degenerative stages of an anti-*Bildungsroman* where, like Shakespeare’s King Lear or Balzac’s Old Goriot, the rejected Chabert slips into a kind of senile madness. Amid such abandonment and abuse, however, Chabert finds support among three sets of military bunkmates—grave bedfellows, veteran bedfellows, and Bicêtre bedfellows—who offer post-combat solace, consolation, and companionship. Faced with an unheroic homecoming, the veteran Chabert takes comfort in these military bedfellows and their persistent Napoleonic friendship.

Grave Bedfellows

In “A Law office,” Chabert recounts his survival story to Derville and asks for the

lawyer's help in regaining his name, property, and life. Linguistically, this "étude d'avoué" signifies doubly as a "law office" and a "study of an avowal" or something avowed between a client and lawyer, penitent and confessor, patient and doctor. In psychoanalytic terms, Derville provides Chabert with the enunciative power to remember, repeat his story, and reclaim his identity.²⁷ Rather than to a doctor or priest, Chabert appeals to Derville in order to challenge the legality that "my death is an historical fact, recorded in [General Charles-Theodore Beauvais's] *Victoires et Conquêtes*, where it is described in detail" (323). Derville is thus a kind of substitute soldier for Chabert, who tells the lawyer "besides the Emperor, you are the man to whom I owe the most! You are a *brave*" (334).²⁸ Comparing Derville to Napoleon and his *brave* military friends, Chabert suggest that on the battlegrounds of the Restoration, Derville is a new kind of warrior who uses the weapons of legal transaction, salon savvy, and backroom bureaucracy to gain victories for his clients.

Like Derville, his young law clerks stand in contrast to the soldiers of the Empire. While Chabert's comrades lie rotting in foreign graves and trenches, Derville's thirteen-year-old clerk Simonnin makes his living as a *saute-ruisseau*, jumping over Parisian gutters as a legal messenger. Having avoided the trenches of Napoleonic warfare, these young men of a new generation prefer the bureaucratic safety of legal administration, where they hurdle over gutters and less life-threatening obstacles in an effort to climb the social ladder of the Restoration. For this reason, Derville's young clerks find Chabert simultaneously ridiculous and frightening, describing him as a "real numbskull" and "old monkey," but also an "old coat," "old fool," and "death warmed over" (311–18). From his tattered old coat and cranial scars to his air of disinterred death, Chabert is a thing of the past, a revenant, a ghost.²⁹

Quiet as the grave, "the old man remained silent" with a total "absence of all bodily movement and all facial warmth" (321). Like a cadaver or "wax figure" (321), Chabert is "pale, livid," "disfigured," "seemingly dead" (322). With his "skull horribly mutilated by a transversal scar" and his "dirty wig, which the poor man wore to hide his wound" (322), Chabert is monstrous and grotesque. Like the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), he is "something mysterious" and "frightening to see," a "supernatural spectacle," and "sublime horror" (321–22). Even a decade after Eylau, Chabert still bears the marks of the grave from which he emerged. Like a ghost, he is a haunting reminder of the millions of Napoleonic dead whose collective grave he once shared.

In his account to Derville, Chabert describes how: "according to the custom in war, I was stripped of my clothes and thrown into a mass grave by those charged with burying the dead" (324). In life, Chabert shared his barracks and bivouac beds with his *camarades de lit*. In death, he lay again with these bedfellows under the crushing weight of their bodies. When he gains consciousness, Chabert finds himself half-buried under bare corpses and shoveled earth, with little space, air, or light:

“The little air that I breathed was fetid. I wanted to move, but found no space. On opening my eyes, I saw nothing ... I understood that, from where I was, there would be no more fresh air, and that I was going to die” (324–25). Chabert’s return to consciousness in the grave recalls the impending trauma of birth. Comparing his tomb to a womb, he explains: “I emerged from the belly of the grave as nude as from that of my mother” (326). Despite Chabert’s miraculous rebirth and resurrection, he is the only one of his fetal brothers to emerge from this mass stillbirth, this sepulchral womb, this tomb for soldiers.

Although none of his grave bedfellows survive, Chabert owes his life to their help. Amid the silence of the grave, the muffled cries of the dying reawaken Chabert: “My ears were burning violently. I heard or thought I heard—though I can’t say for sure—moans coming from the pile of cadavers around me ... [T]here are nights when I believe I can still hear those muffled sighs! But there was something even more horrible than their cries: a silence that I have never heard again, the true silence of the grave” (325). Whether they were real or imagined, the effects of his head wounds or his unconscious mind, Chabert credits these moans, sighs, and cries with his awakening. In regaining consciousness and in “raising my arms and feeling the dead,” Chabert finds “a space between my head and the human waste-heap overhead” (325), and realizes that his comrades’ bodies form the birth canal to new life.

Having cradled him with their bodies and maintained a clear passage to the surface, Chabert’s comrades also deliver him from this womb by extending him a grotesque but helping hand: “I found an unattached arm, the arm of a Hercules! A good piece of bone to which I owe my survival. Without this unexpected help, I would have perished! With a ferocity that you can understand, I began to work through the cadavers separating me from the layer of earth thrown on top of us ... to pierce through the blanket of flesh which was a barrier between life and myself” (325). Like Sergeant Bourgogne, Chabert owes his life to this helping hand of Napoleonic friendship. Whereas Bourgogne’s grenadier had saved him without hands, Chabert’s Herculean arm does so without a body. From barracks and bivouacs to trenches and graves, Chabert owes his survival to the extended hand and corporal protection of his military bedfellows.

Veteran Bedfellows

In “The Transaction,” Derville tries to negotiate Chabert’s case out of court by making the colonel’s former wife Rose—now the Comtesse Ferraud—see the advantages of avoiding a public scandal. Fearing the reaction of the Comte Ferraud, her social-climbing second husband who might divorce her to become a royal peer of France, the countess is prepared to settle, before realizing that she can manipulate the sentimental old Chabert into signing away his rights.³⁰ Wracked with love and pity, then jealousy and disgust, Chabert relinquishes his legal claims on his marriage

and property. Having achieved the difficult trans/action of crossing back from death to life, anonymity to identity, the Empire to the Restoration, Chabert is disgusted by this loveless legal transaction between the countess and himself, and thus forfeits his hopes of regaining his wife and home. Rather than “trans/iger” (333, 354) or compromise, the old military strategist prefers to capitulate, and thus cross back over to anonymity and defeat. Like Napoleon, who defiantly returned from his first exile on Elba, Chabert strikes out for a full victory before being reduced to a second and more permanent exile from his home, wife, and former life.

Having been rejected from his marriage bed, Chabert must find another sympathetic bunk. Bereft of everything, Chabert first finds comfort “in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, on the rue du Petit-Banquier, in the home of an old sergeant of the Imperial Guard named Vergniaud” (336). Despite Sergeant Louis Vergniaud’s own circumstances as a poor dairy farmer, he opens his modest home to the homeless Chabert. Like the dilapidated Maison Vauquer boarding house in Balzac’s *Old Goriot*, Vergniaud’s home is described as one of the suburban faubourg’s most “paltry, miserable, unpoetic habitations” that “seemed close to falling into ruins” (337). Framed by two walls haphazardly constructed “with the bones of the earth” (337) and marked by the constant traffic of cows and pigs, the muddy courtyard is “a pool full of manure, rainwater, and waste” (337). Just as Cambronne’s defiant “Merde!” announces the rotting sepulchral trenches of Hugo’s Waterloo, this ossuary courtyard and excremental pool recall the muddy communal graves of Balzac’s Eylau. From Chabert’s grave bedfellow support in 1807 to Vergniaud’s veteran bedfellow hospitality in 1817, Napoleonic friendship survives even amid fetid squalor.

Horried by Chabert’s living conditions, Derville “did not want to soil his feet in this manure” (339). Like Simonnin, his gutter-jumping message boy, Derville belongs to a different generation and class of Restoration gentlemen, who prefer the parquet and marble of their Châtelet law offices and the Palais de Justice courtrooms to the muddy battlefields and homes of Napoleonic soldiers. Shocked at Chabert’s spartan room, where the bed “consisted of a few bundles of straw” (339) and the floors “were made of bare earth” (339), Derville exclaims, “But, colonel, you are so badly off here” and asks, “Why haven’t you come to Paris, where you could live just as inexpensively but in better conditions?” (339–40). Having never been a soldier, Derville cannot comprehend Chabert’s satisfaction with the simple comforts of a Napoleonic bivouac or the fraternal friendship between Chabert and Vergniaud.³¹

Comfortably lodged, Chabert admits to Derville, “It’s true, Monsieur, we do not live in great luxury. This is a bivouac tempered by friendship” (339). For Chabert, this home he shares with Vergniaud is built not on muddy ground but on almost twenty years of fraternal cohabitation, from the Egyptian Campaign in 1799 to the faubourg Saint-Marceau in 1817: “[T]hese good people lodged and fed me *gratis* for

an entire year! How can I leave them now when I finally have some money? The father of these three children is an old Egyptian ... Not only are all those who returned from there a bit like brothers, but Vergniaud was then in my regiment and we shared water in the desert. And after all, I haven't yet finished teaching his children to read" (340). In this house, Chabert is not only a lodger, but a member of the family, a financial contributor, and a co-parent. Rather than spending his money, as Derville predicts, "to satisfy the soldier's three cardinal virtues: gambling, wine, and women" (339), Chabert spends his advance from Derville on the children, household needs, and happiness of his veteran friend.³² As fellow survivors of the Egyptian Campaign and lifelong comrades, Chabert and Vergniaud are fraternally bound to one another by Napoleonic friendship.

Reproached by Derville for Chabert's lowly lodgings, Vergniaud replies that "Chabert has the most beautiful room. I would give him my own room, if I had more than one. I would sleep in the stable. A man who has suffered like he has, who teaches my children to read, an Egyptian, the first lieutenant under whom I served ... Of everyone, he is the most comfortably lodged. I've shared with him all I have. Unfortunately, this is not much: some bread, milk, eggs. Like in war, we do the best we can" (345). Echoing Chabert's description of a "bivouac tempered by friendship," Vergniaud compares his rustic hospitality to the communal privations and pleasures of military life. Despite his poverty, Vergniaud offers Chabert the best bed, the only bedroom, and all the comforts that his fraternal esteem can provide.

As a former *maréchal des logis* (barracks sergeant) in Chabert's regiment of the Imperial Guard, it is appropriate that Vergniaud lodge Chabert. Yet Chabert might have been more comfortably paired with another barracks sergeant from his Napoleonic past: his dear friend Sergeant Boutin. Rather than intrude on the marital and family life of Vergniaud, the abandoned Chabert could have shared his retirement with the bachelor Boutin, as a complementary pair of veteran bedfellows. In his account to Derville, Chabert speaks affectionately about his comrade Boutin, "the most humble and ... most grateful of my friends" (330), "that dear man" whom he credits as "the only one who would recognize me" (324) on his release from a German prison in 1814. Chabert remembers his early friendship with Boutin as a kind of mischievous pairing in which "[t]he poor bastard and I made the most beautiful pair of hoodlums I ever knew" (330). Having frequented Italian bars and brothels, this hooligan pair and their adventures recall the equally bawdy antics of Sergeants Bourgogne and Picart and of *Beau-pied* and *La-clef-des-cœurs*.

Unlike the Comtesse Ferraud who refuses to recognize Chabert in 1817 Paris, Boutin had recognized and embraced his old friend in 1814 Stuttgart despite Chabert's hideously disfigured face. Although the recognition was not immediate, their years of intimate familiarity helped Boutin see beyond his friend's mutilated face, "[e]ven though," Chabert explains, "my eyes and my voice were ... completely

changed, even though I had no hair, teeth, or brows, and was as white as an Albino” (331). Like a spouse familiar with the contours of his longterm bedfellow’s face, Boutin sees through Chabert’s physical scars and helps heal his emotional wounds.

After years of separation and hardship, Boutin and Chabert are still a good match: “We were two curious relics after having rolled across the globe like two stones that roll in the ocean, tossed by storms from one shore to another” (331). No longer a young “pair of hoodlums,” they are nonetheless “two curious relics,” a pair of sea stones who have weathered the tempests of Napoleonic combat. As a particularly prolific and experienced pair of combatants, Chabert and Boutin could be said to represent the entire Grande Armée and its many extraordinary campaigns, from Egypt in 1799 to Waterloo in 1815: “Between the two of us, we had seen Egypt, Syria, Spain, Russia, Holland, Germany, Italy, Croatia, England ... [T]he only places we still had not been were India and America” (331). Back in France, Chabert and Boutin might have made an ideal veteran pair and shared their retirement in each other’s company if Boutin had not been killed in 1815 when “[t]he poor devil succumbed at Waterloo” (331). Without the welcome of his wife Rose or the comfort of his comrade Boutin, Chabert thus beds with his fellow veteran Vergniaud.

When Vergniaud goes bankrupt, however, “Chabert essentially disappeared ... Perhaps, like a stone thrown into an abyss, he had cascaded and sunk into the mud which proliferates in the streets of Paris” (367–68). Now alone, Chabert again becomes a rolling but solitary stone in the harsh conditions of Restoration France. Like his muddy mass grave at Eylau in 1807, the Parisian mud now swallows Chabert in 1818. Having been the victim of a double burial in which “I was buried under the dead [and then] buried under the living, under contracts, deeds, and society as a whole, which wants me to return to the grave” (328), Chabert finally concedes that “I must go back under the earth” (365). This resignation signals an acknowledgment that Chabert’s place is not among the social-climbers of Restoration society, but among the fallen Napoleonic soldiers of the graves and gutters, prisons and institutions of post-Napoleonic France.

Bicêtre Bedfellows

In “The Old-Age Hospice,” Chabert regresses in a series of retreats, from jail and prison to hospice and oblivion. Like Napoleon’s multiple retreats to his ultimate exile and grave on St. Helena, Chabert retreats first to a Palais de Justice holding cell, before being sentenced to the Saint-Denis beggars prison, and finally ending up in the Bicêtre hospice for aged men. Having left behind his grave bedfellows at Eylau and lost his veteran bedfellow in Paris, Chabert finishes his life in the company of elderly bunkmates in Bicêtre. This ignominious decline marks the end of a lifetime spent in homosocial institutions, from Chabert’s childhood in an orphanage and career in the military to his incarceration in German and French

hospitals and prisons.

After his release as a prisoner of war in 1814, Chabert had resolved to avoid reincarceration, pledging, “My detention in Stuttgart made me think of [the psychiatric prison] Charenton, and I was resolved to act prudently” (333). But with nowhere to rest his weary head after the bankruptcy of Vergniaud and final break with Rose in 1818, the homeless and penniless Chabert is forced to beg and live in the streets. Sentenced for vagrancy to Saint-Denis in 1819, Chabert is transferred in 1820 to Bicêtre where he spends the next twenty years, resigned to the harsh though familiar conditions of institutional life. According to Michel Foucault, the French prison system reached its height in 1840—the year Derville discovers Chabert at Bicêtre—when Mettray, a reformatory prison for boys and young men, opened near Tours, southwest of Paris. The French penal system could now incarcerate prisoners across their lifespan, from youth in Mettray to old age in Bicêtre. Foucault argues that this “carceral system” was in many ways an extension of military life since its reformatory programs were based on the models of the “cloister, prison, school, regiment.”³³

It is thus little surprise that orphans like Chabert later joined or were conscripted into the military or that, as vagrants and delinquents, many veterans wound up in French prisons. Uncomfortable at best and torturous at worst, the prison system absorbed Napoleonic veterans bereft of all other social and institutional support. Foucault quotes a chillingly optimistic description of this prison system by the French social statistician Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès in 1846: “Our benevolent establishments present an admirably coordinated whole by means of which the indigent does not remain a moment without help from the cradle to the grave. Follow the course of the unfortunate man: you will see him born among foundlings; from there he passes to the nursery, then to an orphanage ... Lastly, when the poor Parisian reaches the end of his career, seven almshouses await.”³⁴ Echoing Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Jonnès’s faith in the benevolence of this “cradle-to-grave” prison system is either profoundly naive or blatantly cruel. While many veterans like Chabert took pride in their military service, these other institutions were places of last resort for the miserable, unwanted, and rejected wretches of nineteenth-century France.

For Chabert, Bicêtre is a substitution for the Invalides, where he might have lived if he had been able to prove his identity as a veteran. Though Chabert is likely transferred from the Saint-Denis prison to the Bicêtre hospice because of his advanced age, he ironically ends up in an institution with military origins, where many of his fellow prisoners are veterans like himself. Founded during the seventeenth century by Louis XIII as a hospice for disabled soldiers, Bicêtre was a military institution similar in purpose if not in prestige to the Invalides. Among Balzac’s many veterans, Chabert provides a unique glance inside these veteran

institutions and is thus Balzac's archetype of the veteran *invalidé*. Despite the refusal of the Restoration and July Monarchy to recognize him as such, Chabert ironically ends up living out his days in the company of fellow Napoleonic veterans. Once billeted with military bedfellows and cradled by comrades' corpses, Chabert now returns to the familiar company of institutional bunkmates.

This substitution of Bicêtre for the Invalides announces another set of trans/actions for the beleaguered veteran who, having exchanged his childhood orphanage for an old-age hospice, now prefers his first name Hyacinthe to his last name Chabert. Twenty years earlier, a disillusioned and disconsolate Chabert had told Derville "I no longer want to be myself" (327). Yet as an orphan, Chabert had never fully known what this self constitutes. Like the self-made man Napoleon(e) B(u)onaparte, his life has been an invention, from a lowly army recruit named Hyacinthe to an imperial colonel and count named Chabert. Now that his name has been irretrievably shamed and buried by his wife, Chabert chooses to revert to Hyacinthe. Even as early as 1819, Chabert pleads his vagrancy case in the Palais de Justice as Hyacinthe, and when greeted by Derville at Bicêtre in 1840, he responds, "Not Chabert! Not Chabert! My name is Hyacinthe ... I am no longer a man, I am number 164, room number 7" (372). In refusing this name for which he fought so hard and insisting on both a childhood name and an institutional number, this weary veteran refuses his manhood and humanity.

Reflecting this senile reversion to childhood, the elderly Hyacinthe is described in infantile terms as one who possesses a "Parisian child's naiveté," has "childish gestures," and whose cerebral "wound had reduced him to childhood" (370–72). But as Balzac writes earlier in the text, these childlike qualities are shared by all French soldiers who, like Chabert, speak with "the naiveté of a child or a soldier, for there is often a bit of a child in the true soldier, and almost always a bit of a soldier in the child, especially in France" (329). Evoking the puerile naiveté and brutal simplicity of French soldiers, Balzac draws a connection between Chabert's childhood, adulthood, and old age. Having lived his entire life in orphanages, armies, hospitals, and prisons, this old veteran is a product of male institutional homosociality.

Chabert summarizes his institutional life when he describes himself as "an orphan and soldier whose inheritance was his courage, whose family was the whole world, whose nation was France, and whose protector was God. No, I'm mistaken! I had a father: the Emperor!" (331). Speaking of Napoleon's affection for him, Chabert beams, "The boss loved me a little!" (323) and recalls how the Emperor called him "his Chabert" (331) and "my poor Chabert" (323). Summarizing Chabert's institutional life, Derville explains how "[h]e emerged from the hospice for foundlings and returned to die in the hospice for the elderly, after having, in the interval, helped Napoleon to conquer Egypt and Europe!" (373). Raised with other orphans, encouraged by the paternal and fraternal support of Napoleon and his fellow soldiers, and now imprisoned with his fellow veterans, Chabert has spent his

entire life among sympathetic bedfellows.

As Hyacinthe, Chabert's very name links him to a long history of fraternal, homosocial, and homoerotic fellowship. More than the fraternity between the third-century Christian martyr brothers, Saints Hyacinth and Protos, or the fellowship between the thirteenth-century evangelist Saint Hyacinth and his monastic brothers, this name recalls the ancient Greek myth of the beautiful youth named Hyacinth who was loved by the rival gods Apollo and Zephyrus, was killed when accidentally struck by Apollo's discus blown off-course by Zephyrus, and was mourned by Apollo who transformed his lover's spilled blood into the hyacinth flower.³⁵ Among the many floral varieties of the hyacinth family is endymion, named for that other beautiful youth from Greek mythology, the young shepherd Endymion, who was so loved by the moon goddess Selene that she asked Zeus to grant him immortality through eternal sleep. Others attribute Endymion's eternal slumber to his male admirer Hypnos, the god of sleep, who is often represented in fraternal slumber with his brother Thanatos, the god of death.³⁶

Hyacinthe Chabert's name thus associates him with a rich cultural history of fraternal and homoerotic bedfellows, from antiquity to his own lifetime bunking with fellow orphans, soldiers, and veterans in the various dormitories, barracks, bivouacs, graves, cells, and wards of his homosocial and institutional life.³⁷ Like Hypnos and Thanatos, Chabert shared a grave with his fraternal friends. Like Apollo's Hyacinth resurrected as a flower, Chabert sprouted again from the earth with the help of his comrades. Like the hyacinth flower itself, which grows multiple blossoms from a single stem—as opposed to the single-budded rose that, like Chabert's estranged wife Rose, seeks out individual adoration—Chabert blossoms best in communal clusters.

Despite his ostensibly shameful end, Chabert's incarceration at Bicêtre is ironically a return to a kind of military family, a small victory over what Pierre Danger calls the "Chabert complex" or fear of being abandoned and alienated from one's identity.³⁸ Like Rastignac's efforts to make a name for himself in the *Bildungsroman* of *Old Goriot*, Chabert struggles to regain his name in *Colonel Chabert*. Having been defeated in this struggle to recover his name (as Chabert), he nonetheless regains a sense of personal dignity, fraternal fellowship, and chosen identity (as Hyacinthe) in the homosocial world of Bicêtre. Like Balzac's Goriot and Shakespeare's Lear who—in the absence of wives or benevolent daughters—look to the help of boys and beggars, Chabert finds familiar homosocial comfort and institutional support among fellow vagrants and veteran friends.

While Derville laments what he considers Chabert's miserable and lonely end, he fails to understand that Hyacinthe Chabert ends his life as he lived it, bunking with comrades and buddies. Just as he once shared a mass grave with his fallen friends at Eylau, Chabert will undoubtedly share a communal grave with his fellow inmates

when he dies at Bicêtre. Just as Chabert once parented the young soldiers under his command and co-parented the children of his comrade Vergniaud, Chabert's fortune will continue—via the protected terms of his will, which “bestowed a quarter of [his] property to the orphanages” (341)—to foster future generations of his fellow orphans. Despite his seemingly total rejection and abandonment, Chabert has nevertheless managed to create a family of his orphan, military, and hospice comrades. They have been his companions and comfort, his bedfellows and beneficiaries, his friends and family.

In the end, Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* is a literary monument to the suffering of veterans and the enduring support of Napoleonic friendship. Bearing witness to the miseries of his military retreat and return, Chabert stands in for thousands of soldiers who suffered the abuses and humiliations of the Restoration and July Monarchy. When Chabert weeps in anger and frustration—as “[l]arge tears fell from the weary eyes of the poor soldier and rolled down his wrinkled cheeks” (343)—he mourns the loss of fallen comrades and laments the nation's attack on veteran dignity. Like Napoleon who wept for Lannes and Duroc, Chabert weeps for himself, his emperor, and his friends.

Sobbing despite his battle-hardened years, Chabert tells Derville that he will “go to the foot of the Place Vendôme column, and there I will cry: ‘I am Colonel Chabert, who defeated the Russians at Eylau!’ The bronze statue himself will recognize me!” (343). In his frustrated struggle for recognition, Chabert continues to look to Napoleonic friendship. Cast with the bronze of enemy cannon and erected by the Emperor in 1805 to the “glory of the Grande Armée,” this magnificent imitation of Trajan's Roman column was vandalized in 1815 by Louis XVIII who—in an act of figurative decapitation and phallic castration—ordered the destruction of the column's crowning statue of Napoleon. As Victor Hugo writes in his “Ode to the Place Vendôme Column” (1827), this imperial monument was as much an homage to the veteran “Debris of the Great Empire and Grande Armée” as to Napoleon himself.³⁹ Desecrated, decapitated, and castrated, the column thus became—like Chabert's broken body and spirit—a symbol of Napoleonic emasculation.

Like Napoleon's desecrated column or General Junot's battle-worn body, Chabert's disfigured face represents the ravages of Napoleonic warfare and national ingratitude. Like Hugo's ode on the Vendôme column, Balzac's text on Chabert is a literary monument that attests to the honorable service and sacrifices of Napoleon's soldiers and to their dishonorable neglect and abuse by the Restoration and July Monarchy. For Chabert is at the same time a *comte* and a *conte*, an imperial count and [an] account, or as Derville argues, “an entire poem or ... drama” (371).⁴⁰ While Colonel Chabert fades away in obscurity and disgrace, *Colonel Chabert* survives as his epitaph and monument.



DESPITE THEIR DIVERGENT veteran careers, the honored Marshal Hulot and abused Colonel Chabert both bear witness to the continued comfort of Napoleonic friendship after the fall of the Empire in 1815. While both suffer the loss of dear comrades during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, they survive their respective solitude and suffering during the Restoration and July Monarchy with the help of veteran friends. Like Marshal Hulot and Colonel Chabert, Balzac's later literary veterans—Major Genestas in *The Country Doctor* (1833) and Lieutenant-Colonel Bridau in the third volume of *The Bachelors* (1840–43)—also seek out Napoleonic companions during their veteran years. But while the admirable Genestas ends up fathering a family with his Napoleonic mate, the dishonorable Bridau tramples on his Napoleonic family in frustration over the humiliations of his post-imperial life.

Following 1815, these Napoleonic veterans make very different choices. Maintaining their military careers and honors during the Restoration, Hulot and Genestas are universally respected as lifelong soldiers, benevolent leaders, and substitute fathers. While Hulot is content living in a veteran pair, Genestas goes even further to create a veteran family. Having served the Empire and collaborated with the Restoration, Hulot and Genestas are thus honored as heroes. Unlike these fêted officers, the disenfranchised Chabert and Bridau must struggle against the injustices and neglect of the Restoration and July Monarchy. While Chabert ultimately succumbs to this overwhelming abuse, Bridau cruelly and criminally retaliates in order to survive and prosper amid anti-Bonapartist adversity. More than their parallel lives with Hulot and Chabert, Balzac's later veterans Genestas and Bridau introduce new figures of the Napoleonic veteran in *The Human Comedy*: the military daddy and the veteran rogue. In their opposing roles as hero and villain, saint and sinner, parent and parasite, Genestas and Bridau represent radically divergent archetypes of the Napoleonic veteran and thus the possibility of both a utopian and dystopic future for military friendship in post-1815 France.



Military Daddies & Veteran Rogues Balzac's Major Genestas and Colonel Bridau

In the lamplight of a country barn, an old veteran listened to his buddy's tall tales. For almost fifteen years following Napoleon's defeat in 1815, these two veteran friends had shared the same home, meager pension, and rural life in an isolated Alpine village. One brawny and quiet, the other animated and social, they are a handsome and complementary pair. Huddled around them and seated on bales of hay, a small crowd of old farmers and knitting widows listens carefully to their tales of Napoleon on campaign, the desert heat in Egypt, and the deadly snow in Russia. High in the loft above them, discreetly hidden in the hay, another Napoleonic pair listens in. A military major and a country doctor, they are careful not to disturb the gathering below. Like the storyteller and his mate, the major had served with Napoleon in the Egyptian and Russian Campaigns, while his friend the country doctor has led a different campaign, tending to the orphans and villagers of this Alpine valley where he is affectionately known as the Napoleon of the people. Though they have just met, these Napoleonic friends quickly become an intimate pair, confiding in one another their combat trauma, tending to each other's emotional wounds, and raising a son amid this extended family in their remote mountain village.

In addition to its focus on political and rural life, Balzac's *The Country Doctor* (1833) centers on two military pairs: the elderly veterans Gondrin and Goguelat and the Napoleonic friends Genestas and Benassis.¹ Like Balzac's earlier military texts, this novel honors the mutual support and survival of Napoleonic veterans, pairs, and friends. But in its celebration of both filial and symbolic paternity, the novel also documents the formation of veteran families. Rooted in Napoleon's paternal relationship to his soldiers and their fraternal relationships with each other, these veteran families constitute a new form of male military association, affection, and support during the Restoration and July Monarchy.

Balzac's *The Country Doctor* (1833)

In the hopes of finding a cure for his ailing son, Major Genestas travels from his garrison in Grenoble to a mountain village bordering the Savoie and the Dauphiné,

where Dr. Benassis has gained a reputation for his remarkable transformation of an impoverished valley.² As mayor, Benassis has established successful programs of hygiene, education, and economic growth that have revitalized his isolated canton, nearly tripled its population, and earned him the reputation as the “Napoleon of the people.”³ Traveling clandestinely as “Captain Bluteau,” Genestas is welcomed into Benassis’s home, confidence, and circle of country widows, orphans, and misfits, including two old veterans named Gondrin and Goguelat who tell Napoleonic tales during evenings in the doctor’s barn. Confiding in one another their equally painful past, Benassis recounts his failed love affairs with Agathe and Évelina, the death of his son, and his penitential service to this impoverished valley, while Genestas describes his military service in Russia, the deaths of his wife Judith and best friend Renard, and the sickness of his son Adrien. Having entrusted Adrien to the care of the good doctor in the spring of 1829, Genestas returns in the winter of 1830 to discover that Benassis has died. On visiting the grave of the country doctor, Genestas pledges to retire and dedicate himself to this valley of his beloved friend.

In preparation for the novel, Balzac consulted a Napoleonic officer and bachelor named Captain Nicolas-Louis Périolas, whom he had met in 1828 through his friend Captain François-Michel Carraud and his wife Zulma.⁴ Like Captain Carraud, Périolas was an instructor at the École Militaire de Saint-Cyr where he procured military texts for Balzac.⁵ In his letters to Zulma Carraud, Balzac speaks affectionately of Périolas’s military advice and friendship: “It would be one of my life’s great joys to have M. Périolas near me; he has one of those rare characters that I have noticed and held in esteem, and of which there are very few. One day, on learning of my misfortunes, he extended the kind of sympathy that was like ten years of friendship ... I am indebted to him for his valuable advice.”⁶ Even though Balzac once failed to appear at a meeting that Périolas had organized with several veterans of Wagram, Balzac and Périolas remained friends and the captain continued to provide the novelist with military advice and inspiration.

The complex genesis of *The Country Doctor*’s military narrative can be traced to Balzac’s failed project for his novel *The Battle*.⁷ In the many letters he wrote to his mother and sister Laure during the summer and fall of 1832, Balzac wrote of the excellent progress he was making on his great military novel. Hoping to keep his family, publishers, and creditors at bay, Balzac writes: “I am working on *The Battle* and will finish by July 30” (July 6); “I have begun *The Battle* and will continue without stopping” (September 1); “*The Battle* will soon be ready” (September 16); “In the first days of October, *The Battle* will be finished” (September 22).⁸ Despite more than thirty epistolary assurances that this war novel was close to completion, Balzac finally admits in a letter to Zulma Carraud on October 10, “there is not a single line written for *The Battle*.”⁹ Having lost this literary battle with himself, Balzac faced his Waterloo and admitted his failure.

Although *The Battle* remained unfinished, Balzac incorporated much of this military material into his new project, *The Country Doctor*.¹⁰ In fact, parts of Balzac's manuscript for *The Country Doctor* were written on the reverse side of the paper on which he wrote the title, chapter heading, and single fragmentary sentence for *The Battle* in 1832. Sharing the same genesis and narrative space as *The Battle*, Balzac's *The Country Doctor* is thus a military novel wrapped in a country novel or a scene of both country and military life.¹¹ Born from two sides of the same page, *The Country Doctor* is *The Battle*'s surviving twin, alter ego, and ghost novel.

Having told Balzac in 1832 that "you will learn more chatting with old foot soldiers than consulting with officers," Captain Périolas may have inspired Goguelat's celebrated barnyard account in *The Country Doctor*.¹² Published independently in 1833 before its inclusion in the novel, Goguelat's Napoleonic tale has been republished and anthologized under several different titles including *The Story of Napoleon Recounted in a Barn by an Old Soldier* and *The Napoleon of the People*. While Las Cases's *Memorial of Saint Helena* (1823) has been credited with sparking the Napoleonic legend, Goguelat's tale has been lauded by historians, biographers, and critics for its role in perpetuating the Napoleonic myth.¹³ Whereas Las Cases attempts to write from the Emperor's point of view, Balzac offers the perspective of the foot soldier.¹⁴

Asked by his fellow villagers to "tell us about the Emperor" (520) on a spring evening in 1829, Goguelat tells those assembled in Benassis's barn a string of exaggerated tales about Napoleon's prodigious talents, phenomenal victories, and extraordinary leadership in battle. Although this text occupies only eighteen pages in the Pléiade edition, it represents a grand homage to Napoleon's career and campaigns, in an embellished tone that resonates like a love letter to the Emperor. When Goguelat tells his audience that "I don't at all like to shorten the victories" and that "I prefer to recount an entire battle" (520), he suggests that this barnyard tale is, in effect and in microcosm, Balzac's great war novel *The Battle*, his literary homage to Napoleon and his men.

Describing Napoleon as a divine figure with supernatural powers, Goguelat reproduces tropes of religious, hagiographic, and messianic devotion. Yet even at its most extreme, this cultish veneration is more akin to hero worship, fraternal admiration, and amorous infatuation. At the battle of Eylau, Napoleon is miraculously unharmed "through the hail of bullets that killed us like flies, but that respected his head" (521). As Napoleon's men perish in the frozen rivers of Russia, "I saw the Emperor ... standing immobile near the bridge, feeling no cold at all" (533). And at Waterloo, "Napoleon threw himself three times in front of enemy cannons ... without getting killed!" (536). While his men succumbed to the plague in Egypt, "Napoleon alone was as fresh as a rose, and the entire army saw him drinking the plague without it affecting him at all" (525). Like Antoine Gros's

messianic *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa* (1804) or Shakespeare's Mark Antony, who conquered Egypt drinking "the stale of horses, and the gilded puddle / Which beasts would cough at" and could "eat strange flesh, / Which some did die to look on," Napoleon is immune to infection.¹⁵ From Egypt in 1799 to Waterloo in 1815, Goguelat's Napoleon is impervious to bullets and disease.

In contrast to his superhuman strength, Napoleon is most human when comforting his soldiers, whom "he cared for like his child, worrying if you had shoes, clothes, coats, bread, ammunition" (529). More than paternal care, Goguelat recounts, Napoleon offered fraternal fellowship and shared his soldier's hardships: "A sergeant and even a foot soldier could say to him 'My Emperor,' just as you say to me sometimes 'My good friend.' And he responded to questions we asked him and slept in the snow with us" (529). In this way, the Emperor won the esteem and affection of his men. Just as Napoleon wept for Lannes and Duroc, "They say that he used to cry at night for his poor family of soldiers" (533). Despite Goguelat's exaggerated tone, these allusions to Napoleon's humanity signal a desire among his men to personalize their relationship with the Emperor. In addition to Gondrin who "loves Napoleon fanatically" (456), Genestas confesses, "I can attest that I love him" (481) and admits, "We are all very sad, now that we are without him, because he was our joy" (525). Bereft of the man they loved, these soldiers turn their affections to each other and seek out Napoleonic friendship in their fellow veterans. Deprived of his beloved Napoleon, Goguelat finds comfort in the company of Gondrin.

Gondrin and Goguelat

Recruited into the Revolutionary Army in 1792 at the age of eighteen, Gondrin served Napoleon in Italy, Egypt, France, Germany, and Russia, where he was one of the celebrated *pontoniers* or bridge builders who braved the freezing waters of the Berezina River to construct a provisional pontoon bridge for the evacuation of the Grande Armée in 1812. More than a mere veteran, Gondrin is described as an "unknown hero" (455) who risked almost certain death to save his comrades: "Of the forty-two *pontoniers*, the only survivor today is Gondrin. Thirty-nine of them perished during the crossing of the Berezina, two others died miserably in Polish hospitals" (455). As the sole survivor, Gondrin bears witness to the sacrifice of his bridge-building comrades and—like the Berezina survivors in Balzac's *Adieu* (1830)—to the extraordinary suffering of the Russian Campaign.

Marveling at Gondrin's physical strength, Genestas remarks "One needed a body of steel to resist the extremes of such different climates" (455). Despite his advanced age, Gondrin still radiates this muscular vitality and hairy-chested virility: "Everything in him had the character of roughness: his face was like a large piece of stone ... [and] his arms—covered with as much hair as his chest, which could be seen through the opening in his coarse shirt—heralded extraordinary strength" (458).

Described as an “old man” at fifty-five because of the punishment inflicted on his body, Gondrin nonetheless retains the military muscularity of his youth: “his chest and shoulders were prodigiously large, and his weather-beaten, wrinkled, but muscular face still retained several vestiges of the warrior” (458).

Despite his heroic service, Gondrin returns to a Restoration France that is uninterested in his sacrifices and unwilling to support him as a veteran: “Arrived in Paris and begging for his bread, he made the rounds in the offices of the War Ministry to obtain, not the thousand francs of his promised pension or the cross of the Légionnaire, but the simple retirement pay to which he was entitled after twenty-two years of service and countless campaigns; but he received neither back pay, nor travel expenses, nor pension” (455). Like Colonel Chabert, Gondrin survives the Napoleonic Wars but must face poverty and disgrace during the Restoration and July Monarchy. Referring in part to his friend Gondrin, Goguelat laments that “France is crushed, the soldier is nothing, one deprives him of his due” (536).

Denied his pension and military honors by the Parisian bureaucracy, Gondrin returns to a simpler if harsher life in the country. Unlike Chabert, who initially persists in his quest for justice, Gondrin is resigned to the corruption and rejection of the Restoration. When encouraged by Genestas to reapply for his pension, Gondrin explains, “They asked for my papers! My papers? ... I said to them, read the *Twenty-Ninth Bulletin*” (458). Referring to one of Napoleon’s official reports on the Russian Campaign in the *Bulletins of the Grande Armée*, Gondrin expresses his frustration, pride, and defiance. Having served in the same campaigns as Gondrin, Genestas remarks “We are almost brothers” (455) and promises to help Gondrin obtain his pension. Admitting that “the resignation of this man deeply saddens me” (459), Genestas is angered “that an office boy, whose service consists of dusting documents, has had the thousand francs promised to Gondrin” (460). Gondrin’s disgrace again recalls the humiliation of Chabert, who must haunt the offices of bureaucrats and lawyers in his struggle for recognition. Mocked by Derville’s young clerks, Chabert is Gondrin’s comrade in bureaucratic frustration and shame.

Resigned to the fact that there is no justice to be had in backroom bureaucracy, Gondrin prefers to depend on the support of his comrade, his own labor, and his local community: “[T]here will never be justice for us! ... Since the word of those who spend their lives warming themselves in their offices is worthless, I came to take my salary from the common welfare” (458). Retreating to his native Alpine village, Gondrin earns his living—as he did in the army building bridges—by working in swamps, flooded fields, inundated ditches, and thus doing “work about which no laborer cares” (456). The indignity of this muddy work symbolizes the Restoration’s abject abuse of Napoleonic veterans. Forced to do work that no one else wants, Gondrin is covered in the muck of France, smeared with Cambronne’s *merde*, and buried, like Chabert, by national indifference. Bereft of a grateful nation, Gondrin looks for fellowship and family elsewhere: with Doctor Benassis, who

invites him to “dine ... on the anniversary of Austerlitz, the Emperor’s birthday, and the anniversary of Waterloo” (456); with his country neighbors who “honor him ... and invite him to dinner” (456); and with his comrade and companion Goguelat.

Like Gondrin, Goguelat has survived decades of combat and hardship as a soldier in Napoleon’s armies. Described as “an infantry soldier ... who entered the Imperial Guard in 1812,” the brave Goguelat “has lived as all French soldiers, through bullets, blows, and victories; he has suffered much but was never made an officer. His manner is jovial, and he fanatically loves Napoleon who gave him the [Légionnaire’s] cross” (457). But unlike his uncompensated friend, Goguelat “has his pension, his retirement pay, and his Légionnaire’s stipend” (457). While Gondrin depends on his own labor and his neighbors’ generosity, Goguelat earns money from his various pensions and his work as the valley’s mailman.

Despite the novel’s vague initial reference to Gondrin and Goguelat as “two or three old soldiers ... who during the evenings fabulously recount to the simple people here the adventures of [Napoleon] and his armies” (414), the Napoleonic *grogards* Gondrin and Goguelat are—to the people of this valley—an infamous pair linked by the alliterative similarity of their names and their long-term cohabitation and friendship.¹⁶ In contrast to the melancholy Gondrin who is “not a natural talker” (456), the jovial Goguelat is “the canton’s bringer of news, whose experience in telling tales has made him the evening orator, the resident storyteller” (457). While the muscled and swarthy Gondrin labors in irrigation ditches, the talkative and gregarious Goguelat delivers letters to the people of the valley.¹⁷ Like other bosom buddies or odd couples, Gondrin and Goguelat share a common past and contrasting traits. An introverted laborer and an extroverted storyteller, a quiet butch and a chatty femme, they are a complementary pair.

Describing their life together as a kind of marriage, Balzac explains that Goguelat is “a kind of *femme de ménage* for Gondrin” (457). As a housekeeper or housewife (*femme de ménage*), Goguelat presumably takes care of Gondrin and their household needs in the home where “[t]hey live together” (457). However, this extraordinary characterization of Goguelat as Gondrin’s spouse is diffused by the revelation that they live with “a peddler’s widow to whom they give their money: the good woman lodges them, feeds them, clothes them, and cares for them as if they were her children” (457). The introduction of the peddler’s widow into their household creates a kind of domestic confusion. If she cares for all their needs, is this “good woman” (*bonne femme*) a kind of maternal maid (*bonne*)? If so, why would Goguelat be described as Gondrin’s housekeeper (*femme de ménage*)? One could argue that since the widow takes care of the home (*ménage*), Goguelat remains Gondrin’s wife (*femme*). Whether the widow is read as the veterans’ mother or lover, her role in this domestic triangle cannot diminish—and may in fact draw further attention to—the intimacy between these two men.¹⁸

In addition to being his domestic spouse, Goguelat is also Gondrin's voice. Admiring Goguelat's ability to recount their Napoleonic past, Gondrin "regarded him as a *bel esprit*" (457). While Goguelat is a master storyteller and witty soul (*bel esprit*), Gondrin also affectionately considers him a kindred and beautiful spirit (*bel esprit*). A reluctant raconteur who is partially deaf from cannon fire, Gondrin looks to Goguelat to be both his ears and his voice. Having lived in each other's company and intimate care, they share the same thoughts and read each other's minds: "When Goguelat speaks of Napoleon, [Gondrin] seems to guess his words from the mere movement of his lips" (457). From Gondrin's thoughts to Goguelat's words, they think and speak as one.

As the silent partner at their barnyard gatherings, Gondrin is also Goguelat's alter ego, shadow, and conscience. Content to let Goguelat shine, Gondrin sits quietly by his side, alternately watching his comrade's mouth and the flickering lamplight, evening shadows, and wide-eyed reactions on the faces of their fellow villagers. While Gondrin watches the movement of Goguelat's lips, their intellectual connection takes on a kind of physical intimacy. One can picture Gondrin mouthing the familiar words emanating from Goguelat, their two mouths moving in unison, as in an embrace. Evening companions and nighttime bedfellows, Gondrin and Goguelat are an intimate veteran pair.

Genestas and Benassis

Like Marcellin de Marbot and Victor Hugo, Pierre-Joseph Genestas was raised in a military family: "An army brat and alone in the world, he had made a home of the army, and a family of his regiment" (389). Having served during the Egyptian Campaign in 1799, Genestas was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1802 at the age of twenty-three, later served in the cavalry during the Russian Campaign in 1812–13, and "fought in every battlefield where Napoleon commanded" (387). For his bravery in Russia, Genestas was popularly decorated: "If he wore in his buttonhole the decoration reserved for officers of the Légion d'Honneur, it is because after the battle of Borodino, the unanimous voice of his regiment had designated him as the most worthy to receive it" (387).

In turn, Genestas is dedicated to his fellow soldiers and is known—like Sergeants Bourgoigne and Picart—for "the fraternal ease with [which] he opened his purse to a young man ruined by a game of cards or some other folly" (388). For many of his men, this fraternal care is also maternal: "the simple soldiers all felt for him the feeling that children have for a good mother; for them, he knew how to be both indulgent and severe. Once a young soldier like them, he knew the unhappy joys and joyous miseries, the pardonable and punishable infractions of these soldiers whom he always called *his children*" (387–88). Taking maternal responsibility for this younger generation, Genestas co-parents these young men with the Emperor in a Napoleonic military family.

Having served at Waterloo and accompanied Napoleon back to France in 1815,

Genestas had hoped to join the Emperor in exile on St. Helena. Proud to be recognized by Napoleon as one of his “Egyptians,” Genestas remains with him until his final surrender at Rochefort in July 1815. Here, Genestas must decline Napoleon’s invitation to “Come with me,” explaining “Sire, I would gladly join you; but right now I am responsible for a motherless child and am not free” (591). Forced to remain behind, Genestas obeys Napoleon’s orders to lead a new military generation: “Stay in France, the country needs good men, after all! Remain in military service, and remember me” (592). Painfully, Genestas must separate from Napoleon for the good of the family. In civilian terms, this means caring for Adrien—the orphaned son of his best friend Sergeant Renard and Judith, the woman they both loved—and thus becoming a surrogate father to an army child like himself. In military terms, Genestas must follow the Emperor’s orders to foster the future military family of France. Without feeling any sense of betrayal toward Napoleon and the Empire, Genestas thus serves in the Royal Army during the Restoration and carries out Napoleon’s orders to watch over his orphaned military family.

Napoleon’s departure in 1815 and Genestas’s surrogate fatherhood exemplify the novel’s complex preoccupation with paternity and paternal substitutions.¹⁹ Just as France is successively fathered by Napoleon during the Empire, by Louis XVIII and Charles X during the Restoration, and by Louis-Philippe during the July Monarchy, the orphaned Adrien is fathered successively by Renard, Genestas, and Benassis, who cares for the ailing boy and for the people of his valley as penance for his former paternal failings. Having been indirectly responsible for the death of his own neglected son, Benassis the infanticide becomes an ideal father. As mayor of his town, benefactor of orphans and widows, and “father of us all” (602), Benassis is the canton’s paternal leader, whose death will inspire Genestas to become the new “Napoleon of the people.”²⁰ In a third series of substitutions, paternal authority transfers from Napoleon to Benassis to Genestas, who thus fulfills his promise to Napoleon in 1815 to father Adrien, the army, and France.

In turn, Adrien is the sole survivor in a series of lost sons, including Benassis’s boy and Napoleon’s son, the King of Rome, who died in 1832 while Balzac was writing *The Country Doctor*. Also known as the *Aiglou* (eaglet), Napoleon II became the Duc de Reichstadt after Waterloo in 1815, when he was placed under the care of his maternal grandfather, Emperor Franz I of Austria. Though he reportedly died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one, rumors of neglect, abuse, and assassination circulated in France, where his death inspired a wave of Napoleonic nostalgia during the July Monarchy.²¹ If Napoleon, Benassis, and Genestas are a suite of substitute fathers, then Napoleon II, the young Benassis, and Adrien are their triplet sons. As in most cases, however, these offspring and their families began with the relationship of a parental pair.

The Napoleonic friendship between Benassis and Genestas is built on their

bedfellow intimacy. After Gondrin and Goguelat's barnyard tales, Genestas and Benassis retire to the doctor's farmhouse where, before adjourning to adjoining bedrooms "separated only by the staircase" (441), they share intimate bedtime conversation. Bunking with Benassis, Genestas is reminded of his years on campaign when he was occasionally billeted with similar hospitality. Offering his guest the best bed of the house, Benassis reserves a simpler room for himself, "a sparse bedroom with walls whose only decoration was some old yellowish wallpaper covered with brown roses [and] discolored in places. An iron bed coarsely varnished ... resembled a hospital bed" (441). Like Napoleon, whose campaign bivouac famously consisted of an austere iron bed, Benassis prefers "the nudity of my bedroom and the disorder of my office."²²

In contrast, Benassis offers Genestas an opulent "bedroom where all was comfortable, clean, and almost rich" (441). Explaining that "[h]ospitality seems to me a virtue, joy, and luxury," Benassis takes pleasure in pleasing his guest, whom he asks, "[M]usn't one provide for his guest and his friend all the pleasures [and] comforts of life?" (442). Comparing the luxury of "boudoirs and guestrooms" (442), Benassis draws a link between bedrooms for friends and lovers (*chambres d'amis, boudoirs*) and evokes the proximity of luxury and lust (*luxe, luxure*). When Genestas thanks his host for a comfortable night's sleep, saying "you made the bed as if for a bride" (443), he implies that the austere masculinity and opulent femininity of their contrasting bedchambers characterize them and their occupants as a kind of Napoleonic couple, groom and bride, lover and mistress, emperor and empress.

Even amid the feminine luxury of Genestas's bedroom, there are signs of more masculine and military needs. In addition to "good razors" (442), Genestas appreciates the indispensable boot-remover: "During the wars ... there was more than one time when one would have burned a house for a bloody boot-remover. After long marches and especially after an engagement, there are times when a swollen foot in wet leather will not give way; more than one time I slept with my boots on" (441). For the appreciative Genestas, this boot-remover represents Benassis's familiarity with the military and desire to comfort a suffering soldier. A reminder of arduous marches and swollen feet, the boot-remover also recalls soldiers' attention to the pains and infirmities of their buddies' bodies. Having quoted the Emperor in his *Maxims and Thoughts of Napoleon* (1838) as having said that "[t]he best soldier is not so much the one that fights as the one that marches," Balzac reproduces in *The Country Doctor* this repeating podiatric trope of soldierly affection.²³ Just as General Dorsenne inspects Coignet's weary soles and Bourgogne laments Old Eliot's frozen toes, Benassis brings bedfellow comfort to Genestas's feet.

When Benassis and Genestas bid each other goodnight, their affectionate words and gestures demonstrate their growing fondness for one another. On their first night, "They said a friendly goodnight while cordially shaking hands, and then they

went to bed. The major fell asleep reflecting on this man who, with every passing hour, grew in his estimation” (443). On their second night, after having confessed their most intimate stories to one another, “The doctor ... very affectionately shook the hand that Genestas extended him” (584). Having moved from cordial to very affectionate contact, Benassis and Genestas have become fast friends. Benassis has also renewed Genestas’s faith: “On arriving at the landing that separated their bedrooms, Genestas placed his lamp on the window-sill and approached Benassis. ‘Thunder of God! ... I will not leave you tonight without telling you that you are only the third Christian who has made me understand that there is something up there!’ And he pointed towards heaven” (583–84). Having confessed and absolved one another like monastic brothers, these fraternal friends now retire to their cells. In this sense, the landing between their bedrooms represents the connective space of their emotional union.

Unlike Gondrin and Goguelat’s tall tales, Benassis and Genestas’s bedtime stories are private and painful. Titled the “Confession of the Country Doctor,” the novel’s concluding chapter constitutes two confessions between the doctor and the officer.²⁴ Benassis begins by recounting his wild youth when, like Balzac’s Eugène de Rastignac and Lucien de Rubempré, he fell victim to the “imprudent liaisons” (542) of Paris. Attributing his debauchery to “the continual game of passions, the abuse of pleasures that over-stimulate the body, and the detestable habits of selfishness,” Benassis sums up his financial, sexual, and moral corruption with the simple admission, “I ruined myself” (550). Benassis regrets even more, however, that he ruined others, especially his young lover Agathe, their infant son, and his later love Évelina. A cad who abandoned Agathe for two years before begging forgiveness on her deathbed, the penitent Benassis later tried to raise their son with tenderness: “I cherished him as a father, I wanted to love him as his mother would have done, and [thus] change my remorse into happiness” (553). Converted to a loving parent for his son and a devoted fiancé to his new love Évelina, Benassis nevertheless loses them both when Évelina’s parents discover his shameful past and when his motherless child subsequently dies.²⁵

In a parallel confession, Genestas tells Benassis how he also lost two beloved companions and now risks losing his own son. After the Russian Campaign, during which Genestas “was more than once saved by the care of a sergeant named Renard who did for [him] things that make two men brothers” (578), Genestas and Renard retreated to Poland where they both fell in love with the beautiful Judith. Despite their friendship, the sly fox Renard married Judith in a double betrayal where Genestas lost both his buddy, whom he affectionately calls “my Renard” (580), and his prospective bride. When Renard is killed and Judith later dies, Genestas explains, “I found myself the father of an orphan ... [and] have taken care of this little one as if he were mine” (582). Genestas, Renard, and Judith thus formed an emotional and

erotic love triangle that gave birth to an alternative family.²⁶ Adrien, the biological son of Judith and Renard, becomes the adoptive son of Genestas, who in turn confides the ailing boy to Doctor Benassis. Born from the intimate friendship between two soldiers and their mutual love for a woman described as “a shiny new napoleon in a bunch of old coins” (579), Adrien is cared for by a man who, having lost his own son and dedicated his life to others, is known as the “Napoleon of the people.” Adrien is thus a Napoleonic love child, the surrogate son of two sets of Napoleonic fathers.

In confiding their shame and remorse, loss and pain, needs and desires to one another, Benassis and Genestas symbolically undress and reveal their hidden selves. This is especially significant for two men who otherwise reveal little about their personal lives to those around them. Although he is a friend to everyone in his valley, there is no one in whom Benassis can confide his past. Explaining to Genestas, “I hate to speak of myself,” Benassis admits that “for twelve years I have been silent ... [and] suffered without receiving the consolation that friendship extends to mourning hearts” (539). In turn, Genestas admits, “I’ve had comrades that I’ve never been familiar with, not even after having been on several campaigns with them ... [Y]ou are one of those men with whom I can become friends without waiting for permission” (538). Lamenting his loneliness in this valley where “no one ... can understand my secret tears, nor extend to me the hand of an honest man,” Benassis is profoundly grateful when “With a sudden movement, Genestas extended his hand to Benassis, who was deeply moved by this gesture” (539). Like the boot-remover that the doctor provided to relieve the soldier’s sore feet, Genestas’s handshake now brings comfort to Benassis’s aching heart. Like Bourgonne and the old grenadier or Chabert and the disembodied arm, Genestas offers a lifesaving hand to Benassis in a gesture that for them represents great emotional intimacy.

More than mere catharsis, the confessions of Benassis and Genestas serve a ritual function in their relationship. Like a sacramental rite, the enunciation of these stories seals a sacred bond between the two men. For Benassis, these ritual words and gestures take part in a medieval military tradition where, “In the absence of a priest, ancient captains dying on the field of battle used to make their confession to the cross of their sword, to whom they confided their faithful secrets between them and God. Now you, one of Napoleon’s best swordsmen, hard and strong as steel, perhaps you would listen to me?” (539). Benassis characterizes confession as the shared intimacy between a soldier and his trusted arm. Still holding Genestas’s extended hand, Benassis looks to this officer as his sword and confidant. When he later completes his confession, Benassis confides to Genestas, “You alone ... know the secret of my life” (575). These ritualized words and gestures thus bind Benassis and Genestas in an intimate and holy union.

Having heard the doctor’s confession, Genestas is at first slow to reciprocate. Like

the doctor, Genestas is described as emotionally reticent, an impenetrable soldier whose “calm face demonstrated his power to impose silence on his passions and to bury them at the bottom of his heart, a skill he had mastered from the unexpected dangers and suffering of war” (389). Genestas uses silence and humor to deflect attention from his solitary suffering: “Without being a prude, refusing his share of pleasure, or breaking military code, he remained silent and laughed whenever he was questioned about his amorous affairs” (388). Closeting his most intimate desires, even among his comrades, Genestas lives the lonely life of a soldier: “As for his personal story, it was wrapped in the most profound silence. Like almost all soldiers of the period, he had only seen the world through the smoke of cannons” (388). Through the hazy uncertainties, constant dangers, and inevitable losses of military life, Genestas represses both his pains and desires. It is thus extraordinary when—in a reciprocal gesture of intimate trust where “you have confided your secrets in me, so I can tell you mine” (577)—Genestas tells Benassis that he is tormented by the memory of having killed a man “outside the circumstances of legitimate defense” (464). Troubled by this memory of the Russian Campaign, which “occasionally causes me remorse” (464), and haunted by the dead man’s face, which “occasionally revisits me” (464), Genestas suffers from the same kind of postwar trauma as Sergeant Falcon, Colonel Chabert, and Sergeant Bourgonne, who survived similar horrors in the snows of Russia.²⁷

During the retreat from Moscow in 1812, Genestas arrived in the abandoned town of Studzianka where he found temporary shelter in a barn, along with hundreds of other frozen and exhausted soldiers “all so closely pressed up against one another in order to keep warm” (464). In a sea of sleeping men whom he calls “my bedfellows” (464), Genestas finds a place to lie down, but is troubled that the barn’s central supporting beam is being poached by a disgruntled soldier who, unable to find space in this packed shelter, hopes to build a fire outside and thus stay alive. Fearing the collapse of the barn and the death of his many bedfellows, Genestas exits the barn and tries to reason with the soldier, who threatens to kill him. Exhausted, frustrated, and numb from cold and indifference, Genestas explains, “I took his gun which he had left on the ground, shot him, went back inside, and fell sleep. That’s the whole story” (465).

The similarity of Bourgonne’s and Genestas’s barn-burning accounts again suggests the possibility of mutual influence between Napoleonic memoir and fiction. As with Bourgonne, Balzac’s barn is the site of a moral dilemma where Genestas must choose—even in the face of the other soldier’s menacing self-interest—between outsiders and insiders, the one and the many. Though he may have been justified, Genestas wrestles with the guilt of having killed a fellow soldier out of frustration, fatigue, and perhaps his own need for self-preservation. After Genestas’s confession, Benassis offers moral absolution, reassuring him that “it was a case of

legitimate defense against one man for the good of many, you have no reason to reproach yourself “ (465). After years penitently helping others in order to absolve his own sins, Benassis provides moral and spiritual support to his troubled Napoleonic friend.

Framed in religious terms as confession and absolution, this exchange can also be understood in psychoanalytic terms, where Benassis helps Genestas— like Derville helps Chabert—work through his unresolved combat trauma.²⁸ More than religious confession or psychoanalysis, however, theirs is a reciprocal exchange between fellow sufferers. While the major helps Benassis work through the loss of Agathe, Évelina, and his son, the doctor helps Genestas work through the deaths of Renard, Judith, and the barn-burning soldier. By confiding their stories, they help each other open up to new possibilities of companionship and family. In confronting their ghosts and breaking with the past, Genestas and Benassis transfer their love from the dead to the living, from their past lovers and companions to one another.

For both men, this bachelor intimacy is a welcome and deliberate choice. Like Marshal Hulot, neither Genestas nor Benassis lack potential female mates. Despite an entire valley of available widows and eligible women, Benassis tells Genestas “there is no woman for me, neither in this canton nor elsewhere.”²⁹ Like Balzac’s Vautrin who “does not like women” and Major Hulot whose soldiers know that “women ... are not his affair,” Benassis no longer has any interest in women or marriage.³⁰ Similarly, the marital question had long “remained undecided” (388) for Genestas, who speaks of his time with Judith as “the only time in my life when I thought of marrying” (579). Yet Genestas warmly embraces Benassis who readily accepts Genestas as “his companion” (475). In confiding their stories and supporting one another, Benassis and Genestas come to know each other in the most intimate sense. Just as Montaigne writes in his essay *On Friendship* (1580) that he and his dear friend La Boétie “had been searching for one another before we ever met,” Benassis admits to Genestas that “we were friends before we knew one another” and that “I strongly desired to meet you.”³¹ Having desired and longed for each other, Benassis and Genestas emerge from these bedtime confessions as two men who—short of erotic intimacy—now form an intimate pair. And as surrogate fathers for Adrien, they will now become an alternative Napoleonic family.³²

As the present and future “Napoleon[s] of the valley” (601), Doctor Benassis and Major Genestas are both dedicated to the care of their collective families: from the regiments of the Grande Armée, to the people of their Alpine valley, to their beloved foster son. While Gondrin and Goguelat exemplify the bachelor veteran pair, Benassis and Genestas (with their son Adrien) offer a unique example of a male military family. Parenting their surrogate son and the inhabitants of their impoverished valley, these past and future Napoleons of the people represent a utopian postwar world where soldiers have “hammer[ed] their swords into

ploughshares and their spears into pruning forks” (Isaiah 2.1–5). In combining military and family duty, Genestas offers a new model of Napoleonic paternity for civilian society, where soldiers take responsibility for their children, and veterans forfeit warfare and guns for the welfare of their sons.

While this image of veteran life may seem impossibly utopian in *The Country Doctor*, veteran friendship takes on dystopian proportions in the third volume of *The Bachelors*, titled *La Rabouilleuse*. In this final novel from Balzac’s bachelor trilogy, Napoleonic veterans struggle against the same kinds of Restoration injustice as Balzac’s other soldiers. Rather than resign themselves to these humiliations, however, or content themselves with the help of comrades and friends, many veterans either rose up in rebellion against the Restoration or turned their frustrations inwardly toward themselves and one another. In *La Rabouilleuse*, these veteran rogues face new challenges in their stubborn loyalty or outright betrayal of Napoleonic friendship.

Balzac’s *La Rabouilleuse* (1840–43)

Muscled, aroused, and stripped to the waist, the officers lunged at each other’s bodies. On a cold and grey winter morning in 1822, in the meadow of a rural churchyard, Colonel Philippe Bridau and Major Maxence Gilet engaged in a military duel to the death. In the presence of their veteran comrades— Captains Carpentier and Renard and Majors Mignonnet and Potel—these post-Napoleonic adversaries attacked one another with brute force, taking a peculiar kind of pleasure in their muscular violence and naked aggression. Armed with sabers, Bridau and Gilet lacerated one other’s exposed flesh in an attempt to eliminate a sworn rival. While both had begun their veteran careers humiliated by the half-pay pensions and government surveillance of the Restoration, Major Gilet became a Bonapartist rebel who, in leading his fellow veterans in open resistance, threatened the private ambitions of Colonel Bridau. Once loyal to Napoleon and his fellow soldiers, Bridau later ingratiates himself with the Restoration army and nobility in selfish pursuit of personal success. Worse than his sellout ambitions for wealth and power, Colonel Bridau’s attack on Major Gilet is a gross betrayal of Napoleonic friendship. As they engage in deadly combat, Gilet and Bridau thus represent two opposing types of veteran rogue: the Bonapartist rebel and the Napoleonic traitor.

In the collective ranks of Balzac’s many Napoleonic veterans, Philippe Bridau is perhaps his greatest military cad. While many of Balzac’s veterans have good reason to lash out against the Restoration, few act as dishonorably as Colonel Bridau. Although they remain personally loyal to Napoleon, Majors Hulot and Genestas become officers in the Royal Army of the Restoration. Goguelat speaks out against the Restoration’s ingratitude but leads an otherwise quiet life, collecting his military pension and recounting Napoleonic tales. Chabert and Gondrin have been cheated and abandoned by the Restoration bureaucracy, but resign themselves to the support

and care of their friends and communities. As a whole, this small platoon of veterans exemplifies the stoic resignation of many soldiers who, having lived through extraordinary hardship and suffering, are content with the simpler comforts of Napoleonic friendship.

By contrast, Philippe Bridau is a bitter malcontent and manipulative opportunist. Having been groomed to serve in Napoleon's armies, Bridau came of age just as the Empire was beginning to crumble. His late entry into the imperial army in 1813 and his forced retirement in 1815 have left him resentful and frustrated with the limited opportunities of a veteran on half-pay. But like Balzac's Rastignac and Rubempré, Bridau eventually loses his naïve illusions and adapts to the Restoration's new tactics of financial and social success, climbing over friends and family, including his widowed mother Agathe, his painter brother Joseph, his wealthy uncle Jean-Jacques Rouget, and his fellow veterans Majors Gilet and Giroudeau. From a petty criminal and small-time rebel to a homicidal embezzler, Philippe Bridau is an archetypal veteran rogue.

Published as *The Two Brothers* in 1840, *A Bachelor's Household* in 1842, and *La Rabouilleuse* in 1843, Balzac's novel is classified in the *Scenes of Provincial Life* as the last in the trilogy known as *The Bachelors*, which includes *The Priest of Tours* (1832) and *Pierrette* (1839–40).³³ For the Furne edition of *The Human Comedy* (1843), Balzac changed the title to *La Rabouilleuse*, a reference to one of the novel's central characters, Flore Brazier, who as an orphan made a living collecting freshwater crayfish with a method known as *rabouillage*, in which one stirs the water so as to encourage a better catch. Noticed at her task one day in September 1799 by the passing Doctor Rouget, this *rabouilleuse* ends up catching more than crayfish and becomes the country doctor's housekeeper. On the death of Doctor Rouget, Flore remains in service to his son, Jean-Jacques Rouget, and becomes his lover. Easily manipulated, the young Rouget is duped by Flore into allowing her other lover, Major Maxence Gilet, to live in their household. A family inheritance drama, the novel thus centers on Philippe Bridau's malevolent project to dispense with Gilet and Rouget, marry Flore, and inherit the family fortune.

In changing the novel's title, Balzac switched the focus from the corrupt Philippe to the corrupted Flore, from misogynist men to abused women. The novel's three other titles, however, underscore its focus on Philippe. *The Two Brothers* refers to Philippe and Joseph Bridau, the novel's Cain and Abel, bad and good brothers, favored and neglected sons.³⁴ *A Bachelor's Household* alludes to Philippe's plan to steal the inheritance and home of his bachelor uncle Rouget in Issoudun, the family's native town in central France, where Philippe is exiled as a veteran criminal. *The Bachelors* refers to the novel's many widow(er)s, old maids, and unmarried men, including its military bachelors, Philippe, his friend Major Giroudeau, and his rival Major Gilet.

Unlike Balzac's honorable Marshal Hulot, Colonel Chabert, and Major Gen-estas, the younger Bridau, Gilet, and Giroudeau represent a different kind of veteran soldier: the malcontented and malevolent *demi-solde*.³⁵ Disillusioned by the abrupt end of their military careers and humiliated by the meager salaries and surveillance of the Restoration, many of these veterans became heavy drinkers and brawlers, while others became Bonapartist agitators.³⁶ Haunting the nation's cafés and languishing in the backwater brasseries of their native towns, many disillusioned young soldiers succumbed to an idle and bitter life of self-destruction and crime. Disguising their boredom and debauchery as principled Bonapartism, Gilet, Giroudeau, and Bridau become a band of disreputable *demi-soldes* who slip into lives of sexual and criminal depravity. As a Parisian gambler and womanizer, and as an Issoudun duelist and gang leader, Giroudeau and Gilet represent veteran criminality in both urban and rural France during the Restoration and July Monarchy. And in his steep moral decline from a Napoleonic hero, and Bonapartist rebel, to a ruthless veteran rogue, Bridau deceives his comrades Gilet and Giroudeau in a disgraceful attack on Napoleonic friendship.

As a veteran rogue, Philippe Bridau shares less in common with *The Human Comedy*'s more sympathetic soldiers than with Balzac's celebrated criminal Vautrin.³⁸ From *Old Goriot* (1834–35) and *Lost Illusions* (1837–43) to *Splendors and Miseries of Courtesans* (1838–47), Vautrin's criminal career represents his open resistance to the injustices and corruption of the Restoration and July Monarchy. As the former companion of a young Napoleonic soldier, the respected Bonaparte of his fellow Toulon inmates, and the future chief of the Paris police, Vautrin intimately understands the homosocial institutions of the army, prison, and police, whose social networks he exploits to survive in the mercenary world of post-1815 France. Speaking to his protégé Lucien de Rubempré, Vautrin defines the thief as someone who opposes corrupt institutions: "Today, young man, Society has imperceptibly laid claim to so many of an individual's rights that the individual feels obliged to combat Society."³⁹ A predecessor to Victor Hugo's Jean Valjean, Vautrin is a criminal hero who exacts revenge on the depravity and corruption of society and the state. Vautrin's criminality thus represents a politics of revolt, a refusal of the very moral and social order that marginalizes him, and a desire to protect his companions Franchessini, Rastignac, and Rubempré.³⁹ In this way, Vautrin embodies dissident criminality and sexuality, not because sodomy is unlawful—since the Napoleonic Code effectively decriminalized sodomy in 1810—but because Balzac's homoerotic hero is, both in theory and practice, an outlaw.⁴⁰

Mired in incestuous perversion, homosocial criminality, and homoerotic violence, Philippe Bridau is a companion criminal to Vautrin. Despite his betrayal of military comrades and the ambiguity of his own erotic desire, Philippe Bridau shares Vautrin's criminal philosophy, taking revenge on the very institutions that tried to

destroy him. Unlike Vautrin, however, Bridau is loyal to no one, forsaking not only his family but the homosocial camaraderie and support of his veteran friends. In his gradual betrayal of military comrades, Philippe thus degenerates from a Napoleonic hero (1796–1815), to a Bonapartist rebel (1815–22), to an inveterate veteran rogue (1822–39).

Napoleonic Hero (1796–1815)

Born in 1796, Philippe Bridau was destined for Napoleonic service. His father “devoted himself fanatically to Napoleon,” serving as the First Consul’s administrative *chef de division* “with a fanatical devotion.”⁴¹ Raised by this father who idolized Napoleon, Philippe grows to love the First Consul and Emperor, and considers himself—like Adrien Renard Genestas—the son of two Napoleonic fathers. From 1804 to 1808, the Emperor “buried Bridau [senior] in work and succeeded in ruining the health of this intrepid bureaucrat,” who died of exhaustion at the early age of forty, “killed by his all-nighters, at the very moment when the Emperor was to name him director general, count, and state advisor” (279). A secretarial soldier, this bureaucratic warrior gives his life for Napoleon, who in turn provides a pension for Bridau’s widow Agathe and scholarships for their sons Philippe and Joseph. Assuming “all the costs of their education on his personal account” and “planning ... to watch over the development of these two sons” (280), Napoleon effectively adopts Philippe Bridau, encourages his military career, and earns his total devotion.

While his brother Joseph matures as a painter and artist, Philippe develops as an athlete and soldier. Described as a boy who had “a rowdy disposition that could easily be taken for vivacity and courage” (287–88), Philippe “becomes skilled at every kind of physical exercise. Having learned to fight in school, he acquired that audacity and contempt for pain which engender military valor” (288).⁴² Like many young men during the Empire, he dreams of joining Napoleon’s armies: “Philippe, who disliked school, absolutely wanted to serve the Emperor. Napoleon’s last military revue in the Tuileries ... had fanaticized him. At that time, the military splendor, appearance of the uniforms, and authority of the epaulettes exercised an irresistible seduction on certain young men” (296). Seduced by military ritual and martial power, “Philippe believed he had the same talents for the military that his brother manifested for the arts” (296).⁴³

Like Stendhal’s Fabrice, however, Philippe is a Napoleonic latecomer who enters the Grande Armée just after the disastrous Russian Campaign in 1813 and before the final defeat at Waterloo in 1815. As a result, Philippe’s short military career is described in a single paragraph:

[T]he Emperor sent Philippe from the *Lycée Impériale* to Saint-Cyr; and, six months later, in November 1813, saw to it that he left the academy a

second lieutenant assigned to a cavalry regiment ... During the Campaign for France, he became a lieutenant during an advance mission where [he] saved his colonel. The Emperor promoted Philippe to captain ... and named him his ordnance officer. Inspired by this promotion, Philippe won the Légionnaire's cross at Montreau. A witness to Napoleon's final *adieux* at Fontaine-bleau, and fanaticized by that spectacle, Captain Philippe refused to serve the Bourbons. (296)

This short record of Philippe's Napoleonic service demonstrates his exemplary courage, rapid advancement, and absolute devotion to his commanders and emperor. Thriving in this atmosphere of military meritocracy, Philippe has great potential as a young Napoleonic officer. Refusing to serve the Restoration during the Emperor's first exile in 1814–15, Philippe eagerly returns to service during the One Hundred Days when he “rejoined the Emperor ... accompanied him to the Tuileries, and was named squadron commander in the dragoons of the Imperial Guard” (297). But “[a]fter the battle of Waterloo, where he was lightly wounded and won the Légionnaire's cross” (297), Philippe's military career is over. Forced into early retirement at the very young age of nineteen, Lieutenant-Colonel Bridau is a premature Napoleonic veteran.

Bonapartist Rebel (1815–22)

As a disgruntled *demi-solde*, Philippe becomes a radical Bonapartist. With no other outlet for his Napoleonic devotion, he spends his days with young veteran comrades in the cafés of Paris, where they plot conspiracies against the Restoration: “Philippe became one of the Café Lemblin's most assiduous Bonapartists ... there he took on the habits, manners, and lifestyle of *demi-solde* officers ... vowing a mortal hatred of the Bourbons” (297–98). Accused of conspiracy, Philippe “was arrested, then released for lack of evidence; but the War Minister suspended his *demi-solde* pay” (299). Arrested, interrogated, and disciplined, Philippe suffers the same kind of harassment and surveillance experienced by thousands of Napoleonic veterans in Restoration France. In his loyalty to Napoleon, Philippe “was less at fault than a victim of his own good character and energy ... and the Bourbons' fury against Bonapartists” (305). Politically persecuted during this initial period following Waterloo, Philippe is a dissident veteran victim.

Corrupted by his continual frustrations and failures, however, Philippe slowly becomes a deadbeat and a rogue. Following a life of military discipline, Philippe's lazy days in Paris degenerate into debauchery as he “played pool in suspicious cafés, wasted time, and got into the habit of downing little glasses of different liquors” (299). In a desperate effort to regain a bit of Napoleonic glory, Philippe sets out for Texas where in 1817 François-Antoine Lallemand set up his celebrated Champ d'Asile colony for refugee Bonapartists and Napoleonic veterans.⁴⁴ But the failure

of the Texan colony and Philippe's "debts contracted in New York" (301) force him to return to Paris in 1819 where, despite attempts at working as a journalist, Philippe "again became lazy and bored, took again to his café life ... long sessions playing pool and drinking punch, [and] late-night card games" (323). In addition to drinking and gambling, Philippe leads a debauched "life of pleasures" (316), womanizing a succession of dancers, actresses, and courtesans.

From self-destruction to misogynist and maternal abuse, Philippe next exploits his widowed mother. Destitute and alone, Agathe Bridau had raised her sons with the financial and moral support of her widowed aunt whom she and her boys affectionately call "Mama Descoings" (305). Agathe's favorite son, "Philippe was a hero to his mother; but he had become what people quite energetically call a scoundrel" (304). Like Bonaparte's incessant bloodletting during the Napoleonic Wars, Philippe repeatedly steals from these poor women and exacerbates their misery in order to finance his debauched life. Mourning his two fathers, Monsieur Bridau and Napoleon, Philippe exploits his two mothers, Madame Bridau and Mama Descoings, who collapses and dies following Philippe's gross exploitation and her utter financial ruin. While "[t]he colonel saw himself as persecuted," his veteran outrage turns to civilian selfishness, where "the universe began at his head and ended at his feet [and] the sun shone only for him" (303).

Raised on Napoleonic military meritocracy, Philippe must now develop a new strategy of self-advancement during the Restoration: "For people like this, there are only two ways of being ... either they have the virtues of an honest man or they give themselves over to the demands of necessity" (303). Prefiguring the French Foreign Minister François Guizot's later advice during the July Monarchy to "Get rich," Philippe's moral degeneracy leads to a new and ambitious pursuit of personal wealth.⁴⁵ In leaving behind his Bonapartist embitterment and meritocratic dreams, Philippe slowly embraces the new world order of Restoration opportunism and the Bourbon monarchy's renewed emphasis on familial dynasty, legitimacy, and inheritance. Just as Louis XVIII reclaims the throne of France, Philippe sets out to inherit the Rouget fortune.

Arrested again in 1822 and sentenced to exile and confinement in his family's hometown of Issoudun, Philippe decides, on the advice of his lawyer Des-roches, to abandon Bonapartist rebellion and give in to Bourbon values.⁴⁶ Like Chabert's lawyer Derville, Desroches offers Philippe practical advice: "Look, the Bourbons cannot be reversed, all of Europe is on their side, and you should make your peace with the War Minister ... when you are rich. To get rich ... take hold of your uncle" (469). Since he cannot beat the Bourbons, Philippe decides to join them, in a project of personal restoration. With the death of the Emperor in 1821, Philippe accepts Bonapartist defeat and heads to Issoudun in 1822, setting out—and selling out—to become a Restoration success.

Veteran Rogue (1822–39)

In his long-term scheme to fleece his family, join the Royal Army, and enter the aristocracy, Philippe must betray two fellow soldiers and veterans: Major Gilet in Issoudun and Major Giroudeau in Paris. This betrayal of Napoleonic friendship ultimately leads to Philippe's demise, but its short-term effects gain him access to wealth and power. Exiled to Issoudun for "a sentence of five years' surveillance by the police" (467), Philippe plots to acquire the inheritance of his grandfather Rouget, who left his entire fortune to his son Jean-Jacques and nothing to his daughter Agathe. Cheated of his mother's legacy, Philippe ingratiates himself with his uncle and eliminates his rivals Flore Brazier and Maxence Gilet. In later denying his mother any part of this recovered fortune and leaving her to die in misery, Philippe becomes "her assassin" (532). Following such familial exploitation and matricidal neglect, Philippe's fraternal betrayal of his Napoleonic comrades leads to his Issoudun duel with Major Gilet.

In many ways, Maxence Gilet is Philippe Bridau's double, who must be killed so that Philippe can discard his Bonapartist past and embrace his Restoration future. Like Philippe, Maxence had a short and distinguished military career that ended abruptly and left him an embittered Bonapartist. Naturally gifted as a soldier during his Napoleonic service in Spain and Portugal, "he distinguished himself so well in three campaigns that he became captain," but was "taken by the English [and] sent to the Spanish penal colony of Cabrera" (368) from 1810 to 1814 where "he became completely demoralized" (368). Like Philippe, Gilet is literally de-moralized, stripped of both morale and morality in this penal colony, where "Max became completely depraved" and from which "he left perverted though innocent" (369).

Having distinguished himself in battle and suffered for four years as a prisoner of war, Max is embittered by the humiliations of the Restoration which "recognized neither Gilet's rank nor Légionnaire's cross ... The administrative offices found his terms exorbitant for a young man of twenty-five, without name" (369). In contrast to the military meritocracy of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies, where Bonaparte became a general at twenty-four and the peasant Lannes became a marshal, Max is judged by the Royal Army's Ancien Régime standards where name and nobility dictate advancement. Demoralized by his wartime internment and disgraced by the Restoration, "Max therefore sent his resignation ... [and] lost his *demi-solde* pension" (370).

In rural Issoudun, where "relative to its insignificance, there were ... more Bonapartists than anywhere else," Max becomes "the champion of Bonapartism and the Opposition" (370–71). Unlike Philippe's disorganized veterans in Paris's Café Lemblin, Max's Issoudun veterans join an underground society called the "Chevaliers de la Désœuvrance" (Knights of Idleness), who organize clandestine political actions against the town's royalists. At first, this group is little more than a gang of adolescent hooligans who, "while awaiting their marriage or the inheritance

of their parents” (365), play pranks on local villagers. But with the return of so many frustrated Napoleonic veterans, Issoudun’s idle knights become progressively more violent: “Towards the end of 1816, these new Bad Boys had not yet grown out of the boyish pranks that young men used to play in the provinces. But in January 1817, the Order of Idleness got a new Grand Master and began to distinguish itself by mischief which, until 1823, became a kind of terror in Issoudun ... This new leader was a certain Maxence Gilet” (366–67). In 1819, Major Gilet and his fellow veterans Captain Renard and Major Potel kill two royal officers in a duel, an “affair which ... definitively made Maxence Gilet a hero” (373), and distinguished these Bonapartist bad boys as the town’s organized resistance to the Restoration.

Concomitant with the emergence of the dandy during the Revolution, Empire, and Restoration and the flâneur during the July Monarchy, numerous male clubs flourished in postwar France.⁴⁷ After more than twenty years of almost continual war, several of these homosocial societies focused on a return to pleasure. In contrast to the brutality of combat and the severity of the army, groups like the “Bad Boys,” “Companions of Idleness,” and “Society of Forty-Five Lovely Pigs” celebrated spontaneity and humor.⁴⁸ Balzac’s own social club, the “Society of the Red Horse”—as well as his fictional “Society of Thirteen” and “Revelers” in *History of the Thirteen* (1833–39) and *Lost Illusions* (1837–43)—also focused on drinking, games, and amusements. From frivolous pranks to violent rebellion, Issoudun’s “Knights of Idleness” demonstrate increasingly deviant homosocial behavior.

As the leader of these veteran rebels, Major Maxence Gilet is thus cast as anti-marriage, anti-family, and anti-social. Encouraging fraternal idleness over marital production, Gilet corrupts the town’s veterans and unmarried youth. Squatting with his lover in the home of her sexually manipulated and impotent employer, Gilet lives in erotic perversion. And in blocking Philippe from his inheritance, Gilet disrupts the social structure of the family.⁴⁹ Like his double, Gilet, Philippe also wallows in familial and erotic degeneracy. Faced with a void in paternal authority following the deaths of his father Bridau, grandfather Rouget, and emperor Napoleon, Philippe now reverts to violence, incest, and theft to eliminate his rival Gilet, seduce his uncle’s lover Flore, and claim his mother’s inheritance.⁵⁰ From anti-social behavior and homosocial corruption to incestuous manipulation and sexual perversion, the novel’s Napoleonic veterans represent a gross attack on normative sexuality, sociality, and family in Restoration France.⁵¹

Unlike the pastoral village and valley in *The Country Doctor*, Issoudun offers a sinister and sordid portrait of country life and its rural depravities.⁵² The town’s Bonapartist bad boys may also share much in common with what the historian Michael David Sibal identifies as “small communities of sodomites ... in both Chartres and Issoudun” at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵³ In 1806, town officials in Issoudun admitted that “the crime of pederasty has corrupted several

inhabitants of this city ... [and] made frightful progress,” and that “if we do not apply a prompt remedy, today’s generation of young people runs the risk of being entirely lost.”⁵⁴ In a judicial inquiry that implicated forty men and necessitated the intervention of both the Ministry of Justice and the Paris police, five men were eventually punished and exiled to other distant towns in France.

Like Issoudun, Chartres was home to an organization of men who liked to solicit soldiers. Citing judicial reports, Sibalis writes, “In 1805, when several soldiers attacked two pederasts in Chartres, one assailant told the victims ‘that they were villains and scoundrels who tended to overturn society and to corrupt public morals’ “ (86). This 1805 case involved a pharmacist named Louis Nicolas Millet who “seduced soldiers stationed in the town” and “belonged to a small, tight-knit community of sodomites in Chartres” (88). According to his testimony, a soldier named Louis Fonteneau was angered that “there were more than 150 persons of this clique in this city” and thus attacked Millet and his friends “calling them rogues, scoundrels, and sodomites” (89). As Sibalis points out, other soldiers in Chartres were aware of this group: “One soldier referred to the town’s ‘clique of sodomites,’ while another described a ‘sect’ or ‘association’ of pederasts, who could be recognized by ‘their language and bearing’ and their ‘affected airs’ “ (88). Against this historical backdrop of veteran rebels, homosocial societies, and sodomite sects in early nineteenth-century Issoudun, the tension between Balzac’s fictional veteran bad boys Philippe Bridau and Maxence Gilet intensifies.

In an affront to Bonapartist solidarity and their Napoleonic past, Bridau publicly humiliates Gilet during an 1822 veteran banquet in Issoudun on the anniversary of Napoleon’s coronation, forcing Gilet to challenge Bridau to a duel.⁵⁵ Ostensibly a private quarrel between rivals for Flore and the Rouget fortune, the challenge is nevertheless a military spectacle, issued in the presence of “Napoleon’s old soldiers” (503), sealed with toasts to the Emperor and the Grande Armée, and witnessed by the duelists’ seconds, Captains Carpentier and Renard and Majors Mignonnet and Potel. By killing Gilet, Bridau eliminates his personal rival—for Flore and fortune—and the town’s public menace, whose “death put an end to the exploits of the Order of Idleness, to the great delight of Issoudun” (510). Betraying Napoleonic fraternity for personal profit, Bridau will thus become a Bonapartist traitor and Restoration hero.

Philippe’s need to kill Max can also be understood as a psychoanalytic desire to destroy his double, leave behind his Bonapartist past, and invent a royalist future. Pointing out that “Maxence is the second volume of Philippe” (430), it is Joseph Bridau—the artistic opposite of his military brother—who recognizes that Max is Philippe’s military double. If the “invention of doubling,” as Freud suggests, is “a preservation against extinction,” then Philippe must eliminate his Napoleonic double to create a Restoration self.⁵⁶ In this paradoxical act of self-destruction and creation, Philippe’s duel with his double Max is described in terms that suggest a penetrative

homoerotic coupling that breeds new life. More than merely acting out their aggressive desire on each other's bodies, this virile bachelor pair gives birth to Philippe's new life in a duel/dual act of self-hatred and love.

In response to Philippe's opening question, "Shall we take our clothes off?" (508), Max agrees to undress and duel bare-chested. In addition to its macho bravura, Philippe's question in French (*Mettons-nous habit bas?*) also evokes an erotic invitation. Rather than asking "shall we undress" (*déshabillons-nous*), Philippe uses an expression that implies both the taking off of clothes (*habit*) and the act of giving birth (*mettre bas*). In this sense, his question doubles as an offer to disrobe and an invitation to copulate and procreate: "Let us give birth to us" (*Mettons-nous ... bas*).⁵⁷ This bare-chested duel also adds a degree of danger for these men, whose bodies are completely exposed to each other's sabers, as well as an element of homoerotic titillation and excitement for both the duelists and their military witnesses: "The two adversaries kept only their pants on, and their pink flesh appeared from underneath their shirts ... They were both so calm that, despite the cold, their muscles did not tremble any more than if they had been made of bronze. [Doctor] Goddet, the four witnesses, and the two soldiers felt a sudden involuntary sensation" (508). Excited by the pink flesh, bronze-like muscles, and masculine beauty of these bodies, all of these men spontaneously feel this ambiguously "involuntary sensation," which could be an emotional mixture of anything from admiration to fear, or a broad spectrum of physical sensations ranging from nausea to arousal.

While they admire the calm control of these bodies about to burst into action, the witnesses are less thrilled at the involuntary shuddering of Max's body as he lays on the ground in "the convulsions of death, for, with a man of Max's strength, the muscles of the body twitch frighteningly" (509–10). Having admired the major's calm resistance to fear and the cold, his comrades now watch in horror at Max's wounded and writhing body, in a spectacle of male military violence that perversely reproduces the horrors of war. Although Napoleon expressly forbade dueling among his officers, the duel was nonetheless seen as an extension of combat, which persisted during the Restoration with the integration of Napoleonic veterans back into civilian life.⁵⁸ More than an extension of war or masculine violence, the duel was often an expression of male sexuality in which a man defended the honor of his lovers, spouses, and family.⁵⁹ While his duel with Max has all the outward signs of a chivalric contest for Flore's honor, Philippe is more interested in Flore's access to Rouget's fortune. In their mutual designs on Flore, it is thus not clear if Max and Philippe express erotic or financial desire.

As early as 1816, Max is attracted more to the material than to the erotic benefits of his liaison with Flore: "As soon as this impecunious officer learned of Flore and Jean-Jacques Rouget's situation, he saw the possibilities of more than a love affair"

(405). Bragging to his friends, Max speaks of Flore Brazier in terms of financial gain: “ ‘I love her enough to prefer her to Mademoiselle Fichet, if Mademoiselle Fichet would have me!’ Mademoiselle Fichet was the richest heiress in Issoudun” (383). In 1822, Max is forced into challenging Philippe to the duel when Bridau publicly accuses him of being one of “those for whom featherbeds provide salaries” (505), a male prostitute in Flore’s and Rouget’s employ. For Max, the duel with Philippe has more to do with defending his own honor and material interests than Flore Brazier. As for Philippe, Flore was always a means to an end, an obstacle to be manipulated, a nation to be conquered: “Flore fell under the domination of this man just as France had fallen under that of Napoleon” (519). In seducing Flore, Philippe conquers her financial territory, claims her war booty, and secures his future fortune.

Philippe Bridau’s killing of Max Gilet thus sets in motion a series of criminal and sexual perversions. Following his incestuous intrusion into the erotic field linking Flore to Max and Rouget, Bridau murders his rivals, seduces his aunt Flore, and plunders his family’s money. By killing Max in a homoerotic duel, Rouget by gastronomic excess, and Flore by starvation and neglect, Philippe leaves behind his Napoleonic past, Bonapartist rebellion, and Issoudun exile for a new life in Paris as a royal officer and titled count of the Restoration. Having given birth to this new self from his violent coupling with the murdered Gilet, Bridau engineers his own Faustian rebirth, but reenters the world mired in misogyny, parricide, and the blood of Napoleonic betrayal.

After only one year in Issoudun, Philippe returns to Paris in 1823 where he gains a commission in the Royal Army by flattering Louis XVIII’s Minister of War with his new assertion that “Napoleon is dead; I wanted to remain faithful to him after having pledged an oath to him; now, I am free to offer my services to His Majesty” (520). This extraordinary change of allegiance to the Restoration takes place barely one year after Philippe was arrested for conspiracy against the crown. Following the advice of his lawyer Desroches, Rouget has, in short order, secured wealth and been “restored as a lieutenant-colonel in the ranks of the army” (520). By further ingratiating himself with his new commanding officer, the Duc de Maufrigneuse, Philippe “was thus presented not only to the Dauphin but to the Dauphine who enjoys rough characters and military men known for their loyalty” (522). Having once plotted against Louis XVIII, Philippe now gains the personal confidence of the future king and queen.

In 1827, this new royal favor secures Philippe’s entry into the military and aristocratic elite when he is “admitted to the Royal Guard as lieutenant-colonel” (522). Having amassed a fortune from his theft of the Rouget inheritance, “Colonel Bridau, who had just bought the Brambourg estate, asked for permission to establish there the hereditary title of count” and thus “requested the honor of ennoblement” (522). In the short five-year period during which he should have remained exiled in Issoudun, Philippe thus transforms himself from a “profound wretch” (472) and

“political prisoner” (470) into the wealthy Colonel Bridau, Comte de Brambourg. By rejecting his Napoleonic past and friends, he has become an enormous Restoration success.

Philippe’s sparkling new exterior belies his inner corruption, exemplified by the mortal neglect of his mother Agathe and the even more horrific death of his wife Flore. Abused, abandoned, and hidden from public view, the Comtesse de Brambourg ends her life languishing in a sordid Parisian apartment where she is an “infectious cadaver,” “green like a ... drowning victim, and thin as a skeleton,” whose body “once so ravishing ... was now little but an ignoble bag of bones” (536). The spectacular horror of the Comtesse de Brambourg’s wasted body stands in contrast to the vitality of Flore Brazier’s youth. Once a fresh country *rabouilleuse* who pulled crayfish from clean streams, she has drowned in a deluge of alcohol and her husband’s abuse. Largely responsible for the deaths of his great-aunt, uncle, mother, and wife, Philippe is a multiple parricide, whose fortune grows as his abused family withers and dies.

Despite his seemingly limitless success and unbridled crimes, Philippe is ultimately undone by those whose trust he has broken: a family member who denounces him, false friends who fleece him, and fellow soldiers who mortally abandon him.⁶⁰ This rapid decline from social and financial failure to a horrible and violent death results from his betrayals of family and friends, but most importantly from his disloyalty to military comrades. In killing Major Maxence Gilet, Philippe had broken with his Bonapartist past, but his later rejection of his old friend Major Giroudeau represents his ultimate Napoleonic betrayal.

Having served with Major Giroudeau in combat during the Empire, Philippe had sought the comfort of his old friend during their veteran days in Paris in 1820 when “These old soldiers communicated to one another the state of their affairs, and spoke of their hopes for ... the rescue of the Emperor. Among these reunited old comrades, Philippe was particularly fond of an old captain ... of the Imperial Guard named Giroudeau, in whose company he had first served” (309). Despite helping Philippe to find a job as a journalist—before Philippe secures Rouget’s fortune—Giroudeau is utterly rejected by the newly wealthy and titled Comte de Brambourg. To maintain his new power, Philippe turns his back on Giroudeau in 1827 “by not admitting into his home any of the old friends whose reputation could compromise his future. He was also merciless with the old companions of his past debaucheries. He flatly refused ... to speak in favor of Giroudeau who wanted to re-enter military service” (523). Like the young Prince Hal rejecting his bawdy friend Falstaff in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part 2*, Philippe turns his back on his debauched fraternal friend Giroudeau in order to make way for his own future royal and military success. Blinded by his consuming ambition to “become a general and command one of the regiments of the Royal Guard” (523), Philippe openly denounces his friend, claiming

with acute irony that Giroudeau is “a man without principles!” (523). Unwilling to help Giroudeau as his friend had helped him, Philippe rejects his old comrade and turns his back on Napoleonic friendship.

As the novel’s conclusion makes clear, however, Philippe’s rejection of Giroudeau presages not the demise but the revenge of Napoleonic friendship, when Philippe dies horribly on an Algerian desert battlefield in 1839. Following Philippe’s betrayal, Giroudeau makes an extraordinary military comeback when he is readmitted to the army during the July Monarchy, promoted to general, and placed in command of an African battalion: “An old dragoon of the Imperial Guard, disgraced during the entire Restoration, this general was mired in the depths of a most pitiful debauchery; but in 1830 this simple major had bounced back as a colonel in Africa ... [a]fter having participated in the wars of the Revolution and Empire and spent fifteen years in utter misery”⁶¹ Financially ruined by 1830 and jealous of Giroudeau’s success, Philippe returns to active service in 1835 when “he obtained a regiment in Algeria, where he remained for three years in the most perilous post, hoping to obtain the epaulettes of a general; but a malicious influence, that of General Giroudeau, hindered him” (540). While Giroudeau condemns Philippe to a dangerous post and limited advancement, the ultimate revenge is exacted by Bridau’s own men.

Hated as much by his subordinates as by his commanding general, Philippe, “who exceeded the severity of military service and was detested” (540), is abandoned by his men during an attack against Abd el-Kader’s Algerian resistance forces in 1839: “The combat was bloody, horrible, man to man, and the French cavaliers did not want to perish uselessly in trying to save him. They heard these words: ‘*Your colonel! You’d do this to me! A colonel of the Empire!*’ followed by dreadful screams, but they rejoined the regiment. Philippe suffered a horrible death, for they hacked him with their swords and cut off his head” (540). Hypocritically, the desperate Philippe appeals to his soldiers’ Napoleonic loyalty by asking them to help an imperial veteran. Having betrayed Gilet, Giroudeau, and all sense of military fraternity, however, Philippe can no longer look to the support of Napoleonic friendship.



DESPITE BRIDAU’S TOTAL disregard for Bonapartist solidarity and the Napoleonic past, this legacy of military camaraderie and fraternal support persists among both the veterans of the Empire and these younger soldiers of the July Monarchy. Though many of these young men on the Algerian battlefield in 1839 were doubtless born after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, they have learned the entrenched principles of Napoleonic friendship from their older comrades and officers. When these young soldiers abandon Philippe and “rejoin ... the regiment” (540), they seem to act not out of cowardice but a desire to rejoin the collective

fraternity of their fellow soldiers who, unlike their colonel, are worth the potential risks and sacrifice. Having learned this principle of Napoleonic friendship from their commander General Giroudeau during the 1830s, the youngest of these men will in turn transmit this lesson to their own regiments in 1870.

Long after the disappearance of Napoleonic veterans, pairs, and comrades like Hulot and Falcon, Chabert and Vergniaud, Gondrin and Goguelat, Benassis and Genestas, or even Gilet and Giroudeau, their example of intimate friendship would endure, not as a sentimental relic of Bonapartist nostalgia, but as a deeply embedded principle of French military culture. Conceived during the Revolution, cultivated during the Napoleonic Wars and First Empire, and sustained during the Restoration and July Monarchy, the principles of Napoleonic friendship would persist in the armies of Napoleon III during the Second Empire (1851–70) and resurface on the neo-Napoleonic battlefields of the Franco-Prussian War (1870).



Neo-Napoleonic Friendship Maupassant, Zola, and the War of 1870

Deep in the woods, wrapped in his comrade's arms, the soldier kissed his corporal. Newly escaped from a German prison camp, these euphoric French soldiers hold one another and exchange a passionate embrace. Fleeing for their lives but thrilled to be free, they are overwhelmed with emotion. After months of shared suffering, both in combat and captivity, this brawny corporal and his beloved soldier cling to one another, in a gesture of gratitude and mutual affection. In the aftermath of France's greatest military defeat since Waterloo, Jean and Maurice have become an inseparable pair, sharing their meager rations, caring for one another's wounds, and warming each other's frozen bodies. When they kiss in the woods in the fall of 1870, these neo-Napoleonic soldiers take military friendship to a new level of homoerotic intimacy. Locked in an ardent embrace, they represent both the legacy and new possibility of Napoleonic friendship in late nineteenth-century France.

The invasion was swift and merciless. Less than seven weeks after the declaration of war, the German armies had crossed the Rhine, occupied Alsace-Lorraine, and overwhelmed the French in a crushing and decisive defeat. In September 1870, at the small town of Sedan on the edge of the Ardennes forest, Napoleon III personally led his army and empire to defeat before surrendering himself to General Helmuth von Moltke and Wilhelm I of Prussia. Despite the fall of Napoleon III's Second Empire, the French armies of the new Third Republic continued to fight the German invasion, as cities from Strasbourg to Metz capitulated to enemy occupation in the face of superior German artillery. Two weeks after Sedan, the Germans lay siege to Paris—starving its imprisoned citizens for over four months and thus forcing them to eat rats and animals from the Paris zoo—before taking the city in January 1871. By the time the German armies finally marched on Paris, under the Arc de Triomphe, and down the Champs-Élysées, half a million soldiers and citizens lay dead in the fields and forests of eastern France, a million and a half French civilians now found themselves on annexed German territory in Alsace-Lorraine, and more than one hundred thousand French soldiers had been captured by the enemy.¹

The War of 1870 is a forgotten war. Eclipsed in French military history by the Napoleonic and First World Wars, the events of 1870 have become a minor subject

for history exams, rural museums, and inconspicuous monuments.² For late nineteenth-century France, however, the War of 1870 marked the fall of Napoleon III and the Second Empire, the rise of the Commune and the Third Republic, and the origins of a new century of military hostility leading to the First World War. Known alternately as the Franco-German or Franco-Prussian War, the War of 1870 pitted France against the armies of several German states under the leadership of Prussia, whose victory led to the declaration of a unified German Empire with the Prussian King Wilhelm I as Emperor and his Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck as Chancellor. In addition to altering the balance of power in Europe, the War of 1870 bears the sad reputation as one of the first modern military conflicts, supported by major innovations in industrial technology including the train and telegraph, as well as deadly new developments in mechanized warfare such as the machine gun, the Krupp cannon, and other long-range artillery.

The Franco-Prussian War also inspired an extraordinary amount of literary production, including Arthur Rimbaud's "Sleeper in the Valley" (1870), Victor Hugo's *The Terrible Year* (1872), Alphonse Daudet's *Monday Tales* (1873), Guy de Maupassant's "Boule de suif" (1880), and Émile Zola's war novel *The Debacle* (1892). As the penultimate novel of Zola's twenty-volume *Rougon-Macquart: A Natural and Social History of a Family during the Second Empire* (1871–93), *The Debacle* dramatizes the War of 1870 and the Commune of 1871 as the inevitable decline and symbolic purification of a diseased and degenerate France. Building on the military fiction of Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac, Zola recounts the epic French defeat through the intimate friendship of two soldiers, Jean Macquart and Maurice Levasseur. As the war's mechanized modernity gives way to unprecedented violence, Jean and Maurice protect one another and grow in intimacy. Recalling the bedfellows, buddies, and mentors of the Napoleonic past, Jean and Maurice become intimate friends and combat companions. Their neo-Napoleonic friendship thus represents a bridge between the First and Second Empires and the emergence of new military intimacies in Third Republic France.

Neo-Napoleonic Empire and Warfare

In military terms, Napoleon III's Second Empire has often been denounced—most notably by Victor Hugo—as a fraudulent imitation of Napoleon's First Empire. The son of Louis Bonaparte and the nephew of Napoleon, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was forced into exile in 1815. While Napoleon's son—alternately known as the King of Rome, Napoleon II, and the Duc de Reichstadt—was raised by his paternal grandfather Emperor Franz I of Austria, his cousin Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte grew up in Switzerland where he trained as an artillery officer.³ When the Duc de Reichstadt died of tuberculosis in 1832, the young Louis-Napoleon effectively became the leader of the Bonapartist cause. In 1836 and 1840, he staged two failed

attempts to return to France and challenge the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe, who imprisoned him in the Château de Ham in Picardy for six years before Bonaparte escaped to England in 1846.

After the fall of the July Monarchy in 1848, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte returned to France and, in ten short months, was elected first to the Constituent Assembly and then to the Presidency of the new Second Republic. Having capitalized on the nation's dissatisfaction with the July Monarchy and its nostalgic longing for the Napoleonic past, President Bonaparte then used his executive power and popularity to launch his coup d'état on December 2, 1851, and win landslide victories in the national plebiscites of 1851–52 to approve his coup and elect him as Emperor Napoleon III of the newly declared Second Empire. As a member of the National Assembly and a fervent republican, Victor Hugo spoke out politically and poetically against the new dictator, denouncing Napoleon III in the poems of *Les Châtiments* (1853) as “Napoleon the small,” an opportunistic charlatan, and cheap imitation.⁴

Napoleon III exploited the iconographic power of the Napoleonic legend by appearing in uniform, brandishing the imperial eagles, and appealing to the army's nostalgia for the glorious military past of the First Empire.⁵ Despite the democratic veneer of his short republican presidency and plebiscites, Louis-Napoleon's third and successful coup d'état was the dictatorial culmination of clever Bonapartist propaganda that had transformed the ravages of the Napoleonic Wars into a nostalgic vision of epic glory. The Second Empire's military renaissance initiated a new era of French aggression and colonial conquest. In addition to maintaining France's colonies in the North African Maghreb, West Africa, and the Caribbean, the imperial army took part in the Crimean War (1853–56), the Second Opium War in China (1856–60), the Second War of Italian Independence (1859), and the Franco-Mexican War (1861–67). For Napoleon III's armies, this new period of imperial militarism represented a return to honor and prestige after almost four decades of disfavor and disgrace during the Restoration and July Monarchy.⁶ Despite such military posturing, Napoleon III's imperial arrogance and tactical incompetence ultimately led to the disastrous defeat and fall of his empire in 1870.

The Franco-Prussian War began amid diplomatic tensions between France and Prussia in the summer of 1870 over the candidacy of the Prussian Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern for the Spanish throne. Vehemently opposed by France, which feared another Prussian monarch on its southern border, Prince Leopold diplomatically withdrew his acceptance of the Spanish crown. When the French ambassador to Prussia further demanded that Wilhelm never agree to a Hohenzollern monarchy in Spain, the Prussian king sternly refused such absolute terms. Cleverly edited by the Prussian Prime Minister Bismarck and promptly published in both the French and Prussian press, the written account of Wilhelm's refusal—known as the Ems Dispatch—was perceived as an inflammatory insult to both France and

Napoleon III, who then pressed for a French declaration of war on July 19, 1870.

By September, German troops under the command of Generals Moltke, Roon, and Manteuffel had defeated the French armies of Marshals Bazaine and MacMahon at Wissembourg, Fröschwiller, and Sedan. With the fall of the Second Empire at Sedan on September 2 and the declaration of the Third Republic in Paris on September 4, France was plunged into political chaos that led to the formation of Léon Gambetta's provisional "Government of National Defense" (September 1870—February 1871), the election of a National Assembly under the executive leadership of Adolphe Thiers (February 1871), and the civil insurrection of the Paris Commune (March–May 1871). While the nation struggled with these political crises, the war continued to rage in eastern France. Forced to capitulate after the terrible siege of Paris (September 1870–January 1871), the French agreed to an armistice on January 28 and signed a preliminary peace agreement with the Prussians at Versailles on February 26, 1871.

In this relatively short period of seven months, the French suffered the humiliating defeat of their armies, occupation of their cities, and loss of some 570,000 military and civilian lives.⁷ This overwhelming defeat led in turn to civil conflict and the Paris Commune in 1871, when leftist workers and citizens rebelled against Thiers's Versailles government, set up barricades on Haussmann's boulevards, and—in a final act of desperation—burned the Hôtel de Ville and Palais des Tuileries. In response, the French republican forces slaughtered over 20,000 Parisian *communards* during the "bloody week" of May 21–28 when, *La Petite Presse* reported, the Seine ran red in what was the largest Parisian bloodbath since the Revolutionary Terror in 1793–94.⁸ In the end, France was forced to negotiate a peace with the new German Empire by signing the Treaty of Frankfurt (May 10, 1871), whose crushing terms including the payment of an exorbitant five billion franc indemnity and the surrender of Alsace and northern Lorraine.⁹

After the victories of their fathers and grandfathers in the armies of Napoleon, French soldiers suffered the defeat in 1870 as a kind of national emasculation. In the wake of their German adversaries' territorial penetration, invasion, and occupation of eastern France, the humiliated French armies took on the shame of the entire nation. Lamenting the defeat at Sedan, Captain Claude Lombard wrote on October 28, 1870: "Oh shame! If our fathers came out of their graves, what would they say, those heroes of Austerlitz, Iéna, Friedland, and Wagram? What would they say of their descendants? [They would call us] a bastard generation that could not defend the threshold of the nation, nor chase the enemy from its home."¹⁰ Despite Napoleon's own defeat by the Prussians at Waterloo in 1815, the Grande Armée had won many earlier victories over their Germanic adversaries during the Austerlitz (1805–6), Prussian (1806–7), Danube (1809), and Saxon Campaigns (1813). For soldiers like Lombard, the defeat at Sedan represented not only Napoleon III's

failure to live up to the legacy of his uncle, but their own inability to match the courage of their imperial forefathers.¹¹

While the War of 1870 evoked the Napoleonic past, it also announced the growing antagonism of the Franco-German future. The German victories at Waterloo and Sedan led to a rise in German nationalism, from the establishment of the German Confederation in 1815 to the declaration of the German Empire in 1870. Consequently, France and Germany engaged in a prolonged battle for military dominance and power in Europe, which was symbolized by the repeated annexation, occupation, and repatriation of Alsace and Lorraine, from the Franco-Prussian to the First and Second World Wars. In addition to sparking this new era of antagonistic nationalism, the War of 1870 also inaugurated new innovations in mechanized warfare.

Among the war's many adaptations of nineteenth-century technology, perhaps the most insidious were the military exploitation of the telegraph for longdistance communications and the ingenious use of trains for the rapid and mass mobilization of troops. To these civilian innovations were added the deadly efficiency of the French *mitrailleuse* (machine gun) and the powerful long-range precision of the Prussian Krupp cannon.¹² These new and lethal technologies owed as much to Prussian and French ingenuity as to the example provided by the American Civil War (1860–65), which had been a testing ground for the application of new nineteenth-century military strategies and weapons.¹³ Impressed by the American military exhibits at the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris, the Prussians invited the American General Philip Sheridan to observe the war in 1870, when he advised his hosts that the “proper strategy consists in inflicting as telling a blow as possible on the enemy's army, and then in causing the inhabitants so much suffering that they must long for peace.”¹⁴

This chilling advice appealed to General Moltke, a disciple of the Prussian military theorist General Carl von Clausewitz who famously argued in his volume *On War* (1832) that war is a “continuation of policy by other means” and “an act of force to compel our adversary to do our will.”¹⁵ Extending these definitions to what he calls “absolute war,” Clausewitz argues that “[i]f policy is grand and powerful, so also will be war, and this may be carried to the height at which war attains its absolute form.”¹⁶ In addition to General Moltke, Sheridan's and Clausewitz's theories on scorched earth and absolute warfare also appealed to Bismarck, who warned that to crush the French, “we will shoot down every male inhabitant.”¹⁷ This threat implied an attack not only on France's soldiers, but on all its male citizens, and thus on French manhood itself. With France's head of state decapitated from the body politic, its eastern provinces amputated from French territory, and its soldiers deported to foreign prison camps, a sense of national castration exacerbated the emasculating defeat.¹⁸

Following Sedan, over eighty thousand men in Napoleon III's captured armies were held in an open-air prison on the Iges Peninsula along the Meuse River—with little food, shelter, or medical attention—before being sent by train to more permanent prison camps in Prussia.¹⁹ On September 3–4, 1870, General Barthélémy Lebrun wrote in his field-diary that “[g]roups from all four corps of the army are spread out irregularly on the peninsula, surrounded by German and Bavarian sentinels and checkpoints. Numerous and frightful signs of indiscipline on the part of our soldiers [present a] frightening tableau that I will never forget. All around me, the men steal all kinds of things from one another.”²⁰ Recalling Sergeant Bourgogne's account of the Russian retreat in 1812–13, General Lebrun laments how privations reduced many soldiers to desperate measures. Other accounts, however, describe how mutual suffering inspired solidarity between soldiers and their comrades. As a wide range of literary texts attest, the spirit of Napoleonic friendship from the First Empire reemerged on the battlefields and in the prison camps of the Franco-Prussian War, when a new generation of military mentors, bedfellows, and buddies offered comfort and support to their neo-Napoleonic friends.

Neo-Napoleonic Literature from Maupassant to Zola

The Franco-Prussian War inspired thousands of memoirs, poems, short stories, and novels. Between 1870 and 1914, an enormous number of increasingly literate soldiers, civilian survivors, and literary eyewitnesses penned their first-hand experiences of the war.²¹ This voluminous literary production represents a wide range of pacifist and patriotic positions, left and right politics, high and popular culture. Many of these texts focus on the serious challenges that the Prussian invasion and occupation posed to French military manhood.²²

Originally titled *The Comic Invasion*, the volume of short stories known as *Evenings at Médan* (1880) is a landmark text of Franco-Prussian War literature.²³ Named for the evenings that its co-writers spent together at Émile Zola's country home in Médan, the collection features several celebrated stories including Zola's “Attack on the Mill” in which a woman named Françoise Merlier loses her old father and young fiancé during the Prussian and French assaults on their home, Guy de Maupassant's “Boule de suif” (“Ball of Fat”) in which a courtesan named Élisabeth Rousset resists both Prussian invaders and French traitors, and Joris Karl Huysmans's “Back-Pack” in which Eugène Lejantel spends the entire war in a series of hospitals for a chronic case of dysentery. Critically overdetermined as a naturalist manifesto, *Evenings at Médan* is a watershed volume of late nineteenth-century war fiction and anti-militarist literature in France.²⁴

For Maupassant, *Evenings at Médan* represented his breakthrough and the beginning of his prolific literary production on war and military violence. Having fought as a soldier in 1870, Maupassant wrote many stories on the Franco-Prussian

War, including “Boule de suif “ (1880), “Mademoiselle Fifi” (1882), “Two Friends” (1883), “The Savage Mother” (1884), “Bed 29” (1884), and “The Angelus” (1895). In his 1880 letters to Flaubert—who describes “Boule de suif “ as a “masterpiece of composition, comedy, and observation”— Maupassant writes that *Evenings at Médan* was, contrary to “these *naturalist school* stupidities that are repeated in the newspapers,” an attack on the militarist literature that glorified the war: “With our stories, we simply tried to give a realistic image of war, to undo the Déroulède-like jingoism and false enthusiasm that has, until now, been judged necessary in every narration containing a uniform and a rifle.”²⁵ In contrast to the facile patriotism of Paul Déroulède’s poems, the anti-militarist stories in *Evenings at Médan* denounce the senseless violence and destruction of war.

Shortly after the publication of *Evenings at Médan* and on the eve of the hostilities leading to France’s colonial Tonkin War with China (1883–86), Maupassant expressed his anti-militarist position in an 1881 article published in *Le Gaulois*. Titled simply “War,” this short text reads like a pacifist manifesto: “War is to fight, to kill, to massacre men! ... Ah, let us proclaim these absolute truths: let us dishonor war!”²⁶ As if in response to Clausewitz’s theory of “absolute war,” Maupassant defines war as a landscape of suffering for both soldiers and civilians:

To join a herd of four hundred thousand men, march day and night without rest, think of nothing, study nothing, learn and read nothing, to be useful to no one, but rot in filth, sleep in muck, live like brutes in a continual stupor, pillage cities, burn villages, ruin their inhabitants, then meet another mass of human meat, lunge for them, make lakes of blood, piles of cadavers, plains of crushed flesh mixed with the muddy and reddened earth, to have one’s arms and legs blown off, one’s brains splattered for the benefit of no one, and to die in the corner of some field while your old parents, wife, and children die of hunger. (253)

While he denounces violence done by soldiers, who are “reduced to crazed brutes, killing for pleasure, for fear, out of bravado and ostentation,” Maupassant also empathizes with the impossible position of soldiers, “the scourge of the world” (253–54), who are forced to kill and be killed, and then take the blame for the violence of wars that also exploit and victimize them. Implicit in Maupassant’s many military texts, this explicit denunciation of war serves as a powerful pacifist manifesto for the burgeoning anti-war literature following 1870.²⁷

In their Franco-Prussian War poems, Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo, and Paul Déroulède all honor the fraternal solidarity of soldiers and their fallen comrades. A native of the Ardennes town of Charleville between Paris and Sedan, Rimbaud mourns the death of a soldier in his celebrated sonnet, “The Sleeper in the Valley,” where “A young soldier sleeps, lips apart, head bare, / Neck bathing in cool blue

watercress, / Reclined in the grass beneath the clouds, / Pale in his green bed.”²⁸ Having witnessed the bombardment of Charleville’s twin city Mézières in December 1870 and lived through the Prussian occupation of both towns beginning in January 1871, Rimbaud was an eyewitness to war. While his soldier “sleeps in the sun, a hand on his motionless chest,” he also has “two red holes on his right side” from which his blood soaks the ground.²⁹ In confounding sleep with death, Rimbaud juxtaposes pastoral beauty and mortal combat to denounce warfare and violence.

In contrast to Rimbaud’s quiet individual mourning, Hugo embarks on an epic lamentation of the slaughtered masses in *The Terrible Year* (1872). Having spent the entire Second Empire in exile on the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey because of his open opposition to Napoleon III, Hugo returned to Paris on September 5, 1870, the day after the declaration of the Third Republic. An eyewitness to the siege and capitulation of Paris and the beginning of the Commune, Hugo expresses his grief in these poems over the terrible year of 1870–71 when his wartime suffering was exacerbated by the unexpected heart attack and death of his son Charles at the age of forty-four. While many of the poems in *The Terrible Year* reiterate Hugo’s chastisement of Napoleon III from *Les Châtiments*, other poems lament France’s fallen soldiers. In “Our Dead,” Hugo mourns those who “lie on the terrible and solitary field”:

 Their blood creates a frightening lake on the earth
 The monstrous vultures feed on their open chests;
 Their quiet, cold bodies, scattered on the green field.
 Terrifying, twisted, black, have every shape and form
 That thunder gives to the dead.³⁰

Like the rotting corpses at Waterloo in Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, these soldiers decay in mass graves at Sedan:

 In them crawl worms, larvae, and ants;
 They are already half-sunk in the earth Like a sinking ship in deep water;
 Their pale bones are covered in filth and shadow
 ...
 One sees frightening bullet holes all over them,
 Saber cuts and bayonet holes.

(335)

From Waterloo in 1815 to Sedan in 1870, Hugo laments the gruesome death and decomposition of Napoleonic soldiers.

Often dismissed as overly sentimental, Paul Déroulède’s popular *Soldier Songs* (1872), *New Soldier Songs* (1875), and *Military Refrains* (1888) were inspired by his experiences as a wounded combatant and prisoner during both the Franco-Prussian

War and the Commune.³¹ Despite the simplistic patriotism of poems such as “Vive la France,” other poems lament the military dead and honor those soldiers who cared for one another in combat. In “The Sergeant” (1875), a young conscript carries his mortally wounded mentor off the battlefield. Described as “Adoring his profession, adored by his men, / In short, the god of soldiers and the king of sergeants,” the dying Sergeant Jacques looks to his young comrade for comfort: “ ‘Conscript,’ murmured Jacques while touching him, / ‘Embrace me, conscript, embrace your old sergeant.’”³² In “Supreme Wishes” (1888), another dying soldier seeks companionship in a communal grave:

I do not want to sleep alone.
I want to sleep in the ossuary
Side by side with my soldiers.
O my old war companions,
This great halt is our last;
Open your hearts and your arms!³³

Unlike General Marbot, Colonel Pontmercy, and Colonel Chabert, who all struggle out of the grave with the help of their comrades, Déroulède’s dying soldier longs to rest in the arms of these grave bedfellows.

While the war poems of Rimbaud, Hugo, and Déroulède lament the dead young men of France, George Sand, Léon Bloy, and Guy de Maupassant honor the courage of women warriors, resistors, and saboteurs who defended the nation in the absence of their fighting men.³⁴ In her *Journal of a Wartime Traveler* (1870), George Sand sympathizes with the suffering and courage of French mothers who lost their slaughtered husbands and sons to new and deadly technologies: “This war is particularly brutal, without soul, without distinction, without guts. It is an exchange of projectiles ... that paralyze individual valor and render the conscience and will of the soldier useless. There are no more heroes but the machine gun.”³⁵ In several stories from Léon Bloy’s *Blood and Sweat* (1893), including “The Victors’ Table,” “A Woman Sharp Shooter,” and “House of the Devil,” French women avenge the deaths of their sons, brothers, and husbands or the rape of their daughters and friends by killing the Prussian soldiers billeted in their homes.³⁶ And in several of his celebrated texts, Guy de Maupassant honors the courage and resistance of French women warriors during the War of 1870.

Perhaps the most recognized literary text on the Franco-Prussian War, Maupassant’s “Boule de suif “ (1880) is the story of a courtesan whose patriotic resistance to the Prussian invaders is undermined by the coercive collaboration of her fellow citizens. Known as “Ball of Fat” for her voluptuous body, Élisabeth Rousset is disdained by the bourgeois and aristocratic refugees who share her carriage, eat her food, and pressure her into submitting to the lewd demands of a

Prussian officer in order to liberate them all from house arrest. As the opening of the text makes clear, this story of invasion, occupation, and violation is predicated on the failure of France's soldiers to defend its citizens. As the French troops retreat, they leave the rest of the nation vulnerable to the invading Prussians: "For several days straight, fragments of the fleeing army had passed through the city. These were no longer troops but hordes of disbanded soldiers. The men had long, dirty beards, tattered uniforms, and they had a look of weakness, without flag, without a regiment."³⁷ In this context, the shameful defeat of these French soldiers is a prelude to the continued violation and rape of France.

Although Élisabeth Rousset refuses to meet the invader's demands—insisting that "[y]ou will tell this filthy pig, this Prussian bastard that I will never [give in to him]; you hear me, never, never, never" (1: 107)—she is manipulated by her fellow refugees into submitting to the enemy. Having given in to their demands and the Prussian's sexual violence, Rousset feels "humiliated for having ceded" and is then reviled by this same band of citizens who now "keep their distance from her as if she had an infection under her skirts" (1: 118). As the "ball of fat" on which both the Prussian invaders and her fellow refugees feed, Rousset is the survivor of a double rape and thus a heroine who, despite the absence of French military defense and civilian solidarity, courageously resists the violence of the occupation.

Maupassant also celebrates the heroines of 1870 in "Mademoiselle Fifi" (1882), where a young prostitute named Rachel kills an occupying Prussian officer, and in "Bed 29" (1884) where a patriotic prostitute named Irma avenges the rape of her country and herself by spreading syphilis to unsuspecting Prussians. Like Élisabeth Rousset, Irma's resistance is later reviled as apparent collaboration when her lover, a French captain named Albert, returns from the war. From bed 29 of a French military hospital, she tells the ungrateful officer "It was those Prussian bastards. They took me almost by force and they poisoned me ... I should have died, but I wanted to avenge myself ! And I poisoned them too, all of them, all of them, the most that I could."³⁸ Like a soldier, Irma risked her life to combat the enemy on a different kind of battlefield: "I tell you, they raped me; if I didn't get treated, it was because I wanted to poison them. If I had wanted get healthy, it would not have been difficult, dammit! But I wanted to kill them, and I have killed some! ... You, with your [medal of honor], haven't done as much! I merit that [medal] more ... and I have killed more Prussians than you!" (1: 184). In the absence of the defeated French military, Irma sacrifices her life in defense of the nation. Like Stendhal's battle-seasoned *cantinière* or Léon Bloy's female sharpshooters, Maupassant's prostitutes are resistance fighters and women warriors. Forced to use their bodies as weapons against the invasion and occupation, they represent the courage of French women amid the failure of France's armies in 1870.³⁹

Beyond poetic lamentation and literary admiration, much of the literature on the

Franco-Prussian War focuses on national humiliation and in particular on the surrender and imprisonment of the nation's civilians and soldiers. From the short stories of Alphonse Daudet and Maupassant to the popular fiction of Paul Déroulède and Alexandre de Lamotte, these texts honor the suffering of French war prisoners in the aftermath of defeat. While Daudet focuses on civilian imprisonment during the occupation, Maupassant, Déroulède, and Lamotte examine the capture, execution, and internment of French soldiers, including the tens of thousands who were deported to prison camps in Germany where— despite inadequate food, crippling work details, and debilitating disease—many soldiers survived with the help of their buddies and friends.

Published in his *Monday Tales* (1873), Alphonse Daudet's short story "The Last Class" dramatizes how much of eastern France was effectively taken prisoner by the German invasion and occupation. In Daudet's text, an Alsatian schoolteacher named Monsieur Hamel teaches his last French class before the occupying authorities replace him with a German instructor: "My children, this is the last time that I'm teaching this class. The orders have come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine ... The new schoolteacher arrives tomorrow. Today is your last French lesson."⁴⁰ Hamel urges his students to resist not only the occupation but cultural and linguistic assimilation: "M. Hamel began to speak to us about the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world, the most clear, the most solid; that we must retain it and never forget it because, when a people is enslaved, their language is the key to their prison" (18). This principle of civilian resistance in occupied Alsace extended to French soldiers in German prison camps.

In his poem "The Lesson" (1872), Paul Déroulède honors those war prisoners who gave their lives trying to protect their comrades. In verses describing the appalling conditions of the camps, Déroulède speaks of men facing hardships together: "In the morning, we share a little wheat-less bread, / At night, we share a blackish soup, / And, exhausted from laboring with shovels and plaster, / We collapse onto damp straw."⁴¹ For some, the suffering in the camps was alleviated by the comforts of shared rations and sympathetic bedfellows. Amid the brutality of the Prussian guards, others sacrifice their lives for their friends: "A strong old Burgundian / Sees a Prussian beating a dying man: / 'March,' he cried, 'march or I will execute you!' / The soldier saved the poor man from this brute ... [who] killed them both with two mortal shots" (64–65). While Déroulède's patriotic poems exaggerate the pathos of these sacrifices, other texts corroborate these scenes of neo-Napoleonic friendship in the prison camps of 1870.

In his novel, *The Adventures of an Alsatian Prisoner in Germany* (1872), Alexandre de Lamotte describes the mutual support of three Alsatian prisoners named Guillaume, Charles, and Maurice whose prison camp suffering begins when

they are herded onto trains for transport to Germany: “[T]he train was composed of sixty open wagons, without seats or even straw, in which the miserable prisoners had to remain standing, shivering under their thin uniforms, soaked by the rain and the snow that covered them up to their knees. They did their best to huddle together in an effort to keep themselves warm” (44–45). Prefiguring the ominous train narrative in Zola’s *The Human Beast* (1890), Lamothe’s locomotive is a “moving prison” (46) where soldiers must share the warmth of each other’s bodies in order to survive.

Nicknamed “The City of Mud” by its ten thousand prisoners, Lamothe’s prison camp is neatly organized around five hundred shoddy wooden barracks that are “aligned perfectly in wide streets.”⁴² From the camp kitchens, which the prisoners call “Starvation Village” (116), rations are given out in meager portions, “never enough to stay alive, nor too little to starve, but just enough to keep us suffering” (107). In the drafty dormitory of the prison hospital, called “The Typhus Palace,” Guillaume sees hundreds of men languishing in “a hideous mix of all kinds of disease and the most sordid filth; the stench, the damp walls, the meager and foul food. The sick were too costly. Better that they die and be rid of them as soon as possible” (106). Forced labor and work details further weaken these already starving and sickly men: “We were 300 miserable skeletons who looked like we were digging our own grave. We made no sound, but worked in dead silence” (142). And when escapees are recaptured, their fellow prisoners are forced to watch their summary executions: “[T]hey made us file in formation in front of the bodies, as if we needed a closer look to ensure that we would not forget” (147). Collectively, the prison camp’s cattle cars, shoddy barracks, and work details, combined with its meager rations, death wards, and summary executions, represent horrific innovations in modern warfare, whose barbaric military modernity would be the genocidal model for the next century of Franco-German warfare.

In order to survive the deadly conditions of the camps, Lamothe’s Alsatian trio, Guillaume, Charles, and Maurice, care for one another as mentors, bedfellows, and hometown friends. When Guillaume first meets Maurice in the train, he invites the freezing young soldier to “Come and lie down next to me ... the blanket is large enough for both of us, and that will warm you up” (39–42). Others also seek out the warmth of comrades in their freezing cattle car: “Another prisoner came and lay down next to me to try to warm himself. The poor man had neither boots nor shirt” (43). Later, in the deadly cold of their prison camp barracks, many double up for bedfellow warmth: “In the barracks, we slept on straw that was always damp ... and to keep out the cold, we had only one small cotton blanket for every two people, since we slept two to a bed, in bunks that were so small that there was barely enough space for one” (117).

Interrogated and tortured after the winter escape of three other men, Guillaume is nursed and revived by the men of Barracks Forty-Seven: “[I]t is to these men that I

owe my life. Despite the cold, they gave up their blankets to make me a mattress, rubbed my arms and legs, and made me drink a few drops of alcohol. Due to their tender care, warmth came back into my body” (219). Saved by his barracks buddies, Guillaume is then comforted by his friends Charles and Maurice: “Informed by these comrades, Maurice and [Charles] arrived soon after. They also brought me their blankets, and if I had allowed my young protégé—now become my protector—he would have taken off his very last articles of clothing to warm me” (219). When Guillaume, Charles, and Maurice later escape, they spend their first night of freedom in the shelter of a cave where they again warm each other’s bodies: “Since [Maurice] was cold, he was glad to throw himself onto this bed of leaves where, in pressing up against one another ... we did not delay in warming ourselves. An hour later, we were all sleeping profoundly, more deeply than any of us had since our departure from France; it is also true that since then, we have never been so warmly and comfortably bedded” (233). From cattle cars to barracks and caves, these bedfellows offer the lifesaving warmth and mutual comfort of their bodies to their fellow prisoners.

In “Two Friends” (1883), Maupassant distills the homosocial intimacy of Lamothe’s prison trio into a pair of imprisoned soldiers who are captured by the Prussians during the siege of Paris in January 1871. Before the war, Messieurs Sauvage and Morissot used to spend their Sundays fishing by the Seine on the Île Marante, between Colombes and Argenteuil on the outskirts of Paris, where “side by side ... they had been taken with friendship, the one for the other.”⁴³ During their quiet Sunday afternoons by the river, they had discovered that “they got along famously without saying anything, having similar tastes and identical feelings” and that during these pleasurable hours, few words “were necessary for them to understand and esteem one another” (1: 732–33). In their mutual understanding, these old friends are a complementary pair or, in the language of their Sunday pleasure, a good catch, the one for the other.

Now enrolled in the National Guard, Sauvage and Morissot are delighted— after many months of separation—to bump into each other in Paris, where “they shook hands energetically, moved at having found one another again,” before sharing a couple of glasses of absinthe and proposing the idea of returning again to “our island” (1: 732) in the middle of the siege. Even amid the desperate hunger of this “famished” Paris, when starving Parisians “ate anything at all” (1: 732), including horses, rats, and the animals in the zoo, Sauvage’s fishy suggestion to his soldier friend Morissot is as much about their hunger for the pleasures of better days and shared friendship as for the possibility of catching a good meal. As prisoners-of-war in their capital under siege, they are also delighted by the idea of escaping their prison walls and indulging in the illusive freedom of their island in the middle of the free-flowing Seine.

Despite the complications of obtaining permission from the French authorities and the dangers of entering this no-man's land between the Paris defenses and the Prussian line, the two friends set off "side by side" for their island, where they once again take pleasure in fishing: "They delicately placed their fish into a tightly-meshed pouch that lay at their feet. And a delicious joy penetrated them, that joy that grabs you when [you] rediscover a pleasure that has been denied [to you] for a long time" (1: 734–35). For two men of very few words, this is their form of social intercourse, as they lose themselves in the penetrating joy of holding their poles, filling their pouch, and letting the river flow: "[T]hey no longer listened or thought of anything. They ignored the rest of the world. They fished" (1: 735). Hoping for a tug on their line, Sauvage and Morissot lose themselves in the mutual enjoyment of this forbidden pleasure.

When they are discovered and taken prisoner by a patrol of Prussian soldiers, Sauvage and Morissot are asked to betray their military comrades by revealing the French password to gain access into the city. Trembling from fear "side by side" (1: 737), Sauvage and Morissot refuse and are threatened with immediate execution. When the Prussian officer tries to persuade them, asking "You must have family?" (1: 737), their silence signals their courageous resignation, but also implies that these men are each other's family, that their military comrades defending the city are their greater family, and that their imminent sacrifice thus represents both patriotic and fraternal love. In death, as in life, they exchange few words—"Adieu, Monsieur Sauvage," "Adieu, Monsieur Morissot"—before they shake hands, are summarily shot, and die, one on the other: "M. Sauvage fell face down. Morissot, spun and fell on his comrade, with his face to the sky" (1: 737–38). As the Prussians throw their bodies in the river, the two friends become part of their beloved Seine, in an image of fluvial union where their "little bit of blood floats" (1: 738) into the waters of the moving current.⁴⁴ In spite of Sauvage and Morissot's polite formality, always addressing each other as *monsieur* and with the formal *vous*, they nonetheless spend their lives and deaths in each other's company or, as Maupassant reiterates at least four times in the text, "side by side" (1: 732, 734, 737).

The pathos of this intimate friendship between war prisoners is perhaps amplified by the similarity between Maupassant's "Two Friends" and his story "Little Soldier" (1885), in which two young Breton soldiers named Jean Ker-deren and Luc Le Ganidec leave their barracks in Courbevoie every Sunday to cross the Seine at the Bezons bridge, watch the sailboats in the Argenteuil basin, and spend their afternoon picnicking in a field that reminds them of Brittany. Like Sauvage and Morissot, Jean and Luc "never spoke on the way, but walked straight ahead, with the same idea in mind, which took the place of conversation" (2: 485). And like Sauvage and Morissot, they take pleasure in their Sunday excursions, the Seine fishermen, and their mutual "side by side" company: "When they had eaten their bread till the last

crumb and drunk their wine till the last drop, they relaxed on the grass, side by side, saying nothing” (2: 487). Although the story does not ostensibly take place during the war, the soldiers Jean and Luc nevertheless feel like captives, imprisoned near Paris in their suburban military base, far from their wild and native Brittany: “They marched with small steps, Luc Le Ganidec and Jean Kerderen, happy and sad, haunted by the slow, gentle, penetrating melancholy of a caged animal” (2: 487). Like Sergeants Bourgogne and Picart, Jean and Luc are hometown friends who find comfort in each other’s company.

Their country pleasure is at first increased by their acquaintance with a “milkmaid” from Bezons, who befriends them and shares their Sunday afternoons. At first a maternal figure, this young woman is quickly integrated into this soldier pair and they become a trio, “all three, side by side” (2: 489). But as the young woman and Luc become lovers, Jean is abandoned during their Sunday picnics, forced to watch them “walk away, side by side,” and remain behind, “dazed by hurt and a kind of naïve and profound suffering. He wanted to cry, flee, hide, and never see anyone again” (2: 490). Jealous and confused, Jean silently returns to the base with Luc: “The two soldiers remained, side by side, silent and calm as always, their faces betraying nothing of what was troubling their heart” (2: 491). But as they recross the Bezons bridge, the despairing Jean throws himself into the Seine “as if he had seen something in the current that attracted him” (2: 491). After watching his friend disappear under the water, Luc mourns with “his eyes full of tears” and laments the loss of his Jean so much that “his emotions strangled him” (2: 491).

While Jean’s suicidal despair may represent his frustrated desire for the milkmaid, he likely mourns the loss of his beloved soldier’s attentions.⁴⁵ Imprisoned like a “caged animal” in his military life and his love for Luc, Jean ends his life submerged in the Seine, which flows out from Paris to Normandy and the wild Atlantic waters of his native Brittany. Luc too drowns, in his own tears, choked by his grief at the loss of Jean. As “side by side” companions—like the riverbed bedfellows Sauvage and Morissot—Jean and Luc resemble the buddies and hometown friends of Napoleonic memoirs and fiction from the First Empire. Inspired by the soldiers of the Second Empire and the War of 1870, Maupassant’s short stories thus offer models of neo-Napoleonic friendship that later reach epic proportions in Zola’s novel *The Debacle*.

Neo-Napoleonic Friendship and Zola’s *The Debacle* (1892)

Published in 1892, *The Debacle* is a monumental account of the French defeat, resistance, and insurrection during the Franco- Prussian War in 1870 and the Commune in 1871. With *The Debacle*, Zola succeeded in writing the great nineteenth-century war novel that Balzac had envisioned for *The Battle*, in which “one can hear the firing cannons on the very first page and ... during which the reader believes he is taking part in a real battle ... with all of its accessories,

uniforms, casualties, details.”⁴⁶ In delivering on this Balzacian vision, Zola distinguished his novel as not only an important contribution to Franco-Prussian War literature but a major work of French nineteenth-century military fiction.

Within this monumental context, *The Debacle* is also an intimate account of two soldiers, Jean Macquart and Maurice Levasseur, who survive the brutality of the war in each other’s care. As such, Zola’s novel bears witness to the legacy of Napoleonic friendship in the relationships between neo-Napoleonic soldiers. Like Balzac’s soldier pairs, Jean and Maurice provide both emotional and physical comfort to one another amid the dangers and violence of combat and the humiliation and privations of defeat. Beyond mere comfort and affection, however, Jean and Maurice’s passion for one another inscribes them into a homoerotic tradition that stretches back to Plato’s warrior lovers and forward to Proust’s homosexual soldiers. *The Debacle* thus represents the nineteenth-century evolution from Napoleonic to neo-Napoleonic friendship, and the broader tradition between the homoerotic military past and the homosexual military future.

As the only son of a widow, Zola was exempt from military service in 1870 and spent the duration of the war in Marseilles and Bordeaux before returning to Paris on the eve of the Commune in March 1871. Like Maupassant, however, he sympathized with the impossible position of France’s soldiers who were forced to kill and be killed in combat. Presaging his later denunciation in *J’accuse* (1898) of the anti-Semitic corruption in both the government and military of the Third Republic during the Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906), Zola openly criticizes the corruption of Napoleon III and the Second Empire in his early journalism (1868–70).⁴⁷ And in his later fiction on the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune—notably “The Attack on the Mill” (1880), “Jacques Damour” (1880), and *The Debacle* (1892)—Zola consistently speaks out against the horrors of the war and empathizes with the suffering of civilians and soldiers.

Nowhere in *The Debacle* is Zola’s soldierly empathy and anti-militarism more evident than in his descriptions of the dead. In his catalogue of the carnage in 1870, Zola’s landscape of broken bodies, severed limbs, and bleeding corpses illustrates the spectacular horror of combat. Among the many cadavers that litter *The Debacle*, some of the dead soldiers are—like Rimbaud’s “Sleeper in the Val-ley”—quite beautiful: “Against a hedge ... was a sergeant, a superb man, young and strong, who seemed to smile with his open lips, his calm face.”⁴⁸ Other soldiers are eviscerated, “frighteningly mutilated, the head half blown off, the shoulders covered with a splattering of brains” (392). Still others are piled in mass graves: “the dead were splayed out in all directions, in atrocious postures, their arms twisted, their legs doubled back” (399). These dismantled bodies recall the atrocities of the Napoleonic past, the mass graves and mutilated corpses described by Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac, and the three million soldiers killed during the Empire and buried in fields

across Europe.⁴⁹ But these broken bodies also represent the unprecedented violence of modern mechanized warfare and the advent of increasingly brutal and efficient killing machines on the battlefields of 1870.

While Zola foregrounds the intimacy between Jean and Maurice, their relationship develops amid the mutual support and affection they share with other men in the French armies. For the infantry, such fraternal solidarity centers on the small units or platoons whose men share their meals, tents, and bivouacs with one another: “Each group or tribe of six men had a single mess kit; and each tribe was a family, one doing the cooking, the other doing the laundry, the others setting up the tent, caring for the animals, cleaning the weapons” (81). Within these small familial groups, soldiers find comfort in the face of hunger, fatigue, and other “physical needs of communal life” (93). For Maurice, the men of his tribal crew—which includes Jean, Pache, Loubet, Chouteau, and Lapoule—become both his bedfellows and his family: “At night, he slept profoundly with his five tent-mates, all in a pile, happy to be warm” (93).

As with the infantry, other families form in artillery units, for whom “The cannon, the beloved beast, gathered around itself a little family. The cannon was their common link, their single concern, everything existed for it: the caisson, the wagons, the horses, the men. This was the basis of the great cohesion, solidity, and tranquility among the men of the artillery” (295). Honored and protected despite its ferocious brutality, the cannon creates a family unit dedicated to its care, whose many male members take a kind of phallic pride and pleasure in its maintenance and performance. Similarly, many cavalry officers form intimate relationships with their horses. Disoriented in the confusion of battle, the cavalryman Prosper “trusted in his horse, Zéphir, whom he loved so much” (305) and is devastated when Zéphir is mortally wounded: “I held his head in my arms, and continued to tell him that he was a good horse, that I loved him, and that I would always remember him. He listened to me and seemed so happy! Then he had another convulsion and died ... [T]here were great tears in his eyes. My poor Zéphir cried liked a man” (381). Like the artillerymen who care for their “beloved beast,” Prosper loves Zéphir as a buddy and companion. Like these artillery soldiers and their cannons or these cavalry officers and their horses, infantrymen like Jean and Maurice form intimate bonds with their fellow soldiers.

Beyond group solidarity, Jean and Maurice’s relationship is perhaps best compared to the “marriage” between two artillerymen, “the driver Adolphe, and his companion Louis. For three years, they had been married—to use the expression which was used to describe a driver and a gunner—[and] they got on well” (103). Despite their petty squabbles, Adolphe and Louis are recognized by one another and their fellow soldiers as a couple in a military marriage. When they are both mortally wounded in battle, Adolphe falls on his Louis and embraces him: “In a last

convulsion, he had taken hold of the other; they lay there embracing, grotesquely mutilated, married until death” (298). Like Maupassant’s *Sauvage* and Morissot, Adolphe and Louis die together, locked in an eternal embrace: “One on the other, Adolphe and Louis ... were grotesquely intertwined, married even in death” (399). For Jean and Maurice, this kind of intertwining intimacy develops gradually over the course of the war but culminates in a series of similar embraces.

Initially, Jean and Maurice are presented as social opposites who, despite their differences in class, education, and rank, gradually become an unlikely but complementary pair. In an early sketch for the novel, Zola describes the thirty-nine-year-old Jean as “the central character, the very soul of France, stable and brave, well connected to the land,” while the twenty-nine-year-old Maurice is “the other part of France, its mistakes, its head in the air, its vain selfishness.”⁵⁰ The friendship between these two men thus serves as a metaphor for the French civil conflict in 1871 when, as Zola writes, “the bad part of France, Maurice, is accidentally suppressed by the good Jean.”⁵¹ Long before the Commune, however, Jean and Maurice slowly become friends during the Franco-Prussian War, in spite of their many differences.

Masculine and virile, Corporal Jean Macquart is described in Zola’s earlier novel *The Earth* (1887) as a “muscular boy, with short-cropped brown hair, and a wide face,” whose manly body and physical strength have developed during his many years as a farm laborer and foot soldier who served at the battle of Solferino (1859).⁵² Despite his brute force and rough years as a farmer and soldier, Jean nevertheless possesses the “gentleness of an experienced man, whose thick fingers know how to be delicate on occasion” (109). In contrast, Maurice Levas-seur is a young and inexperienced soldier whose “weak and excitable temperament” (25) and “womanly nervousness” (191) resemble those of Zola’s other more feminine men, such as Camille in *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), Maxime in *The Kill* (1871), and Florent in *The Belly of Paris* (1873).⁵³ While Jean has dark hair, a broad face, and a powerful body, Maurice is “[b]lond, short, with a very developed face, a slender nose and chin, and fine features” (25–26). Whereas Jean is a peasant laborer with no family support, Maurice is a petit-bourgeois lawyer, whose grandfather was a “hero of the Grande Armée” (25).

Because of their differences in class and character, Jean and Maurice are initially uneasy as bedfellows. During their first nights on bivouac, “Jean did not move, pressed up against Maurice,” since “[a]n instinctual class repugnance, like a physical malaise, could be felt between the peasant and lawyer” (38). Through the physical intimacy of their bivouac and the shared difficulties of life on campaign, however, there gradually develops “between the two men a tacit truce” (83). Maurice’s affection for Jean increases as “the fraternity of the same fatigue and the same pains, survived together ... dissolved his bad feelings” (64). Gradually, Maurice comes to

feel a sense of solidarity with Jean, the men in their unit, and the soldiers of their army, whom he now counts as his bedfellows: “And in the dark peace of night, as if crushed by the silence, one could feel the slow breathing of the one hundred thousand men who were sleeping there. Then, Maurice’s worries vanished, and a sense of fraternity came over him, full of indulgent tenderness for all these sleeping men, many of whom would soon be sleeping in death” (85). Like the sleeping soldiers in Édouard Detaille’s bivouac painting *The Dream* (1888), Maurice feels a growing sense of fraternal solidarity with these men who have shared his daily hunger and fatigue and now share his nightly rest. As he begins to understand Napoleon’s belief that “[p]rivations and misery are the true teachers of the soldier,” Maurice Levasseur eventually learns not only to tolerate but to appreciate Jean Macquart, and ultimately to depend on and care for his attentive corporal and friend.⁵⁴

Jean bandages Maurice’s feet, scavenges food to sustain him, and warms his weary body on cold nights. Suffering from painful blisters after days of relentless marching, Maurice is moved when, “[o]n his knees, [Jean] himself washed the wound, bandaged it with clean linen” (109). As Jean cares for Maurice’s blistered feet with “maternal gestures” (109) and fraternal care, their physical contact turns to emotional intimacy: “An irrepressible tenderness came over Maurice, his eyes got blurry, and, in an immense need for affection, a sense of familiarity rose from his heart to his lips, as if he had found his brother in this peasant whom he had disdained only yesterday” (109). At this point in their relationship, Jean and Maurice begin to address each other with the familiar *tu* and to call each other “my old friend” and “my little one” (109, 110, 139, 222, 288). Weak with hunger and fatigue from incessant marching, Maurice continues to depend on Jean for both physical and emotional support: “Maurice fell into Jean’s arms and allowed himself to be carried like a child. Never had the arms of a woman ever made him feel such a sense of warmth in his heart. In the middle of this extreme misery and in the face of death, it was a delicious comfort to him to feel loved and cared for” (152). While the stronger and more experienced Jean exemplifies the Napoleonic maxims that “[t]he best quality of a soldier is his ability to put up with fatigue” and “[t]he best soldier is not the one who fights but the one who marches” (79), the weaker and untested Maurice must depend on Jean’s strong arms, comfort, and care. When he later falls asleep next to his friend, “Maurice ... took hold of Jean’s hand. Only then, reassured, did he fall asleep” (200). Once reluctant comrades and uneasy bedfellows, Jean and Maurice now march side by side and sleep hand in hand.

When the earlier hardships of their first days on campaign give way to ferocious combat at Sedan, many of the young and inexperienced soldiers, like Maurice, rise to the occasion in grateful support of their older comrades. Zola asserts how these young men “showed themselves to be the most disciplined, the most fraternally

united by feelings of duty and abnegation, when faced with the enemy” (267). Suggesting that a soldier fights in order to protect his comrades, Zola concurs with the earlier military theories of Napoleon, who argued that “[o]ne is only brave for others,” and the later military theories of Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq, who argued in 1868—before he was killed in combat in 1870—that soldiers’ “habit of living together ... and sharing the same fatigue and privations” produces a sense of “fraternity, union ... [and] solidarity.”⁵⁵ Zola concedes that, amid the terrors and dangers of combat, this fraternal cohesion is often uneven, since for many panicked soldiers, “the wounded, the dead no longer matter. Many comrades who fell were abandoned, forgotten, without even a backward glance” (339). But for soldiers like Jean and Maurice, the bond of friendship that had been a source of comfort on campaign is now an essential factor for survival in combat.

Jean’s attention to Maurice’s safety becomes “the gift of his entire person, the total abnegation of the self for the love of the other ... he would have given his skin to clothe the other, shelter him, warm his feet” (412). In turn, Maurice saves his beloved corporal when Jean is wounded in battle and must be carried to safety: “In the exaltation of friendship, this frail Maurice, whom he loved ... had found strong arms to carry him” (335). For Jean and Maurice, this mutual support represents both their physical and emotional union, “one holding up the other, forming one single being, in pity and suffering” (152). As they become more physically and emotionally intimate, “[f]riendship became for both of them a great release: they barely needed to embrace, since they touched each other deeply, and were one inside the other” (152). Even as the text insists that their emotional intimacy goes beyond the need to embrace, Zola’s language here ironically evokes erotic physical contact between these two soldiers who, like a pair of lovers, “touch each other deeply,” “one inside the other,” “forming one single being.” Whether or not one reads this language as euphemism, Jean and Maurice undeniably grow in emotional and physical intimacy over the course of the war, from the arduous marches at the opening of the campaign to the final brutal days of combat.

Following the debacle at Sedan, Maurice and Jean face the humiliation of defeat and the new miseries of imprisonment with the same fraternal care. As more than eighty thousand French prisoners are detained on the Iges Peninsula, at a bend in the Meuse river west of Sedan, “Maurice and Jean, along with the rest of their comrades, marched fraternally, side by side” (403). Echoing the “side by side” solidarity of Maupassant’s war prisoners Sauvage and Morissot, Zola’s Jean and Maurice together confront the dehumanizing conditions of this temporary prison while awaiting deportation to a more permanent prison camp in Germany. With little food, shelter, or clean water in this “vast, open-air prison” (407), the defeated French soldiers suffer from dysentery, malnutrition, and disease. Exposed to torrential rain and wracked by hunger, they become a “crowd dressed in rags, soldiers covered in

mud,” who must scavenge to survive this “terrifying hell that the soldiers called the Camp of Misery” (411).

For the defeated French soldiers who were captured at Sedan on September 2, 1870, the declaration of the Third Republic in Paris on September 4 inspired little hope.⁵⁶ Unaware of the events in Paris and faced with deportation to Germany, these soldiers were forced to defer their desire for revenge to the postwar period known as *La Revanche* (1871–1914), when a new wave of militarization would transform the memories of these prison camps into visions of future vengeance and new programs of nation defense.⁵⁷ In the immediate aftermath of Sedan, however, thousands of these French soldiers faced the humiliation of defeat and the new privations of imprisonment. Cut off from the mainland on the Iges Peninsula and geographically gelded from the nation, these emasculated prisoners yet again looked to one another for survival and support.

For Jean and Maurice, the shared suffering of imprisonment inspires the emotional and physical climax of their relationship. Having managed to elude their captors and escape the Iges Peninsula to the safety of the Ardennes, Jean and Maurice embrace one another in the woods: “[A]n extraordinary emotion flung them into the arms of one another. Maurice cried in great sobs, while slow tears streamed down Jean’s cheeks. This was the release of their torment ... And they held each other ... in the fraternity of all that they had just suffered together; and the kiss that they then exchanged seemed to them the softest and the strongest of their lives, the kind of kiss that they would never receive from a woman.”⁵⁸ In a gesture of both physical and emotional liberation, this breathtaking kiss simultaneously marks the end of their imprisonment and the consummation of their relationship. While the text differentiates between Maurice’s effusive sobs and Jean’s reticent tears—and thus continues to gender them in normative terms as feminine and masculine—Zola makes no attempt to euphemize or minimize this unapologetically homoerotic kiss between men.⁵⁹

Even as they evoke the buddies and bedfellows in the military memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne, and the military fiction of Stendhal, Hugo, and Balzac, Jean and Maurice represents a new chapter in the tradition of Napoleonic friendship, and a major homoerotic leap in French nineteenth-century military literature. Zola argues further that Jean and Maurice’s passion links them to an even broader history of military fraternity that stretches all the way back to antiquity: “Wasn’t it the fraternity of the first days of the world, the friendship seen in all cultures and all classes, that friendship of two men united and confounded, in their need for assistance, when faced with the menace of a natural enemy?” (152). By contextualizing Jean and Maurice’s fraternal intimacy within the broad scope of this ancient tradition, Zola legitimizes their passion: “The fraternity that had grown between this peasant and himself went to the depth of his being, to the very root of

life. It went back perhaps to the first days of the world” (307).

Following a long line of ancient combat companions and warrior lovers from the Sumerian, Israelite, Greek, and Roman traditions, Jean and Maurice are the descendants of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Jonathan and David, Achilles and Patroclus, Nisus and Euryalus, and the Sacred Band of Thebes.⁶⁰ In addition to his allusions to the ancient world, Zola’s repeated references to “fraternity” (152, 307) also place Jean and Maurice within a long tradition of French military friendship, from the medieval knights of the *Song of Roland*, to the fraternal soldiers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. When they escape from the prison camp and embrace in the woods, Jean and Maurice emerge as a new generation of combat companions and warrior lovers, fraternal comrades and Napoleonic friends. More than mere consummation or climax, their kiss ritually binds them into what Zola calls, “immortal friendship, the absolute certainly that their two hearts were now one, forever” (442). As in a marriage, this ceremonial kiss seals an immortal and absolute union.⁶¹

The honeymoon, however, cannot last. Rather than allow Jean and Maurice to become a veteran pair like Balzac’s Gondrin and Goguelat, Zola destabilizes their homoerotic union—as Maupassant does with his soldiers Jean and Luc—by creating a heteroerotic triangle.⁶² Before returning to the war, Maurice leaves his wounded Jean in the care of his twin sister Henriette who bears “a striking resemblance with Maurice, one of those extraordinary resemblances of twins that is like a doubling of faces” (187). Although Jean and Henriette develop a “connection of tender sympathy” (454), their relationship never grows beyond “a tenderness that they believed was fraternal” (470). Uninterested in Henriette and devoted to Maurice, Jean concludes that “[h]e only loved Henriette because he was Maurice’s brother.”⁶³

Even as Maurice departs, telling Henriette to “Take care of [Jean], and love him like I love him” (451), Maurice’s farewell kiss with Jean reinforces their total emotional and physical commitment to one another: “[T]hey kissed, and as in the woods, the previous evening, there was at the base of this kiss, the fraternity of the dangers they had survived together during the heroic weeks of communal life that had united them, more closely than years of ordinary friendship could have done” (451).⁶⁴ As before, this second kiss represents the profound intimacy born of shared suffering: “The days without bread, the nights without sleep, the excessive fatigue, death always present, [all this] contributed to their tenderness. How can two hearts ever again separate, when the gift of oneself had, in a sense, melted them one into the other?” (451). Bonded by mutual suffering, physically and emotionally melted into one another, Jean and Maurice leave no room for Henriette to disrupt their passionate union.

As Maurice abandons his “communal life” (451) with Jean, however, for the life of the Commune in Paris, the fratricidal violence of the civil insurrection in 1871

drives a deadly bayonet between them. While Maurice deserts the army to join the Commune, Jean later rejoins the army, after his convalescence, in the hopes of finding his beloved friend. As Maurice gives in to the “general intoxication,” “chronic drunkenness,” and “invading epidemic” (543) of the Commune, he resembles the revolutionary Florent in Zola’s *Belly of Paris* (1873), who is eaten alive by the political and social forces of a repressive regime. For Zola, the *communard* Maurice and the republican Jean embody the naturalist oppositions of sickness and health, degeneracy and regeneration, putrefaction and purification.⁶⁵ As figures for the Republic and the Commune, Jean and Maurice become fraternal enemies in “this fratricidal war” (549), where their earlier resemblance to Achilles and Patroclus or Jonathan and David gives way to images of Cain and Abel.⁶⁶ When they finally meet on opposing sides of the barricades in Paris, Jean mistakenly penetrates Maurice with his bayonet in a final macabre embrace.

As Maurice lies dying in anguish, he tries to console Jean by reminding him of his own battlefield advice, that “when there is a gangrenous limb, it is better to cut it off with an axe than to die of cholera from it ... Well, I am the gangrenous limb that you removed” (576). In these self-deprecating terms, Maurice describes himself as part of the diseased and degenerate France whose elimination will make way for the healthy regeneration of the nation by citizens like Jean: “My old friend, Jean, you are the good and solid one. Go, take a shovel and trowel, and return to the fields and rebuild your home! As for me, you did well to kill me, since I am the ulcer attached to your bones!” (576). In Zola’s naturalist vision, Maurice represents the cancerous corruption of both the Second Empire and the Commune, a tumorous growth to be lanced from the Third Republic so that Jean and other healthy members of the body politic can heal the nation, like a regenerating tree “that grows another strong stalk when one has cut off a rotten branch” (581). This naturalist discourse on disease, however, neglects the importance of (bio) diversity and difference for a healthy social and political body. While Maurice is condemned for his effeminacy and weakness, Jean owes his survival during the war to Maurice’s physical strength and emotional support. Characterized as a deserting coward, Maurice confronts the republican forces on the barricades in Paris as bravely as he had faced the Prussians on the battlefields of Sedan. Demonized as a gangrenous growth, Maurice willingly sacrifices himself so that Jean may prosper.

For Jean, Maurice’s death is devastating. While Zola’s naturalist vision suggests that Jean is now liberated to take up again that “great and difficult task of an entire France to rebuild” (582), it is unclear if Jean is up to the task. Having fought in two wars, at Solferino in 1859 and Sedan in 1870, Jean is weary of military service and sacrifice. Having already attempted to sow his seed—as both a farmer and a husband in *The Earth* (1887)—and survived the murderous inheritance drama that led to his wife’s death, Jean is disillusioned with marriage and family. Having loved and lost

Maurice, Jean is perhaps unwilling to rebuild a France—as Balzac’s Benassis and Genestas had done in their mountain valley—that has robbed him of his friend and companion. Even if Jean felt a sense of patriotic duty to help rebuild his nation in the aftermath of foreign invasion and civil war, he may have little desire to confront these new challenges without the continued support of Maurice. According to the novel’s naturalist logic, Jean has been surgically saved from a “gangrenous limb” (576), but in cleaving two hearts that had long ago “melted ... one into the other” (451), the amputation of Maurice butchers Jean in the process. In the aftermath of this operation, Jean survives Maurice’s death, but emerges from this hack job with a hemorrhaging aortic wound.



IN THE NOVEL’S apocalyptic conclusion, the Commune is brutally suppressed by republican forces as Paris burns in an act of incendiary purification. While the fires blaze at the Tuileries Palace and the Hôtel de Ville, Maurice languishes on his deathbed where his mounting fever produces delirious visions of flaming sodomitical excess: “[H]e evoked the galas of Gomorrah and Sodom, the music, flowers, monstrous pleasures, the palaces falling from such debauchery, shedding light on the abomination, nudities, and luxury of candles that burned themselves out” (562). In feverish delirium, Maurice prophetically suggests that, like Sodom and Gomorrah, Paris burns for its past two decades of debaucherous extravagance during the Second Empire (1852–70) and its last two months of decadent rebellion during the Commune (March 26– May 28, 1871). Consumed by fever, Maurice perishes in this ritual fire as Jean falls “in front of the bed, sobbing, exhausted, and without strength, weighted by the terrible thought that he had killed his friend” (565).

According to this incendiary metaphor, Jean’s tears should quench his grief and douse his passion for Maurice. Having extinguished his flaming friend, Jean can now leave behind this old flame and their sodomitical past to help rebuild a ritually purified France. This naturalist logic, however, ignores the fact that Jean has been burned by this fratricidal disaster and is emotionally burned-out by grief. As he walks away from Maurice’s deathbed, Jean also abandons Henriette, since “Maurice’s grave now separated them” (579). Although Jean can see “above this city in flames that dawn was already breaking” (581), this new day dawns on a Parisian Sodom and Gomorrah whose persistent flames and smoldering embers will fuel the fires of sodomitical passion and militarist revenge among a new generation of soldiers during the period leading up to the First World War.

As France’s long Revolutionary and Napoleonic century draws to a close, Jean and Maurice represent the legacy of military fraternity, from the First to the Second Empire and the First to the Third Republic. Despite their fratricidal end, this passionate pair symbolizes the persistence of Napoleonic friendship in the French

military from the beginning to the final decades of the nineteenth century. More than mere camaraderie or intimacy, their physical and emotional passion for one another in 1870–71 could be thought of as an inaugural military model, in French military literature, for the newly coined concept in 1869 called “homosexual” love.⁶⁷ Zola’s Franco-Prussian pair thus serves as a bridge between Balzac’s Napoleonic buddies and Proust’s First World War lovers, or more broadly between the warrior lovers of antiquity and the homosexual soldiers of modernity.

Homo Military Modernity
Proust and the First World War

An officer came out of the brothel and went back to his men at the front. On leave from the war in the spring of 1916, this infantry officer had retreated to Paris where, on a darkened street in a remote part of town, he had entered an inconspicuous hotel in search of corporal comfort. Inside, young men in uniforms of many nations and ranks made up a virtual platoon of soldiers for hire, including brawny Parisian *poilus*, strong-armed French sailors, charming Québécois corpsmen, and Scottish sergeants in kilts. Whether they were real soldiers in need of cash or prostitutes dressed for success, these young men fulfilled a wide range of fantasies for both their civilian and military clients in need of a little wartime tenderness, homoerotic release, or a good sadomasochistic thrashing. There is no way of knowing which soldier he desired or what fantasy he fulfilled, but having satisfied his needs, the fur-loughed French officer buttoned his uniform, left the brothel behind, and prepared to return to the war. A man of great influence, he might have arranged a longer leave or a transfer to Paris rather than return to the front where machine guns and artillery shells shattered the robust bodies of his men. Trading the pleasures of the brothel for the company of his comrades in the trenches, the officer returned to the front where he was killed the next day while protecting his men from fire.¹

Robert de Saint-Loup's emergence from Jupien's brothel in Marcel Proust's *Time Regained* (1927) announces the emergence of the homosexual soldier from the French military closet. Recounted from the narrator Marcel's point of view, Saint-Loup's exit from the brothel is both a literal and figurative coming-out story. Walking through an unfamiliar neighborhood late at night under the anti-aircraft darkness of wartime Paris, Marcel is drawn to a lively hotel from which "I saw an officer come out quickly, fifteen meters away from me, that is to say too far away for me to be able to distinguish him in the profound darkness" (389). Far from a clear or confident declaration of identity, this officer's coming-out is obscured by his rapid nighttime departure and Marcel's uncertainty that it is even his friend Robert whom he has just seen exiting "this hotel whose modest appearance made me strongly doubt that it was Saint-Loup" (389). Even later, when Marcel draws a connection between "a *croix de guerre* that had been found on the floor" (399) in Jupien's brothel and Saint-Loup's inquiry "to see if he had, during his visit with me that morning, dropped his *croix de guerre*" (419), Saint-Loup's homosexuality is cloaked in a mantle of uncertainty as great as the "large overcoat" (389) that covers his uniform.²

Despite this ambiguity, Saint-Loup's coming-out of Jupien's brothel nonetheless

marks the appearance of the French soldier on the verge of homosexual identification. As the most prominent soldier in what has been called one of the most vital texts on homosexual modernity, Saint-Loup could thus be described as the figure that brings the French military homosexual out of the closet.³ This seemingly inaugural moment, however, seems to undermine its own sense of novelty. While Marcel is at first surprised to discover “a few military men” (390) in Jupien’s brothel, he soon realizes that this clandestine homosexual closet is filled with “soldiers of all arms and allies of every nation” (402). While Proust offers a groundbreaking literary glance inside this unambiguously homoerotic world, this gathering of homosexual soldiers is, in fact, nothing new. What Marcel finds in Jupien’s brothel is an already flourishing homosexual military subculture, whose erotic vocabularies, codes, and characters were established long before 1916. Rather than a sudden revelation, Saint-Loup’s coming-out is the homoerotic culmination of a slow evolution in French military culture stretching back to the foundations of Revolutionary fraternity and the century-long tradition of Napoleonic friendship.

Homoeroticism in the French Trenches

The First World War inspired a profusion of homoerotic literary texts celebrating the affection between soldiers in the trenches, from the verses of the English poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon to the essays, letters, journals, and fiction of the French novelists André Gide, Jean Cocteau, Pierre Loti, and Marcel Proust.⁴ In the shadow of the war, André Gide theorized in *Corydon* (1911–20) that “periods of military fervor are essentially Uranian periods, just as one sees warrior peoples particularly inclined towards homosexuality.”⁵ Begun during the period of militarization leading to the outbreak of the war in 1914 and completed in the aftermath of the armistice in 1918, *Corydon* compares Plato’s “Army of Lovers” to Napoleon’s Grande Armée. Alluding to Bonaparte’s sod-omitical Second Consul and Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès and to Napoleon’s fanatically devoted General Junot, Gide argues that the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804 and the later Penal Code of 1810 decriminalized sodomy because “these laws would have bothered certain of [Napoleon’s] best generals. Reprehensible or not, this behavior is ... very close to military life.”⁶

In 1915, Jean Cocteau volunteered as an ambulance driver at the front. Like Walt Whitman, who served as a hospital volunteer during the American Civil War, and Ernest Hemingway, who also drove an ambulance during the First World War, Cocteau witnessed both the carnage of battle and the compassion of combat soldiers. In his letters from the front lines, Cocteau writes of his intimate camaraderie with French *poilus* and their sailor comrades, explaining in 1916 how these “dear sailors have welcomed and adopted me ... I eat and I sleep with them.”⁷ Admiring the athletic beauty of American and English soldiers, Cocteau writes how he “look[s]

with envy on the Americans, colossal bronzes in doughboy uniforms,” and marvels at how “[t]he English prove that marble betrays the true colors of Greek faces.”⁸ In addition to admiring his French, English, and American comrades, Cocteau was reprimanded for lingering over Senegalese soldiers in the camp showers and for his bacchanalian nights with Moroccan *zouaves*.

In Cocteau’s war novel, *Thomas the Imposter* (1923), the young Guillaume is also in love with his fellow combatants. Before he is killed at the front, Guillaume becomes attached to a group of soldiers who care for him and for one another amid the miseries of the trenches: “It was ... a family, this battalion ... They adopted Guillaume. They would never leave one another.”⁹ Cocteau explains that this exchange of mutual affection represents “the spirit of close proximity during a long war,” which gives way to a “spirit of family between [soldiers]” (145) in the trenches of Belgium and eastern France. While the soldiers “became a home for Guillaume,” Cocteau writes, “Guillaume became their fetish” (106). In turn, the beloved Guillaume “transferred his affection to his new friends. He poured the wealth of his love onto them. He was in love with the battalion” (106). As Cocteau suggests, this combat intimacy between Guillaume and his trench buddies is a mix of family and fetish, adoption and affection, fraternity and love.

Like Cocteau, Julien Viaud was also in love with sailors. Long before he began to publish novels under the pseudonym Pierre Loti, the young Viaud had trained at the French Naval Academy in Brittany in 1867 where he began an illustrious career as a naval officer, serving on numerous ships and in various ports of the French colonial empire before rising to the rank of naval captain in 1906 and grand officer of the Légion d’Honneur in 1914. While Viaud’s naval voyages to Turkey, Tahiti, Senegal, and Japan inspired his orientalist novels *Aziyadé* (1879), *Loti’s Marriage* (1880), *A Spahi’s Novel* (1881), and *Madame Chrysanthemum* (1887), Viaud’s intimate friendship with his fellow sailor Pierre Le Cor inspired his homoerotic novel *My Brother Yves* (1883).¹⁰ Recalling Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd* (1891) and prefiguring Jean Genet’s *Querelle de Brest* (1947), Loti’s naval novel recounts the fraternal intimacy between an older officer and a younger sailor named Yves Kermadec. While the officer admires the physical beauty of his beloved Yves whom he describes as “[t]all, trim like an ancient Greek, with the muscular arms, neck, and carriage of an athlete,” Yves is equally dedicated to his beloved officer whom he calls “my good brother” and to whom he later writes, “I am so sad to embark this time without you. I close by embracing you with all my heart. Your brother who loves you.”¹¹

Already at the end of his naval career in 1914, the sixty-four-year-old Viaud asked to be remobilized at the outbreak of the First World War. During several diplomatic missions and visits to the front, Captain Viaud wrote in his war journal that, despite their horrific conditions, the “trenches, tunnels, small obscure labyrinths, [and]

subterranean passages of suffering and abnegation” were a “school for socialism,” where “all social classes mix, where friendships are made which did not seem possible yesterday.”¹² In terms that evoke both Revolutionary fraternity and Napoleonic friendship, Viaud writes that the trenches inspired feelings “synonymous with tolerance and fraternity” and moved soldiers to “[l]ove one another” (85). As a naval expert, Viaud recognized how the trenches created an “affectionate familiarity between commanders and their men” that was already well established in the navy, where close quarters and long absences at sea encouraged intimacy and affection between sailors. For the army, Viaud writes, trench warfare required officers to “live closer with their soldiers and become even more loved by them,” and to know that “if they fall, these humble companions will not neglect to come, at great risk, to defend and tenderly collect them” (84–85). While Viaud ignores the major obstacles of class conflict, incompetent leadership, and shell shock in the trenches of 1914–18, he attests to the way “long and intimate chats between officers and their men” created a sense of homosocial intimacy and “sublime devotion” (84–85) between many combatants in the trenches of the First World War.

In France, these texts on military homoeroticism by Gide, Cocteau, and Loti grew out of the literary tradition established by Balzac, Maupassant, and Zola, as well as more recent preoccupations with sexual inversion and homosexuality during the period between the Franco-Prussian and First World Wars. After the emasculating defeat of 1870, France tried to reassert its sense of national manhood with new programs of military recruitment, training, and mobilization during the interwar period known as *La Revanche* (1871–1914). At the same time, medical and criminological discourse looked to the male homosexual—a term coined in 1869 on the eve of the war in 1870—as a convenient scapegoat for national anxieties over France’s humiliating military defeat.¹³ This fear of weakness and degeneracy extended to Germany where Bismarck believed that “[h]omosexuality is perilous for the state,” despite the fact that the hero of the Franco-Prussian victory—Alfred Krupp—was a suspected homosexual.¹⁴ In a series of similar ironies, this preoccupation with homosexuality inspired criminal investigations, military reforms, and technological innovations that may have inadvertently encouraged rather than suppressed homoerotic life.

Although medical and criminological studies condemned homosexuals, they simultaneously called attention to the existence of a homoerotic military subculture in France. While the military’s new programs of universal conscription, hygiene, and athletics tried to revitalize the French soldier, they also brought every able-bodied male citizen into intimate homosocial contact with other men, exposing soldiers to one another’s bodies like never before. And as deadly innovations in artillery and chemical weapons increased the dangers of modern warfare, soldiers would need to rely more than ever on the support of their buddies. For many, mutual

suffering in the trenches led to even stronger bonds of affection and friendship. For homosexual soldiers like Robert de Saint-Loup, the increased dangers and intimacy of the First World War provided tacit permission to express homoerotic desire and love for one's comrades.

Homosexual Soldiers in France (1857–96)

The introduction of the word “homosexual” in 1869 announced an explosion of sexological, psychological, and criminological discourses on homoeroticism during the final decades of the nineteenth century. This preoccupation with homoerotic behavior produced a vast amount of research in Europe, from the work of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Sigmund Freud in Austria and Germany, to the writings of Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, and Edward Carpenter in England, to the research of Auguste Ambroise Tardieu, François Carlier, and Georges Saint-Paul in France.¹⁵ In their analysis of criminal reports, medical records, and memoirs, Tardieu, Carlier, and Saint-Paul document the lives of several homosexual soldiers in France between 1857 and 1896.

In *Pederasty: A Medico-Legal Study of the Attacks on Morals* (1857), the prominent physician and scientist Auguste Ambroise Tardieu notes that of the twelve soldiers in his study, three were arrested for public indecency and crimes of passion between men.¹⁶ In the first two cases, Tardieu documents how, on November 10, 1854, “Mr. D, a soldier, and Mr. L, a cook, 18 years old, were both arrested at night, on the Champ de Mars, partially unclothed” (69), and recounts how, on November 12, 1857, “Mr. Letellier, 44 years old, a worker in a mineral water factory, was killed ... by Pascal, a soldier whom he had invited home to sleep with him after an evening spent with four other avowed pederasts: a servant, a wine merchant, a cabinetmaker, and another soldier, who, for their part, also coupled off two by two” (77–78). When Tardieu is asked by the police to examine the murderer, he allegedly finds physiological proof of the soldier's pederasty: “This man, a soldier, aged 25 years, has an athletic build ... Nothing characteristic about the penis, but he has an enormous *infundibulum* and relaxation of the sphincter, despite visible efforts by the accused to contract these parts ... The aforesaid Pascal shows all the characteristic signs of pederastic habits” (78–79). These dubious conclusions are characteristic of Tardieu's other examinations, where specious physiological signs are cited as incriminating evidence. In a third military case involving the “Soldier H, aged 22 years, who says that he only took part in onanistic relations” (79), Tardieu finds no physiological evidence of anal eroticism, despite the young soldier's guilt by association with a “[s]ociety of seven pederasts” (81). From public sex to murder and masturbation, the pederastic crimes of Tardieu's subjects offer a glimpse into the homoerotic life of French soldiers during the Second Empire.

Thirty years later, François Carlier's *The Two Prostitutions* (1887) provided further evidence of a homoerotic military subculture during the Third Republic. Building on Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet's monumental study *On Prostitution in the City of Paris* (1836), and on his own experience as the former chief of the morals division of the Paris police, Carlier documents the criminal records of military prostitutes and clients. Pointing out that "the large army-base towns are all inhabited by a special category of pederasts," Carlier explains that in Paris, "There are two or three establishments composed of a café on the ground floor, and with furnished rooms on the floors above. These establishments, managed by pederasts, are especially intended for soldiers"¹⁷ Prefiguring Jupien's brothel in Proust's *Time Regained* (1927) by several decades, these establishments provided French soldiers with a place to find pleasure with—or employment as—homosexual prostitutes.

Underpaid soldiers in need of extra income found ample opportunity among civilian clients looking for men in uniform.¹⁸ Carlier cites the example of a man who admits that "civilians have never inspired anything but disgust in me, while the sight of a uniform drives me crazy. For the man who's wearing it, I'm capable of making every kind of sacrifice" (139). Beaten several times by soldiers who refused his advances, this man had changed his residence on multiple occasions in order to escape his assailants and seek out more hospitable military men, both in Paris, where "he rents an apartment in proximity to the École Militaire," and in the provinces where France's many military camps offered new possibilities for erotic military contact: "[H]e is thinking of selling his things and moving to a hotel in the country near Camp Châlons" (142).

However, this man's military devotion is perhaps best exemplified by his bedroom, where he displays the trophies of his many military visitors and erotic conquests: "[T]he bedroom is literally papered with obscene drawings, mixed with photos of the marshals of France, officers, non-commissioned officers of all ranks, and foot soldiers; three huge paintings representing the officer corps from three regiments; and painted engravings representing a collection of uniforms from the French army" (142–43). In an eroticized version of the military museum at the Invalides, this man's collection demonstrates his passion for the heroes of recent French victories as well as the military masculinity of their foreign adversaries: "On one of the walls of the bedroom is a trophy composed of: a Légionnaire's cross, military medals from the Crimean, Italian, and Mexican campaigns; other foreign crosses; a saddlebag and a soldier's uniform; an Austrian soldier's coat; another from a Russian soldier; a Cossack helmet, a Prussian helmet, and a police cap" (143). The irony of this last item is lost on the policeman Carlier, who does not consider that one of his own colleagues may have been this man's lover. Nevertheless, this collection of medals, uniforms, and paintings illustrates the extent of this man's military fetish and the wide range of soldier lovers who—like Saint-

Loup leaving his *croix de guerre* behind in Jupien's brothel—have left their mark on his bedroom. Although they obtained these reports through the harassment and criminal prosecution of their subjects, Tardieu and Carlier nonetheless provide documented proof of homosexual soldiers in Second Empire and Third Republic France.

In a later study titled *Defects and Poisons: Sexual Perversions and Perversity* (1896), the military doctor Georges Saint-Paul focuses his analysis on a homosexual soldier who had sent an autobiographical manuscript to Émile Zola sometime during the 1880s or 1890s in the hope that his story might inspire the celebrated writer. Despite his courage in publishing novels that the Paris press had once characterized as “putrid literature,” Zola was reluctant to publish the homosexual soldier's manuscript and later gave it to Dr. Saint-Paul who—under the pseudonym Dr. Lauphs—published the text in 1896 as *The Novel of a Born Invert*.¹⁹ In this “novel,” the anonymous narrator describes his attraction to men, his erotic fumbling with a young sergeant during his military service, and his passionate encounter with a retired cavalry captain.

In his preface to the text, Zola writes sympathetically about its author: “When I received this curious document a few years ago, I was struck by the great psychological and social interest it offered. I was touched by its absolute sincerity, for one can feel the passion or, I would almost say, the eloquence of truth ... Here is a complete, naive, spontaneous confession, which very few men have dared to create.”²⁰ While Zola later concludes that “[a]n invert is a destroyer of the family, nation, and humanity,” he appreciates this man's courage and eloquence, which Zola freely admits to having attempted but failed to match: “It was in the thought that its publication might be useful that I first had the desire to use the manuscript and to give it to the public in a form that I looked for in vain and that finally made me abandon the project” (1). Although there is little proof that Zola penned this “novel” himself, the addition of his preface and the anonymity of both the text's author and editor means that “Zola” was the only authentic name to appear on its cover.²¹ And though its influence is unclear, this text was likely in Zola's possession during the late 1880s or early 1890s while he was writing the homoerotic military novel *The Debacle* (1892). Zolian speculation aside, *The Novel of a Born Invert* is an important document on homosexual soldiers in late nineteenth-century French discourse.²²

In this text, the young soldier recounts his wild nights with a sympathetic sergeant in the dark corners of their barracks: “Finally, I made up my mind, took off my uniform, stripped to my birthday suit, and got into the little bed [with] my young friend; in our excitement and the haze caused by the wine ... I was treated to the softest caresses and the most flattering words.”²³ As the soldiers become erotically intimate, the text alternates between French and italicized Latin, presumably to conceal the more graphic material from impressionable readers: “[S]uddenly he

leaned over, *embraced me in his arms and applied a long kiss to my cheek: at the same time, he plunged his hand under the sheets and firmly grasped my flesh.* I thought that I would die and an immense joy seized me. *We remained a few seconds like that, resting one head against the other, our fiery cheeks touching, my mouth in his ...* I was never so happy!”²⁴ As these military bedfellows become barracks lovers, their explicit sexuality surpasses the passionate kisses—though not the emotional intimacy—of Zola’s Jean Macquart and Maurice Levasseur.

After his barracks sergeant, the young narrator becomes intimate with a cavalry captain: “I had no affection for this man, but he seemed to me so manly that I strongly desired to be with him, even if only for a few instants. When he looked at me, I got nervous; I blushed, and when he touched me, I shuddered with pleasure” (73). Overwhelmed with desire, the narrator eventually abandons himself to this older, more experienced, and masculine lover: “He undressed me ... moving his hands over my entire body, took off my shoes, socks, shirt, and carried me like a small child to his bed. In the wink of an eye, he was also completely nude and he lay down next to me; it was like a dream” (74). At this point in the narrative, the italicized Latin offers the most explicitly erotic passage in the entire text:

*He lay on top of me, panting and groaning loudly, and he clasped me so tightly in his arms that I almost suffocated; he began stroking himself on top of my body. He had a huge member which, when rubbed over me, gave me an extraordinarily pleasurable sensation ... When he emitted his semen, he inundated me and didn’t cease thrusting, but roared like a bull. Meanwhile, I had ejaculated copiously, and for a long time we clung together as if unconscious and indeed glued together; in fact, we struggled to unstick ourselves.*²⁵

Having given in to the erotic desire of his older military mentor, the young narrator explains that “I no longer had any shame at that moment and he also seemed fully happy. I breathed long sighs of pleasure and satisfaction” (74). Like the young Marbot with his mentor Pertelay or the young Coignet with his bedfellow Renard, the narrator sets out to please his captain. In eroticizing this relationship, however, *The Novel of a Born Invert* moves beyond mere mentor-ship and bedfellow intimacy to an unambiguous expression of military homosexuality.

For all their focus on explicitly homosexual soldiers, the collective work of Tardieu, Carlier, and Saint-Paul reproduces the same tropes of fraternal embraces and corporal comforts seen throughout nineteenth-century military literature in France, from the memoirs of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgoigne to the fiction of Balzac, Maupassant, and Zola. This seemingly sudden emergence of the homosexual soldier during the Second Empire and Third Republic thus followed in the tradition of Napoleonic friendship from the First Empire, Restoration, and July Monarchy.

While French criminology and sexology during the last decades of the century documented modern military homosexuality, the roots of these relationships can be traced to the gradual transformation in social relations among French soldiers throughout the nineteenth century: from the invocation of Revolutionary fraternity (1790–99), and the evolution of Napoleonic friendship (1799–1815), to the mutual dedication of Napoleonic veterans (1815–70), and the devotion of neo-Napoleonic soldiers during the Franco-Prussian War (1870).

Military Muscularity and *La Revanche* (1871–1914)

France's emasculating defeat in 1870 led to a national obsession with revenge. Reports of debilitated and demoralized troops from the battlefields and prison camps of the Franco-Prussian War gave rise to the belief that the French soldier was weak and susceptible to defeat.²⁶ Between 1871 and 1914, the French military thus engaged in a series of radical reforms, including new programs of universal conscription, athletics, and hygiene, and innovations in mobilization, armament, and defense, that collectively transformed Third Republic France into a modern military state during the decades leading to the First World War.²⁷ By revitalizing its armies and reorganizing its resources, France hoped to challenge German military superiority and prepare French soldiers to defend the nation from future attack.

The Third Republic's first Minister of the Interior, Léon Gambetta set the tone for *La Revanche* when he argued in a celebrated speech in Bordeaux on June 26, 1871, that France needed to focus more of its resources on education, defense, and fitness: "We must double our efforts so that they focus on the development of both the spirit and the body ... I want a man to be able not only to think, read, and reason, but also to act and fight. Alongside teachers, we must place gymnasts and officers so that our children, soldiers, and fellow citizens will be able to hold a sword, use a gun, and march long distances ... to valiantly endure all kinds of hardships for their country."²⁸ Answering Gambetta's call, the National Assembly enacted and amended the law of universal conscription between 1872 and 1905, requiring two years of military service for all able-bodied male citizens.²⁹ In an attempt to engineer a stronger fighting body and a more effective *corps militaire*, the French military created rigorous new programs of hygiene and athletics to help soldiers withstand the fatigue of combat, the ravages of disease, and the threat of physical and moral degeneracy.

From Colonel Victor Marchand's *Cleanliness and Hygiene of the Soldier* (1871) to Dr. Étienne Viguiet's *The Role of the Officer in Matters of Hygiene* (1907), hundreds of new studies were published during *La Revanche* advocating the importance of hygienic reforms in preventing infection and disease.³⁰ Among the many proposed innovations was the radical new idea of regular bathing in order to combat the filth, germs, and fetid odors of the barracks. During the 1860s and 1870s,

military doctors engaged in an extended debate on the most efficient way for a large quantity of men to bathe regularly: by total or partial immersion, steam bath or shower. Legislatively mandated military reforms in the 1880s and 1890s called for the addition of sinks in barracks, regular communal showers, and frequent inspections of soldiers' bodies—especially heads, feet, and genitals—by their superior officers in order to ensure proper hygiene.³¹

In addition to new standards of sanitation and cleanliness, young recruits were also subjected to innovative methods of physical fitness. In *The Culture of Virility and the Physical Duties of the Combat Officer* (1913), the military reformer Georges Hébert argues that citizens and officers have a civic responsibility to develop their bodies: "Every man has a duty to himself to develop his physique ... The modern officer, like mythic heroic warriors, must be strong. An officer's strength must be envisaged in the most complete sense and include: physical, virile, moral, and intellectual strength."³² Inspired by other nineteenth-century military and fitness reformers in France, including Francisco Amoros, Georges Demy, Philippe Tissier, and Pierre de Coubertin, Hébert's "natural method" stressed the benefits of barefooted, shirtless, open-air exercise such as running, jumping, climbing, and swimming which, he discovered, was a skill unknown to many sailors and several admirals in the French navy. Instructing his soldiers to "Be strong! The weak are useless or cowardly" (149), Hébert argued that "[t]o wage war, an officer must be strong" (145) and believed that "only those who are physically strong and virile will be able to serve" (147). Through vigorous exercise, Hébert hoped to exorcise France's emasculating past and transform the military body into a muscled machine.

Beyond mere machismo, Hébert's natural method produced impressive results. In *The Celebration of Muscle* (1913), Georges Rozet describes the muscular and robust bodies that he observed at a naval training camp in Brittany where Lieutenant Hébert "trains his men practically nude" in order to make them "athletes in the true sense of the word, that is to say he trains them to be complete normal men."³³ In subjecting these nude bodies to the rigors of open-air exercise, Hébert hoped to sweat out their toxic impurities: "[A]s they wrestle ... many continue to sweat: that strong human odor you smell represents the last civilized toxins they are trying to shed" (220–21). With their "robust shoulders, bulging chests" and their "large pectoral and dorsal muscles" (218–19), Hébert's soldiers were models of masculine virility produced by the *revanchard* reforms in military health and hygiene. Intended to combat effeminacy, this new muscularity ironically created new objects of homoerotic desire in an army where universal conscription brought all French men—heterosexual and homosexual—in ever more intimate contact. No amount of weight-training, however, could prepare these men to withstand the violence of the First World War, when technological modernity would shred their beautiful bodies with horrific efficiency.

Combat Brutality and the First World War (1914–18)

After years of physical training, the French soldier discovered in the trenches of the Great War that his muscles offered little protection from machine guns, artillery, and mustard gas. Despite efforts to transform the male body, simultaneous advances in military technology produced weapons capable of dismantling soldiers with extraordinary violence. Muscles that had taken years of exercise and training to build could be efficiently ripped from their sinews by a single mortar or round of machine gun fire. Born out of a desire to create a better soldier, the development of the male body in France at the end of the nineteenth century could not keep men safe from the carnage of industrialized warfare. The French soldier emerged from the prison camps of the Franco-Prussian War to create a virile new body in the training camps of *La Revanche* before offering himself up to the killing fields of the First World War, when an entire generation of Hébert's muscled men became cannon fodder in Flanders and Picardy.

In his Goncourt Prize-winning trench novel *Under Fire* (1916), Henri Barbusse describes the horrors on the battlefields of eastern France where soldiers' bodies became rotting corpses: "They are huddled together, each body's arms and legs petrified in a different agonizing pose. There are some with half-rotten faces, the skin yellowed with black spots. Several have faces that are completely blackened, tarred, the lips enormous and swollen ... Between two bodies, sticking out from one or the other, is a cut-up fist which ends in a ball of filaments."³⁴ Those who survived were often forced to watch the decomposition of their comrades: "Further on, they've left a cadaver that they brought back from the front as best they could ... bound up with barbed wire, attached to the two ends of a wooden stake. He has been transported in a ball in this metallic hammock, and left there. You can no longer distinguish the top or bottom of the body" (125).

In contrast to the anonymity of this rotting and "formless mass" (124), Barbusse describes the bodies of four dear comrades who now decay in the mud: "They are our buddies: Lamuse, Barque, Biquet, and little Eudore. They are decomposing there, right next to us ... we live face to face with our dead" (188). After months and years of mutual suffering and support, all is destroyed with horrific speed and brutality. Having shared the same bunks, barracks, and trenches with these men, Barbusse was used to the sight and smell of his comrades' bodies. Now he must resign himself to their new forms and odors, as a "cloud of pestilence began to hang about the remains of these creatures with whom we had so closely lived and so long suffered" (190–91).

The deadly technologies of the Great War paradoxically destroyed and cemented military friendships. While soldiers lost their friends at an alarming rate, the unprecedented misery of the trenches brought many soldiers closer together. The crippling fear, shell shock, and horror of 1914–18, however, represented only the

latest chapter in a long century of suffering that had ironically inspired greater tenderness and affection between soldiers. Napoleonic friendship had evolved not only from fraternal and egalitarian reforms, but also from the miseries of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in which millions of soldiers lost their friends, limbs, and lives. Beyond the military theories of Napoleon, Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq, and Marshal Hubert Lyautey—who collectively argued during the First Empire, Second Empire, and Third Republic for the tactical advantages of military fraternity—the evolution of intimate friendship among French soldiers was as much a product of shared wartime suffering as a goal of military policy.³⁵

Before the outbreak of the Great War, fin de siècle France already faced major obstacles to military solidarity and friendship, from the scandalous political upheaval of the Boulanger Crisis (1887–89) and Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906), to the ongoing challenges of the French colonial empire. The popular War Minister and controversial political figure General Georges Ernest Boulanger posed a serious threat to the Third Republic’s fragile democracy during the 1880s. Long after Captain Alfred Dreyfus was arrested and convicted for treason (1894–95), imprisoned in French Guiana (1895–99), defended by Émile Zola in *J’accuse* (1898), pardoned (1899), and exonerated (1906), explosive tensions between *Dreyfusards* and anti-Semitic *Anti-Dreyfusards* continued to plague both military and civilian life. And France’s ever expanding colonial empire in North and West Africa, East Asia, and the Caribbean placed increasingly onerous demands on French soldiers and sailors, who bore the moral and material burdens of exploiting France’s colonial resources and brutally conquered subjects.³⁶

In more mundane ways, universal conscription now subjected all able-bodied men to the tedious routine and disciplinary abuse of mandatory military service, which was openly criticized and parodied in the 1880s novels of Georges Courteline, Abel Hermant, Georges Darien, and Lucien Descaves.³⁷ As prewar tedium turned to mass slaughter at the Battles of the Marne and the Somme, a platoon of novelists including Henri Barbusse, Maurice Genevoix, Georges Duhamel, and Roland Dorgelès spoke out against the new horrors of mechanized warfare.³⁸ As André Gide, Jean Cocteau, Pierre Loti, and Marcel Proust demonstrate in their own military texts, many soldiers responded to such horrors by drawing closer to their fellow comrades in the trenches. From monotony to massacre, these new generations of war writers described military life between 1870 and 1918 as a paradoxical combination of comic and catastrophic absurdity, gratifying and grotesque intimacy, compassionate and brutal humanity. While all of France’s soldiers struggled to survive both boredom and slaughter, homosexual soldiers—from Saint-Paul’s anonymous invert to Proust’s Robert de Saint-Loup—found erotic and emotional solace in the company of their comrades.

Proust's *Poilus* and Robert de Saint-Loup (1916)

For the Baron de Charlus and other clients of Jupien's brothel, the soldiers of the Great War are objects of visual and erotic consumption. Charlus marvels at the athletic beauty of English soldiers whom he compares to the "athletes of Greece" and "the youths of Plato or Sparta" (386). Thrilled at the rugged masculinity of French soldiers, he confesses "I can't tell you what pleasure I take in our *poilus*" (386). Charlus even admires the virility of German soldiers, admitting that "the superb fellow known as the Gerry soldier is a strong and healthy type" (387). Like another regular client who asks if "one couldn't introduce him to an amputee," Charlus eroticizes these military men and fetish-izes the remote violence of the war by taking pleasure "in getting beaten with a paddle stuck with nails" by the military brutes in the brothel (823). Substituting sadomasochistic play for combat suffering, Charlus loves the thrill of simulated military brutality. Back in Paris, safe from the machine guns and artillery shells at the front, Charlus and other civilian johns take perverse pleasure in subjecting themselves to mimetic military violence at the hands of hired soldiers.

Unlike Barbusse's graphic descriptions of carnage in the trenches, Proust sublimates the violence of the war by focusing on life in Paris where soldiers on leave from the "edges of death to which they must return" (336) frequent the city's lively brothels, busy theaters, and crowded restaurants, marveling at how "[y]ou would think that there was no war going on here" (313). This contrast between the pleasures of Paris and the suffering at the front leads Marcel to believe that "there was something cruel in the temporary leaves granted to the combatants" and to suspect that men on leave in the capital "would never leave again; they'll desert" (336). This assessment, however, does not apply to Saint-Loup, who willingly leaves behind the pleasures of the capital to return to his men in the trenches.

Saint-Loup's return to the front cannot be explained as mere military obligation or patriotic duty. While others attempt to evade their military service, "Saint-Loup had, in an inverse way and with success, made the same effort to be in the middle of danger" (420). Though zealous patriots conversely enlist in order to "go and stick it to those dirty Krauts" (390), the career officer Saint-Loup has no hatred of the German enemy: "Never had a man had less hatred of a people ... Nor did he hate Germanism; the last words I heard coming out of his mouth, six days ago, were those that open a Schumann song" (425). And unlike Charlus, who takes pleasure in sadomasochistic play, Saint-Loup does not seem to share this erotic penchant for simulated violence and military brutality. More than anything else, Saint-Loup willingly submits to the dangers of combat out of affectionate devotion to his comrades: "Saint-Loup admires the courage of young men, the intoxication of cavalry charges, the intellectual and moral nobility of entirely pure man-to-man friendship, where one sacrifices one's life for another" (324).

Even before the war, Saint-Loup's admiration of romantic friendship and military

self-sacrifice had produced a kind of self-effacing fatalism that Marcel had recognized: “Robert had often, before the war, told me with sadness: ‘Oh, let’s not talk about my life, I am a man condemned in advance.’ Was he alluding to the vice that he had succeeded until then in hiding from the whole world, but that he knew?” (428). Marcel’s question implies that Saint-Loup’s expectations of an early military death were somehow related to his homosexual vice and love for men. Ultimately, Saint-Loup’s death in combat “while protecting the retreat of his men” (425) is a self-sacrificial act of fraternal devotion: “[F]aced with the enemy, he had avoided, just like with his mobilization, that which could have saved his life, by this self-effacement for others that symbolized all of his behavior” (425).

In the end, Saint-Loup dies living up to his own heroic ideal, which Marcel describes as reciprocal love between an officer and his soldiers: “[F]or Saint-Loup, the war was even more than the ideal that he had imagined pursuing, to serve with beings he preferred, in a purely masculine chivalric order, far from women, where he could expose his life to save his orderly, and die inspiring the fanatical love of his men” (324–25). Modeling himself on the heroic friendship of ancient warriors like Achilles and Patroclus or chivalric knights like Roland and Olivier, “Saint-Loup was as respected by his officers as he was loved by his men” (419). Emulating the affectionate care of Napoleonic mentors like Marbot’s Sergeant Pertelay, Stendhal’s Corporal Aubry, and Balzac’s Major Hulot, Saint-Loup protects his men and earns their respect and love.

While Saint-Loup speaks affectionately of “the working-class men ... who ran amid gunfire to comfort a comrade or save an officer” (332), the soldiers in Jupien’s brothel speak warmly about “the kindness of an officer who got himself killed while trying to save his orderly” (399). These mutual sacrifices in combat—across lines of social class and military rank—recall many others in the long tradition of Napoleonic friendship, from the helping hands of Sergeant Bourgogne and his handless grenadier, to the bedfellow warmth of Captains Coignet and Renard, to the intimate care of Corporal Macquart and Maurice Levasseur. Amid this legacy of Napoleonic friendship, Saint-Loup and his men represent that generation whose new example of fraternal comfort and affection-ate support during the First World War would inspire an entire genre of homo-erotic military literature—from Cocteau to Gide and Proust—and the emergence of homosexual modernity in postwar France.³⁹

Ultimately, Saint-Loup comes out of Jupien’s brothel and returns to his men in the trench because these comrades are, more than any soldier for hire, his most cherished military bedfellows and lovers. As Foucault suggests in “Friendship as a Way of Life,” Saint-Loup’s relationship with these men represents the kind of friendship formed between those who have shared enormous suffering and emotional intimacy. Even as new spaces of homosexual association and pleasure emerge in early twentieth-century Paris, Saint-Loup nevertheless returns to his comrades at the

front. Leaving behind the momentary comforts and erotic pleasures of Parisian beds, Saint-Loup willingly submits—like General Marbot and Colonels Pontmercy and Chabert—to the horrors of frontline trenches and graves. Building on the tradition of ancient warrior lovers and medieval chivalric companions, and on the legacy of Revolutionary fraternity and Napoleonic friendship, Saint-Loup ends his life protecting the men he loves. When Marcel explains that his friend Robert “had died more himself or more of his race” (429), he suggests not only that Saint-Loup is buried as a *Germantes* but that he died utterly himself, in the company of those he preferred, among his chosen race of combat companions and soldier lovers.

Unknown Soldiers

At the center of Paris, on the Champs-Élysées, under the Arc de Triomphe lies the tomb of the *soldat inconnu*. Like Napoleon, who ordered the arch's construction in 1805 and whose funeral procession passed under the monument in 1840, this unknown soldier occupies one of the most honored places in the French national consciousness. Killed in action during the First World War, the *soldat inconnu* was buried under the arch on the anniversary of the Armistice on November 11, 1920. Trampled by the Nazis during the invasion of Paris in 1940, and liberated by Charles de Gaulle and the Allies in 1944, the tomb of this unknown soldier stands at the very crossroads of nineteenth- and twentieth-century French history. Today, this grave, like the tombs of unknown soldiers at Westminster Abbey and Arlington National Cemetery, is marked by an eternal flame, national holiday flowers, and the gratitude of the nation.

Yet we know nothing about this man, his life, or how he died. Beyond our own imagination, we know nothing about his dreams and ambitions, passions and affections, pleasures and hardships. His anonymity represents both an absence and an abundance of signification: he is simultaneously no soldier and every soldier, wholly absent and centrally present, known by none and known to all. In this way, the *soldat inconnu* is doubly silenced by both death and anonymity, even though his tomb gives voice to all soldiers in France and beckons French citizens to remember their sacrifices. The silence of his grave is broken by the Parisian traffic swirling around the Place de l'Étoile, the dedicatory words that cover his tomb, the names of Napoleon's generals that line the walls of the arch, and the millions of schoolchildren and tourists who make this triumphal pilgrimage each year. Silent, the unknown soldier speaks. Voiceless, he gives voice. Unknown, he symbolizes national identity.

Insofar as he represents every soldier, the *soldat inconnu* is also a gay man. As such, he represents the silence and invisibility of the gay soldier in France. His simultaneous presence and absence, identity and anonymity, voice and silence reproduce the very discourses that are associated with the closet. Known to all, yet known by none, the closeted subject is regulated by what Eve Sedgwick calls the "powerful mechanism of the open secret" and a series of regulatory dismissals that demand, "Don't ask; you shouldn't know."¹ For the closeted soldier, these demands are echoed in the homophobic American military policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" or what Janet Halley has summarized in her book on gays in the American military with the simple title, *Don't*.² In contrast to these regulatory regimes and their negative homophobic imperatives, the tomb of the French *soldat inconnu* offers itself as a symbol of open signification, a text to be read and

interpreted. Like the military memoirs and fiction of nineteenth-century France, the symbolic importance of the unknown soldier depends on our willingness to ask and to tell, to pursue and to know.

NOTES

Prologue: Gays in the Military

1. Eric Schmitt, "Powell Receives a Rousing Greeting at Harvard," *New York Times*, 11 June 1993, A8; "Balloons of Protest for Powell at Harvard," *New York Times*, 9 June 1993, A14; Alice Dembner and Tom Coakley, "Powell Says Gay Issue Is Solvable: Quiet Protest Greets General at Harvard," *Boston Globe*, 11 June 1993, 1; Melissa Healy, "Powell Faces Protest over Armed Forces' Ban on Gays in the Military," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 June 1993, 20.

2. While Larry Kramer describes the homophobic inaction of the government and the activist work of ACT UP in terms of genocide, battles, and war, Susan Sontag argues against the use of military metaphors in AIDS discourse. For a more thorough discussion of this debate, see Larry Kramer, *Reports from the Holocaust: The Making of an AIDS Activist* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989) and Susan Sontag, *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1989).

3. Following his opposition to gays in the military during his tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of State Colin Powell later advocated—in opposition to President George W. Bush—the use of condoms and safer sex campaigns to fight AIDS in Africa. Despite his early opposition to the integration of gay soldiers in the armed forces, one must recognize Colin Powell's lifetime service, political courage, and pioneering leadership as the first African-American to serve both as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as Secretary of State.

Introduction: Napoleon Wept

1. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcellin de Marbot, *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot*, vol. 1 (1891; Paris: Mercure de France, 1983), 447. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this book are mine.

2. Marbot 1: 447.

3. For more on ancient combat companions and warrior lovers, see Wayne Dynes and Stephen Donaldson, eds., *Homosexuality in the Ancient World* (New York: Garland, 1992); David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); Jonathan Goldberg, ed. *Reclaiming Sodom* (New York: Routledge, 1994); John Boswell, "Battle Worn: Gays in the Military, 300 bc," *New Republic*, 10 May 1993, 15–18. Boswell argues that "same-sex eroticism" has a "long and hallowed relationship to democracy and military valor" in both the historical and literary record of ancient Greece: "The association of homosexuals with democracy and the military is intense and widespread, extending from Harmodius and Aristogiton, a pair of lovers who were believed to have founded the Athenian democracy ... to the noted generals Pelopidas and Epaminondas, to the great military genius Alexander and his male lover Bagoas" (15). To these pairs might also be added the Emperor Hadrian and his Greek lover Antinous.

4. Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Christopher Gill (London: Penguin, 1999), 10–11.

5. Plato, 10–11. While Christopher Gill translates the older partner as "lover" and the younger partner as "boyfriend," I have substituted "lover" for both comrades. Gill's more radical translation stands in contrast to others that favor "beloved" or "man in love." Boswell, for example, cites the following translation: "For a man in love would surely choose to have all the rest of the host rather than the one he loves see him forsaking his station or flinging away his arms; sooner than this he would prefer to die many deaths: while, as for leaving the one he loves in the lurch or not succoring him in peril, no man is so craven that the influence of love cannot inspire him with a courage that makes him equal to the bravest born" ("Battle Worn," 15).

6. Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 375–76. Subsequent line references to this edition are provided parenthetically in the body of the text.

7. In *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, David Halperin argues that for epic warrior pairs, "death is the climax of friendship, the occasion of the most extreme expressions of tenderness on the part of the two friends, and it weds them forever ... Indeed, it is not too much to say that death is to friendship what marriage is to romance" (79). Halperin explains that while Homer mentions nothing about the erotic life of Achilles and Patroclus, it was assumed that "the relation between the heroes was a pederastic one" (86).

8. While the actual battle on August 15, 778, pitted the rearguard of Charlemagne's Frankish army against an army of Basque guerrillas, the *Song of Roland* distorts the historical battle by substituting the Catholic Basques with Muslim Saracens.

9. See Howard Bloch, "The First Document and the Birth of Medieval Studies," and Joseph Duggan, "The Epic," in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 6, 11, 22.

[10.](#) For more on chivalric friendship and male intimacy in medieval Europe, see Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[11.](#) *La Chanson de Roland*, trans. Jean Dufournet (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1993), 283. Subsequent line references to this edition are provided parenthetically in the body of the text.

[12.](#) In the introduction to his translation of the *Song of Roland* (London: Norton, 1978), Frederick Goldin explains that “the relation that binds man and lord, and man and man, in this way is designated *amur*, love; so that when Ganelon, at the height of his rage, shouts at Roland, *Jo ne vus aim nient* ... that is no understated and ironical insult but the most terrible thing he could utter. It means: the bonds of loyalty are cut, we are enemies” (22).

[13.](#) For more on Achilles, Roland, and Lannes, see Chapter 2. In “The First Document and the Birth of Medieval Studies,” Howard Bloch also draws a connection between the Carolingian and (post-)Napoleonic empires when he argues that “it can be no accident that ... the discipline of medieval studies came into being in France in the period between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I (1870–1914)” when both German and French scholars of Carolingian texts like the *Oaths of Strasbourg* and the *Song of Roland* “debated passionately whether Europe’s earliest literary monuments were of French or German origin” (10).

[14.](#) See Chapters 1 and 2 for more on these reforms in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies.

[15.](#) From the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries, the French historical record is rich in many other anecdotal examples of military men who loved men. In medieval France, these soldiers included Philippe II (1180–1223) who mounted a crusade with his lover Richard the Lion Hearted (1157–99). During the reign of Louis XIV, the king’s military brother Philippe Duc d’Orléans (1674–1723) was said to have organized a secret society of sodomitical military men, which may have included Marshal Louis-Joseph de Vendôme (1654–1712), his brother Philippe de Vendôme (1655–1727), Admiral Louis de Vermandois (1667–83), Marshal Nicolas d’Huxelles (1652–1730), General Claude-Alexandre de Bonneval (1675–1747), and Marshal Claude Louis Hector de Villars (1653–1734). For more, see Boswell, “Battle Worn”; and Michel Larivière, *Homosexuels et bisexuels célèbres: le dictionnaire* (Paris: Delé-traz, 1997). For an extended discussion on the abuses of the Royal Army during the Ancien Régime, see Chapter 1.

[16.](#) As I discuss at length in Chapter 2, one must be careful not to wholly accept or dismiss these secondary Napoleonic sources in the absence of the Emperor’s definitive memoirs.

[17.](#) Paul Adolphe Grisot, ed., *Maximes napoléoniennes* (Paris: L. B. Baudoin, 1897–1901), 5.

[18.](#) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War. The Book of War*, ed. Caleb Carr and Ralph Peters, trans. O. J. Matthijs Jolles (1832; New York: Modern Library, 2000), 303.

[19.](#) Clausewitz, 407.

[20.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Maximes et pensées de Napoleon*, ed. Jan Doat and Ben Weider (1838; Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1976), 78, 86.

[21.](#) Napoleon Bonaparte, Address to the French Armies and Navy, Toulon, 19 May 1798; quoted in Charles de la Jonquière, *L’Expédition d’Égypte, 1798–1801*, vol. 1 (Paris: Charles Lavauzelle, 1899), 538.

[22.](#) Napoleon Bonaparte, Address to the French Armies and Navy, quoted in Jonquière, 1: 538.

[23.](#) Charles Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat: combat antique et combat moderne* (1880; Paris: Champ Libre, 1978), 51.

[24.](#) Ferdinand Foch, *Des principes de la guerre*, ed. André Martel (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1996), 437; Elizabeth Kier, “Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness,” *International Security* 23.2 (Fall 1998): 5–39. In her analysis of unit cohesion and the debates on gays in the military, the American political scientist Elizabeth Kier argues that “the combat officer and military theorist Ardant du Picq had eloquently expressed a similar opinion in his discussion of the role of unit cohesion a century ago” (12).

[25.](#) Hubert Lyautey, *Le Rôle social de l’officier* (1891; Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1989), 22, 26.

[26.](#) For more on Lyautey’s sexuality, see Larivière as well as Jacques Benoist-Méchin, *Lyautey l’Africain ou le rêve immolé* (Paris: Perrin, 1978); Hervé de Charette, *Lyautey* (Paris: Lattès, 1997); Christian Gury, *Lyautey-Charlus* (Paris: Kimé, 1998); Paul Doury, *Lyautey: un Saharien atypique* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002); and Arnaud Teyssier, *Lyautey: Le ciel et les sables sont grands* (Paris: Perrin, 2004).

[27.](#) Clemenceau’s original French expression is even more homoerotically suggestive: “Voilà un homme admirable, courageux, qui a toujours eu des couilles au cul ... même quand ce n’étaient pas les siennes” (quoted in Gury, *Lyautey-Charlus*, 86). Using the popular proverb “avoir les couilles au cul” (which roughly means “to have balls,” or to be virile or courageous), Clemenceau literally quipped that Lyautey “always had balls against his ass, even when they were not his own.”

[28.](#) For more on Pierre Loti’s exoticist and homoerotic novels, see Clive Wake, *The Novels of Pierre Loti*

(Paris: Mouton, 1974); Alain Quella-Villéger, *Pierre Loti l'incompris* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1986); Christian Genet and Daniel Hervé, *Pierre Loti l'enchanteur* (Gémozac: La Caillerie, 1988); Suzanne Lafont, *Suprêmes clichés de Loti* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1993); Marie-Paul de Saint-Léger, *Pierre Loti l'in-saisissable* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996); and Alain Buisine, *Pierre Loti: l'écrivain et son double* (Paris: Tallandier, 1998).

[29.](#) Patrice de MacMahon, quoted in Yann Le Goff, "Treillis et camouflage: l'armée française et les gays," *Têtu* 45 (May 2000): 56.

[30.](#) For more on Lyautey and Proust, see Gury, *Lyautey-Charlus*. For more on homoeroticism in the colonial Maghreb, see Emily Apter, *André Gide and the Codes of Homotextuality* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1987); Malek Chebel, *L'Esprit de Sérail: perversions et marginalités sexuelles au Maghreb* (Paris: Lieu Commun, 1988); Andrew Parker et al., eds., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer, eds., *Sexuality and Eroticism among Males in Moslem Societies* (New York: Hawthorne Press, 1992); Rudi Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male to Male Sexual Behaviour Outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Michael Luongo, ed., *Gay Travels in the Muslim World* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2007); Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Brian Martin, "Panthers, Palms, and Desert Passions: Balzac and Napoleon in Egypt," *Queer Exoticism*, ed. David A. Powell, Tamara Powell, and Matthew J. Sobnosky (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

[31.](#) Michel Foucault, "De l'amitié comme mode de vie," *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 163–64.

[32.](#) Didier Eribon, *Réflexions sur la question gay* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 474.

[33.](#) In *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Paul Fussell writes about these simultaneous and contradictory influences of Mars and Eros among soldiers during the First World War: "On the one hand, sanctioned public mass murder. On the other, unlawful secret individual love. Again, severe dichotomy" (271). Similarly, Gregory Woods argues in *Articulate Flesh: Male Homoeroticism and Modern Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) that "[w]ar is a war on love" (58).

[34.](#) See Fussell, as well as Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: A History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Penguin-Plume, 1990).

[35.](#) This tradition is, of course, not limited to France. Military buddies and combat companions also figure prominently in the American and English literary traditions, from Walt Whitman's *Drum-Taps* (1865), to Herman Melville's *Billy Budd* (1886–91), and the First World War trench poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, among many others. For more on the Anglophone homoerotic military tradition, see Fussell, Woods, and Gury, as well as Adrian Caesar, *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

[36.](#) Jean Tulard, *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), 451.

[37.](#) Jean Tulard, letter to the author, 29 June 2001.

[38.](#) Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970) 11–12. See also Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Noonday-Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990).

Chapter 1. Military Fraternity from the Revolution to Napoleon

[1.](#) Marcel David, *Fraternité et révolution française* (Paris: Aubier, 1987), 58.

[2.](#) Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Vintage—Random House, 1990), 511.

[3.](#) For detailed investigations into the origins of *fraternité* in French republican discourse, see Marcel David, as well as Michel Borgetto, *La Devise 'Liberté, égalité, fraternité'* (Paris: PUF, 1997); Mona Ozouf, *La Fête révolutionnaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); "Frater-nité," in *Dictionnaire critique de la Révolution française*, ed. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 731–41; "Fraternity," in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, ed. François Furet and Mona Ozouf, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Belknap and Harvard University Press, 1989), 694–703.

[4.](#) Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Fraternité," in *Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot et al., vol. 7 (Paris: Briasson, 1751–72), 291.

[5.](#) Étienne de La Boétie, *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, ed. P. Léonard (Paris: Payot, 1978), 184–85.

[6.](#) Michel de Montaigne, "De l'amitié," in *Essais*, ed. Alexandre Micha, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), 233.

[7.](#) For further discussion of Montaigne, La Boétie, and civic friendship, see Tom Conley, "Friendship in a

Local Vein: Montaigne's Servitude to La Boétie," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 97.1 (Winter 1998): 68–73.

8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur l'inégalité," *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1959), 115.

9. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur l'économie politique," *Œuvres complètes*, 3: 261.

10. Gérard Gayot, *La Franc-maçonnerie française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 63.

11. David, *Fraternité*, 61, 79, 137, 205.

12. David, *Fraternité*, 40–41; Ozouf, "Fraternité," 731–34; Borgetto, 25–32.

13. Borgetto, 31; David, *Fraternité*, 193; Ozouf, "Fraternité," 694–96, 732.

14. Ozouf, "Fraternité," 739–40.

15. Borgetto, 32.

16. David, *Fraternité*, 52–53.

17. David, *Fraternité*, 65.

18. Ozouf, *Fête révolutionnaire*, 55–56; Ozouf, "Fraternité," 43.

19. Camille Desmoulins, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, vol. 35 (Paris: Garnery, 1789–91), 511. Desmoulins numbers the procession at 150,000 (501). Schama calculates the number of spectators on the Champ de Mars at 400,000 (508).

20. Schama reports that the oath was not pronounced until as late as five o'clock (511).

21. John Albert Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France 1791–94* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 63–64; Cornwall Rogers, *The Spirit of Revolution in 1789* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 210.

22. Borgetto, 31; David, *Fraternité*, 68–69.

23. Ozouf, *Fête révolutionnaire*, 48. Marcel David also speaks of "amicable frontal contacts" and other "manifestations of fraternity" (55–56).

24. Borgetto, 31; David, *Fraternité*, 68–69.

25. Lynn Hunt, Foreword, *Festivals of the French Revolution*, by Mona Ozouf, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), xii.

26. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, *Necklines: The Art of Jacques-Louis David after the Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 106.

27. Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 92; Lajer-Burcharth, 108.

28. Jacques-Louis David, *Explication du Tableau des Thermopyles* (Paris: Hacquart, 1814), 5.

29. Borgetto, 32.

30. Maurice Duverger, *Constitutions, textes et documents* (Paris: PUF, 1978), 12.

31. Lynn, 173.

32. Auguste-Philippe Herlaut, *Le colonel Bouchotte, ministre de la guerre en l'an II*, vol. 2 (Paris: C. Poisson, 1946), 128; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 55.

33. Jacques Fricasse, *Journal de marche du sergent Fricasse de la 127e demi-brigade*, ed. Lorédan Larchey (Paris, 1882), 43; Lynn, 173.

34. See John Albert Lynn, as well as Alan Forrest, "L'Armée," in *Dictionnaire critique de la Révolution française*, ed. Mona Ozouf and François Furet (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 417; *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3; *The Soldiers of the French Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990); and Jean-Paul Bertaud, *La Révolution armée: les soldats citoyens de la Révolution française* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1979), 11; *Soldats de la Révolution, 1789–1799* (Paris: Hachette, 1985); *La Vie quotidienne des soldats de la Révolution, 1789–1799* (Paris: Hachette, 1985).

35. Forrest, *Soldiers*, 27–29, 36, 82.

36. Forrest, *Soldiers*, 34–41; Bertaud, *Révolution*, 37–38.

37. Bertaud, *Révolution*, 106–16; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 61–86.

38. Forrest, *Soldiers*, 80–81; Bertaud, *Révolution*, 131–39.

39. There were smaller levies between 1794 and 1797, but none as large as in 1793. Forrest, *Soldiers*, 82.

40. Forrest, *Soldiers*, 81–83.

41. Bertaud, *Révolution*, 89–97, 159, 166–74; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 51–53.

42. Forrest, *Conscripts*, 61–73, 161–65; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 171–72.

43. Lynn, 80–82; Forrest, *Soldiers* 36, 47; Forrest, "Army," 417; Bertaud, *Révolution*, 38–50.

44. Forrest, "Army," 420; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 47, 53.

[45.](#) For more on both Napoleon's and Lannes's meteoric careers, see Chapter 2.

[46.](#) Jean-Claude Damamme, *Les Soldats de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 90–96.

[47.](#) Bertaud, *Révolution*, 73–76.

[48.](#) Forrest, *Soldiers*, 111; Bertaud, *Révolution*, 73–76.

[49.](#) Bertaud, *Révolution*, 179. In Chapter 3, I discuss the Napoleonic memoirs of two such soldiers, Sergeant François Bourgoigne and Captain Jean-Roch Coignet. In order to gain promotion in Napoleon's armies, Coignet learned to read at the age of thirty-two.

[50.](#) John Albert Lynn argues nevertheless that “it would be excessively cynical to dismiss the talk of fraternity as pure cant ... [T]he fraternal ideal undoubtedly influenced the *ordinaire*, tightening bonds and defining the relationship between men as familial, based on affection, concern, support, and a strong degree of selflessness” (173). Similarly, Alan Forrest argues that fraternity had much more symbolic and practical weight for soldiers than for citizens: “The Revolutionary concept of fraternity, indeed, arguably rather vacuous in civilian society, assumed a rich and evocative meaning in the ranks of the army, where young men did feel like brothers, dependent on one another in the face of shared danger” (*Soldiers*, 102).

[51.](#) Forrest, “Army,” 448.

[52.](#) Albert Aboul, *Les Soldats de l'an II* (Paris: Club Français du Livre, 1959), 209; Bertaud, *Révolution*, 230.

[53.](#) Lynn, 185–93; Forrest, “Army,” 421–24; Forrest, *Soldiers*, 102.

[54.](#) Borgetto, 39–43.

Chapter 2. Napoleonic Friendship at the Top

[1.](#) Louis Constant, *Mémoires de Constant, Premier valet de chambre de l'Empereur*, vol. 3 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1894), 233–34; Comte de Ségur, *Histoire et Mémoires par le Général Comte de Ségur*, vol. 3 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1873), 360.

[2.](#) For Marbot's version, see the account cited in the Introduction to this book. General Marcellin de Marbot, *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot*, vol. 1 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1983), 441–47; General Jean-Marie-René Savary, *Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo pour servir à l'histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon*, vol. 4 (Paris: Bossange, 1829), 125; General Louis-François Lejeune, *Mémoires du Général Lejeune*, vol. 1 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1895), 356–57.

[3.](#) General Jean-Jacques-Germain Pelet, *Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809 en Allemagne* (Paris: Roret, 1825), 334–35.

[4.](#) Emmanuel de Las Cases, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, ed. Joël Schmidt (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 414.

[5.](#) Ségur, *Histoire et Mémoires*, 3: 357. During the Napoleonic Wars, such deathbed affections were not limited to the French. Having been fatally wounded off the southwest coast of Spain during the naval battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Napoleon's great rival, the English Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson famously asked his friend, the naval captain Thomas Hardy, to kiss him before he died. Although some have speculated that the dying Nelson said “Kismet, Hardy” instead of “Kiss me, Hardy,” others have argued that the word “kismet” did not enter popular English usage until later in the nineteenth century and that, in any case, Hardy understood Nelson's words as a request for a kiss, which he willingly provided for his dying friend. For more on Nelson's death, see Roger Knight, *The Pursuit of Victory: The Life and Achievement of Horatio Nelson* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 501–26; Christopher Hibbert, *Nelson: A Personal History* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 376; John Sugden, *Nelson: A Dream of Glory* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Terry Coleman, *The Nelson Touch: The Life and Legend of Horatio Nelson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[6.](#) From his youthful ennui in Paris with Junot, to his melancholic mourning over Lannes and Duroc, to his final windswept exile on St. Helena, Napoleon could be thought of as possessing the same emasculating *mal du siècle* as other prominent Romantic figures. For more on Romantic masculinity, see Margaret Waller, *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

[7.](#) Constant, 3: 129; Cadet de Gassicourt, *Voyage en Autriche, en Moravie et en Bavière* (Paris: L'Huillier, 1818), 126–27; Marbot, 1: 441; Savary, 4: 146; Pelet, 333–36.

[8.](#) Margaret Scott Chrisawn, *The Emperor's Friend: Marshal Jean Lannes* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 237; Jean-Claude Damamme, *Lannes: Maréchal d'Empire* (Paris: Payot, 1987), 289; Ronald Zins, *Le Maréchal Lannes: favori de l'empereur* (Paris: Le Temps Traversé, 1994), 323–25.

[9.](#) Louis de Bourrienne, *Mémoires de Monsieur de Bourrienne sur Napoléon*, vol. 3 (Paris: Garnier, 1899), 218–19.

[10.](#) Jean Didelot, *Bourrienne et Napoléon* (Levallois: Centre d'études napoléoniennes, 1999), 93–108; Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 381–83.

[11.](#) Las Cases, 362.

[12.](#) Napoleon, letter to the Duchesse de Montebello, 31 May 1809, Personal Archives of the Duc de Montebello, quoted in Zins, 273.

[13.](#) Las Cases, 362.

[14.](#) Constant, 3: 128.

[15.](#) Lejeune, 1: 356.

[16.](#) As the fallen hero, Lannes might have been better described as the Patroclus to Napoleon's Achilles, but this does not diminish the symbolic power of the epic metaphor here.

[17.](#) François-Frédéric Billon, *Souvenirs d'un vélite de la garde sous Napoléon I* (Paris: Plon, 1905), 73–74.

[18.](#) Constant, 3: 251–52. For other detailed accounts of Lannes's funeral, see Zins, 387–91; and René Perin, *Vie militaire de Jean Lannes* (Paris: Delaunay, 1810), 252–57.

[19.](#) Marshal Davout, funeral oration for Marshal Lannes, 6 July 1810, quoted in Zins, 280, and in General Charles Antoine Thoumas, *Le Maréchal Lannes* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1891), 375.

[20.](#) Echoing Lannes's other biographers, Ronald Zins speculates: "Isn't it because of his feelings that Napoleon did not attend the last honors rendered to Lannes? Wasn't he afraid of being a spectacle of overwhelming emotion in public? Since, for no other companion did Napoleon feel such affection as he did for Lannes" (323).

[21.](#) In *Napoleon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), Jean Tulard writes: "Much has been said of Napoleon's extraordinary capacity for work, his prodigious memory, the admirable organization of his intelligence, and ... his genius for staging a scene. Much has been spoken of his contempt, his excessive pride, and his extreme nervousness which threw him into epileptic-like fits" (308). Tulard argues that the Napoleonic legend also gives way to contradictory interpretations of Napoleon's private life: "The man was quick-tempered but faithful in friendship ... The legend and then the counter-legend have contributed to blur the face of Napoleon, overestimating sometimes his good qualities, sometimes his faults. His correspondence reveals his excess, but also his good sense; his harshness, but also his sentimental side" (308).

[22.](#) Duroc's first name is alternately cited by biographers, historians, and scholars as Géraud and Gérard. His full name is Gérard (Géraud) Christophe Michel Duroc, Duc de Frioul.

[23.](#) Schom, 488–89, 664–65; Zins, 317; Chrisawn, 250.

[24.](#) Pierre Berthezène, *Souvenirs militaires de la République et de l'Empire*, vol. 1 (Paris: Dumaine, 1855), 236.

[25.](#) Captain Jean-Roch Coignet, *Les Cahiers du Capitaine Coignet*, ed. Lorédan Larchey (Paris: Hachette, 1912), 158. Coignet also writes how, at the battle of Essling in 1809, the Emperor "had recognized his favorite," Marshal Lannes (174). Lannes's biographer Ronald Zins insists, "[A]n intimate friend of Bonaparte, Lannes was incontestably the favorite of the First Consul" (316). Zins argues that despite their alternating "affection and reproaches, trust and defiance, pouting and reconciliations," Napoleon and Lannes "remained faithful to each other" until Lannes's death in Austria: "The death of Lannes caused Napoleon profound and sincere pain: with the disappearance of Lannes, a little of Napoleon died ... Lannes was truly the Emperor's favorite" (326). However, Napoleon's biographer Alan Schom argues that, following the death of Lannes, "Duroc was indeed his only close friend" and that the deaths of both men were equally devastating: "Napoleon was silent and remote for days thereafter, just as he had been following the death of Lannes at Wagram. The effect of the loss of Duroc ... was certainly great and permanent, leaving Napoleon a different man, more distant than ever before. He was now all alone in the world" (664–65).

[26.](#) As I argue in the Introduction, these models would inspire tactical innovations in military strategy much later in the century by such theorists as Colonel Ardant du Picq and Marshal Lyautey.

[27.](#) Laure Junot, *Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantès*, vol. 11 (Paris: Jean de Bonnot, 1967–68), 207. These phrases in capital letters represent the original emphasis in the Bonnot edition of Laure Junot's memoirs. It is possible that they also represent such emphasis in Junot's original letter.

[28.](#) Peter Gunn, *Napoleon's Little Pest: The Duchesse of Abrantès* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 68.

[29.](#) This is one of the challenges of the memoir as an autobiographical genre: like the confessions of Augustine and Rousseau, one cannot always trust the autobiographer to know or to tell the truth. In *Le Pacte autobiographique* (1975; Paris: Seuil, 1996), Philippe Lejeune argues that while there is an implicit "referential pact" (36) or agreement that autobiography sets out to tell a verifiable truth, one cannot depend on the writer to tell an objective truth. Similarly, Jean Tulard argues in *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* that all theories

surrounding the enigma of Napoleon are open to consideration and skepticism in equal part (308, 451). Rumor and exaggeration participate in historical discourse not because of their distortion of the truth, but because they define the outer limits of believability. Laure Junot's memoirs are thus an equally dubious and dependable source. For a comparison of her style with corroborating sources, see the strikingly similar accounts—cited later in this chapter—by Laure Junot and Emmanuel de las Cases of the meeting between Bonaparte and Junot at the siege of Toulon in 1793.

[30.](#) Compare Laure Junot's passage on Napoleon and Junot in the Jardin des Plantes with Maurice Lever's descriptions in *Les Bûchers de Sodome* (Paris: Fayard, 1985) of eighteenth-century *infâmes* cruising in the Tuileries (250) or Joris-Karl Huysmans's account in his 1884 novel *À rebours* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1968) of the exaggerated floral decadence of the Parisian dandy Des Esseintes (105–6, 122–29).

[31.](#) In *Homosexuels et bisexuels célèbres: le dictionnaire* (Paris: Delétra, 1997), Michel Larivière argues that the friendship between Napoleon and Junot may have transformed at this time into a more intimate liaison: "Without money, deprived of women, it is perhaps at this moment that the very intense friendship between the two men could have transformed itself, in the space of a few weeks, into a homosexual liaison" (199). In *Les Cinq girouettes ou Servitudes et souplesses de son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Archichancelier de l'Empire, Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès* (Paris: Ramsay, 1979), Jean-Louis Bory writes that the homoerotic nature of their relationship was exaggerated by rumor: "Junot had not hidden his passion for Bonaparte at Toulon, an admiration which bordered on idolatry, a devotion as juvenile as a love affair ... And it is with Junot that Bonaparte, released from prison, had lived out his disgrace ... on the meager allowances that Junot received from his family. French soldiers were not so off the mark in making cracks about this Corsican Hadrian and Burgundian Antinoüs, this Achilles and Patroclus of the Revolutionary armies" (110). These homoerotic comparisons of Napoleon and Junot to ancient combat companions echo comparisons of Jean Lannes to both Achilles and Roland.

[32.](#) For more on Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde, see Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side: Towards a Genealogy of Discourse on Male Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Morris Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames: Sex Love and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[33.](#) In the *Trésor de la langue française: Dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), a *séide* is more broadly defined as a "person who manifests a blind and fanatical devotion to a master, leader, party, or sect. Synon. fanatic, partisan, sectarian" (15: 263–64). The following sources offer similar definitions and trace the entry of this word into literary usage by nineteenth-century writers such as Chateaubriand, Constant, Stendhal, Hugo, Balzac, Mérimée, and Vigny, who quite often used the word *séide* to refer to fanatical followers of Napoleon: Paul-Émile Littré, *Littre: Dictionnaire de la langue française*, vol. 6 (Versailles: Encyclopaedia Britannica France, 1997), 5809; *Grand Larousse de la langue française*, ed. Louis Guilbert, vol. 6 (Paris: Larousse, 1971–78), 5435; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, ed. Alain Rey, vol. 2 (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1992), 1908; *Grand Robert de la langue française*, ed. Paul Robert, vol. 6 (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2001), 308.

[34.](#) Schom, 180–88.

[35.](#) For more on the role of dueling in nineteenth-century France, see Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 148–215.

[36.](#) Despite his occasional quips and requests for public discretion, Napoleon trusted his Second Consul and Imperial Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès with running his affairs of state in France during his many extended absences at war. Under the jurisprudential leadership of Cambacérès, sodomy was decriminalized by the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804 and the later Penal Code of 1810. Cambacérès's role as Second Consul and Imperial Arch-Chancellor are detailed in Richard Boulind, *Cambacérès and the Bonapartes* (New York: Kraus, 1976); Pierre-François Pinnaud, *Cambacérès* (Paris: Perrin, 1996); and in Cambacérès's own *Lettres inédites à Napoleon, 1802–1814*, ed. Jean Tulard (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973). Jean Bory discusses Cambacérès's sexuality in *Les Cinq girouettes*; and Michael David Sibal has provided an excellent analysis of Cambacérès's role in drafting the Napoleonic Code and other penal codes decriminalizing sodomy in France in "The Regulation of Male Homosexuality in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, 1789–1815," in *Homosexuality in Modern France*, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 80–101.

[37.](#) According to Jean-Louis Bory, Napoleon demanded that Junot wed in order to silence the rumors: "[Napoleon] named him, at the age of 28, the military commandant of the city of Paris, on one condition: he had to marry in order to quiet the rumors (à la Cambacérès). Napoleon would end up covering Junot in gold and honors, but this fervent friendship bothered him" (133).

[38.](#) In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that in “the rivalry between the two active members of an erotic triangle ... the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved” (21). Drawing on René Girard’s discussion of erotic triangles in *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961), Sedgwick postulates that the erotic triangle is “symmetrical—in the sense that its structure would be relatively unaffected by the power difference that would be introduced by a change in the gender of one of the participants” (23). In *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Sedgwick summarizes her earlier work on the erotic triangle in *Between Men* by arguing that, in some cases, “male–male desire became widely intelligible primarily by being routed through triangular relations involving a woman” (15).

[39.](#) For more on the epistolary novel, see Lucia Omacini, *Le roman épistolaire français au tournant des Lumières* (Paris: Champion, 2003); Joe Bray, *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[40.](#) Schom, 614, 644. For a more detailed account of the Russian Campaign, see Chapter 3.

[41.](#) Stéphane Le Couëdic, ed., *Bulletins de la Grande Armée: Campagne de Russie* (Paris: La Vouivre, 1997), 48, 61.

[42.](#) Las Cases, 361.

[43.](#) In *Junot, qui ne fut pas maréchal d’empire* (Châtillon-sur-Seine: Association des amis du Châtillonnais, 1993), Maxime Cordier writes, “One has a tendency to forget, or at least to minimize the fact that, since 1792, Junot suffered from great cranio-cerebral trauma ... He was wounded twenty-seven times and at least three times quite seriously, in the head and on his face” (133–40).

[44.](#) The Illyrian Provinces of the French Empire occupied territories that comprise parts of present-day Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[45.](#) Cordier, 122.

[46.](#) In her 1941 travelogue, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin, 1994), Rebecca West writes “Junot, the Duke d’Abrantès, brought his career to its only possible climax at the Governor’s palace in the delicious Slovenian town of Lyublyana. He gave a state ball, and came down the great marble staircase, under the blazing chandeliers, stark naked and raving mad” (121). The French imperial governor’s palace was in Ljubljana, the capital of Napoleon’s Illyrian Provinces. Maxime Cordier argues, however, that Junot’s infamous 1813 ball took place in Ragusa (Dubrovnik).

[47.](#) While Maxime Cordier documents a total of twenty-seven wounds during Junot’s military career (133–40), Junot himself later spoke to Napoleon of his seventeen battle wounds (Junot, 11: 207). Despite this discrepancy—which may represent Junot’s own minimizing of minor versus major wounds—both numbers attest to an extraordinary amount of battle-inflicted trauma.

[48.](#) On the madness and death of Junot, Las Cases also writes, “The irregularities that one had observed for some time in Junot and which had originated in his excesses, broke down into complete insanity. It became necessary to restrain him and transport him home to his father’s house where he perished miserably soon after, mutilated by his own hands” (361–62). Here, Las Cases seems to suggest that Junot’s “insanity” was due to end-stage syphilis, rather than to combat wounds and cerebral head trauma. However, Maxime Cordier documents further reports of Junot’s erratic behavior in Illyria by diplomats, doctors, and witnesses in Milan, Gorizia, and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) that suggest otherwise. Two of these reports—that Junot “gave his *grand cordon de la Légion d’honneur* to a village idiot” and that “[h]e had written to Admiral Freemantle, commander of the English fleet in the Adriatic, to negotiate a peaceful truce”—imply that Junot’s peculiar conduct in Illyria may be explained more accurately by his battle fatigue, disillusionment, and desire for peace than by simplistic accusations of “insanity” (124–25).

[49.](#) In stark contrast to the Emperor’s effusive outpouring of private grief and his orders to organize great ceremonies and monuments of public mourning for both Lannes and Duroc, Napoleon’s reaction to the death of his old friend Junot inspired little grief or emotion. According to Louis Constant, “The Emperor learned of the death of the Duc d’Abrantès, who had just succumbed ... to the violent excesses of the terrible sickness from which he was suffering. Though the Emperor already knew that [Junot] was in a deplorable state of mental alienation, and must have expected this loss ... he sincerely regretted [the death of] his old aide-de-camp” (4: 59). Such “sincere regret” for Junot is far from the dramatic sobbing and national mourning associated with Napoleon’s earlier losses of Lannes and Duroc.

[50.](#) Jean-Pierre Pouget, *Souvenirs de Guerre du Général Baron Pouget* (Paris: Plon, 1895), quoted in Jean-Claude Damamme, *Les Soldats de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 91.

[51.](#) For further discussions of advancement, field-promotions, and decorations, see Damamme, *Soldats*, 90–96; Marcel Baldet, *La Vie quotidienne dans les armées de Napoleon* (Paris: Hachette, 1964), 196–97; Georges Blond, *La Grande Armée* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1979) and *The Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (London: Arms and Armour, 1995), 230–34; Maurice Descotes, *La Légende de Napoléon et les écrivains français du 19e siècle* (Paris: Minard, 1967), 259; Marcel Dupont, *Napoléon et ses grognards* (Paris: Lavauzelle, 1981); Henry Lachouque, *Napoléon et la Garde impériale* (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1957) and *Anatomy of Glory: Napoleon and His Guard*, trans. Anne S. K. Brown (London: Greenhill, 1997); and Marie-Hélène Legrand, *Citoyens-officiers de Napoléon* (Derval: L’Orée du Bois, 1997).

[52.](#) Elzéar Blaze, *La Vie militaire sous l’Empire* (Paris: Librairie Henry du Parc, 1888), 173–74.

[53.](#) Blaze, 267–68. In analogous terms, Maurice Descotes argues that by “stimulating the [soldiers’] desire for advancement and wealth,” Napoleon created an “extraordinary group of *séides*” or fanatics similar to Junot (259).

[54.](#) Marcel Dupont writes about soldiers’ “passionate love of Napoleon” and argues “it was normal to kill oneself for the Emperor” (17–18).

[55.](#) Lieutenant Anciaume, *Lettres d’un vélite de la Garde impériale* (Paris, 1895), 30.

[56.](#) Jean Bordenave, letter to the Ministre de Guerre, 1815, Service historique de l’armée de terre, Vincennes, dossier de classement 1791–1847, quoted in Gilbert Bodinier, “Officiers et soldats de l’armée impériale face à Napoléon,” *Napoléon: de l’histoire à la légende*, ed. Bernard Devaux (Paris: Éditions In Forma, 2000), 220.

[57.](#) General Alfred-Armand-Robert de Saint-Chamans, *Mémoires du général comte de Saint-Chamans* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1896) 59, quoted in Bodinier, 221. In *La Grande Armée*, Georges Blond also documents this mutinous language (127, 372–73).

[58.](#) Jérôme-Roland Laugier, *Les Cahiers du capitaine Laugier* (Paris: Remondet-Aubin, 1893), 300, 317, quoted in Bodinier 221.

Chapter 3. Napoleonic Friendship in the Ranks

[1.](#) Adrien-Jean-Baptiste-François Bourgogne, *Mémoires du Sergent Bourgogne (1812–13)* (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 314–15.

[2.](#) Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 595.

[3.](#) Some reports claim even greater mortality. Alan Schom argues that of the 611,900 men who began the campaign, only 43,000 survived to re-cross the Niemen on December 10, 1812, but that another 36,000 died or were taken prisoner during the three following days, leaving a total of only 8,823 survivors (595, 642–44). While George Blond claims in *La Grande Armée* (Paris: Pierre Laffont, 1979) that anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 returned to France (379), Marcel Spivak writes in his introduction to François Bourgogne’s *Mémoires du Sergent Bourgogne* that only 5,000 men of the *Grande Armée* survived the re-crossing of the Niemen (4, 16–17). David Chandler reports in *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan, 1966) that Napoleon began the Russian Campaign with 655,000 men and lost some 570,000: this overwhelming loss of life in the ranks of the *Grande Armée* included 370,000 who were killed in combat or died of exposure and sickness during the retreat, as well as 200,000 who were taken prisoner by the Russians, half of whom died later (852–53). By comparison, Drew Gilpin Faust reports in *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008) that an estimated total of 620,000 soldiers in the Union and Confederate armies died during the entire five-year span (1861–65) of the American Civil War (xi).

[4.](#) For more on Russian forces and casualties, see Pavel A. Jiline, *La Destruction de l’armée napoléonienne en Russie* (Moscow, 1975).

[5.](#) Jean Tulard, ed. *Nouvelle bibliographie critique des mémoires sur l’époque napoléonienne* (Geneva: Droz, 1991).

[6.](#) Jean Tulard, Preface, *Le Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*, by Emmanuel de Las Cases (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 7, 10.

[7.](#) Starting with *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), Philippe Lejeune’s extensive work on autobiography builds on theoretical considerations of the genre from Freud and Gide to Barthes and Lacan. In *Si le grain ne meurt* (1926; Paris: Gallimard, 1972), André Gide writes that “[m]emoirs are never more than half sincere, no matter how greatly they strive for the truth: everything is always more complicated than one says” (278). For Freud, memory and repetition bring the past into the present (the unconscious into consciousness), as an evolving process in which the past is never fixed, but constantly rewritten or remembered in the present. Freud thus resists easy self-synopsis in *An Autobiographical Study* (1925). Jacques

Lacan argues in “Les Quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse,” *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, vol. 11 (Paris: Seuil, 1973), that the mirror stage initiates a lifelong desire for self-knowledge, but that the subject can never fully understand this unknowable Other. In *La Mort de l’auteur* (1968), Roland Barthes calls on interpretation—or the birth of the reader—to replace what he believes is an unproductive emphasis on the authority of the author. In his own autobiographical text, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), Barthes echoes Gide in questioning autobiographical sincerity: “What I write about myself is never *the last word*: the more ‘sincere’ I am, the more interpretable I am,” *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Macmillan, 1977), 120. For a detailed discussion of the genre, see Linda Anderson, *Autobiography* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

8. In *Le Pacte autobiographique* (1975; Paris: Seuil, 1996), Philippe Lejeune proposes a working definition of autobiography as a “retrospective account in prose that a real person writes about his own existence, stressing his own individual life” (14). Although memoirs are often not limited to the author’s life, Lejeune argues that the memoir nonetheless takes part in the “autobiographical pact” and the “referential pact” (26, 36).

9. According to Lejeune, “even if the account is, historically, completely false, it will be in the order of the lie (which is an ‘autobiographical’ category) and not of fiction” (30). In defense of the Napoleonic memoir, Jean Tulard asks: “Should one renounce memoirs and forbid them from bibliographies? Aren’t other historical documents which we prefer over memoirs, just as suspect: statistics marred by errors, records recorded by suspiciously optimistic officials, police reports filled with dubious gossip, bulletins of the Grande Armée which the soldiers themselves laughed at ... Memoirs reveal to us what kind of image the authors wanted to give of themselves and how they viewed their historical period; they thus form an essential source on the history of ideas” (*Nouvelle bibliographie*, 13).

10. For a more detailed discussion of Captain Périolas and Balzac’s fiction, see Chapters 6 and 8.

11. As opposed to the more national character of “countryman,” the term “homeboy” most accurately describes the sense of local, provincial, and regional friendship that is embodied in the French term *pays*. But since “homeboy” is associated with twentieth-century African American hip-hop culture, I have chosen the more neutral term “hometown friend” for a soldier’s *pays*. For a detailed discussion of these terms, see the analysis of Marbot, Coignet, and Bourgogne later in this chapter.

12. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcellin de Marbot, *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot*, vol. 1 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1983), 34–35.

13. In “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), Judith Butler writes: “If gender is drag and if it is an imitation that regularly produces the ideal it attempts to approximate, then gender is a performance that *produces* the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic core; it *produces* on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation), the illusion of an inner depth” (23). By “uniform” manhood, I mean both the requirements of military dress (uniform) and the strict expectations of a standard (uniform) definition or expression of masculinity in Napoleon’s armies.

14. In *Les Soldats de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), Jean-Claude Damamme writes that “For the simple soldier, the discovery of military life begins with the discovery of a man ... [E]very new arrival below the rank of corporal shares a bed with an older soldier, who serves as his mentor” (37). Younger soldiers thus submitted to what Damamme calls the “virile promiscuity of an older soldier” (37).

15. Martin Duberman suggests that the bedfellow is a common trope in nineteenth-century epistolary, autobiographical, and homoerotic writing. Though he writes about American bedfellows during the 1820s, his work has important implications for the soldiers of the Civil War (1861–65) and the homoerotic military relationships described by Walt Whitman in his *Drum-Taps* (1865). Martin Duberman, “‘Writhing Bedfellows’ in Antebellum South Carolina: Historical Interpretation and the Politics of Evidence,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman et al. (New York: Penguin-Meridian, 1990), 153–68.

16. Chandler, 548. Schom, 444.

17. The striking similarities between Marbot and Chabert are discussed at length in Chapter 7. Having risked the loss of his identity (Marbot) with the removal of this last article of his uniform (boot/botte), it is ironic that Marbot is brought back to consciousness (re-booted, as it were) by this ritual stripping of his wounded body.

18. Jean-Roch Coignet, *Les Cahiers du Capitaine Coignet*, ed. Lorédan Larchey (Paris: Hachette, 1912), 137, 141.

[19.](#) Tulard argues that Coignet demonstrates “a naïveté which guarantees authenticity” and makes his text “indispensable reading for understanding the mentality of *grogards*” (*Nouvelle bibliographie*, 81).

[20.](#) John Fortescue explains, “The officers ... were worse off than the soldiers. Indeed, but for the affectionate care of their men, they would have perished ... And hence we find officers constantly walking arm-in-arm with their men, embracing them, and otherwise courting them.” John Fortescue, Introduction, *The Notebooks of Captain Coignet*, by Jean-Roch Coignet, trans. John Fortescue (London: Greenhill, 1986), x.

[21.](#) In *La Morale des corps: le soin de propreté corporelle à Paris, évolution des normes et pratiques, 1850–1900* (Lille: Université de Lille, 1986), Julia Scialom Csergo writes, “Merciless inspection reports describe the repugnant filth of feet, which corrupted the stinking atmosphere of the barracks, the great filthiness of bodies covered in an oily layer emanating a fetid odor, the repugnant state of hair, with which the soldiers had the bad habit of wiping their dirty hands, the noxious breath, the infectious uncleanness of the genital organs which ... engendered symptoms of syphilis” (200).

[22.](#) In *La Vie militaire sous l’Empire* (Paris: Henry du Parc, 1888), Captain Elzéar Blaze explains: “During the Empire, one could enter the military in three different ways: one could enlist as a soldier, which was the simplest and least expensive way; one could enroll in the *vélites*; or one could be admitted as a cadet to the military school at Fontainebleau” (19). Damamme also discusses the requirements and training for imperial *vélites* (33–44).

[23.](#) In his preface to Hachette’s 1978 edition of Bourgogne’s memoirs, Jean Tulard argues that he considers Bourgogne a “born storyteller” and “the best witness of the disaster of 1812” whose memoirs offer the “foot soldier’s point of view” (11).

[24.](#) Published in 1825 as *La Campagne de Russie* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1894), Ségur’s account of the retreat features moving descriptions of freezing soldiers: “The Muscovite winter ... attacked them from all sides: it penetrated through their flimsy clothing and their torn shoes. Their wet clothes froze right on them; this envelope of ice took hold of their bodies and stiffened their limbs ... and formed icicles which hung from their beards” (256). Ségur demonstrates a gift for metaphor in his comparison of the retreat to a funeral procession: “In front of them and around them, all was snow ... it was like a great natural shroud that enveloped the army! The only distinguishable objects were the somber pines which, like graveside trees in funerary green ... completed this desolated landscape of mass mourning” (256). Despite this literary skill, Paul Cottin argues (in his foreword to Hachette’s 1978 edition of Bourgogne’s memoirs) that Ségur is limited by his point of view as a senior officer and member of the nobility: “We owe to [Ségur] one version of the Russian Campaign ... but it is not true to life and could never be ... [Ségur] did not at all have to endure the suffering of the soldiers and troop officers” (21).

[25.](#) Marbot, 2: 298–99.

[26.](#) For a detailed comparison of Bourgogne’s and Balzac’s barn-burning accounts, see Chapter 8.

[27.](#) From 1807 to 1813, the German state of Hesse-Kassel was incorporated into the Kingdom of Westphalia, a puppet state of the Napoleonic Empire ruled by Napoleon’s youngest brother, Jérôme Bonaparte. Despite the illegitimacy of King Jérôme, this new state became a constitutional monarchy, eradicated feudal serfdom, established religious freedom, and adopted the Napoleonic Code. While Prince Émile de Hesse-Kassel may have been part of the older Hessian aristocracy, his new roles as a prince of this modernized Westphalia and as an officer in the Napoleonic armies may have required his adherence to more egalitarian and meritocratic standards in regard to his subjects and soldiers. In this context, these Hessian soldiers may have protected the young prince out of a sense of duty, and even fraternity, rather than mere obligation. For more on Westphalia and Hesse-Kassel, see Schom, 568–70; Otto von Pivka, *Napoleon’s German Allies* (Reading: Osprey, 1975); Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Le Roi Jérôme: frère prodigue de Napoléon, 1784–1860* (Paris: Fayard, 2008); and Jacques-Olivier Boudon et al., *Jérôme Napoléon, roi de Westphalie* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008).

[28.](#) Michel de Montaigne, “De l’amitié,” *Essais*, ed. Alexandre Micha, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), 236.

[29.](#) Both Bourgogne and Marguerite de Navarre use the French word “bourse” (purse) to describe the shared financial resources of these men. According to *Le Petit Robert de la langue française*, ed. Paul Robert (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1991), “bourse” can refer to the Latin word *scrotum*, which came into French usage in 1541 to indicate “la peau des bourses” or purse skin (1782). While it seems unlikely that either Bourgogne or Marguerite de Navarre are making any erotic allusions when describing the joint “bourse” of these men, it is clear that the shared purse and property of both male pairs symbolize their material and emotional intimacy.

[30.](#) Bourgogne, 233, 366–71. Picart’s “Mama Sausage” or “La Mère aux bouts” is a bawdy play on the word *bout*, which resembles the word *boudin* for “sausage,” literally means “an end or tip,” and can thus also refer to an erect penis. Mama Sausage is thus either a juvenile adolescent nickname for a hometown sausage vendor or a misogynist description of a prostitute, who evokes images for these soldiers of either a full stomach or an early sexual experience.

[31.](#) Marcel Spivak, Introduction and Notes, *Mémoires du Sergent Bourgogne (1812–13)*, by Adrien-Jean-Baptiste-François Bourgogne (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 233n.

[32.](#) Despite his name, Bourgogne is not from Burgundy, but from Condé-sur-l’Escaut in northern France. His name nevertheless associates him with French regional and national identity.

[33.](#) Spivak, 41–42n; Jiline, 109.

[34.](#) Schom, xvii.

[35.](#) This heartbreaking image of a battle-hardened soldier—who, having lost his fingers to frostbite, cannot urinate on his own—stands in stark contrast to images of masculine virility and military power. To use a celebrated twentieth-century example, one might cite General George S. Patton’s report in 1945 that, having defeated enemy defenses and invaded German territory, he was contemptuously and triumphantly “pissing in the Rhine.” Carlos d’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 703–32.

[36.](#) Marbot’s manuscript was written before his death in 1854 and published posthumously in 1891. Coignet’s manuscript was written between 1848 and 1850, and published in 1851. Based on notes and letters from 1812–14, Bourgogne’s manuscript was completed around 1835, partially published in *feuilleton* between 1856 and 1857, and in full book form in 1898. Tulard, *Nouvelle bibliographie*, 9–10, 81, 194; Coignet, 329–30; Cottin, 27.

[37.](#) Tulard, Preface, *Le Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*, 10; Jean Tulard, *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), 448.

Chapter 4. Wannabes and Waterloo

[1.](#) Stendhal, *La Vie de Henry Brulard* (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1973), 412.

[2.](#) Stendhal, letter to the Comtesse Pierre Daru, 7 November 1812, in *Correspondance*, ed. Henri Martineau and Victor Del Litto, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1968), 680.

[3.](#) Stendhal, *Journal (1801–17)*, in *Œuvres intimes*, ed. Victor Del Litto, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1981), 869.

[4.](#) Stendhal, *Vie de Napoléon*, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Victor Del Litto and Ernest Abravanel, vol. 40 (Geneva and Paris: Slatkine, 1986), 19. Paul Noirot, ed., *Napoléon Bonaparte: Comment il a enivré la littérature* (Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 1999), 328–30.

[5.](#) In *La Légende de Napoléon et les écrivains français du 19ème siècle* (Paris: Minard, 1967), Maurice Descotes explains that “Stendhal’s feelings for Napoleon never ceased to change. From his instinctive adolescent admiration followed severe critical judgment; then his support of a regime which provided him with the most brilliant years of his life (1810–11), transforming him into a government administrator whose devotion nonetheless fell short of fanaticism” (160). In similar terms, Marcel Heisler writes in *Stendhal et Napoléon* (Paris: Nizet, 1969): “On the surface, he changed opinions on Napoleon: he admired him, detested him, then admired him again. From a Revolutionary at ten years old, a Jacobin at twenty, an anti-Bonapartist at forty, and a Bonapartist at fifty ... [he] often admired and bragged about the strength and violence of the tyrant, though he never supported the full weight of tyranny” (204–5).

[6.](#) Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, ed. Henri Martineau (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), 3.

[7.](#) In their work on the closet, gender, and cross-dressing, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, and Marjorie Garber provide theoretical models for understanding Julien’s struggle with the cassock, uniform, and wardrobe structure of his military closet. In *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Sedgwick defines “closetedness” as “a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence” where the closet is built on binary “relations of the known and the unknown, the explicit and the inexplicit” (3). Julien’s closetedness can be thought of as a clerical performance that silences his military identity. In “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), Judith Butler argues that “drag constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn, and done” and defines gender as “a performance that produces the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core” (21, 28). In the same way, Julien’s clerical drag can be thought of as an outward clerical performance that does not reflect his inner identification as a soldier. Marjorie Garber argues in *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge,

1997) that drag can be as much a transgression of class as gender. In her discussion of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Garber argues that Malvolio is "as much a cross-dresser as Viola, but what he crosses is a boundary of rank rather than of gender. His desire is clearly for upward mobility, another kind of coming out of the closet" (36). In establishing that "status and gender are both clearly marked ... by costume change," Garber reminds us that "the clothes make the man" and one must "dress for success" (36, 1, 41). Julien's ambitious desire for success in Restoration France produces a similar conflict between the epaulettes of his uniform and the folds of his cassock.

[8.](#) Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le noir*, ed. Anne-Marie Meininger (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 2000), 69–70.

[9.](#) It was in part for this reason that younger generations were so easily seduced by Napoleon's nephew Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, and were so willing to elect him to power as President of the Second Republic (1848) and Emperor Napoleon III of the Second Empire (1851–52). For more on Napoleon III, see Chapter 9.

[10.](#) In "Truth in Masquerade," in *Stendhal: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Victor Brombert, trans. B. A. B. Archer (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), Jean Starobinski argues that Henri Beyle's many pseudonyms represent a similar process of self-identification related to costuming, masquerade, and travesty: "We have then ... a man unhappy with what he is ... who is torn between two conflicting desires: to affirm himself by an act of power ... or to metamorphose ceaselessly, to become other than himself, to split in two so as to become both an accomplished actor and an invisible spectator through some form of efficacious travesty" (120–21). This description of Stendhal also applies to Julien Sorel, who similarly hopes for metamorphosis, the transformation of the cassock into the uniform, and the translation of his name from the peasant Julien Sorel to the noble Chevalier de la Vernaye.

[11.](#) As Simone de Beauvoir argues in *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1989), Julien's erotic and military misogyny reflects neither Stendhal's attitudes toward women nor Mathilde de La Mole's and Madame de Rênal's power. Ultimately, Julien is no match for Mathilde, an enlightened reader of Voltaire who, Beauvoir points out, "criticizes, disparages, and scorns the society around her and wants to be distinguished for it" (241). Unafraid of paternal authority, Mathilde does not hesitate to set a ladder against her window for her lover's entry or her own escape, which symbolizes "her proud impudence, her taste for the extraordinary, her provocative courage" (242). Nor is Julien a match for Madame de Rênal who, despite her emotional vulnerability, is not afraid to set her own ladders, defy her husband, or denounce her lover. Beauvoir believes that, though she is "timid and without experience" (243), Madame de Rênal possesses "independence of soul" (241). In all his novels, Beauvoir argues, "Stendhal demands women's emancipation" in the way he "never limits himself to describing his heroines as functions of his heroes: he gives them a destiny of their own ... It is through women, under their influence, in reaction to their behavior, that Julien, Fabrice, Lucien work out their apprenticeship in dealing with the world and themselves" (247).

[12.](#) Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le noir*, 131. In French, Fouqué tells Julien, "Reste avec moi ... Sois mon associé." While Fouqué literally asks Julien to become his business "associate" or "partner," Fouqué also hopes to share his life in Verrières with his dear friend, in an affectionate as well as commercial association or partnership.

[13.](#) In "Truth in Masquerade," Starobinski argues that liberation from Stendhal's ubiquitous prison cells depends on the external intervention of love: "In these heroes, who are visited by love in prison, one must recognize ... the figurative transposition of Stendhal's secret desire—to be loved in spite of his ugliness" (119). For Julien, this lover is Fouqué, who loves Julien unconditionally, forgives his many faults, allows him to be himself. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick argues that self-identity often requires the gaze of the other, in the interplay between the "spectacle" and "viewpoint of the closet" (222–23). Fouqué's location beyond Julien's closet affords him the spectacular ability to recognize, love, and "know" Julien.

[14.](#) Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le noir*, 645. Julien's multiple imprisonments—in his father's house, the Rênal household, the Besançon seminary, and the Verrières prison—are all metaphors for his personal suffocation. In "Truth in Masquerade," Starobinski writes, "In the case of Stendhal, the theme of confinement must be underlined. A name, a body, a social status, all are prisons. But their doors are not so well locked that the dream of escape is impossible" (119). Like the closet, Julien's prisons allow him no room to express his deepest passions (for the military), admirations (for Napoleon), and identifications (with soldiers).

[15.](#) For more on mourning and madness, see Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1989), 584–89; Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Naomi Schor, *One Hundred Years of Melancholy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Douglas Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy," *October* 51 (Winter 1989): 30–18; Jeff Nunokawa, "All the Sad Young Men: AIDS and the Work of Mourning," *Yale*

Journal of Criticism 4.2 (1991): 1–12.

16. Walt Whitman, “Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night,” *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Bantam, 1983), 245–46.

17. In *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), D. A. Miller points out that “as always in Stendhal, military metaphors ... define the situation of the latecomer. Their pathos stems from the fact that their source, in the Napoleonic campaigns, is now available only as a figurative vehicle” (125).

18. In *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), Victor Brombert writes that “Stendhal has been praised for his ‘realistic’ account, for having been the first writer to systematically describe a battle ... through the eyes of a single character utterly puzzled by what goes on, and who, instead of dominating the historical event with the perspective and omniscience of an historian, is only able to witness movement and confusion” (155). Brombert argues that “what these pages propose is not at all a ‘realistic’ account, but a mock-heroic episode, a parody of epic attitudes and conventions” (99). In *Balzac to Beckett: Center and Circumference in French Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), Leo Bersani writes, “The celebrated Waterloo episode in *La Chartreuse* is, as it has often been said, a satire of the conventions of heroic war literature” (104). For more on Stendhal’s Waterloo, see Jean Prévost, *La Création chez Stendhal: essai sur le métier d’écrire et la psychologie de l’écrivain* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1951); Henri Martineau, *Le Cœur de Stendhal* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1952–53); Victor Brombert, *Stendhal et la voie oblique* (Paris: PUF, 1954); Jean-Pierre Richard, “Connaissance et tendresse chez Stendhal,” *Littérature et sensation* (Paris: Seuil, 1954); Jean Starobinski, “Stendhal Pseudonyme,” *L’Œil vivant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961); Georges Blin, *Stendhal et les problèmes du roman* (Paris: José Corti, 1954); *Stendhal et les problèmes de la personnalité* (Paris: José Corti, 1958); and Roger Pearson, ed., *Stendhal: The Red and the Black and the Charterhouse of Parma* (London: Longman, 1994).

19. Arguing that Stendhal is “the first French author to write modern subjectivity into war literature,” Catharine Savage Brosman writes in *Visions of War in France* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999) that his Waterloo offers “no overview ... no neat evaluation ... no totalization,” and is thus “one of the first pieces of modern military fiction in France” (95–97).

20. These contrasting figures of paternal madness echo what Shoshana Felman calls, in *La ‘Folie’ dans l’œuvre romanesque de Stendhal* (Paris: José Corti, 1971), a “two-edged” formula in which “the word ‘madness’ seems like a knot of functions each modifying one another” (43).

21. Victor Brombert argues that *La Chartreuse de Parme* is “primarily a novel of quest” that includes “the thirst for experience, the voyage, the myths of the false father and of the father substitute” (Pearson 110). Leo Bersani adds that “hostility towards the father is ... balanced by the Stendhalian hero’s need for the loving attention of an older man” (100). In *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), Peter Brooks writes “‘Paternalism’ is ... a highly charged concept for Stendhal—a man who used a hundred different pseudonyms, who in letters to his sister referred to their father as ‘the bastard.’ ... Encoded in his novels is always the problem of whether paternity is possible, whether there might be a father and son who could talk to one another” (75–76).

22. Faced with this paternal impasse, D. A. Miller proposes that the “Œdipal struggle in Stendhal” inspires a need for more radical forms of association: “Actual fathers and sons and their relationships may thematize the Œdipal figure, but it is not confined to such literal enactments. The functions of Father, Son migrate in devious paradoxical ways” (153–54). One of these paternal migrations might be the fraternal pair. In “Body Bildung and Textual Liberation,” *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), Miller compares Stendhal’s Fabrice and Mosca to Balzac’s Vautrin and Lucien and their homoerotic “relation between the younger and older man” (684).

23. Shoshana Felman writes that “intoxication is ambiguous ... [w]ine in *La Chartreuse* is not only the key to a world of ecstasy; it is also used as a weapon” (225).

24. Brombert argues that Fabrice’s head wound at Waterloo represents a “beneficent bloodletting” or “a special therapy destined to cure Fabrice of his illusions” (Pearson, 100). Descotes writes that “the escapades of this hero opened his eyes to the vanity of illusions; dreams of military glory do not survive their contact with reality: exaltation on the field of battle and solidarity between soldiers are only delusions” (174).

25. Later made famous by the title character in Bertolt Brecht’s *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1938–39), the camp-following women known as *cantinières* (“canteen women”) or *vivandières* (“supply women”) were sutlers or victualers who played enormously important roles in Napoleonic warfare as nurses, supply clerks, seamstresses, cooks, prostitutes, lovers, wives, mothers, and even combatants. For more on

vivandières, *cantinières*, women warriors, and other contributions by women to Napoleonic warfare, see Chapters 6 and 9.

[26.](#) Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, 52–53. In French, Aubry congratulates Fabrice by assuring him that “tu es un bon b ...,” a likable *bougre* or “bugger.” Amid the macho clichés and homoerotic references in Aubry’s vulgar vocabulary, these words signal his approval and even affection for the newly initiated Fabrice.

[27.](#) Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, 53. In Aubry’s colorful French, he says, “Va te faire f ... toi et tous les généraux.” Unlike his vulgar “b ...” (*bougre*, “bugger”), which he uses as a term of affection for Fabrice, Aubry’s “f ...” (*foutre*, “fuck”) is meant—along with his disrespectful use of the informal *te* and *toi*—as a clear insult to the general. One might also speculate that the proximity of Stendhal’s references to the word “b ...” and to the general known as the Count “B***” implies that the incompetent general is a *bougre*, in the less affectionate sense.

[28.](#) Honoré de Balzac, “Études sur M. Beyle,” in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Marcel Bouteron and Henri Lognon, vol. 40 (Paris: L. Conard, 1912–40), 374, 402; Bersani, 92.

[29.](#) Among other interpretations of Stendhal’s “Happy Few,” Brombert speaks of “a code of honor that freely binds human beings capable of mutual esteem” (Pearson, 104). Bersani writes about “that elite audience Stendhal is addressing” and “the Happy Few who make up the strictly literary salon of Stendhal and his audience” (92, 139). In *Stendhal’s Violin: A Novelist and His Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), Roger Pearson argues “the Happy Few constitute a kind of aristocracy of taste” (5–6).

[30.](#) In *Stendhal’s Violin*, Pearson explains how critics from Martineau, Del Litto, and Blin to Prévost, Brombert, and Starobinski have variously attributed the “Happy Few” to Stendhal’s sense of wish fulfillment, sublimation, revenge, victory, masochism, and authorial power (5–8).

[31.](#) Stendhal, *Œuvres intimes*, 1: 167.

[32.](#) Stendhal, *Œuvres intimes*, 2: 536–37. In *Stendhal’s Violin*, Pearson writes, “Stendhal often predicted that he would find his true readers only at a later time. The years 1880, 1900, 1935, 2000, these are all proposed for the moment of recognition” (6).

[33.](#) William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (4.3.41–48), in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 1499–1500.

[34.](#) Shakespeare, *Henry V* (4.3.56–60), in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1500. Shakespeare’s notion of a military “band of brothers” has become a ubiquitous trope in twentieth- and twenty-first-century war literature and film, including Stephen Ambrose’s popular *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), and the 2001 HBO television series of the same name that Ambrose inspired.

[35.](#) Georg Lukács, “Balzac and Stendhal,” in *Studies in European Realism*, ed. and trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), quoted in Harold Bloom, ed., *Stendhal* (New York: Chelsea House, 1989), 36.

Chapter 5. Grave Friendship

[1.](#) In his discussion of the Peninsular Wars in *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), Alan Schom writes that “there were reports of captured French soldiers having their eyes and tongues cut out, or being castrated ... while others had fingers, hands, arms, and legs chopped off. Soldiers and female collaborators were tortured and disemboweled. The women ... were eviscerated from the navel to the vagina and their breasts hacked off” (552). Other forms of torture, Schom reports, included burying, burning, and boiling soldiers alive (453–87, 550–76).

[2.](#) Adèle Hugo, *Victor Hugo raconté par Adèle Hugo*, ed. Annie Ubersfeld and Guy Rosa (Paris: Plon, 1985), 196.

[3.](#) Adèle Hugo, 196. For more on the grotesque and the carnivalesque, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (1941; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[4.](#) After his defeat to the English and Portuguese during the disastrous battle of Vimeiro, General Junot was forced to negotiate the French evacuation of Portugal, at Cintra (Sintra) in 1808.

[5.](#) Hubert Juin, *Victor Hugo*, vol. 1 (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 174.

[6.](#) Victor Hugo, “Ode à la colonne de la place Vendôme,” in *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Pierre Albouy, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1964–74), 395–400. In *Victor Hugo* (New York: Norton, 1997), Graham Robb recounts how in 1807 Italy, Léopold Hugo “had the boys signed up as members of his regiment ... which enabled Victor Hugo to describe himself, years later, as a soldier since childhood” (22, 29–40).

[7.](#) Hugo’s poetry reflects his political development and evolving attitudes toward Napoleon: from a

disillusioned Napoleonic veteran to a confirmed royalist and Bourbon legitimist to a nostalgic neo-Bonapartist to a fervent anti-Napoleonic republican, exile, and opponent of Napoleon III. For more on Hugo's poetic and political development, see Maurice Descotes, *La Légende de Napoleon et les écrivains français du 19e siècle* (Paris: Minard—Lettres Modernes, 1967), 187–223; Jean-Marc Hovasse, Introduction, *Les Châtiments*, by Victor Hugo, ed. Jean-Marc Hovasse (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 25–44; Laurence Porter, *Victor Hugo* (New York: Twayne, 1999), 1–10, 65–76; Adèle Hugo, 415–16; Juin, 493–97; Robb, *Victor Hugo*, 116–25. For more on Hugo's "Ode to the Place Vendôme Column," see the detailed discussion later in this chapter.

[8.](#) Robb, *Victor Hugo*, 46.

[9.](#) Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, ed. Yves Gohin, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1995), 415. Hugo traveled to Waterloo in May 1861 to see the battlefield. In the opening of his Waterloo episode, Hugo explains, "I do not pretend to write a history of Waterloo here ... this history has been masterfully written elsewhere from the point of view of both Napoleon and a constellation of historians" (1: 414–15). Despite this disclaimer, Hugo nevertheless presents a grand and totalizing vision of the battle and its consequences for both France and Europe.

[10.](#) Hugo begins his Waterloo account as an 1861 "witness" of the scars left by the 1815 battle: "Last year, on a beautiful day in May, a passerby—he who recounts this story—arrived from Nivelles and made his way for La Hulpe. He went on foot" (1: 403). A half-century later, the narrator reconstructs the battle as an investigating tourist, with the help of local witnesses and guides. Without any direct memories of his own, Hugo reconstructs the battle from the physical evidence inscribed onto the battlefield and its ruins.

[11.](#) Despite its narrative unity, *Les Misérables* could be described as five novels: Part 1, *Fantine*; Part 2, *Cosette*; Part 3, *Marius*; Part 4, *L'Idylle rue Plumet et l'épopée rue Saint-Denis*; and Part 5, *Jean Valjean*. Inserted between Parts 1 and 2, Hugo's Waterloo episode underscores the epic weight of triple defeat: Fantine's death and Valjean's arrest (at the end of *Fantine*) and Napoleon's downfall (at the opening of *Cosette*).

[12.](#) In "Histoire, épopée et roman: *Les Misérables* à Waterloo," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 75 (1975), Roland Desné disagrees with the notion of digression. In contrast to "claims that Hugo arbitrarily added an epic fresco to his novel, either because he had a *Waterloo* waiting in his briefcase, or because he could not contain his imagination" (323), Desné argues that Hugo's Waterloo is an integral episode in the novel. Desné disagrees with Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, who wrote in 1862 that Hugo's Waterloo was a "disproportionate hors d'œuvre," with André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, who claimed in 1957 that "the connection between this episode and the rest of the novel is rather loose," and with Michel Butor who argued in 1964 that Hugo's Waterloo "cut up the narrative completely" (quoted in Desné, 321). For more on the similarities between Napoleon and Valjean, see the detailed discussion later in the chapter.

[13.](#) In *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), Victor Brombert argues that, unlike the novel's digressions on sewers, convents, and bishops, Hugo's Waterloo "may well be the most provocative digression in all of Hugo's fiction. Tangential as it seems, no digression could be more central" (87). In 1860, Hugo wrote that he considered opening the entire novel with "[p]erhaps Waterloo, begin there—the great epic account mixed with the novel"; Victor Hugo, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Jean Massin, vol. 12 (Paris: Club Français du Livre, 1967–70), 1502, quoted in Brombert 257 n. 1. *Les Misérables* begins quite literally with the phrase "In 1815" (1: 35) and—after the novel's first digression on the Bishop of Digne—with the 1815 release of Jean Valjean from prison. Brombert argues that Hugo's Waterloo also represents the novel's conclusion, since Hugo completed *Les Misérables* while visiting Waterloo in 1861 (87).

[14.](#) The year 1815 is an important hinge on which the novel swings, a date which marks the end of Napoleon and the beginning of *Les Misérables*. Both of them born in 1769, Napoleon and Valjean also share a common—if inverse—trajectory. While Napoleon began his meteoric rise to power with the Italian Campaign in 1796, Valjean was sentenced to five years in prison that year for stealing bread to feed his family. From 1796 to 1815, while Napoleon conquers Europe, Valjean serves a nineteen-year sentence, the same amount of time that Hugo spent in exile during the Second Empire (Brombert, 89). In 1815, as Napoleon is exiled, Valjean is released from Toulon. While Napoleon is held captive on St. Helena (1815–21), Valjean thrives as a businessman, mayor, and benefactor. When Napoleon dies in 1821, Valjean is arrested by Javert and imprisoned again. This chiasmic structure posits Valjean as Napoleon's alter ego: as Napoleon rises, Valjean falls; as the Emperor fails, Valjean thrives.

[15.](#) In *Gavroche: études sur Les Misérables* (Paris: SEDES, 1994), Pierre Laforgue argues that Hugo's placement of the Waterloo episode has an interior coherence: "From the beginning of the novel, there is a confusion between fiction and history: the title of this part is *Cosette*, but its first book is titled *Waterloo* ... The

beginning thus comes after the beginning: by this complex process, which mixes analepsis and anachronism, Hugo ... reinscribes the novel, in a quite spectacular manner, into his historical material" (57). In "Prisons et exils: où sont allés les héros de Waterloo?" *Nineteenth Century French Studies* 2.1–2 (1994–95), Janice Best similarly argues that within Hugo's "time-space referential," the Waterloo episode is not a digression but "a place where past and future fuse, the limits of traditional narrative are broken, [and] the novel becomes, as Victor Brombert said so well, 'visionary' " (90).

16. Hugo attributes Napoleon's defeat to God: "If it had not rained during the night of 17 to 18 June 1815, the future of Europe would have been different. Several drops of water more or less toppled Napoleon. Providence needed just a little rain to make Austerlitz end with Waterloo" (1: 412–13). Since the rain had muddied the field and made artillery movement difficult, Napoleon hesitated, allowing the Prussians more time to arrive and reinforce the English. Victor Brombert points out that "Disintegration in its diverse manifestations (flowing, melting, thawing, vanishing) is the chief image for the catastrophe of Waterloo" (93).

17. For Hugo, Napoleon's waterlogged Waterloo represents divine intervention: "In the battle of Waterloo, there are more than clouds, there are meteors. God has passed by" (1: 499). Napoleon is thus defeated by God himself: "Was it possible for Napoleon to win this battle? I say no. Why? Because of Wellington? Because of Blücher? No. Because of God" (1: 436).

18. In *Visions of War in France: Fiction, Art, Ideology* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), Catharine Savage Brosman argues that—unlike Hugo's epic Waterloo—Stendhal's Waterloo provides "no overview ... no totalization" (96).

19. Hugo describes the movement of French, English, and Prussian troops at Waterloo (and the location of the surrounding towns of Nivelles, Genappe, Braine-l'Alleud, Ohain, and Mont-Saint-Jean) as a map that could be drawn along the axes of a large diagrammatic "A" (1: 415–16). Just as Hugo simplifies these battle positions at Waterloo into a cartographic "A," his structural move (from epic to individual, broad to pointed) inverts this structure into a diagrammatic "V."

20. As Brombert points out (108–12), Cambronne's "merde" in 1815 presages the future when Valjean will save Marius from combat on the barricades in 1832 by wading through the sludge of the Paris sewers. In "Jean Valjean: réalisme et irréalisme des *Misérables*," in *Lire Les Misérables*, ed. Anne Ubersfeld and Guy Rosa (Paris: José Corti, 1985), Guy Rosa similarly describes the novel as "a great literary sewer," which reflects good and evil, heaven and hell, vice and virtue: "For if misery is the inverse and exterior of society ... then misery is as much on the top as the bottom ... The sewer, which is the underside of the city just as slang is the underside of language, is both mire and gold" (235–37).

21. Roland Desné argues that "Cambronne's word is the hyphen between 1793 and 1832," the soiled period between France's struggles for republican democracy (327). While nineteenth-century critics such as Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve and Alphonse de Lamartine criticized Hugo for citing Cambronne's vulgar "merde," Desné applauds Cambronne's courage in throwing *merde* in the face of defeat, and in distinguishing between the offensive word and the more offensive violence that it represents (325).

22. Hugo calls Cambronne "the *misérable* of words" (*Œuvres complètes* 9: 281). Guy Robert, '*Chaos Vaincu*': quelques remarques sur l'œuvre de Victor Hugo, vol. 2 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976), 97–98; Desné, 325.

23. Victor Hugo, "L'Expiation," in *Œuvres poétiques*, 2: 139.

24. Burial alive is a recurring theme in *Les Misérables*. Prefiguring the Ohain trench and Hougomont well, Hugo describes Valjean's misery as a kind of conscious drowning under "L'Onde et l'Ombre" (1: 149–51). Later, Valjean clandestinely escapes from the Petit Picpus convent in a coffin, is almost buried alive "Entre Quatre Planches" (1: 707–9), and fakes his own death by drowning to escape the prisoner transport ship *L'Orion* (1: 487–89). Referring to what Victor Brombert calls Hugo's "recurrent terror of being buried alive" (128), Yves Gohin speaks—in his notes to the 1995 Gallimard edition—of this "recurring image of engulfment" as an "obsessive Hugolian fear" (1: 148 n. 1, 468 n. 1).

25. Pierre Laforgue argues that Hugo's notion of "residue" is a recurring metaphor for misery: "The sewer is residue, in the sense that it cynically preserves—[as] the 'conscience of the city'—all or part of what is thrown in there" (135). As *misérables*, Valjean, Fantine, Cosette, Marius, and Gavroche are treated like human refuse by the Restoration and July Monarchy. Laforgue argues that "[t]he world of *Les Misérables* is also an abyss" where "[i]mages of drainage dominate with those of degradation" and all is "reduced to a kind of irreversible entropy" (137).

26. In his will, Colonel Pontmercy writes, "To my son. The Emperor made me a baron on the field of battle at Waterloo. Since the Restoration refuses me this title which I earned with my blood, my son will take and

assume it. It goes without saying that he will be worthy of it" (1: 794).

27. For more on signifiers, simulacra, and (mis)representation, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Écrits de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris: Galilée, 1981); Jacques Lacan, "Les Quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse," in *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, vol. 11 (Paris: Seuil, 1973); René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961); Christopher Prendergast, *The Triangle of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), and *Napoleon and History Painting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997).

28. It mattered little that the Egyptian Campaign was a military disaster, that (unlike Hannibal and his elephants) Bonaparte had crossed the Alps on a donkey, or that (apart from France's trade missions in Pondichéry and environs) India would be colonized not by Napoleon but by his arch-rivals the English. For more on the Bastille elephant, see Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1990), 3–6.

29. Victor Hugo, "Ode à la colonne de la place Vendôme," in *Œuvres poétiques*, 1: 395–400. Published in 1827, Hugo's Vendôme ode celebrates the Vendôme column that was erected by Napoleon between 1806 and 1810. Inspired by Trajan's column in Rome, it was cast with the bronze of enemy cannon from the French victory against the Austrians at Austerlitz in 1805. Desecrated in 1815 by the Restoration, which ordered the removal of Napoleon's statue on top, the column remained on the Place Vendôme as a tribute to the victories of France. Hugo's ode was inspired by a scandalous incident in January 1827 during a reception at the Austrian Embassy in Paris, where four of Napoleon's marshals were announced by their family names (Oudinot, Soult, Macdonald, and Mortier) instead of the ennobled titles (Ducs de Reggio, Dalmatie, Tarente, Trévise) that had been given to them by Napoleon for their victory over the Austrians. Outraged by this affront to his family's own Napoleonic past, Hugo composed his Vendôme ode, in which he praises the monument as the glorious "Debris of the Great Empire and the *Grande Armée*" (395). Referring to his own military childhood, Hugo writes, "And I should be silent! / I, who used to hear my name amid cries of war! / I, who followed the flight of a triumphant flag! / Who, joining my voice to the trumpets / Had the golden tassel of a sword as my first toy! / I, who was a soldier when I was a child!" (400). Speaking as a Napoleonic veteran, Hugo honors veterans like his father whose death the following year in 1828 may have also contributed to his Bonapartist nostalgia.

30. In "Le Tombeau de Gavroche ou Magnitudo Parvuli," in *Lire Les Misérables*, ed. Anne Ubersfeld and Guy Rosa (Paris: José Corti, 1985), Jacques Seebacher argues that "the child sheltered in the elephant reverses exteriority and interiority. From the bourgeois religion of utility, this little boy represents a return to the 'idea' of Napoleon the Great, in a 'biblical belly of the whale' ... The tightfisted economic regime of Louis-Philippe is contrasted here with Napoleon's great projects of expansion" (197–98). Laforgue adds that "by installing Gavroche in the elephant, Hugo transcends Napoleonic history and ... writes the novel of misery" (72).

Chapter 6. An Army of Bachelors

1. Elzéar Blaze, *La Vie militaire sous l'Empire* (1837; Paris: Henry du Parc, 1888), 317. Blaze explicitly describes this proposal as "une singulière proposition" (317).

2. Born in 1788, Elzéar Blaze trained at the military academy of Fontainebleau before joining Napoleon's armies in 1807 and serving as a lieutenant and then captain during the campaigns in Prussia (1807), Austria (1808–9), Spain (1811–12), Saxony (1813), and France (1814). Following his Napoleonic career and an attempt to remain in military service after 1815, Captain Blaze retired and later published his memoirs, *La Vie militaire sous l'Empire*, in 1837.

3. Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondance*, ed. Roger Pierrot, vol. 2 (Paris: Garnier, 1960–69), 8.

4. For more on Napoleon's exile and death on St. Helena (October 17, 1815, to May 5, 1821), see Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 766–87; Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène, 1815–1821* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1929); Barry Edward O'Meara, *Napoleon in Exile: A Voice from St. Helena*, 2 vols. (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1822); Gaspard Gorgaud, *Sainte-Hélène, Journal inédit de 1815 à 1818*, 2 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 1899); Emmanuel de Las Cases, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, ed. Joël Schmidt (Paris: Seuil, 1968); Henri-Gratien Bertrand, *Cahiers de Sainte-Hélène*, 3 vols. (Paris: Sulliver-Albin Michel, 1959).

5. Jean Tulard, Preface, *Le Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*, by Emmanuel de Las Cases, ed. Joël Schmidt (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 7.

6. Many scholars argue that Napoleon was murdered by arsenic poisoning on St. Helena in 1821. Since

Montholon had the financial motive and ample opportunity, he seems to be the most likely suspect, though he never received the millions of francs bequeathed to him in Napoleon's will. For detailed investigations into Napoleon's death, see Schom, 772–87; Sven Forshuvud and Ben Weider, *Assassination at St. Helena: The Poisoning of Napoleon Bonaparte* (Vancouver: Mitchell, 1978); Ben Weider, *Assassination at St. Helena Revisited* (New York: John Smiley, 1995); René Maury, *L'énigme Napoléon résolue* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000).

[7.](#) Bertrand, 3: 19. Schom, 785.

[8.](#) Marbot married Mademoiselle Desbrières during the Empire, fathered his eldest son, Alfred, in 1812, and died in 1854 at the age of seventy-two. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcellin de Marbot, *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot*, vol. 2 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1983), 154–56, 228. Coignet wed Mademoiselle Baillet in 1818, was married for thirty years until her death in 1848, and died in 1865 at the age of ninety. Jean-Roch Coignet, *Les Cahiers du Capitaine Coignet*, ed. Lorédan Larchey (Paris: Hachette, 1912), 311–15, 329. Bourgogne was married twice following his military service during the Empire: first to Thérèse-Fortunée Demarez in 1814, with whom he had two daughters, and, following the death of his first wife, to Philippine Godart in 1822, with whom he had two more children, before his death in 1867 at eighty-two years of age. Adrien-Jean-Baptiste-François Bourgogne, *Mémoires du Sergent Bourgogne (1812–13)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 24–26.

[9.](#) Despite the insensitivity of these terms in twenty-first-century French and English, disabled veterans in nineteenth-century France were often referred to as *invalides* (invalids or the invalidated) and *mutilés de guerre* (the mutilated of war).

[10.](#) In *La Société militaire de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), Raoul Girardet writes that Napoleonic veterans were thus “the last representatives of a world that was crumbling” amid a new regime that began to “repudiate the military exaltation of the preceding period” (13).

[11.](#) Schom, 789. Georges Blond, *La Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (London: Arms and Armour, 1995), 511.

[12.](#) Girardet writes that veterans were considered “vulgar, unkempt, and brutish” (15) in post-1815 France.

[13.](#) Adolphe de Montureux, *Essai sur l'esprit militaire et l'organisation de l'armée* (Paris: Charles Béchét, 1828), quoted in Girardet, 22.

[14.](#) Jean Maximilien Lamarque, *De l'Esprit militaire en France* (Paris: Bossange, 1826), quoted in Girardet, 22.

[15.](#) In *The French Veteran: From the Revolution to the Restoration* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), Isser Woloch documents the material, social, and political challenges facing Napoleonic veterans. I owe much of the historical material in this section to Woloch's veteran expertise, especially his discussion of veteran life on pages 3–24, 78–100, 206–79, 292–304.

[16.](#) Despite its limited coverage, Choiseul's pension plan created what Woloch calls “a new social type to French society, the pensioned ex-soldier” (7).

[17.](#) Woloch, 11, 78–100, 232–46, 262–66.

[18.](#) Woloch, 292–93.

[19.](#) Woloch, 297, 303–4.

[20.](#) Woloch, 209, 259, 298–99. Due to high rates of mortality and desertion, there were fewer veterans of the Grande Armée than one might expect. Even though Napoleon’s army numbered over 600,000 during the invasion of Russia in 1812, Woloch reports that there were only “118,000 veterans collecting pensions in 1815, and a total of approximately 150,000 pensioned veterans in the entire course of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars” (206). Since many veterans did not qualify for pensions, the total number of veterans was potentially much higher.

[21.](#) Woloch, 297–99.

[22.](#) From his investigation of the crime rate among veterans during the Restoration, Woloch reports that “the records of the Paris police constables, the military police, and the [Invalides] administration indicate that public disturbances, drunkenness, brawling, and insults were the most common infractions for which the *invalides* were disciplined or arrested” (279).

[23.](#) In *Napoleon: le pouvoir, la nation, la légende* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997), Jean Tulard writes that the Napoleonic legend was born during the Restoration among the ranks of discontented veterans, “particularly the officers reduced to half-pay and a routine and miserable life after so much glory; the legend was born out of the restrictions placed on them at the beginning of the Restoration against speaking and praising the fallen Emperor” (97). In *Les Demi-solde: étude d’une catégorie sociale* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1955), Jean Vidalenc argues, however, that this image has been exaggerated and that many Napoleonic veterans submitted to the Bourbon Restoration “out of conviction, calculation, or resignation” (quoted in Woloch, 300).

[24.](#) Woloch calls this wistful Bonapartism a “nostalgic regret for more exciting times” (300–301).

[25.](#) Jean Tulard, *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), 449.

[26.](#) Marie-Hélène Legrand, *Citoyens Officiers de Napoléon* (Derval: L’Orée du Bois, 1997), 376.

[27.](#) Vicomte d’Avout, *Davout et les événements de 1815: à propos d’un livre récent* (Paris: Auxerre Millon, 1906), quoted in Legrand, 376. As Victor Hugo dramatizes in *Les Misérables*, a civil insurrection later erupted at the funeral of the republican leader and Napoleonic veteran General Maximilien Lamarque in June 1832. The barricades in 1832 followed the July Revolution of 1830 and prefigured the civil insurrections of 1848 and 1871.

[28.](#) Charles Joly, *Le Maréchal Davout* (Paris: Perriquet, 1864), quoted in Legrand, 376.

[29.](#) André Corvisier, *L’Armée française de la fin du dix-septième siècle au ministère de Choiseul: Le Soldat*, vol. 2 (Paris: PUF, 1964), 757.

[30.](#) In *Les Officiers français dans la nation, 1848–1914* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982), William Serman writes that during the latter half of the nineteenth century, “the majority of European countries ... restrained the matrimonial freedom of

military men” (145).

[31.](#) General Anne-Joseph Théodore Peyssard, Archives du Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre (S.H.A.T.): Xs 138 (1857), quoted in Serman, 146.

[32.](#) Colonel Laperche, Archives du Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre (S.H.A.T.): G6/36, carnet n. 4 (24.7.1859), quoted in Serman, 146.

[33.](#) In addition to their roles as monarchs, diplomats, and writers, women made incalculable contributions to Napoleonic warfare as camp-followers, prostitutes, soldiers, wives, and widows. For an extended discussion of women and the Napoleonic Wars, see Blond, 19–25, 244–45; and Jean-Claude Damamme, *Les Soldats de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 118–33. Like the *vivandière* who saves Stendhal’s Fabrice at Waterloo, a *cantinière* known as Marie-Tête-de-Bois (Stubborn Marie) served in seventeen campaigns between 1805 and 1815 (Damamme, 129). Like a woman nicknamed “Madame-Quarante-Milles-Hommes” (Madame Forty-Thousand-Men) who died miserably of syphilis after eight years as a military prostitute between 1804 and 1812 (Blond, 25), many wartime women were savaged by sexual exploitation and violence, including, as Schom writes, the “thousands of old women and young girls raped by [the] Grande Armée” (789). Silenced during the Empire, war prostitutes were later honored as resistance fighters and patriots in Maupassant’s *Boule de suif* (1880) and *Le Lit* 29 (1884). In the great tradition of French women warriors stretching back to Jeanne d’Arc, some women served as soldiers, fighting alongside their male comrades in masculine military drag. An orphan named Thérèse Figueur served in Napoleon’s armies from the siege of Toulon (1793) to the battles of Austerlitz and Iéna (1805–6), before being captured by the English (Damamme, 131–33). For more on the women warriors known as *pétroleuses* and *Amazones de la Seine*, who fought during the Paris Commune in 1871, see Françoise Giroud, *Les Françaises de la Gauloise à la pilule* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); Michelle Perot, *Les Femmes ou le silence de l’Histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998); and Martin Phillip Johnson, “Citizenship and Gender: The Légion des Fédérées in the Paris Commune of 1871,” *French History* 8.3 (1994): 276–95. Despite their extraordinary sacrifices and service, military wives, widows, and their children received little to no assistance from the state. Veterans who retired to the Invalides could not bring their wives since, as Woloch explains, “women did not fit smoothly into the institution’s design” (272–78). This astute observation characterizes the French military’s overall institutional misogyny during the first half of the nineteenth century. Despite their immeasurable contributions, military women received little recognition, remuneration, or compensation. For more on Napoleonic women warriors, see Chapters 4 and 9.

[34.](#) Serman explains that “at least two out of every hundred officers are punished ... for concubinage. Several have been disciplined, forced to resign ... or sentenced to prison” (181).

[35.](#) For more on nineteenth-century prostitution in France, see Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[36.](#) In *The Soldiers of the French Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), Alan Forrest documents the Revolution's attempt in 1793 to undo restrictions on military marriage: "soldiers obtained a further right, much prized as a symbol of freedom, when they were allowed to marry without the written permission of their commanding officer" (46). But Woloch reports that the Consulate "restored the obligation of *militaires* to receive permission before marrying, and by the time of the Empire the government was clearly discouraging matrimony among its troops" (273–74).

[37.](#) For more on military marital impediments, see Woloch, 246–57, 273–74.

[38.](#) For more on such cases, see the extended discussion of Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* in Chapter 7.

[39.](#) Woloch, 246–57.

[40.](#) Woloch, 298–99.

[41.](#) In a December 17, 1843, decree, the Minister of War, Marshal Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult, stipulated that "officers of all ranks cannot obtain permission to marry unless the person they wish to wed provides a dowry of at least 1,200 francs" (Serman, 153).

[42.](#) Serman, 155.

[43.](#) Ernest Serret, *Une jambe de moins* (Paris: Hachette, 1861), 139.

[44.](#) Alfred Assollant, *Une ville de garnison* (Paris: Hetzel, 1865), 182–83.

[45.](#) Serman reports that "the proportion of fifty-year-old bachelors rose from 28% [from the period between] 1825 to 1835, to 38%, 37%, and 35% for ... 1840, 1850, and 1855" (153).

[46.](#) General Édouard Collineau, *Carnets de la Sabretache* (Paris: Société La Sabretache, 1924), 261.

[47.](#) Serman argues that "officers sworn to celibacy or constrained by temporary celibacy looked for pleasure however they could" (180). While this certainly included heterosexual prostitution, it may also have encompassed other forms of homosocial pleasure and intimacy.

[48.](#) Woloch reports that "every officer resided singly except for 46 out of 97 lieutenants who were obliged to double-up" (24).

[49.](#) Bourgogne, 123–24.

[50.](#) Hector Fleischmann, *Napoléon par Balzac* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1919), 31; Donald Lee Joseph, *Les souvenirs et l'esprit napoléoniens chez Balzac* (Paris: Guitard, 1924), 37, 71; André Maurois, *Prométhée ou la vie de Balzac* (Paris: Hachette, 1965), 128–30; Maurice Descotes, *La Légende de Napoléon et les*

écrivains français du XIXème siècle (Paris: Minard, 1967), 225; Saint-Paulien, *Napoléon Balzac et l'Empire de la Comédie humaine* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), 147; Gérard Gengembre, *Balzac, le Napoléon des lettres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 36–37; Graham Robb, *Balzac: A Biography* (London: Picador, 1994), 141–42.

[51.](#) For more, see Fleischmann, Joseph, Maurois, Descotes, Saint-Paulien, Gengembre, and Robb, *Balzac*.

[52.](#) Adèle Hugo, *Victor Hugo raconté par Adèle Hugo*, ed. Annie Ubersfeld and Guy Rosa (Paris: Plon, 1985), 296–97; Hubert Juin, *Victor Hugo*, vol. 1 (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 296; Graham Robb, *Victor Hugo*, 58–59.

[53.](#) Victor Hugo, “Discours prononcé aux funérailles de M. Honoré de Balzac,” in *Actes et paroles: Avant l'exil, 1841–51*, ed. Jean-Claude Fizaine, vol. 1 (Paris: Laffont, 1985), quoted in Gengembre, 1.

[54.](#) Hugo, “Discours prononcé aux funérailles de M. Honoré de Balzac,” quoted in Gengembre, 1.

[55.](#) Léon Gozlan, *Balzac chez lui* (Paris: Lévy, 1863), 36; Fleischmann, 21–22; Descotes, 225; Joseph, 8; Gengembre, 11, 31, 69. In his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (Paris, 1883–85), Paul Bourget argues that “Balzac is our literary Napoleon” (quoted in Saint-Paulien, 4, 408). Fleischmann, Joseph, and Descotes all discuss the overshadowing presence of Napoleon in *The Human Comedy*. Saint-Paulien argues that “to study [*The Human Comedy*] without considering the Emperor would be as faulty as discussing Greek mythology without speaking of Zeus” (10).

[56.](#) Bertrand-François Balzac, *De la statue equestre que les Français doivent ériger pour perpétuer la mémoire d'Henry IV et leur amour pour la dynastie* (1814); Joseph, 13–20; Descotes, 225–26.

[57.](#) Descotes explains that “such about-faces were common at the time” (225), when shifting loyalties were a political necessity or insurance policy against the consequences of rapid regime change.

[58.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Avant-propos de la Comédie humaine, La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), 13.

[59.](#) Robb points out that Balzac was an “unorthodox catholic” (*Balzac*, 112).

[60.](#) For more on the Duchesse d'Abrantès and her memoirs on the Empire, see Chapter 2.

[61.](#) Joseph argues that “this little book is incontestable proof of Balzac’s Napoleonic cult” (168).

[62.](#) Fleischmann writes that “the effigy of the Emperor is seen in every page of *The Human Comedy* ... Among the four thousand characters who populate this work, Napoleon is the one who shines as an incessant *leitmotif*. All comes back to him ... In the end, *The Human Comedy* is peopled with Napoleon’s servants, soldiers, and dignitaries” (39–40, 54). Joseph argues that “it is because of these two sources of inspiration—Balzac’s absorbing interest in the present and his love for Napoleon—

that we find in almost all his tales, all his stories, all his novels the atmosphere of the Empire and the Napoleonic era” (40–41).

[63.](#) Joseph refers to these Napoleonic memories, sights, and veterans as the “lively memories,” “simple echoes,” and “diverse allusions” (41) of Napoleon’s Empire in *The Human Comedy*.

[64.](#) Descotes writes that “Napoleon is the mythic hero of a gigantic adventure whose shadow falls on all of *The Human Comedy* ... Napoleon is everywhere in the work of Balzac” (228), and argues that, though he rarely appears in person, “it is above all through the characters who evoke him, in *The Human Comedy*, that Napoleon speaks and acts” (231). According to Descotes, Balzac’s Bonaparte is the “Napoleon of the people,” the heroic “Charlemagne or Roland, Achilles or Aeneas” as well as the “Ogre, Attila, Antichrist” of his age (235).

[65.](#) Balzac, *Autre étude de femme, La Comédie humaine* 3: 700–701. Cited by twentieth-century scholars from Fleischmann to Descotes, this extraordinary passage—often called “the apology of Napoleon”—summarizes the great range of Napoleonic images in Balzac’s *The Human Comedy*.

[66.](#) Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989–2000) Part 1, Sect. 2, Memb. 4, Subsect. 4; Edward Bulwer-Lytton, “Richelieu,” in *British and American Plays 1830–1945*, ed. William Durham Higley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), Act II, sc. ii; both quoted in John Bartlett, *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2002), 241, 452. Despite little evidence linking them, these references—to Balzac and Napoleon, Bulwer-Lytton and Richelieu, Burton and colonial conquest—all evoke political and literary ambition. Napoleon’s ambition surpassed that of Richelieu (1585–1642), whose clerical and military path to power could be considered a model for Stendhal’s Julien Sorel. Destined for military service, Richelieu only entered the clergy to replace his brother as the young bishop of Luçon in 1607. Though he never became a soldier, Richelieu rose to great power as prime minister for Louis XIII, and became the founder both of the French Academy and Royal Navy, a patron of letters, and the consolidator of colonial power.

[67.](#) Balzac, *Avant-propos*, 20.

[68.](#) Pierre-Georges Castex, “L’Univers de la *Comédie humaine*,” *La Comédie humaine*, 1: xiii–xv; Robb, *Balzac*, 234; Gengembre, 139, 144–45.

[69.](#) Balzac, *Correspondance*, 4: 33–37; Robb, *Balzac*, 330; Gengembre, 132, 139.

[70.](#) Balzac, *Avant-propos*, 18.

[71.](#) Victor Hugo, *Actes et paroles*, vol. 1 (Paris: Club Français du Livre, 1968), 421.

[72.](#) In “L’Univers de *La Comédie humaine*,” Pierre-Georges Castex argues that Balzac invented French social history: “The novelist dreamed of becoming an historian ... [and] even flattered himself as being ‘more of an historian than a novelist’ “ (xix). Castex concludes, “While writing the novel of his age, [Balzac]

founded ... social history and the history of manners” (xxxiii).

[73.](#) Balzac, *Avant-propos*, 8.

[74.](#) Balzac, *Avant-propos*, 19.

[75.](#) Balzac, *Catalogue de 1845, La Comédie humaine*, 1: cxxv.

[76.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Théorie de la démarche, La Comédie humaine*, 12: 266–71; Honoré de Balzac, *Le Cousin Pons, La Comédie humaine*, 7: 566. Balzac’s theory of vital fluids is also discussed in Robb, *Balzac*, 173–79, 401.

[77.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *La Bataille, La Comédie humaine*, 12: 653.

[78.](#) Fleischmann, 27–34; Joseph, 73; Descotes, 256; Saint-Paulien, 273–82; Roland Chollet, Introduction to *La Bataille, La Comédie humaine*, 12: 649–52; Catharine Savage Brosman, *Visions of War in France* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 88; Thierry Bodin, “Les Batailles napoléoniennes de Balzac,” in *Napoleon: de l’histoire à la légende*, ed. Bernard Devaux (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000), 87–115.

[79.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Pensées, sujets, fragments*, ed. Jacques Crépet (Paris: Blaizot, 1910), quoted in Chollet, 650.

[80.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres à Mme. Hanska*, ed. Roger Pierrot, vol. 1 (Paris: Delta, 1967–71), 27–28.

[81.](#) Fleischmann, 33; Chollet, 652; Brosman, 89.

[82.](#) Honoré de Balzac, Letter to Henri Beyle, 20 March 1839, *Correspondance*, in *Œuvres complètes de Honoré de Balzac*, vol. 24 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1869–76), 328.

[83.](#) Honoré de Balzac, Letter to Éveline Hanska, 14 April 1839, *Lettres à l’étrangère*, vol. 1 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1906–50), 509.

[84.](#) Honoré de Balzac, “Étude sur *La Chartreuse de Parme* de M. Beyle,” *La Revue parisienne*, 25 September 1840, quoted in Saint-Paulien, 418.

[85.](#) Balzac, “Étude sur *La Chartreuse de Parme* de M. Beyle,” quoted in Henri Martineau, *L’œuvre de Stendhal* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1966), 503.

[86.](#) Quoted in Martineau, 503.

[87.](#) For a more extensive discussion of *A Passion in the Desert* as a metaphor for Napoleonic friendship, see Brian Martin, “Panthers, Palms, and Desert Passions: Balzac and Napoleon in Egypt,” in *Queer Exoticism*, ed. David A. Powell and Tamara Powell (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 47–62.

[88.](#) Here, the strict taxonomy of Balzac’s *The Human Comedy* gives way to alternate classification. On closer examination, the plan that Balzac laid out for *The Human Comedy* in both the *Preface* (1842) and *Catalogue* (1845) appears arbitrary. Why, for example, categorize *Colonel Chabert* as a *Scene of Private Life* and not a *Scene of Military Life*? Here, one confronts the complexity of Balzac’s texts, their resistance to easy categorization, and their open invitation to interpretation. Several literary critics have proposed expanded versions of the *Scenes of Military Life*

(Fleischmann, 3–62; Joseph, 71–149; Descotes, 225–67; Saint-Paulien, 82–135, 347–85). In the introduction to his *Studies of Manners*, even Balzac asks the question, “[I]n this rich picture gallery, whose great halls stretch to infinity, does one not find frames of a rather remarkable size, such as those of ... *The Country Doctor* and *The Chouans*, which obviously belong to the *Scenes of Military Life*?” (*La Comédie humaine*, 10: 1207).

Chapter 7. Combat Companions and Veteran Bedfellows

1. Honoré de Balzac, *Les Chouans*, *La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 8 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), 927.

2. Honoré de Balzac, *Préface de l'Édition Furne*, *La Comédie humaine*, 8: 903.

3. In her introduction to the Pléiade edition of *The Chouans*, Lucienne Frappier-Mazur argues that Hulot is most likely a composite of several Republican generals who served in Brittany and Vendée, including Kléber, Hoche, and Hédouville. Balzac may have borrowed Hulot's name from General Jacques-Louis Hulot (1773–1843) or from General Étienne Hulot (1774–1850) whom Balzac met in the salon of his friend the Duchesse d'Abrantès (*La Comédie humaine*, 8: 859–66, 1694–95 n. 2, 1708 n. 1).

4. Hulot holds both the French rank of “commandant” and the military post of “commandant” or commanding officer of his demi-brigade in Brittany. Since the French rank of “commandant” is the equivalent of the Anglophone “major,” I have used this word to describe Hulot's rank, but have retained “commandant” to describe Hulot's post or command.

5. In *Visions of War in France* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), Catharine Savage Brosman argues that “although ambushes, skirmishes, and massacres are recounted ... *Les Chouans* is principally a novel of violent love [between Montauran and Verneuil], acted out in a political setting” (89). Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, however, argues that the war novel and love story represent a thematic unity: “*Les Chouans*, historical novel or love story? This traditional question has been badly posed, because it invites one to accord superiority to one or the other, and this is precisely the problem ... [T]here exists between these two a game of echoes, a thematic unity” (*La Comédie humaine*, 8: 872). Similarly, Georg Lukács argues in *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), that Balzac's ability to move beyond the “portrayal of past history to the portrayal of the present as history” (83) allows his work to signify doubly as past and present, memory and experience, history and fiction.

6. According to *Le Petit Robert Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Le Robert, 1991), a *hulotte* is a sixteenth-century variation on the tenth-century *hibou* (owl); the verb *hululer* is derived from the Latin *ululare* (to hoot) (944).

7. Balzac, *Les Chouans*, 936–37. Hulot literally refers to his men as “lapins”

(rabbits), an affectionate term that can be expressed by “lads” or “boys.”

[8.](#) Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, ed. Henri Martineau (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), 53. For more on Corporal Aubry’s vulgar speech, see Chapter 4.

[9.](#) Balzac, *La Cousine Bette*, *La Comédie humaine*, 7: 345.

[10.](#) Balzac, *La Cousine Bette*, *La Comédie humaine*, 7: 353.

[11.](#) In *The Chouans*, Balzac explains that “according to the custom of the royalist leaders, [The Guy] hid his title and name under the cover of what were called war names” (940), and further clarifies that “[t]he word *gars*, which is pronounced *gah*, is a relic of the Celtic language. It entered the French language through the low Breton dialect, and this word carries with it a great amount of ancient significance. The *gais* was the principal weapon of the Gaëls or Gauls; *gaisde* signifies the army; *gais*, bravery; *gas*, strength” (917).

[12.](#) During a firefight against the *Chouans* on the Pèlerine plateau, for example, *Beau-pied* jokes to his fellow soldiers, “Shut up, gentlemen, I can’t hear myself kill!” (937). Balzac writes that this tasteless bit of black humor “rekindled the Blues’ courage” (937).

[13.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*, *La Comédie humaine*, 3: 192.

[14.](#) Balzac, *La Cousine Bette*, *La Comédie humaine*, 7: 338.

[15.](#) Balzac, *La Cousine Bette*, *La Comédie humaine*, 7: 1326 n. 1.

[16.](#) Jean Tulard, *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), 449.

[17.](#) Jean-Baptiste Barrès, *Souvenirs d’un officier de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Plon, 1923), 87.

[18.](#) Napoleon, Letter to Josephine, 9 February 1807, quoted in Jean-Claude Damamme, *Les Soldats de la Grande Armée* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 64.

[19.](#) Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 444. In between the 7,600 reported by Napoleon’s 58ème *Bulletin de la Grande Armée* and Schom’s estimate of 40,000, Georges Blond calculates 27,000 dead and wounded, in *La Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (London: Arms and Armour, 1995), 127.

[20.](#) Maréchal Michel Ney, quoted in Eric Perrin, *Le Maréchal Ney* (Paris: Perrin, 1993), 106, English translation quoted in Schom 444.

[21.](#) Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Damamme, 63, and Blond, 127.

[22.](#) In his Introduction to the Pléiade edition of *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), Pierre Barbéris argues that the resemblance between Chabert, Pontmercy, and Marbot—as well as Alfred de Vigny’s military father, who was left for dead and buried alive on a German battlefield—illustrates the mutual influences of military memoirs and literary texts: “It is not impossible that, through Gilbert de Pommereul, present at Eylau, Balzac may have known about Marbot’s adventure” (323 n. 3, 1343). In *Post-Revolutionary Narrative: Stendhal, Balzac, and Restoration History Writing* (Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1997), Rachel Ann Shuh also draws a connection between historical and literary texts by comparing Balzac’s

Colonel Chabert with Las Cases's *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (841–42).

23. There were several officers in Napoleon's Grande Armée named Chabert, including a General Chabert who was the military commander in Balzac's native Tours during his childhood, a Colonel Chabert who had served in Russia and later retired to Versailles, and another Colonel Louis Chabert who had served in Spain. Pierre Citron, Introduction, *Le Colonel Chabert*, by Honoré de Balzac (Paris: Didier, 1961), xxxvi–xli. Patrick Berthier, Notice, *Le Colonel Chabert*, by Honoré de Balzac (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1974), 39 n. 2, 255, 268. Pierre Barbéris, Introduction, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Comédie humaine*, 3: 302, 322 n. 1, 1342. See also Patrick Berthier, "Folbert, Chabert, Falbert?" *L'Année balzacienne* 8 (1987): 394–98; Eileen Sivert, "Who's Who: Non-Characters in *Le Colonel Chabert*," *French Forum* 13.2 (1988): 217–28; and Michael Lastinger, "The CAPital Letter: Balzac's *Le Colonel Chabert* and the Names of a Rose," *Nineteenth Century French Studies* 30.1–2 (2001): 39–57.

24. Despite the historical distance, Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* also has much in common with Jean de Coras's *Arrêt mémorable du Parlement de Toulouse* (1561), which was popularized by Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983), in which a veteran ironically named Guerre (which means "war") returns home in 1560 to discover that an imposter, Arnault du Tihl, has usurped his wife, property, and identity in his native village of Artigat in southwestern France. In the French popular imagination during the last twenty-five years, Guerre and Chabert have been associated with one another due in no small part to the cinematic success of Daniel Vigne's *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1982) and Yves Angelo's *Colonel Chabert* (1994), in which Gérard Dépardieu plays both title roles. Guerre and Chabert have thus become synonymous with the forgotten and abused veteran. At the risk of anachronism, I would venture that Balzac's *Colonel Chabert* also has much in common with Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* (1976). Popularized by Oliver Stone's film (1989), Kovic's memoir recounts his traumatic combat experience in Vietnam, where his severe wounds left him paralyzed from the chest down, and his later return to a politically tempestuous America that was not only unwilling to sympathize with his suffering, but blamed him for taking part in a murderous and unjust war. For more, see Brian Martin, "From Balzac to Iraq: Soldiers, Veterans, and Military Adaptation," *The Comparatist* 30 (May 2006): 68–80.

25. Balzac, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Comédie humaine*, 3: 329.

26. In *A War on Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), Ben Shephard explains that the "the diagnostic eras of shell shock, battle fatigue, and post-traumatic stress disorder" (xix) all belong to the twentieth century. What "shell shock" was for the First World War, and "battle fatigue" was for the Second World War, "post-traumatic stress disorder" was to the Vietnam and post-Vietnam era.

[27.](#) In *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), Peter Brooks compares Chabert's burial with Freud's psychoanalytic work in "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through" (1914). Brooks draws a connection between the embedded narrative of *Colonel Chabert*, in which Chabert tells Derville his story of being buried alive, and the psychoanalytic "mechanism and burden of repression, burying and encrypting a past that insists on continuing to live" (221). Comparing Chabert's physical burial and the text's embedded narrative, Brooks argues that "the true horror of his situation may lie in an even more painful analogue and product of his living entombment: the possibility that his story may remain buried," in what Brooks calls "a massive act of historical repression" (222).

[28.](#) In this context, the French noun *brave* can refer either to a man of courage and valor or, more generally, to a decent, honest, good man or fellow. Nineteenth-century soldiers used this word, in both senses, as a term of respect and affection.

[29.](#) As a ghost or revenant, Chabert is a manifestation of France's repressed Napoleonic trauma that refuses to remain buried. Pierre Barb  ris writes, "The revenant always serves ... as a source of revelation for the society that he haunts and which has continued without him" (*La Com  die humaine*, 3: 297). In *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York: Methuen, 1987), Marjorie Garber argues that the ghost is a manifestation of what Freud calls the repetition-compulsion: "The agent of repetition here, clearly, is the ghost. And what is a ghost? It is a memory trace. It is a sign of something missing, something omitted, something undone" (129). In "The Claims of the Dead: History, Haunted Property, and the Law," *Critical Inquiry* 28.2 (Winter 2002), Cathy Caruth compares Chabert's "ghostly claim to property" with the legal claims of other war survivors in their search for restitution, compensation, and justice (420).

[30.](#) An archetype of the disloyal military wife, Rose Chapotel Chabert is demonized as a heartless social climber, unwilling to mourn, await, or recognize her husband. While one empathizes with Colonel Chabert, it is difficult to demonize Rose Chapotel in such absolute and misogynist terms. Patrick Berthier argues that Balzac's story idealizes Chabert and demonizes Ferraud to "accentuate the Manichean dualism of the heartless wife and the innocent husband" (Notice, 95 n. 1, 279). In reminding his wife that "I picked you up at the Palais Royal" (357), an infamous site for prostitution in nineteenth-century Paris, Chabert implies that Rose was a prostitute who longed to become a colonel's wife and imperial countess, before joining the ranks of the older aristocracy as wife of the Comte Ferraud (and later becoming the last mistress of Louis XVIII, in Balzac's *Les Employ  s*). However, Rose Chapotel is also a victim of poverty and institutional misogyny. As Jann Matlock argues in *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), the stakes for women accused of prostitution were extremely high during the

1830s, when *Colonel Chabert* was published. In her reading of Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet's *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (1837), Matlock explains that the capital's 9,000–22,000 prostitutes between 1820 and 1831 risked not only violence and disease from their clients, but the surveillance and harassment of the medical and penal systems (22). It is thus understandable that Rose Chapotel—like Rose Tascher, who was later known as Napoleon's Empress Josephine—uses every means possible to protect herself in the volatile world of (post) Napoleonic France. For more on prostitution, see Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[31.](#) In *La Pensée de Balzac dans la Comédie humaine* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), Per Nykrog writes about Balzac's "insistence on the theme of 'absolute devotion' among soldiers" (342) and compares this military devotion to both conjugal and maternal love. In *La Légende de Napoléon et les écrivains français du 19ème siècle* (Paris: Minard, 1967), Maurice Descotes argues that "Balzac endeavored ... to determine what bonds linked Napoleon to his soldiers: affectionate bonds, man to man" (258). Citing *Colonel Chabert*, Descotes attests that "each soldier is convinced of the Emperor's personal interest in his well-being" and that "the Emperor will take care of the families of those who die in his service" (258). Similarly, Pierre Barbéris writes in *Mythes balzaciens* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972) that "it is the Emperor who ... is concerned to know if Chabert is dead at Eylau" (229). However, without the paternal protection of Napoleon following 1815, many soldiers sought fraternal support in each other.

[32.](#) In *Le Monde de Balzac* (Paris: Arthaud, 1973), Pierre Barbéris argues that Chabert "dreams incessantly of joining, being admitted, and living with similar beings. It is for this that, faced with Parisian selfishness, Chabert has not forgotten military fraternity" (426).

[33.](#) Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 300; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1979), 293.

[34.](#) Hippolyte-Ernest Dutouquet, *De la condition des classes pauvres* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1846), quoted in Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, 307; *Discipline and Punish*, 300.

[35.](#) In Book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this myth of Apollo and Hyacinth is flanked by other stories of lovers, transformation, and resurrection, from Orpheus and Euridice, to Pygmalion and Galatea, and Venus and Adonis.

[36.](#) Hyacinth and Endymion also recall Adonis. In Balzac's *Sarrasine* (1830), Girodet's painting of Endymion is said to be inspired by a painting of the castrato opera diva La Zambinella as Adonis. Loved by the goddess Aphrodite, who begs Zeus to resurrect Adonis when he is killed by a wild boar, Adonis is condemned to

spend half the year on earth and half in hell, between life and death. Like Hyacinth, Endymion, and Adonis, Chabert also lives between the living and the dead, active and passive, masculine and feminine. In *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), Roland Barthes argues that “everything in Endymion-Adonis connotes femininity,” from Endymion’s and Adonis’s passive imprisonment, to Girodet’s languishing odalisque, to La Zambinella’s castrated and feminine body (76–77). Like Endymion-Adonis, Hyacinthe-Chabert is also emasculated by a manipulative lover who tries to keep him buried. Like the men who shared his grave, or the orphans, soldiers, prisoners, and patients who have shared his barracks, bivouacs, and cellblocks, Hyacinth, Endymion, and Adonis are Chabert’s mythological bedfellows.

[37.](#) Later in the century, Oscar Wilde used the image of a hyacinth to refer to his lover Lord Alfred Douglas. As Neil McKenna points out in *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde* (London: Century, 2003), Wilde wrote of Douglas in 1892: “Bosie is so tired. He lies like a hyacinth on the sofa, and I worship him” (185).

[38.](#) In *L’Éros balzacien* (Paris: José Corti, 1989), Pierre Danger asks, “And isn’t this what most of Balzac’s heroes are haunted by, this ‘Chabert complex,’ that permanent fear of being chased from one’s own existence ... ?” (70). For Danger, Balzac’s characters “are all thus a little like foundlings, badly loved, abandoned, and unrecognized. They are ‘damned children’ who are struggling ... to win their very right to exist from those who refuse them” (70).

[39.](#) Victor Hugo, “Ode à la colonne de la place Vendôme,” in *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Pierre Albouy, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1964–74) 395–400. For more on Hugo’s Vendôme ode, see Chapter 5.

[40.](#) Derville also says that “[t]hese old soldiers are a collection of paintings and books” (355).

Chapter 8. Military Daddies and Veteran Rogues

[1.](#) *The Country Doctor* (1840–43) was a literary vehicle for Balzac’s essay, *On Modern Government*, which was written to launch his parliamentary electoral campaign in 1832. Although Balzac never presented himself for these elections, the series of political articles he published in the popular press from 1831 to 1832 culminated in this essay, which expresses his Bourbon legitimism and his ideas on social and political theory. Inserted into the novel and the mouth of Benassis, *On Modern Government* became a dinner party discussion between a country doctor, military officer, priest, magistrate, notary, and merchant, who collectively represent rural France. *The Country Doctor* also marked the beginning of Balzac’s *Scenes of Country Life*, which would later include *The Lily of the Valley* (1836) and *The Village Priest* (1841). This inaugural country novel examines the rural bourgeoisie and peasantry—colorfully represented by the wild mountain bandit Butifer and the melancholy young woman called La Fosseuse—and thus offers an alternative vision to Balzac’s Parisian novels, such as *Old Goriot* (1834–35) and *Lost Illusions* (1837–

43). For more on the novel's complex political and rural discourses, see the critical work (cited in the Bibliography) of Andréoli, Barbéris, Donnard, Fortassier, Guyon, Ladurie, Lukács, Mioche, Nykrog, Vanoncini, and Wurmser.

2. Like Hulot, Genestas holds the French rank of "commandant," which is the equivalent of the Anglophone "major."

3. Honoré de Balzac, *Le Médecin de campagne*, *La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 9 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), 498. Subsequent references to *The Country Doctor* are indicated parenthetically in the body of the text.

4. Balzac also consulted a Waterloo veteran named Major Chapuis. For more on Balzac's Napoleonic sources, see Donald Lee Joseph, *Les Souvenirs et l'esprit napoléoniens chez Balzac* (Paris: Guitard, 1924), 45–46; Bernard Guyon, *La Création littéraire chez Balzac: la genèse du Médecin de campagne* (Paris: Bernard Colin, 1951), 42–43; Bernard Guyon, *La Pensée politique et sociale de Balzac* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1967), 653–54; Patrick Berthier, "Absence et présence du récit guerrier dans l'œuvre de Balzac," *L'Année balzacienne* (1984): 225–27.

5. Berthier, 227. Among other titles, Périolas borrowed for Balzac *Le Guide du pontonnier*, a guide for army engineers and pontoon bridge builders, such as those that saved thousands of lives during the crossing of the Berezina River during the Russian retreat in 1812–13. For more on Périolas and Balzac, see Marcel Bouteron, "Correspondance inédite entre Honoré de Balzac et le colonel L. N. Périolas 1832–45," *Cahiers balzaciens* 1 (1923).

6. Joseph, 45.

7. For a detailed discussion of *The Battle*, see Chapter 6.

8. Honoré de Balzac, *Letters to His Family*, ed. W. Scott Hastings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934), 82–83, 90, 103, 112, 116, 121. In these epistolary pages, Balzac also wrote: "I will make *The Battle* come alive" (June 28); "I rise at 6AM, I correct *Les Chouans*, then I work on *The Battle* from 8PM to 4AM, and during the day, I correct the work I did during the night" (July 19); "Before all else, *The Battle* must be published" (August 21). For more on Balzac's epistolary sketches for *The Battle*, see Berthier, 227–28; Guyon, *La Création littéraire*, 43–44; and Roland Chollet, Introduction, *La Bataille*, by Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 12 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), 649–52.

9. Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondence inédite avec Mme Zulma Carraud*, ed. Marcel Bouteron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1934), 93.

10. On September 23, 1832, Balzac wrote to his mother that he had written the novel in the space of "three days and three nights" (*Letters to His Family* 122). The same day, Balzac wrote to Zulma Carraud that "*The Battle* will be published, as well as something even better ... a book that will be dear to your heart, *The Country Doctor*" (*Correspondence inédite avec Mme Zulma Carraud* 80). Like his false

progress on *The Battle*, Balzac grossly exaggerated his rapid progress on this new novel, which would take a year to complete and publish. But these letters show how *The Battle* was supplanted by, if not transformed into, *The Country Doctor*. When he wrote to Éveline Hanska on September 2, 1833, that “I have done a great thing for my country: this book is worth more, in my estimation, than laws and battles,” Balzac confirms that *The Country Doctor* is a kind of military novel, worth more than battles or, as it turns out, *The Battle*. Honoré de Balzac, letter to Éveline Hanska, 2 Sept. 1833, quoted in François-Xavier Mioche, “*Le Médecin de campagne*, roman politique?” *L’Année balzacienne* (1988): 305.

11. Guyon argues that “nothing expresses more than this humble page, mislaid among those of *The Country Doctor*, the direct connection that united these two works in the mind of their creator. Nothing could help us better understand why, in this novel on country life, are inserted so many pages which could figure among the *Scenes of Military Life*” (*La Création littéraire*, 44). For more on the novel’s military discourse and its role in the broader context of Balzac’s military fiction, see the critical work (cited in the Bibliography) of Barbéris, Berthier, Bodin, Brosman, Descotes, Donnard, Fleischmann, Fortassier, Guyon, Joseph, Lascar, Laubriet, Maurois, Robb, Saint-Paulien, Schom, Tulard, and Wurmser.

12. Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondance*, ed. Roger Pierrot, vol. 2 (Paris: Garnier, 1960–69), 8.

13. In a letter to Éveline Hanska on August 1, 1833, Balzac writes that the initial publication of Goguelat’s barnyard account (in *L’Europe littéraire* on July 19, 1833) was so popular that as many as twenty thousand pirate copies were sold. Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres à l’étrangère*, vol. 1 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1906–50), 29; Hector Fleischmann, *Napoléon par Balzac* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1919), 171–85; Paul Noirot, ed., *Napoléon Bonaparte: Comment il a enivré la littérature* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1999), 253. Guyon explains that, despite hostile critical reaction to the novel, “the military episodes escaped the critics” (*La Création littéraire*, 184). In *Le Temps des passions: espérances, tragédies et mythes sous la Révolution et l’Empire* (Paris: Bartillat, 1996), Jean Tulard suggests that popular folktales like those in *The Country Doctor* were responsible for the rise in Bonapartism that led to the popularity, presidency, and empire of Napoleon III (183).

14. In *Napoleon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), Jean Tulard writes that Gondrin and Goguelat contributed importantly to the translation of the Napoleonic legend into myth: “These old soldiers ... became the best guardians of the cult, the veritable authors of the legend” (447).

15. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1.4.62–63, 67–68. *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 2639.

16. While Gondrin’s name evokes his advancing age (*gondolé*: crinkled, warped),

his central role in the community (*gond*: hinge), and his ability to please an audience (*gondoler*: to split one's side laughing), Goguelat's name suggests the bawdy character of the credulous dupe (*gogo*: sucker), the harmless drunkard (*en goguette*: to be tipsy), the jokester (*goguenard*: mocking), and the low humorist (*goguette*: toilet, latrines). *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, ed. Paul-Émile Littré, vol. 1.2 (Paris: Hachette, 1863), 1891–94; *Le Grand Larousse de la langue française*, ed. Louis Guilbert et al., vol. 3 (Paris: Larousse, 1973), 2256–60; *Le Grand Robert Dictionnaire de la langue française*, ed. Paul Robert, vol. 4 (Paris: Le Robert, 1992), 956–57; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, ed. Alain Rey, vol. 1 (Paris: Le Robert, 1992), 898–900.

17. Guyon distinguishes between Gondrin the “soldier-laborer” and Goguelat the “life of the party, braggart, and good child “ (*La Pensée politique*, 653).

18. In *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes about a nineteenth-century “cultural system in which male–male desire became widely intelligible ... through triangular relations involving a woman” (15). In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), Sedgwick argues that the erotic triangle is “symmetrical” and thus “unaffected by the power difference that would be introduced by a change in the gender of one of the participants” (23).

19. In “Preceptors, Fathers, and Ideology: The Strange Narrative of Balzac's *Le Médecin de campagne*,” *French Forum* 9.1 (January 1984), William Paulson argues that “at the political level, we have of course the kingless society of post-Revolutionary France; at the private level, two men whose lives have been spent in pursuit of an ever elusive fatherhood” (20).

20. Balzac, *Le Médecin de campagne*, 498. Paulson writes, “Benassis, the transgressor of paternal authority punished by the failure of his own paternity, must become a preceptor or substitute father, first to the town, and then to Adrien Genestas” (23).

21. Guyon, *La Création littéraire*, 87. For more on the *Aiglon*, see Jean Tulard, *Napoléon II* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), and *Napoléon: le pouvoir, la nation, la légende* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997).

22. Balzac, *Le Médecin de campagne*, 442. In *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1997), Alan Schom makes note of Napoleon's iron campaign bed (616–17).

23. Honoré de Balzac, *Maximes et pensées de Napoleon*, ed. Jan Doat and Ben Weider (1838; Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1976), 79. In the Christian tradition, foot washing is also a sign of fraternal intimacy. In John 13.1–15, Christ washes the feet of his Apostles at the Last Supper.

24. Contextualized by Benassis's spiritual epiphany at the Grande Chartreuse monastery, his confession to Genestas follows in the tradition of Saint Augustine's and Rousseau's *Confessions*. The same might be said of Genestas's confession to

Benassis. For more on confessional discourse, see Virginia Swain, “Autobiographical Acts,” *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 543–48.

[25.](#) Inspired by the notion that “Happy are those who suffer” (572) from Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.3–12) and by Benassis’s own final words of resignation to Évelina, “To wounded hearts, shadows and silence” (574), Benassis flees his Parisian shame and retreats to the Alpine cloisters of the Grande Chartreuse where he finds hope in these words carved (in Latin) on the door of a monastic cell: “Flee, Hide, Be Silent” (573). As penance for his sins, the doctor commits to a life of service: “The *Fuge, late, tace* of the Charterhouse is my motto here, my work is an active prayer” (574). Benassis thus becomes a secular missionary, transforming his penance into a program of medical, economic, and social reform for the surrounding valley. For more on the novel’s religious discourse, see the critical work (cited in the Bibliography) of Barbéris, Fortassier, Guyon, and Laubriet.

[26.](#) Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 21–23.

[27.](#) For more on the history of combat trauma, see Ben Shephard, *A War on Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[28.](#) In *Therapy and Technique*, ed. Philip Rieff, trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Macmillan, 1963), Freud describes psychoanalysis in military terms, where the past represents “the patient’s armory out of which he fetches his weapons for defending himself against the progress of analysis, weapons which we must wrest from him” (161).

[29.](#) Balzac, *Le Médecin de campagne*, 475. Speaking of the novel’s central female character La Fosseuse as his “good friend” (475), “sister” (476), and “daughter” (485), Benassis explains, “I could never love her any differently than one loves his sister or daughter” (486). Elsewhere, he tells Genestas that “[t]o speak of La Fosseuse is to speak of me,” his “sister in suffering” (476–77). If La Fosseuse is Benassis’s double, then his hope that she marry Genestas suggests a kind of fantasy that Genestas marry *him*. When Benassis tells Genestas, “I would like to see La Fosseuse married ... to some good boy who would make her happy” (479) and speaks of Genestas to La Fosseuse as “perhaps a husband for you” (485), Benassis implicates himself in this marital fantasy, projecting himself into the position of his feminine double, and projecting Genestas as his own husband.

[30.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine*, 3: 192, 8: 995.

[31.](#) Michel de Montaigne, “De l’amitié,” in *Essais*, ed. Alexandre Micha, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), 236; Balzac, *Le Médecin de campagne*, 576.

[32.](#) Benassis believes that “[t]he basis of all human societies will always be the family ... [T]he spirit of family and paternal power are two principles that are too little developed in our new legislative system” (446). Reflecting Balzac’s Bourbon

legitimism, Benassis insists on paternal authority. However, Benassis's patriarchal model of the family stands at odds with the realities of his valley, which contains few traditional families. Despite the availability of so many widows in his valley, all of the men at Benassis's bourgeois dinner are—like Benassis, Gondrin, and Goguelat—bachelors. Even the local youth, represented by La Fosseuse and Butifer, remain unmarried. Yet, amid the lack of married couples and nuclear families in his otherwise fertile and prosperous valley, Benassis's villagers form a community of interdependent neighbors, who collectively care for the valley's many orphans and thus form extended and alternative families.

[33.](#) The novel was first published as *The Two Brothers* in a thirty-part series in *La Presse* (1840), as *A Bachelor's Household* in the Souverain edition (1842), and as *La Rabouilleuse* in the Furne edition (1843).

[34.](#) In *Dans Balzac* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), Pierre Citron calls the Bridau brothers “a double and a counter-double” (11).

[35.](#) In his critical introduction to *La Rabouilleuse* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1966), Pierre Citron argues that “literarily, it is [Balzac] who created the character of the *demi-solde*, and who attained in one stroke, with Bridau and Gilet, a success that no one else has even approached after him” (xxix–xx). While Chabert and Gondrin harbor justifiable rage for the Restoration, Citron suspects that for less honorable *demi-soldes*, “their Bonapartism is otherwise an alibi: Gilet and Bridau hide their mediocrity and ambition behind the grandeur of the Emperor” (xxiv).

[36.](#) In *Conseils de révision* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), André Wurmser deplors “the sterile idleness of *demi-soldes* despoiled by disaster” (238) and implies that all Napoleonic veterans are rogues: “The brilliant officers that pranced across Europe are nothing more, in the civilian life of *The Human Comedy*, but a bunch of parasites ... braggarts like Maxence Gilet, old duffers like Giroudeau ... crooks like Philippe Brideau” (57).

[37.](#) Citron argues that “it is difficult not to compare [Bridau] to Vautrin. Implacable, ready for anything, walking over everyone, he also refuses to take account of written and unwritten laws, and only conforms to the code of a group on the margins of society” (Introduction, *La Rabouilleuse*, xxx). Citron admits, however, that “Philippe is more inhuman than Vautrin, whose profound weakness [Philippe] knows nothing of: love. He loves absolutely no one but himself, and has tenderness for no Rastignac or Rubempré” (xxxi). For more comparisons of Bridau and Vautrin, see Gérard Gengembre, Preface, *La Rabouilleuse*, by Honoré de Balzac (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1994), 14; Pierre Laubriet, “La Légende et le mythe napoléoniens chez Balzac,” *L'Année balzacienne* (1968): 299.

[38.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Illusions perdues*, *La Comédie humaine*, 5: 702.

[39.](#) In the years between 1812 and 1843 and the span of three novels, Vautrin has as many male companions as pseudonyms: Jacques Collin, *Trompe-la-Mort*, and Abbé Carlos Herrera. In 1812, Vautrin is sentenced to prison in Toulon, where “[h]e

consented to take the blame for another's crime, a case of fraud committed by a very beautiful young man whom he loved very much, a gambling young Italian who has since entered military service" (*La Comédie humaine*, 3: 189). While his young Italian becomes Colonel Comte Franchessini in Napoleon's armies, Vautrin serves his sentence in the Toulon penal colony where, among his fellow prisoners, he is "their flag, their support, their Bonaparte" (3: 208). After his escape from Toulon and return to Paris, Vautrin becomes the protector of the young Eugène de Rastignac to whom he explains, "I love you ... on my word as Vautrin" (3: 135). Arrested in 1820 by the police chief Bibi-Lupin, who reveals that Vautrin "does not like women" (3: 192), Vautrin again escapes and returns to Paris in 1822 with another young protégé, Lucien de Rubempré, whom he convinces through a "kind of seduction" to "[o]bey me as a wife obeys her husband" (*La Comédie humaine*, 5: 690, 703). Having promised Lucien that "I was alone, we will be two," and admitted that "I have this vice of loving to devote myself to someone" (5: 705, 708), Vautrin later faints from grief at Lucien's funeral—following his suicide—in 1830. After a life of crime, Vautrin ironically becomes the Paris police chief in 1843. From *Le Père Goriot* to *Les Illusions perdues* to *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, Vautrin exploits the corrupt institutions of the Restoration and July Monarchy for survival, revenge, and his beloved Franchessini, Rastignac, and Rubempré.

40. In "Balzac du côté de Sodome," *L'Année balzacienne* (1979), Patrick Berthier argues that Vautrin's criminality and sexuality are linked to his refusal of moral and political order: "There is an organic connection between the affirmation of a forbidden sexual desire and the contestation of a certain moral and political order that this desire challenges ... If society is worthless, one must challenge and scorn it, primarily through the spreading of a savage and oppositional sexual desire. Homosexuality can be understood then quite naturally as the practice of those who, having sized up society, propose the vindication of a self, liberated from the social contract" (170–72). As an archetype of the homoerotic criminal, Balzac's Vautrin is the descendant of François Villon's fifteenth-century criminal comrades and the predecessor of Jean Genet's twentieth-century thieves, murderer, and inmates. Berthier reminds us that Genet's definition of a bandit is "un mâle qui bande" (170), a man who gets an erection. For more on Vautrin's criminality and sexuality, see the critical work (cited in the Bibliography) of Bersani, Dobelbower, Goujon, Lucey, Miller, Saylor, Schehr, and Storzer. For more on sodomy and the Napoleonic Code, see Chapter 2.

41. Honoré de Balzac, *La Rabouilleuse*, *La Comédie humaine*, 4: 277–78. Subsequent references to *La Rabouilleuse* are indicated parenthetically in the body of the text.

42. As Citron points out, even Bridau's name, with its echo of equestrian bridles, "evokes a passion for the horse" and the spirit of the cavalry (Introduction, *La*

Rabouilleuse, xvii).

43. Napoleon's last military review in the Tuileries in 1808 is detailed in the opening pages of Balzac's *The Thirty-Year-Old Woman* (1830–34). For more on this passage, see Chapter 6.

44. For more on this Bonapartist project in America, see Inès Murat, *Napoléon et le rêve américain* (Paris: Fayard, 1976); François Lagarde, *The French in Texas: History, Migration, Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

45. François Guizot, *Le Moniteur*, 2 March 1843. Guizot was quoted as having said, "Get rich. Improve the moral and material conditions of France." However, in pursuing individual wealth, Brideau contributes to the immoral exploitation of the nation and its citizens.

46. As Isser Woloch explains in *The French Veteran: From the Revolution to the Restoration* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), *demi-soldes* were required by the Restoration to retire to their hometowns, where they could be observed and controlled (298–99). This hometown surveillance and geographic dispersal ensured that veterans would not threaten the monarchy with another military coup d'état. For more on this veteran history, see Chapter 6.

47. Inspired by Beau Brummell (1778–1840) and later described in Barbey D'Aurevilly's *Du dandyisme et de George Brummell* (1844), Gautier's *De la mode* (1858), Baudelaire's *Le peintre de la vie moderne* (1863), and Mallarmé's *La Dernière mode* (1874), Parisian dandies may have frequented these homosocial societies and their veteran members in the 1830s. For more on dandies in nineteenth-century France, see Sima Godfrey, "Haute Couture and Haute Culture," in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 761–69.

48. Citron writes that "prankster societies flourished during this period ... Due to the frequency of war, there was an analogous unleashing of pleasure" (Introduction, *La Rabouilleuse*, xxxii, lxxii–lxxv).

49. In "Max et les Chevaliers: famille, filiation et confrerie dans *La Rabouilleuse*," in Balzac, *Pater Familias*, ed. Claude Bernard and Franc Schuerewegen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), Lucienne Frappier-Mazur writes, "Amoral and asocial, [Max] politically chooses the Bonapartist opposition, socially chooses the role of gigolo, and clandestinely chooses the Order of Idleness" (54).

50. In *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), Fredric Jameson argues that the novel is a "story about a prolonged and unnatural vacancy of the paternal function" (176–77). The result of this crisis in paternal authority, or what Jameson calls "the failure of the subject to constitute itself," is the dual chaos of "authoritarianism and sexual excess" or "tyranny and libertinage" (178).

51. Referring to the impotent Jean-Jacques Rouget, Jameson writes, "[H]ereditary debility associated with venereal disease, impotence, but also masochism and incest

... entitle this work to take its place alongside others whose tactful but explicit evocations of male homosexuality, lesbianism, frigidity, bestiality, transvestitism, and satyriasis range Balzac in the lineage of Sade” (176–77).

[52.](#) Citron argues that “Issoudun, for Balzac, is an ignoble town” associated with rural corruption and perversion: “On every page, where the virtuous and muffled public opinions of Issoudun are murmured, incest lurks between the lines” (Introduction, *La Rabouilleuse*, lxxxvii).

[53.](#) Michael David Sibal, “The Regulation of Male Homosexuality in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, 1789–1815,” in *Homosexuality in Modern France*, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87.

[54.](#) Sibal, 87.

[55.](#) In “Autour de *La Rabouilleuse*: Le Capitaine Fix et le duel de Frapesle,” *L’Année balzacienne* (1965), Gaston Imbault traces the origins of Max and Philippe’s conflict to a duel between the Napoleonic veteran Captain Fix and the royalist officers Captain Pernot and Lieutenant Baron on September 27, 1818. After a provocation at Issoudun’s Café Militaire, Fix killed Pernot and Baron in a duel at the nearby Frapesle estate, which was owned by the father of Balzac’s friend Zulma Carraud. Citing possible sources for Balzac’s story, Gaston confirms that while visiting Carraud at Frapesle in August 1835, Balzac met with his old friend Captain Périolas in the nearby town of Bourges, at another Café Militaire, which was then owned and operated by Captain Fix (217–32).

[56.](#) Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *Studies in Parapsychology*, ed. Philip Rieff, trans. Alix Strachey (New York: Macmillan-Collier, 1963), 40.

[57.](#) While it is unclear if such expressions were in use during the nineteenth century, the verbs “aller se faire mettre” or simply “se mettre” can refer, in twentieth-century French, either to a fight or to receptive penetrative (and particularly anal homosexual) sex. *Robert-Collins Dictionnaire français-anglais*, ed. Beryl Atkins et al. (Paris: Le Robert, 1993), 76, 510.

[58.](#) In *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), Robert Nye examines the relationship between “the honor embedded in the sex of the male body and its sexual hygiene, and the public rites of honor expressed in male sociability and the duel” (132). Nye explains that “Bonaparte formally disapproved of the practice between officers, preferring them to shed their blood for him,” but that “for military men, the display of courage in a personal affair of honor was indistinguishable from courage displayed on the battlefield” (132–33). For more on dueling in nineteenth-century France, see François Guillet, *La mort en face: Histoire du duel de la Révolution à nos jours* (Paris: Aubier, 2008).

[59.](#) Nye argues that a man’s “sexual identity becomes a key element in his social

identity as a man of honor” (10), and that to engage in a duel, “a man had to be wounded in his personal honor, that is, by an imputation against his private integrity, his family, a woman under his ‘protection,’ or a group in which he had bonds of deep emotional solidarity” (200).

[60.](#) Bridau’s cousin Bixiou denounces him to the Count de Soulanges, whose daughter Bridau had hoped to marry in his ambition to become a general and royal peer. Bridau’s false friends, the financiers Nucingen and du Tillet, fleece him of his millions with fraudulent investment advice.

[61.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *Le Programme d’une jeune veuve*, *La Comédie humaine*, 12: 373.

Chapter 9. Neo-Napoleonic Friendship

[1.](#) Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989), 121, 315.

[2.](#) This notion of the forgotten war is a common trope among historians of 1870, including Audoin-Rouzeau (7, 15) and François Roth who argues in *La Guerre de 1870* (Paris: Fayard, 1990) that the Franco-Prussian War is “a war forgotten, or nearly forgotten, by the French as well as the Germans ... Situated between two major upheavals on the map of Europe, 1870 is a parenthesis whose consequences seemed minor in comparison to the wars of the Revolution and the Empire, and the trauma caused by the Great War” (7).

[3.](#) For more on Napoleon II, the Duc de Reichstadt, see Chapter 8.

[4.](#) Victor Hugo, *Les Châtiments*, ed. Jean-Marc Hovasse (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 219–33.

[5.](#) In *La France, la nation, la guerre: 1850–1920* (Paris: SEDES, 1995), Jean-Jacques Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau argue that the success of the Second Empire depended largely on Napoleon III’s savvy “political capitalization of the Napoleonic legend” and his “appeal to the memory of the nation’s ... military grandeur” (16). Referring to Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte’s attempted coups in 1836 and 1840, they explain that “it was in uniform and behind the tricolor flag mounted with the imperial eagle that the Emperor’s nephew appeared to the soldiers in Strasbourg that first time, then to the soldiers in Boulogne during the second attempt” (16–17).

[6.](#) In *La Société militaire de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), Raoul Girardet writes that “military glory thus made its reappearance, the army came out of the disgraceful obscurity in which it had been mired, and the soldier again came to know the feeling of great victories, the gratitude of the people, and the favor and flattery of power” (56).

[7.](#) Audoin-Rouzeau, 315.

[8.](#) Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, 1870–71* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 495, 497.

[9.](#) Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre*, 310.

[10.](#) Captain Claude Lombard, Letter of 28 October 1870, quoted in Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre*, 225.

[11.](#) While Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau argue that Napoleon III was largely blamed for the disaster at Sedan since “the Emperor was not only defeated: he capitulated” (19), Claude Digeon argues in *La Crise allemande de la pensée française, 1870–1914* (Paris: PUF, 1959) that Napoleon III and “the principal actors of this drama ... were too small, compared to the national shame” (3–4).

[12.](#) Roth explains that in technological terms, “until 1914, 1870 was the war par excellence” (7). Audoin-Rouzeau argues that “modernity is everywhere” on the battlefields of 1870, when “trains for the transport of troops and materials, and the telegraph for the communication of orders” (320) contributed to the deadly efficiency of what Digeon concisely cites as the “German command, German organization, German cannons” (48).

[13.](#) In *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870–1871* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), Michael Howard writes that while “the events of 1870 long provided the only example [of] ... the effect of modern weapons” (xi) in battle, “the American Civil War provided the first great example” (3). In the *Norton Book of Modern War* (New York: Norton, 1991), Paul Fussell argues that “the American Civil War was the first modern one, for it was the first mass war fought in the industrial age, the first to rely on railroads and the telegraph, armored battleships, fast-firing ordnance, and mass-produced, machine-made weapons” (17). In their *Dictionnaire de stratégie militaire des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin concur that “the Civil War was the first modern war in the industrial sense,” where “the train ... modified the transport of men and supplies” and the “telegraph transformed communications” (337).

[14.](#) General Philip Sheridan, quoted in Howard, 380. Horne writes how at the 1867 Universal Exposition, “America, just recovering from the Civil War had sent a complete field service or ‘ambulance,’ as it was then called, representing the peak of military medicine of the day,” while the Prussians boasted “an immense 50-ton gun exhibited by a Herr Krupp of Essen ... [I]t was the biggest thing the world had ever seen and for this it won a prize” (4–5).

[15.](#) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, in *The Book of War*, ed. Caleb Carr and Ralph Peters, trans. O. J. Matthijs Jolles (New York: Modern Library, 2000) 280, 266.

[16.](#) Clausewitz, 934.

[17.](#) Otto von Bismarck, quoted in Howard, 380.

[18.](#) In *Guerre, mythes et caricatures* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1984), Ouriel Reshef writes that in 1870, “French virility was outclassed by a completely superior German virility. One thinks inevitably of the theme of castration” (151).

[19.](#) Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre*, 121.

[20.](#) General Barthélémy Lebrun, quoted in Audoin-Rouzeau, 1870: *La France dans la guerre*, 122.

[21.](#) Claude Digeon explains that after 1870, “the war occupied a terrible place in the consciousness of the nation, and inspired an extraordinary proliferation of memoirs, accounts, and novels” (50). François Roth concurs, adding that “during the decades that followed, officers, journalists, and veterans published a massive amount of works and memoirs, an immense library of several thousand volumes” (7). Citing General Palat’s exhaustive *Bibliographie générale de la guerre de 1870–1871* (1896), which lists thousands of military memoirs, historical studies, and eyewitness accounts by both soldiers and civilians, Howard writes that “it is doubtful whether any war, the First World War not excepted, has been the object of more concentrated study in proportion to its length and extent than the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. A bibliography compiled in 1898 could already list 7,000 titles, and the flood was to continue unabated for at least another decade” (xi).

[22.](#) Digeon argues that “all of these works speak more of combat than defeat, more of suffering than humiliation ... These patriotic fictions have one social function: to heal a wound, to distract the patient. This is why they hide an immense defeat under a multitude of small victories” (64).

[23.](#) In his discussion of *Evenings at Médan*, Digeon explains, “One can see the chasm that separates this work from the majority of popular tales and novels consecrated to the War of 1870. The subject had almost solely served to exalt the army, the *Revanche*, and to preach patriotic hatred. It could now serve to denounce the society that authorizes and sanctifies this absurd monstrosity, war” (266–67).

[24.](#) In *Zola et le naturalisme* (Paris: PUF, 1986), 19–50, and in *Zola*, vol. 1 (Paris: Fayard, 1999–2001), 532–35, 584–86, Henri Mitterand argues that Zola’s naturalism—which finds its origins in Balzac, Taine, Darwin, and Montaigne—predates *Evenings at Médan* (1880) by at least fifteen years. Zola had in fact defined naturalism—as a scientific dissection or analytic study of temperaments—in his 1868 preface to the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin*. In an 1880 article in *Le Gaulois*, Maupassant responded to this naturalist debate by explaining, “We have no intention of being a school. We are simply a few friends, whose common admiration brought us together at Zola’s home ... Zola found these stories interesting and proposed that we make a book of them.” Guy de Maupassant, *Chroniques, études, correspondance de Guy de Maupassant*, ed. René Dumesnil (Paris: Gründ, 1938), 20–23.

[25.](#) Guy de Maupassant, *Contes et nouvelles*, ed. Louis Forestier, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1974–79), 1295; Guy de Maupassant, *Correspondance*, ed. Jacques Suffel, vol. 1 (Évreux: Cercle du bibliophile, 1973), 277.

[26.](#) Guy de Maupassant, “La Guerre,” *Le Gaulois*, 10 April 1881; Guy de Maupassant, *Boule de suif et autres textes de guerre*, ed. Antonia Fonyi (Paris:

Flammarion, 1991), 252–53.

27. These texts could include the anti-militarist novels of *La Revanche* (1870–1914) such as Georges Courteline’s *Les Gaietés de l’escadron* (1886), Abel Hermant’s *Le Cavalier Miserey* (1887), Georges Darien’s *Biribi* (1888), and Lucien Descaves’s *Sous-offs* (1889). To these could be added the anti-war trench novels of the First World War, including Henri Barbusse’s *Le Feu* (1916), Maurice Genevoix’s *Sous Verdun* (1916), Georges Duhamel’s *Vie des martyrs* (1917), and Roland Dorgelès’s *Croix de bois* (1919). For more on *La Revanche* and the First World War, see the Conclusion to this book.

28. Arthur Rimbaud, “Le Dormeur du val,” in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Antoine Adam (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1972), 32; Arthur Rimbaud, *Rimbaud Complete*, ed. and trans. Wyatt Mason (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 37.

29. Rimbaud, “Le Dormeur du val,” in *Œuvres complètes*, 32; *Rimbaud Complete*, 37. Rimbaud’s poem “The Stolen Heart” (1871) also laments the loss of innocence in the brutish military context of the war. Having traveled to Paris in August 1870 in order to escape the fighting in Charleville, and again in February 1871 just after the armistice and capitulation of Paris, the penniless Rimbaud lodged in the military Caserne Babylone, where he may have been harassed or even raped by the soldiers in the barracks. His “stolen heart” is attributed to the drunken and phallic depravities of his military bedfellows: “My sad heart drools on the deck, / A heart splattered with chaw: / A target for bowls of soup, / My sad heart drools on the deck: / Soldiers jeer and guffaw... / Ithyphallic and soldierly, / Their jeers have soiled me!” (*Œuvres complètes*, 46; *Rimbaud Complete*, 55).

30. Victor Hugo, “Nos Morts,” in *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Pierre Albouy, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1964–74), 334–35.

31. Déroulède’s poems appeared in more than fifty editions during the decades following the war. According to Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau, “Déroulède appeared as a kind of national poet and the living symbol of *La Revanche*” (147). Digeon writes that Déroulède’s poetic “protest against national humiliation” and his “denial of the defeat ... made his little poems successful” (71).

32. Paul Déroulède, *Nouveaux chants du soldat* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1875), 79, 92. Inversely, an older military mentor tries to carry his wounded young comrade to safety in “The Turco,” in *Chants du soldat* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1872): “The child fell, hit by a bullet, / But an old soldier carried him on his back. / He knows nothing of the fatal retreat; / Death has already come over his pale face; / His vacant eyes are already half shut” (22).

33. Paul Déroulède, “Vœux suprêmes,” in *Refrains militaires* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1889), 81.

34. For more on Napoleonic women warriors, see Chapters 4 and 6. Long before the analogous engagement of women during both the First and Second World Wars, these female combatants during the War of 1870 filled the roles left vacant by the

nation's absent, fallen, and captured men. As with the decades following the First and Second World Wars, anxiety and enthusiasm over the postwar roles of women emerged in discourse on decadence, women's writing, and the "new woman" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For more on women in fin de siècle Europe, see the critical work (cited in the Bibliography) of Benstock, Faderman, Gilbert and Gubar, Hawthorne, Newton, and Smith-Rosenberg.

[35.](#) George Sand, "Journal d'un voyageur pendant la guerre," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1 March 1870, 1 April 1870, quoted in Digeon, 63. Other literary texts that honor French mothers during the War of 1870 include Daudet's "Les Mères" and Déroulède's "À ma mère."

[36.](#) Léon Bloy, *Sueurs de sang*, in *Œuvres de Léon Bloy*, ed. J. Bollery and J. Petit, vol. 6 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1967).

[37.](#) Guy de Maupassant, "Boule de suif," in *Contes et nouvelles*, 1: 83.

[38.](#) Guy de Maupassant, "Le Lit 29," in *Contes et nouvelles*, 1: 181.

[39.](#) Like the brave *cantinière* Margot in Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* and the courageous volunteer nurse Henriette in Zola's *La Débâcle*, these self-sacrificing women in Maupassant's "Boule de suif," "Mademoiselle Fifi," and "Le Lit 29" take part in a larger French literary tradition on women warriors, from Christine de Pisan's fifteenth-century verses on Joan of Arc to Monique Wittig's twentieth-century homage to *Les Guérillères* (1969).

[40.](#) Alphonse Daudet, "La Dernière classe," in *Contes du lundi* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1985) 17.

[41.](#) Déroulède, *Chants du soldat*, 63–64.

[42.](#) Alexandre Bessot de Lamothe, *Les Aventures d'un Alsacien prisonnier en Allemagne* (Paris: Charles Blieriot, 1872), 116.

[43.](#) Maupassant, "Deux amis," in *Contes et nouvelles*, 1: 732.

[44.](#) In her critical introduction to Maupassant's *Boule de suif et autres histoires de guerre* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), Antonia Fonyi argues that "*Deux Amis* is the story of a love affair" where, despite Sauvage and Morissot's brutal death, "they save their love" (36–37).

[45.](#) In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that erotic triangles are symmetrically "unaffected by ... a change in the gender of one of the participants" (23) and that "the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved" (21).

[46.](#) Honoré de Balzac, *La Comédie humaine*, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, vol. 12 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1976–81), 650. For more on Balzac's *The Battle*, see Chapters 6 and 8. Henri Mitterand documents the complex genesis of *La Débâcle* in his study *Zola et le naturalisme* (93–95), his biography *Zola* (2: 1019–84), and his critical edition of *Les Rougon-Macquart*, ed. Henri Mitterand, vol. 5 (Paris:

Gallimard-Pléaïde, 1967), 1353–1572. Zola’s exhaustive research for *La Débâcle* included comprehensive reading of historical and military accounts, voluminous correspondence and interviews with both veteran and civilian eyewitnesses, and a research trip to Sedan in April 1891.

[47.](#) Zola’s anti-militarism can be traced back to his journalism in the 1860s, when he wrote in *La Tribune* that “war is hell” (8 November 1868), warned that a “lake of blood will inundate Europe,” and argued that “[w]ar chases liberty from nations” (31 January 1869); quoted in Henri Mitterand, “Étude de *La Débâcle*,” *Les Rougon-Macquart*, 5: 1362–63. In an article for *Le Rappel* titled “The True Friends of the Army” (21 January 1870), Zola blames Napoleon III but sympathizes with his soldiers: “You, who send the sons of France not into combat, but into butchery, you call yourself their friend ... And you call us their enemies, we who would like to see them free!” (quoted in Mitterand, “Étude de *La Débâcle*,” 1363). Mitterand argues that, from the Franco-Prussian War to the Dreyfus Affair, Zola believed that “a real patriot speaks the truth” (Zola 1023, 1081; “Étude de *La Débâcle*,” 1449).

[48.](#) Émile Zola, *La Débâcle*, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1984), 392. Like the muscular working-class corpses at the Paris morgue in Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), the beauty of these bodies underscores the overwhelming sense of waste and loss in 1870.

[49.](#) Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 789; Georges Blond, *La Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (London: Arms and Armour, 1995), 511. Blond estimates 1.4 million dead or missing in the Grande Armée alone, while Schom estimates 3 million dead among all the combatants during the Napoleonic Wars.

[50.](#) Émile Zola, quoted in Mitterand, “Étude de *La Débâcle*,” 1400.

[51.](#) Émile Zola, quoted in Mitterand, “Étude de *La Débâcle*,” 1400.

[52.](#) Émile Zola, *La Terre* (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1980), 31.

[53.](#) Jean and Maurice are often gendered in normative terms as masculine and feminine. In “La Guerre et l’idée de la nation: autour de *La Débâcle* d’Émile Zola,” *Excavatio* 9 (1997), Lucienne Frappier-Mazur argues that the novel’s complex series of binary oppositions—masculine/feminine, war/peace, country/city—are reflected in the relationship between Jean and Maurice, who represent “a virile earthy France as opposed to an effeminate and corrupt Paris and Second Empire” (146). Similarly, Frappier-Mazur explains in “Guerre, nationalisme et différence sexuelle dans *La Débâcle* d’Émile Zola,” in *Masculin/féminin: le 19e siècle à l’épreuve du genre*, ed. Chantal Bertrand-Jennings (Toronto: Centre d’Études du 19e Siècle Joseph Sablé, 1999), that the emasculating defeat led to “the allegorical effeminization of the nation,” the “homosocial eroticization of war,” and both the fraternal and homoerotic intimacy between Maurice and Jean: “Fraternity of arms, the collective theme in the masculine war novel, focuses on a community of shared needs, suffering, and danger. Its homoerotics play a primary role in the affection that unites

... Maurice and Jean” (170–71). For more on gender discourse, performance, and representation, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

54. Balzac, *Maximes et pensées de Napoléon*, ed. Jan Doat and Ben Weider (1838; Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1976), 80.

55. Balzac, *Maximes et pensées de Napoléon*, 78; Charles Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat: combat antique et combat moderne* (1880; Paris: Champ Libre, 1978)

53. For more on the military theories of Napoleon and Ardant du Picq, see the detailed discussion in the Introduction to this book.

56. In “La République de *La Débâcle*,” *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 54 (1980), Sandy Petrey points out that, for Zola’s imprisoned soldiers, the Third Republic begins in a prison camp: “There is only one single moment where the novel mentions this great political renaissance, and this is in the inhuman suffering of the Camp of Misery. ‘This first day, the day of the 4th’ inaugurates a series of physical and psychological hardships that abolish any sense of renewal” (89).

57. In *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), Michel Foucault argues that the Enlightenment’s “dream of a perfect society” ceded to “a military dream of society” (171) under Napoleon, whose utopian vision of training camps during the First Empire gave way to the dystopian suffering of prison camps following the Second Empire. Like the train in the Franco-Prussian War (or the airplane and nuclear fission during the First and Second World Wars), innovation was exploited as a tool for destruction. Becker and Audoin-Rouzeau argue that the spirit of *La Revanche* was born in the prison camps of 1870–71 (74).

58. Zola, *La Débâcle*, 442. It is important to note that, in this passage, Zola explicitly uses the noun *baiser* (kiss) and not the more euphemistic verb *s’embrasser* (to embrace) to describe this kiss: “le baiser qu’ils échangèrent alors leur parut le plus doux et le plus fort de leur vie, un baiser tel qu’ils n’en recevraient jamais d’une femme” (442). It is also worth noting that Jean and Maurice’s *baiser* is a passionate kiss, and not the more reserved double or quadruple pecks on both cheeks known as *bises* or *bisoux* that the French often use to greet family and friends.

59. While it might be anachronistic to say that Jean and Maurice “come out” in this scene, it might be useful to point out that this kiss coincides with their liberation from a prison, which could be metaphorized by twenty-first-century readers as “the closet.” For more on the construction of the closet in French literary discourse, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). For more on how Jean and Maurice are gendered as masculine and feminine, see the discussion above on Zola, Frappier-Mazur, and Butler, as well as the discussion of Zola and sexual inversion in the Conclusion to this book.

60. For more on these ancient warriors, see the detailed discussion in the

Introduction.

61. Just as Balzac's *A Country Doctor* champions alternative pairs and families, Zola's *The Debacle* celebrates couples who, at the margins of normative marriage or the nuclear family, are defined by their love for one another in the face of mortal danger. While Henriette's husband Weiss is executed before they can have children, Silvine's beloved Honoré is killed in battle before they can even consummate their relationship. Like Prosper and his horse Zéphir, who are personified as a loving male couple, Adolphe and Louis care for one another before they are both brutally killed. Whether composed of men or women, humans or horses, these loving couples reflect and normalize the relationship between Jean and Maurice. The only characters that approximate a nuclear family in the novel are Goliath, Silvine, and their son Charlot. But as a deadbeat fiancé and father and as a Prussian spy, Goliath represents the failure of paternity and the normative nuclear family in this text that celebrates the love of loyal and alternative pairs.

62. In *Zola's Crowds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), Naomi Schor argues that "Zola finds himself here at the point of no return: either he goes on to show the consummation of this love affair or else he must find some expedient to divert the characters' and the reader's attention/libido" (117). Schor argues that the erotic triangle is one of the organizing structures of Zola's novels, such as *Thérèse Raquin*, *L'Assommoir*, and *Nana*, where "homosexuality short-circuits the conventional triangle" (34, 116–17). Anticipating Sedgwick's argument in *Between Men* (1985) on the symmetric and homoerotic possibilities of love triangles (23), Jean Borie argues in *Zola et les mythes; ou, De la nausée au salut* (Paris: Seuil, 1971) that Zola's love triangles—such as the one linking Madeleine, Guillaume, and Jacques in *Madeleine Féral*—are often the site of sexual anxiety or "a fascination which must be called homosexual" (61).

63. Zola, *La Débâcle*, 471. Even here, there seems to be a pronoun confusion or gender ambiguity that underscores Jean's preference for Maurice over Henriette. In Zola's assertion that Jean "only loved Henriette because he was Maurice's brother" (471), the pronoun "he" could stand in for either Jean (the fraternal friend and thus "brother" of Maurice) or Henriette (the masculine sister and thus "brother" of Maurice whom she closely resembles).

64. As before, Zola explicitly uses the noun and verb *baiser* to describe this kiss. Although this scene begins when Jean tells Maurice to "Embrasse-moi, mon petit" (Embrace me, little one), the narrator immediately follows with "ils se baisèrent," and asserts that "il y avait, au fond de ce baiser, la fraternité des dangers courus ensemble," before repeating this word twice more as "le baiser" (this kiss) and "ce baiser" (this kiss) (451). While the French verb *s'embrasser* (to embrace) might ambiguously refer to anything from hugging, to holding, and kissing, the word *baiser* explicitly refers to a kiss, and in this case a passionate one.

65. Schor argues that Maurice must be amputated "if the health of the body politic

is to be restored” (118).

66. In “Le Récit de guerre: narration et focalisation dans *La Débâcle*,” *Littérature* 50 (May 1983), David Baguley argues that Jean and Maurice’s reunion on the barricades is “a profoundly ritualized scene, a ... re-enactment of the myth of enemy brothers” (89).

67. As David Halperin documents at length in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), “the words ‘homosexual’ and ‘homosexuality’ appeared in print for the first time in 1869 in two anonymous pamphlets published in Leipzig composed by Karl Maria Kertbeny” (155 n. 2), an Austro-Hungarian scholar of Bavarian origins (né Benkert), who first used the word “homosexuality” in letters to the Hanoverian activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. Although the word “homosexuality” was not popularized until the publication of Gustav Jäger’s *Die Entdeckung der Seele* (1880) and Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), the invention and dissemination of this term announced the simultaneous proliferation of sexological, psychological, and criminological discourses on inversion and homosexuality in late nineteenth-century Europe.

Conclusion: Homo Military Modernity

1. Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1987), 389, 402, 425.

2. The Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) is a French military decoration that was awarded for valor in combat during the First World War.

3. In *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* “has remained into the present the most vital center of energies of gay literary high culture” and “a charter text in that most intriguing of all genres, the coming-out story that doesn’t come out” (213, 248).

4. Among the many other French writers who wrote about homosocial intimacy in the trenches are Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Henry de Montherlant, Roland Dorgelès, Henri Barbusse, Maurice Genevoix, and Georges Duhamel. For more on homoerotic texts from the First World War, in France, England, Germany, and the United States, see Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Gregory Woods, *Articulate Flesh: Male Homoeroticism and Modern Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Adrian Caesar, *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owens, Graves* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Christian Gury, *L’Honneur retrouvé d’un officier homosexuel en 1915, suivi de Grande guerre et homophilie* (Paris: Kimé, 2000).

5. André Gide, *Corydon* (Paris: Gallimard, 1925), 174–75. Although the full text was not published until 1924, Gide wrote *Corydon* between 1911 and 1918, and self-

published portions of the text in 1911 and 1920. Inspired by Plato's *Symposium* and popularized by the Hanoverian activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in the 1860s, the term "Uranian" referred to men (or, according to the logic of sexual inversion, "third sex" persons who, in this case, have a female spirit in a male body) with an erotic desire for men. For more on Gide and his work on homosexuality, see Emily Apter, *André Gide and the Codes of Homotextuality* (Saratoga, Calif.: Anna Libri, 1987); Michael Lucey, *Gide's Bent: Sexuality, Politics, Writing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 68–94; Didier Eribon, *Réflexions sur la question gay* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 305–14.

6. Gide, *Corydon*, 174–75. For a detailed discussion of Junot, see Chapter 2. For more on Cambacérès and the Napoleonic Code, see Jean-Louis Bory, *Les Cinq girouettes ou Servitudes et souplesses de son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Archichancelier de l'Empire, Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès* (Paris: Ramsay, 1979); Michael David Sibalis, "The Regulation of Male Homosexuality in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, 1789–1815," in *Homosexuality in Modern France*, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). While Cambacérès played a central role in drafting the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804, he had much less if any influence—despite popular belief—on the later Penal Code of 1810, which reaffirmed the Constituent Assembly's Penal Code of 1791 decriminalizing sodomy.

7. Jean Cocteau, quoted in Gury, *L'Honneur retrouvé*, 397. For more on Cocteau's service during the First World War, see Gury, *L'Honneur retrouvé*, 389–403; Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau: A Biography* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970). Like their allies, the American "doughboys" and English "Tommies," or like their Napoleonic predecessors the *grogards* (grumblers or grunts), French foot soldiers were known as *poilus* (hairy ones) in 1914–18. Some attribute this name to the fact that, due to reforms introduced by the Minister of War General Georges Ernest Boulanger in the 1880s, French soldiers were allowed to grow beards and mustaches. Others cite the crude conditions in the trenches where men had little opportunity to shave. In *L'Argot de la guerre, d'après une enquête auprès des officiers et soldats* (1918; Paris: Armand Colin, 2007), Albert Dauzat confirms that *poilus* themselves associated this name with hairy-chested virility and courage in combat (48–50).

8. Cocteau, quoted in Gury, *L'Honneur retrouvé*, 401, 399; Steegmuller, 153. In admiring how "Les Anglais prouvent que le marbre trompe sur la vraie couleur des visages grecs," Cocteau seems to imply that English soldiers surpass the beauty of the marble sculptures that represent ancient Greek heroes.

9. Jean Cocteau, *Thomas l'imposteur* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 105. More specifically, Guillaume's new family is a battalion of *fusiliers marins* or naval infantrymen, who are sailors trained to fight as infantry soldiers in order to protect naval positions or serve as first-assault combat troops on shore. As such, they are similar to the United States Marines.

10. For more on *Mon Frère Yves* and Loti's relationship with Pierre Le Cor, see Alain Buisine, *Pierre Loti: l'écrivain et son double* (Paris: Tallandier, 1998), 42–47; Suzanne Lafont, *Suprêmes clichés de Loti* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1993); Marie-Paule de Saint-Léger, *Pierre Loti l'insaisissable* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996); Alain Quella-Villéger, *Pierre Loti l'incompris* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1986); Christian Genet and Daniel Hervé, *Pierre Loti l'enchanteur* (Gémozac: La Caillerie, 1988); Clive Wake, *The Novels of Pierre Loti* (Paris: Mouton, 1974).

11. Pierre Loti, *Mon Frère Yves* (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1998), 40, 143.

12. Pierre Loti, *Soldats bleus: journal intime (1914–1918)*, ed. Alain Quella-Villéger and Bruno Vercier (Paris: Table Ronde, 1998), 85.

13. In *The Erotic Imagination: French Histories of Perversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Vernon Rosario writes that “the national fires of French-German rivalry continued to burn ... well after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War ... The fictioning of what would later be called ‘homosexuality’—embellished as it was by associations with effeminacy, hysteria, and deceitfulness—was especially critical in bolstering fantasies of national potency and scientific virility” (110). Rosario also argues that “the sexual perversions, particularly sexual inversion, conveniently knotted together fin de siècle medical, social, and moral preoccupations that stemmed from declining French fertility, growing class tensions, and the demoralization of the nation after its humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War” (89).

14. In his critical introduction to Ambroise Tardieu's *La Pédérastie: étude médico-légale sur les attentats aux mœurs* (1857; Paris: Le Sycamore, 1981), Dominique Fernandez argues that, in their investigation of pederasts, French criminologists seemed to sound an “involuntary echo from Bismarck's deep voice: ‘Homosexuality is perilous for the state because it breaks down social barriers’ ” (iv). In 1902, the artillery expert Friedrich-Alfred Krupp committed suicide, fueling rumors that he was a homosexual. In a national scandal in 1907, General Kuno von Moltke and Prince Eulenburg were publicly accused of being lovers, which gave rise to anxieties over effeminacy in the German military, as well as to the invention of the term *Eulenburgre* (Eulenbugger) in France. For more on the Eulenburg Affair, see James Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal: Political Cartoons and the Eulenburg Affair in Wilhelmin Germany,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman et al. (New York: Penguin-Meridian, 1989), 233–63; John Grand-Carteret, *Derrière ‘lui’: l’homosexualité en Allemagne* (Lille: Gai-Kitsch-Camp, 1992); Melanie Hawthorne, “ ‘Comment peut-on être homosexuel?’ Multinational (In)Corporation and the Frenchness of *Salomé*,” in *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence*, ed. Liz Constable et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 159–82.

[15.](#) To this list should be added the work of Gustav Jäger, Albert Moll, Jean-Martin Charcot, Valentin Magnan, and Marc-André Raffalovich. David Halperin documents in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990) that the word “homosexuality” was first published in Leipzig in 1869, apparently by Karl Maria Kertbeny who first used the word in letters to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (155 n. 2). For more on the history of the word “homosexuality,” see Chapter 9.

[16.](#) Tardieu, 22.

[17.](#) François Carlier, *Les Deux Prostitutions*, in *Nos ancêtres les pervers: la vie des homosexuels sous le Second Empire*, ed. Pierre Hahn (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1979), 137. For more on prostitution, see Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[18.](#) In *Nos ancêtres les pervers*, Pierre Hahn explains that, “as with workers, the prostitution of soldiers during the Second Empire can be explained by economic motives” (138). Described in contemporary terms by Steven Zealand in *Military Trade* (New York: Hawthorne, 1999) as “military chasers” (ix), these men are drawn to both the uniforms and masculinity of soldiers.

[19.](#) Ferragus (Louis Ulbach), “La littérature putride,” *Le Figaro*, 23 January 1868; David Baguley, ed., *Critical Essays on Émile Zola* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), 25. A fairly transparent pseudonym, Lauphs (which is St. Paul spelled backwards) symbolizes (sexual) inversion itself.

[20.](#) Émile Zola, Preface, *Le Roman d’un inverti né*, in Georges Saint-Paul [Dr. Lauphs], *Tares et poisons: perversions et perversité sexuelles, une enquête médicale sur l’inversion* (Paris: Georges Carré, 1896), 1; Daniel Grojnowski, ed., *Confessions d’un inverti né: suivi de Confidences et aveux d’un Parisien* (Paris: José Corti, 2007).

[21.](#) Rosario, 89–98; Christopher Rivers, “Improbable Prescience: Émile Zola and the Origins of Homosexuality,” *Excavatio* 14.1–2 (2001): 49–57; Karl Rosen, “Émile Zola and Homosexuality,” *Excavatio* 2 (1993): 111–15.

[22.](#) While this text was written in French, sent to a French novelist, and published by a French doctor in France, it is important to note that, in trying to protect his anonymity—either by claiming foreign identity or sending his story to a safe foreign distance—the anonymous author identifies himself as Italian. It is perhaps less helpful to point out the Italian origins of Napoleon’s, Zola’s, and Balzac’s families than to say that France and Italy shared a rich nineteenth-century military history. Like Stendhal’s Fabrice del Dongo, many Italians served in Napoleon’s Grande Armée following his two campaigns in Italy (1796, 1800). During the Second Empire, the armies of Napoleon III invaded Italy during the Second War of Italian

Independence in 1859, when Zola's Jean Macquart served at Solferino. Veiled in anonymity, this text could have been written by anyone, and might thus represent anything from autobiographical testimony, to engaged fiction, to titillating entertainment. Regardless of the author's identity, the *Novel of a Born Invert* is an important source on military homosexuality in French discourse during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

[23.](#) *Le Roman d'un inverti né*, 66.

[24.](#) *Le Roman d'un inverti né*, 66. Rosario provides this English translation—by David Halperin—of the italicized Latin (95). It is not clear if the Latin translations represent the author's original text, or if the author's graphic passages were later translated into Latin by Zola, Saint-Paul, or Saint-Paul's publisher Georges Carré. The use of Latin to conceal this graphic material would have limited it to mostly male, educated, and privileged readers in late nineteenth-century France.

[25.](#) *Roman d'un inverti né*, 74. Again, Rosario provides David Halperin's English translation of the italicized Latin (96).

[26.](#) In *La Morale des corps: le soin de propreté corporelle à Paris, évolution des normes et pratiques: 1850–1900* (Diss. Université de Lille-EHESS, 1986), Julia Scialom Csergo explains that for some military reformers, “hygiene alone would be used to reinvigorate France, perfect men, guarantee the physical and moral vigor of soldiers, train the military body for combat ... The word of order became: ‘After discipline, hygiene is the source of the army's strength’ “ (199).

[27.](#) In 1870: *La France dans la guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989), Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau argues that the defeat in 1870 underscored France's need to modernize: “The war's modernity also lay in the need to mobilize an ever larger proportion of the male population, and thus opened the road to universal service ... during the Third Republic. Modernity also in the need for an economic war in which industry and finance would be mobilized. And modernity in the need for the civilian population to brace itself for the rigors of war” (320).

[28.](#) Léon Gambetta, Discours à Bordeaux, 26 June 1871, quoted in Pierre Arnaud, ed., *Les Athlètes de la République: Gymnastique, sport et idéologie républicaine 1870–1914* (Paris: Privat, 1987), 26.

[29.](#) By eliminating the practice of replacement, the new laws on universal conscription attempted to integrate the military and require all able-bodied men to serve, regardless of social class. French policies on universal conscription—including the length of service and allowable exemptions—evolved slowly between 1872 and 1905. For more on this evolution, see William Serman, *Les Officiers français dans la nation, 1848–1914* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982); Raoul Girardet, *La Société militaire de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1998); Jean-Jacques Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La France, la nation, la guerre: 1850–1920* (Paris: SEDES, 1995).

[30.](#) Other studies on military hygiene include: Colonel Victor Marchand, *Quelques mots sur la propreté et l'hygiène du soldat* (Dijon: J. Marchand, 1871); Dr. G. Morache, *Traité d'hygiène militaire* (Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1874); Dr. Charles Viry, *Principes d'hygiène militaire* (Paris: Bataille, 1896); Dr. Fernand Camus, *Le Service militaire devant l'hygiène* (Lille: L. Daniel, 1896); Dr. Étienne Viguié, *Le Role de l'officier en matière d'hygiène* (Paris: R. Chapelot, 1907).

[31.](#) Julia Csergo documents in detail this period of innovation in military bathing and hygiene (198–221). For more on the homoerotic dimensions of bathing soldiers, see Fussell, 299–309.

[32.](#) Georges Hébert, *La Culture virile et les devoirs physiques de l'officier combattant* (Paris: Vuibert, 1913), 1, 35.

[33.](#) Georges Rozet, *Les Fêtes du muscle* (Paris: Grasset, 1914), 197, 211.

[34.](#) Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu, journal d'un escouade* (Paris: Flammarion, 1965), 125.

[35.](#) For more on the collective military theories of Napoleon, Ardant du Picq, and Lyautey, see the detailed discussion in the Introduction to this book.

[36.](#) For more on Boulanger, Dreyfus, and the French colonial empire, see Jean-Paul Bertaud and William Serman, *Nouvelle histoire militaire de la France, 1789–1919* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Émile Zola, *J'accuse* (1898; Paris: Mille et Une Nuits, 1994); Vincent Duclert, *Alfred Dreyfus: l'honneur d'un patriote* (Paris: Fayard, 2006); Christopher Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); William Irvine, *The Boulanger Crisis Reconsidered: Royalism, Boulangism, and the Origins of the Radical Right in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jean Garrigues, *Le Boulangisme* (Paris: PUF, 1992); Rudi Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male to Male Sexual Behaviour Outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

[37.](#) For more on these anti-militarist texts, see Georges Courteline, *Les Gaietés de l'escadron* (1886); Abel Hermant, *Le Cavalier Miserey* (1887); Georges Darien, *Biribi* (1888); Lucien Descaves, *Sous-offs* (1889)

[38.](#) These First World War trench novels include Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu* (1916); Maurice Genevoix, *Sous Verdun* (1916); Georges Duhamel, *Vie des martyrs* (1917); Roland Dorgelès, *Croix de bois* (1919).

[39.](#) For more on homosexuality and gay identity during the postwar period in France, see Gilles Barbedette and Michel Carassou, *Paris Gay 1925* (Paris: Renaissance, 1981).

Epilogue: Unknown Soldiers

[1.](#) Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 52–53.

[2.](#) Janet Halley, *Don't: A Reader's Guide to the Military's Anti-Gay Policy*

(Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

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