Euclid’s world is very simple and Einstein’s world is very difficult; nevertheless it is now impossible to return to Euclid’s. No revolution, no heresy is comfortable and easy. Because it is a leap, it is a rupture of the smooth revolutionary curve, and a rupture is a wound, a pain. But it is a necessary wound. Most people suffer from hereditary sleeping sickness, and those who are sick with this ailment (entropy) must not be allowed to sleep or they will go to their last sleep, the sleep of death.—Evgeny Zamiatin
CHAPTER ONE

THE OTHER GRAND SIECLE

On m’a chassé de la cour, où je n’avais que faire; si on me presse encore à sortir de France, quelque part de l’Europe où je veuille aller, mon nom m’y a fait des connaissances. Je me sais facilement accommoder à toute diversité de vivres et d’habillements; les climats et les hommes me sont indifférents.—Théophile (de Viau)

Ceci est de l’histoire et ne nous regarde plus, simple biographe littéraire, humble critique cherchant quelques perles dans le fumier des écrivains de second ordre.—Théophile (Gautier)

I. THE TWO THEOPHILES

Avant d’avoir lu un seul de ses vers je lui portais déjà un tendre intérêt à cause de son nom de Théophile, qui est le miens... C’est peut-être une puérilité, mais je vous avoue que tout le mal que l’on disait de Théophile de Viau me semblait adressé à moi, Théophile Gautier. Théophile est un nom comme un autre, mais ce nom obscur, je l’aime dans moi et dans les autres.

Voyez come la marraine de Théophile a eu une idée triomphante de l’appeler ainsi et pas autrement! Car il est certain que, si elle lui eut donné pour nom Christophe ou Barthélemy, je ne m’en serais pas occupé le moins du monde.

Two men named Théophile were leaders of what could be considered parallel intellectual and artistic revolutions. A little over two centuries passed after one Théophile was hanged in effigy and imprisoned before the first individual outside his immediate circle of friends took up his defense: the other Théophile. As Gautier admits, he originally noticed his kindred spirit only because of the
first name they share, a name otherwise rare in the French literary tradition. Nevertheless, this curious onomastic recurrence is not nearly so interesting as the onomastic difference that sets these writers apart. Their baptismal certificates show that they began life with both a Christian and a family name, yet while history has chosen to employ this double name when speaking of the nineteenth-century French author, an exceptional practice has become current in the case of his predecessor. Gautier was the first to remark that the seventeenth-century man of letters has traditionally been referred to simply as “Théophile.” “Sur le titre de ses œuvres, Théophile, je ne sais pourquoi, n’est désigné que par son prénom.” The question should not be dropped with Gautier’s casual “je ne sais pourquoi.”

The proper name is the only sign with a unique referent. “Théophile de Viau” designates the individual Théophile de Viau and no one but Théophile de Viau. The first name, however, presents special problems within the category of the proper name. When unmarked by deictics, “Théophile” is merely a Christian name with an infinite number of possible referents, referents that become clear only with the addition of a family name: Théophile de Viau, Théophile Gautier, Théophile Un Tel. To suppress “de Viau” and leave only “Théophile” is to destroy the specificity of the functioning of this proper name. When referred to simply as “Théophile,” Théophile de Viau loses his identity, becomes one Théophile among countless others. This name fails to fulfill properly its basic function of marking off his personal territory. Were his case unique in the history of seventeenth-century French literature, it would be less significant. There are, however, two other contemporary writers who share Théophile’s fate and are known in literary history by their first names alone: Cyrano and Tristan. Such appellations cause obvious confusion. For example, the individual who announces his intention of reading the works of one of these authors may encounter the same eminently logical question: “Which Théophile?” “Which Tristan?”—even, “Which Cyrano?” On a more practical level, the critic trying to track down scholarly references can never be certain of their place in alphabetical classifications. Will Cyrano be listed under “C” for “Cyrano” or “B” for “Bergerac?”

The twentieth-century scholar’s bibliographic dilemma is only
a largely inconsequential by-product of a phenomenon with much larger implications. The suppression of family names not only produces inconsistencies among indexes, it also reflects a loss of status in literary history. Whereas the inconsistencies are accidental, the loss of status is not. It is the result of a desire to obliterate, along with their names, the values represented by these writers and by many of the works they produced. In their day, Théophile de Viau, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Tristan L'Hermite, to return their full names to them for once, were known as libertines, freethinkers whose flamboyant life styles, dangerous ideas, and attacks on the ruling order(s) threw suspicion on their literary productions. They created daring, unusual novels at a time when partisans of literary codification were beginning their attempts to destroy all that did not conform to their carefully laid out rules.

Using three essential strategies, the grand siècle eliminated the blemish of the libertine writer from the otherwise flawless surface it was contriving even then to leave for posterity. First, it created a climate hostile to the publication and the distribution of works by authors of unorthodox philosophical stance. Although the repressive conditions for publication in the seventeenth century often have been exaggerated, certain facts give testimony to the difficulties encountered by the novelists under consideration here. A mere three copies of the first edition of Théophile’s *Fragments d’une histoire comique* have survived. Only one copy of the first edition of Tristan’s *Le Page disgracié* is known to exist. As for Cyrano’s novels, the only text of *L’Autre Monde* available until the publication of the Paris manuscript at the beginning of this century was mutilated by the cutting of his friend Le Bret, and no manuscript of *Les Estats et empires du soleil* has ever been found to rehabilitate the second imaginary voyage. Second, these unwelcome authors were eased out of the literary mainstream by a general disparagement of their talents. From the Père Garasse’s diatribes against Théophile in his *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps ou prétendus tels* (1623) to the scornful evaluation of Cyrano’s sometime friend Ménage, “Je crois que, quand il fit son *Voyage dans la lune* il en avait déjà le premier quartier dans la tête,” no efforts were spared to undermine their importance. They became known as second-, if not third-, rate authors of small, outlandish books. Finally, to finish them off, the grand
sixteenth century removed their last names, the mark of father, family, and heritage. A new onomastic category in modern literary history was created for them—to be closed with their passing and re-opened but twice more, in a gesture of two later centuries' descending sympathy for their own mad writers, Jean-Jacques and Gérard. Madmen, like children and the stars of the day, need only a first name.

Nor is this the end of libertine name games. With the exception of “Théophile,” even the first names by which these men are known present problems. In the most extreme case, that of Cyrano de Bergerac, “Cyrano” is the only component of this name acquired at birth. The future libertine was baptized Savinien de Cyrano, but he apparently tired quickly of this name. At the age of twenty, he had already begun to indulge in flamboyant onomastic transformations. He abandoned his baptismal name, “Savinien,” changed his family name to a first name, and completed this creation with the addition of “Bergerac,” the name of an estate that had once been owned by his grandfather and that had belonged in the sixteenth century to a family named de Bergerac. This is the name he continued to use most often, the name by which he was known to his contemporaries, and the name posterity would continue to adopt, and abbreviate, when referring to him. But Cyrano’s fascination with naming did not end there. Soon after the adoption of “Cyrano de Bergerac,” his nominal creativity led him to appropriate at random the following signatures: “de Bergerac Cyrano,” “de Cyrano de Bergerac,” “Alexandre de Cyrano Bergerac,” “Hercule de Bergerac,” even occasionally the anagram “Dyrcona,” and variants employing it, such as “Savinien Bergerac Dyrcona.” In the ensuing confusion, he was taken at his word, and “de Bergerac” was generally accepted as his family name. The ironic result of his incessant twists is that the so-called first name, “Cyrano,” pejoratively used as his only name, is his actual family name. But “Cyrano,” as a result of its bearer’s own manipulations, no longer functions as a family name but rather as a given name too vague to be sufficient for the identification of a human being. Hence the possibility of the question “Which Cyrano?”, even though “Cyrano” as a Christian name is unique in its class.

Cyrano shares the will to shape his own onomastic destiny with
his friend Tristan. The latter was baptized François L’Hermite, but near the age of twenty he exchanged his prosaic baptismal name for “Tristan.” He probably made this change to give himself legendary airs and certainly to establish an association with a famous previous bearer of the name “Tristan L’Hermite,” the grand prévôt de l’hôtel de France during the reign of Louis XI. Tristan was also continuing a family tradition, for his entire family, and especially his younger brother Jean-Baptiste, was constantly engaged in complicated genealogical maneuvers in the hope of annexing glorious ancestors, such as Pierre L’Hermite and Tristan L’Hermite. In Tristan’s case, when his contemporaries began the practice of referring to him by an adopted first name alone, all links with his actual family heritage disappeared, leaving only a connection with a fairy-tale past of his own invention.

Before examining the implications of this desire to shape grandiose names for oneself, I would like to mention briefly a related case, that of a writer linked with the same libertine circle as Cyrano and Tristan, a writer best known as the “Emperor of the Burlesque”: D’Assoucy. As his birth certificate attests, he was baptized with a simple name, Charles Coyppeau, suitable for a lawyer’s son. Unfortunately, so few historians of literature have concerned themselves with the dark areas of his highly complicated biography that the age at which he chose to adopt a new name has not yet been established, much less the resonances this name may have had for him. All that seems clear according to his only modern editor, Emile Colombey, is that “D’Assoucy” is a false name of his own invention, selected to replace his family name in accordance with the glorious literary ambitions of an individual who would later exult in his title as the emperor of the most carefree of genres. So complete is the mystery surrounding this name, in fact, that even today, when the orthography of most other family names of the period has been standardized, this one remains uncertain. It may be found written “D’Assoucy,” “d’Assoucy,” or “Dassoucy.”

The three instances I have described were not, of course, the only nominal duplicities that occurred in seventeenth-century France. The practice of annexing “de” in the hope of usurping nobility was current at the period. Actors, and at least one actor-
playwright, assumed new names to protect their families from contamination. But examples such as these of writers indulging in willfully creative nominal transformations are unheard of outside the milieu with which I am concerned.

Tristan, Cyrano, and D'Assoucy manipulate their names as a political sign associating them with the libertine movement. In the years following Théophile's trial, a writer who did nothing to hide his allegiance to this milieu would surely have been ostracized by official circles. Rather than waiting to have judgment passed on them, these young writers took over the organization of their own fates by wiping out their original heritage. In the process, they appropriated for themselves a new family and a new heritage. They revealed themselves to be subversive individuals by destroying the importance of a possession treasured by a society where it could open or close doors, the name. They rejected the name and all it stands for: paternal authority, family obligations, a fixed social status. As a replacement for the name, they adopted onomastic masks that give none of the information normally conveyed by names. These pseudo names branded their users with their chosen vocations, as though they were members of a religious order. They were no longer L'Hermites, or Cyranos, or Coyppeaus, but libertines, members of a family they freely accepted and that accepted them freely, a family that replaced traditional responsibilities with intellectual ones, a family destined for promulgation rather than propagation. By calling attention to themselves in such a flamboyant way, they provided, before having set pen to paper, the initial impetus in the process of their own ostracism.

The obscurity of their prose works would have been enough in itself to bar the libertines from great literary success. The official disfavor they encouraged guaranteed their virtual elimination. From the very beginning, all but their immediate circle greeted them with scorn. Since the French critical tradition almost always has respected the seventeenth century's vision of itself, the image of these authors handed down from generation to generation has remained as immobile as they themselves were changing. Any attempt at an exhaustive survey of these dismissals would require at least a chapter in itself. To illustrate the extent to which these writers have been underestimated, one need only look at the most important studies accorded them before the last decade.
Gautier’s *Les Grotesques* (1844) inaugurates the “rediscovery” of Théophile and Cyrano, but the title of his volume reflects the peculiar critical slant from which he views them. In the preface to his “collection de têtes grimaçantes,” Gautier explains his interest in these “auteurs de troisième ordre, dédaignés ou tombés en désuétude,” these “pauvres diables,” in terms of a fascination with “diformités littéraires,” and “déviations poétiques.” Remarks such as these reduce these authors to mere literary curiosities, to be read with any degree of seriousness only by a few maniac bibliophiles, and to be treated simply as a source of amusing anecdotes (Cyrano’s nose and such) by a more general public. The same disparaging attitude is evident in Victor Fournel’s study of lesser-known writers of the seventeenth century, *La Littérature indépendante et les écrivains oubliés*, which contains chapters on authors associated with the libertine milieu—“des auteurs d’un ordre inférieur, comme Cyrano, . . . Dassoucy.”

Literary historians of the early twentieth century generally concern themselves with these writers not because of their artistic merits, but rather because they were part of a group whose religious beliefs they either defend or disparage. The two men responsible for editing and publishing their works, for establishing their bibliographies, and for reconstructing the history of their literary activities, Antoine Adam and Frédéric Lachèvre, are ideal representatives of these opposing stands. Even Adam, the great defender of libertine rights, is not always capable of taking these writers seriously. He refers to Cyrano and D’Assoucy, for example, as “les extravagants.” Lachèvre is far more outraged by their excesses, and even as he publishes volume after volume of the series *Le Libertinage en France au dix-septième siècle*, he cannot hide his growing antipathy for the men to whom he is devoting his life’s work:

Plus nous avançons dans la monographie des libertins du dix-septième siècle et dans la publication de leurs œuvres, plus se précise notre définition du libertin: un faible d’esprit incapable de maîtriser ses passions, en d’autres termes un homme rétif à toute discipline intellectuelle volontairement consentie et ayant perdu le sens des réalités; un déséquilibré chez qui la sensation l'emporte sur la raison.

It is easy to understand from even this brief survey why such writers, studied only for their eccentric behavior or their untimely
religious convictions, could not be granted a place in the grand fresco of the seventeenth century that was to be passed on to generations of French schoolchildren as the ultimate proof of the greatness of their national literature. As F. T. Perrens reasons in *Les Libertins en France au dix-septième siècle*:

Ce parti pris, cette partialité optimiste viennent du point de vue pédagogique où l'éducation de la jeunesse nous conduit à nous placer. Voulant former les cœurs et les esprits, tâche sacrée, nous enfermons nos enfants dans l'étude des plus beaux modèles que fournissent notre langue et notre littérature, nous ne leur montrons du dix-septième siècle que tout ce qu'il a de pur, de beau, d'admirable, moisson si riche que nous pouvons négliger le reste.21

Opinion after opinion confirmed what the contemporaries of these writers knew from the start: there was little reason to pay attention to the bizarre texts of slightly mad authors. Today, of the novels already discussed here, only Cyrano's *L'Autre Monde* exists in an easily obtainable edition,22 and volumes of the last editions of Tristan’s *Page disgracié* and D’Assoucy’s *Avantures* and *Avantures d’Italie* are difficult to find, even in major libraries. The scarcity of texts could continue to confine these works to the marginal status conferred upon them by a historical period threatened by their difference. Thus, I believe that a serious reevaluation of both their merits and their relationships to each other is called for.

2. THE EVOLUTION OF A GENRE

René Pintard’s definitive study, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du dix-septième siècle*, maps out well the activities of the small group of freethinkers who discreetly gathered around the so-called Tétrade of their intellectual leaders, Pierre Gassendi, François de La Mothe Le Vayer, Gabriel Naudé, and Diodati. In such friendly homes as that of the Dupuy brothers (the académie putéane), they discussed the most important contemporary trends in philosophy and science. Their intellectual investigations reached a peak in the years immediately following what both Pintard and J. S. Spink agree is a major dividing line in seventeenth-century French intellectual history—referred to by Spink as “the crisis of 1619–25”23—that is, the crusade of atheist-hunting that spanned the years between the burning of Vanini at
the stake for charges of atheism and Théophile's banishment. This was clearly not a period conducive to any form of activity that might attract attention. Propagandizing was unthinkable, as well as out of character, for such reserved philosophers as Gassendi. As a result, the movement of libertinage érudit produced relatively few testimonies to its activities and its discussions and almost no followers. In Pintard's description:

Telle est l'étrange situation de ces “esprits forts:” ils veulent rester eux-mêmes, mais ils redoutent d'être imités; ils souhaitent quelques confidents, mais le moins possible de disciples. Etonnants fouilleurs qui se hâtent d'enterrer de nouveau la moitié de leurs trouvailles; Prométhées honteux de leur audace qui éteignent, avant de la transmettre aux hommes, l'étincelle qu'ils ont dérobée aux dieux.24

This was, then, an underground movement for a handful of initiates. They helped keep free thought alive in France during a difficult period, but they carefully avoided the risk of public exposure that might have brought wider attention their way. The movement was also short-lived, virtually extinct after Gassendi's death in 1655.

Gassendi's philosophy did leave its mark on one group of individuals destined to produce important chronicles of libertine life and thought. When he arrived in Paris in 1628, Gassendi carried with him a letter from Peiresc for the Dupuy brothers. In this milieu, friendship was sacred, and the chosen few were always passed from friend to friend, so it was natural that the Dupuys in turn introduced Gassendi to François Luillier, the rich patron of the arts and protector of freethinkers. Luillier offered him the position of tutor for his illegitimate son, Chapelle.25 Gassendi's decision to accept Luillier's proposal may well be described as one of the major turning points in the evolution of the French novel, since the philosopher's influence in this role was not limited to his pupil alone. It also extended to a group of Chapelle's close friends, most of whom were later to convey their sense of shared experience in unusual novels that altered the limits of the genre as they were then perceived. Until recently, it was generally believed that Gassendi held formal lectures in philosophy for his young students, but Michaud and Pintard have worked to change this view: “Des sortes de conférences familières ont fort bien pu s'y tenir, des conversations amicales, en tout cas, y ont eu lieu.”26
The list of those who attended these sessions with Gassendi is an impressive one indeed. Chapelle met Cyrano, who introduced him to D’Assoucy, and so, in typical libertine fashion, the band was formed. It finally included Tristan, Bernier, Scarron, and possibly even Molière. Exposure of one type or another to Gassendi meant that, no matter what the philosophical orientation of his discussions with them, these young thinkers had access to a variety of texts and ideas rarely available in France at that time. I do not intend to enter the debate on the religious convictions, or lack of them, of the various members of this group. Chapelle, Cyrano, and D’Assoucy are always classified as atheists—largely on the basis either of their own testimony or of their later attempts at blackening each other’s reputations. Opinions on Tristan’s atheism run the gamut from the unconditionally affirmative (Adam, Guillumette), to the somewhat hesitant affirmative or negative (Perrens, Arland) to the scandalized denial (Lachevre)—leaving room in between for what seems most likely: that he was an atheist in his youth, but modified his stand in later years (Dietrich). There certainly is no last word on the inner convictions of each member of the band, but it is important to remember that this group of writers shared two common bonds. They were in some sense students of Gassendi and, through him, were linked with other members of the circle of libertins erudits. Because of this alliance, they came to share an ideology based on the defense of philosophical and scientific open-mindedness and were led to defend all the great men associated with this ideology. In short, they subscribed to Sorbière’s profession of faith: “Je tiens pour Galilée et Gassendi et j’estime qu’à la longue ils emporteront par dessus Hobbes et Descartes, encore que les bricoles de ceux-là se fassent davantage admirer sur l’adresse des autres.”

Certain among them share a final common bond, one that establishes beyond any doubt the importance of the first two. Tristan, Cyrano, Chapelle, and D’Assoucy all left documents—strange novels whose similarities will provide the focal point of this study, testimonies that can be used, with the annexation of two earlier texts, to tell the story of the rise and fall of the libertine movement in seventeenth-century France. The two additional novels indispensable for any discussion of the literature associated with the libertinism of the period are, first, Théophile’s Frag-
ments d'une histoire comique, “l'autobiographie du libertin triomphant,” in Démostès's terms, and Sorel's Francion (both 1623). Adam maintains that Sorel's novel is a description of Théophile's youth and its title character a barely disguised double for the real-life libertine hero. But even for a critic who rejects that thesis, it is clear that Francion's surprising adventures, as well as the novel's intellectual and formal audacity, would make this text a prototype for young writers aspiring to find a type of narrative flexible enough to transmit a libertine message. These two novels, Sorel's fictionalized eulogy of libertine youth and its aspirations and Théophile's all too brief but decisive libertine manifesto, can be read together as a description of a first flash of glory and power, of total belief in the transforming potential of a libertine ideology.

Tristan's Page disgracie (1643) and Cyrano's L'Auere Monde and Les États et empires du soleil mark the arrival of a new generation, one characterized by its lack of optimism and illusions. The almost carefree bravado of earlier libertine heroes is conspicuously absent here, no longer possible after the years 1619-25. These novels may be said to represent different moments of a grave crisis of pessimism, a crisis reflected in the mode of retreat chosen by each of them: Tristan's “softened” treatment of dangerous themes, and Cyrano's decision not to publish his manuscript. Despite their pessimistic overtones, Cyrano and Tristan's texts remain marked by a spirit of struggle that expresses continued conviction: neither the page nor Dyrcona is broken at the end of his adventures.

During the final period in the evolution of the fiction produced by Gassendi's students, even this hope for an eventual solution is lost. Chapelle's Voyage à Encausse (written with Bachaumont, 1663) and D'Assoucy's Avantures and Avantures d'Italie (1677) merit a separate classification for several reasons. Not only are they characterized by the absence of the traditional libertine notion of struggle, but the optimism and conviction conveyed by earlier texts are replaced by a pervasive sense of the failure and collapse of a movement. The libertine cooperation and camaraderie has broken down into a stream of ugly and potentially damning accusations. Even the once sacred master, Gassendi, is implicated in these outpourings of bile. As Pintard points out, this is
the ultimate sign of the complete disintegration of all the values of the past:

Quand les compères, brouillés les uns avec les autres, étaleront les souvenirs de leurs débauches et de leur gueuserie, de plagiat, de maladies honteuses, de vices dégradants, d'irréligion, quand toute la lie de leur temps d'amitié remontera à la surface, l'ombre du philosophe se trouvera mêlée à ces évocations fâcheuses (p. 331).

In the relation of these accusations, the personal invades the fictional to such an extent that these texts begin to strain the boundaries of the novel. Previous criticism of these works seriously underestimates their content when it stresses their “playfulness,” or speaks of D’Assoucy’s “lightness” (Fritz Neubert), or classifies Chapelle and Bachaumont’s Voyage as a “charmante satire littéraire” (Sainte-Beuve), or invents the following comparison to describe the Voyage: “l'équivalent littéraire des Porzellanfigürchen, des figurines de porcelaine, de ces biscuits de Sèvres (ou de Saxes. .) si caractéristiques d'une époque” (Laufer). Of these critics, only Sainte-Beuve even brushes up against the implications of Chapelle’s Voyage when, near the end of his Causerie, he remarks casually: “Il est dommage cependant que le tout se termine par cette histoire désagréable et indécente de d’Assoucy, sur laquelle l'auteur revient encore plus loin et insiste avant de finir.” A pity, perhaps; disagreeable, certainly—yet such brutal attacks are not to be avoided in this less than glorious end to the libertine saga. They may shock, surprise, even disgust, but these reactions are an integral part of the package. These “adventure” novels are anything but porcelain figurines. They retain the frosting of Epicurean delights associated with the seventeenth-century libertine tradition, but they are hollow and bitter at the center: hollow because their authors can no longer fight the good fight and defend the ideals and idols of a generation, and bitter because they are all too conscious of having replaced this ideology with useless bickering. D’Assoucy and Chapelle had the misfortune of living long enough to witness, and bear witness to, the end of an era.

Chronologically, the evolution of this literary trend more or less coincides with that of the purely intellectual current of libertinage érudit. Its moment of euphoria is over by 1625; its breakdown is contemporary with the period of the Fronde. Just as the libertinage érudit receives its coup fatal at the moment of political
upheaval associated with the split into pro- and anti-Mazarin forces, as Pintard remarks (pp. 433–34), so the young writers who banded together around Gassendi in the post-Théophile years also lost their solidarity at this point. Whether dissent first crept in over political issues or over personal ones cannot be established. The fact remains that the most forceful document attesting to the beginning of the final crisis, Cyrano’s *Lettre contre les frondeurs* (1651), is essentially a political manifesto. With this text, Cyrano, formerly the prolific author of such caustic *Mazarinades* as the *Ministre d’Etat flambé*, takes on the role of the defender of absolute monarchy. Hand in hand with his political about-face comes the break with the friends remaining on the side of the anti-Mazarin forces, Chapelle and D’Assoucy.

Such chronological parallels, however, do not necessarily indicate frequent intermingleings of the *libertins erudits* and the novelists. After an initial period of more or less frequent contact, while Gassendi served as Chapelle’s tutor, the two circles moved farther and farther apart. After all, no prudent philosopher or scholar would wish to be too closely linked with writers who, through their increasingly flamboyant behavior and publications, were becoming more and more likely targets for official reprisal. Such ties would involve a sharing of the risks that were surely higher for a writer who chose to make his work public than for a philosopher who talked within the confines of a salon. As Howard Harvey points out, charges of madness were leveled only against literary figures such as Cyrano and not against their more cautious masters, the Descartes and the Gassendis. The *libertins erudits* avoided not only disparaging accusations but also physical penalties. Spink makes a distinction between the two groups based on their attitude toward political authority. There were, on the one hand, “the professional erudites . . . holding stable positions in society” and, on the other, “the wanderers, the irregulars, the independents, resentful of authority, unsubmissive in spirit. It was the members of this latter group who ran a real risk of the galleys and the stake.” The danger was evident. As late as 1662, Claude Le Petit was condemned to be strangled and then burned for the alleged libertine content of his works.

3. THE LIBERTINE BOND

Since the *libertins erudits* considered themselves free men in the
midst of an enslaved world, they were particularly conscious of the importance of a united front. Friendship was the most sacred of all values for those fortunate enough to be among the initiate, and the hospitality of this friendship was freely extended to all individuals persecuted because of their intellectual beliefs. By reason of this persecution alone, they won admission to the inner circle. Campanella, fleeing the Inquisition, was immediately taken in by Peiresc, who introduced him to Gassendi, who in turn brought him to the Dupuy brothers. They gave him shelter, even though, as Pintard describes them, “la métaphysique, à vrai dire, n’est pas le propre des ‘frères Putéans’ et de leurs intimes, et ils se soucient assez peu d’approuver ou d’improver les théories du moine calabrais. . . . Mais qu’importe? Il est persécuté, cela leur suffit” (p. 97).

This sense of brotherhood was even more pronounced among the literary figures connected with this movement, perhaps because of the common danger they confronted. For them, persecution was a sign of personal merit. The most virtuous men were those who were most strongly persecuted. As Lidame’s aunt in Edinburgh explains to Tristan’s page disgracie: “Vous n’êtes pas le premier qu’on a persécuté sans raison, et vous n’en êtes pas moins digne d’être servi, puisque ce n’est qu’une marque de votre vertu.”

The libertine writers had no homes in which to offer refuge to those fleeing persecution, but they could give written defenses in their works to those they perceived to be their illustrious predecessors in misfortune. Their novels contain startling, anti-novelistic lists of individuals imprisoned, exiled, or forced to wander because of the daring of their ideas. These lists are made up of a rather bizarre jumble of philosophers, scientists, alchemists, and charlatans of all countries and all periods, thrown together in a common melting pot as a result of shared experience.

For example, in the Page disgracie there is a passage devoted to Jean-Baptiste Porta and his Magie naturelle (pp. 84-85), then a cluster of names: Jacques Coeur, Raymond Lulle, Arnaud de Villeneuve, Nicholas Flamel, and Bragadino (p. 96). Cyrano’s L’Autre Monde marks the summit of such naming: Pythagorus, Epicurus, Democritus, Copernicus, Kepler, Cardano, Corneille Agrippa de Nettesheim, Jean Trithème, Jean Faust, Guy de la Brosse, the adventurer César, the knights of the Rosy Cross,
Campanella, La Mothe Le Vayer, Gassendi—all find their way into its lists. His *Estats et empires du soleil* contains additional references to Corneille Agrippa and especially to Campanella. The Calabrian monk is elevated from his status as name in a list to that of an actual character, serving as guide and interlocutor for Dyrcona during an important phase of his solar sojourn.

Previous critics of these novels maintain that they function as *romans à clef*. However, decipherment is unnecessary when reading them, since the names to be stressed are plainly inscribed in the text. To suggest as Pintard does that the demon of Socrates in *L’Autre Monde* represents Gassendi and that the *fils de l’hôte* in the same work can be identified with Chapelle is to fail to understand the way Cyrano integrates references to those he sees as his brothers-in-arms. If he had wanted to make an additional allusion to Gassendi or to include one to Chapelle, he would have done so directly and without cover-up. This is no society game of guessing who’s who, but a reaffirmation of oneness in alienation. These writers reject the *à clef* mask in favor of a more explicit union with the past.

For example, when Tristan names the alchemist encountered by the page “le nouvel Artefius” (pp. 97, 162, 212), he does so in order to establish a link between the character of his invention and a pattern of occult relationships. Tristan’s alchemist gains thereby a share in the identity of the twelfth-century hermetic philosopher, author of a treatise on *The Art of Prolonging Life*, who claimed to have lived for a thousand years through the secrets of his art—and whose contemporaries further extended his grasp on the past by contending that he had known a previous existence as Apollonius of Tyana. Tristan’s alchemist is a reincarnation of Artefius, just as Artefius was himself a reincarnation of Apollonius.

The libertine novelists continue their practice of being more daring than their intellectual mentors. The *libertins érudits*, realizing how suspicious their activities were to others, always took the precaution of using a tight system of self-censorship to protect their freedom of expression. They consistently avoided the use of all proper names connected in any way with libertine concerns, replacing them with a carefully constructed code of Greek pseudonyms, a code Pintard describes in these terms:
De là [i.e., from their desire for self-protection] dès qu'ils livrent quelqu'une de leurs confidences, le souci de la voiler sous des noms empruntés et des allusions obscures; de là encore l'habitude, et bientôt la manie des pseudonymes . . . Avec un mélange d'inquiétude et de plaisir, ils tissent autour de toutes leurs actions une trame transparente aux initiés; mais qui trompera les profanes. Ils s'accoutument à s'entendre à demi-mot, à parler un language intelligible à eux seuls, à multiplier entre eux les liens d'une sorte de complicité (p. 176).

This brand of self-censorship is supposedly active, for example, in such works as La Mothe Le Vayer’s *Dialogues d’Orasius Tubero*, in which, according to Pintard’s interpretation, the initiated reader was to identify the members of the Tétrade and their immediate circle behind the various interlocutors.

The libertine novelists’ rejection of the à clef formula as practiced by the *libertins érudits* constitutes the first of a series of unifying traits that define the peculiar character of their works. They clearly wished to set their novels apart from the libertine philosophical dialogue or treatise, perhaps because they sensed that its veiled references could never be properly understood outside a small secret society, and, furthermore, that any impact thus obtained would be very short-lived. Here the libertines’ awareness of the importance of posterity that motivates their manipulation of their own names is important once again. These writers crafted appellations for themselves that reflect their rejection of their own heritage and their adoption of a libertine one. When they openly name the names of their persecuted “forefathers,” they do so in order to inscribe the notion of persecution in their texts and to flaunt their own real and imagined tribulations (Théophile’s and Tristan’s exiles and D’Assoucy’s imprisonment; Cyrano’s conviction that the Jesuits were seeking his death).

In their works, these young writers traced a libertine family tree. In addition, they showed that the family was still alive and flourishing by making various references to each other. This mutual referentiality further established their identity as a band of renegades. When an important work by one of them appeared, it would sometimes be introduced by a series of prefatory poems by other members of the group as a sign of libertine solidarity. This tradition was inaugurated in 1648 with the appearance of D’Assoucy’s *Jugement de Pâris*, ornamented with pièces liminaires
singing its praises and those of its author signed by Chapelle, Tristan, and Cyrano—who, as was occasionally his practice, marks only his initials, or one set of them at least, “C.D.” For this occasion, Cyrano also contributed an épître-préface “Au sot Lecteur et non au sage,” a tour de force of the insulting burlesque style more frequently associated with D’Assoucy himself. Two years later, D’Assoucy’s next burlesque epic poem, L’Ovide en belle humeur, was once again accompanied by prefatory verses by Tristan and Cyrano. The era of the joys of friendship was already nearing its end, however, and when Cyrano in turn was able to publish a collection of his works in 1654, the absence of prefatory sonnets, epistles, and other marks of participation by a circle of friends is striking.

The most memorable inscription of libertine solidarity is Cyrano’s eulogy of his friend Tristan, pronounced by the character who often serves as the author’s porte-parole in L’Autre Monde, the demon of Socrates:

Pour abréger son panégyrique, il est tout esprit, il est tout coeur, et si donner à quelqu’un toutes ces deux qualités dont une jadis suffisait à marquer un héros n’était dire Tristan L’Hermite, je me serais bien gardé de le nommer, car je suis assuré qu’il ne me pardonnera point cette méprise; mais comme je n’attends pas de retourner jamais en votre monde, je veux rendre à la vérité ce témoignage de ma conscience. . . . Enfin je ne puis rien ajouter à l’éloge de ce grand homme, si ce n’est que c’est le seul poète, le seul philosophe et le seul homme libre que vous ayez (p. 57).

Here, Cyrano underlines the potential risk involved in the evocation of a fellow renegade: “Je me serais bien gardé de le nommer.” There is no such thing as casual name-dropping in a work by a known libertine, and Cyrano realizes that by inscribing Tristan’s name in his text at the end of an extensive list of ancestors (from Corneille Agrippa to Gassendi), he identifies Tristan with this tradition. Tristan’s link with freethinkers past and present is firmly established for anyone who knows how to interpret the weight of the proper name in the libertine text. As Adam points out: “Pour qui connaît Cyrano, cela ne peut laisser aucun doute. . . . Cyrano le loue dans les mêmes termes qu’il donnerait à Théophile si Théophile était vivant.” The simple presence of the name is equivalent to saying, “He is a libertine,” or “He is one of us.”
But if such inscriptions are far more explicit than the opaque veils of the roman à clef, they also constitute a new form of self-censorship. The name is present with no cover-up, yet the metaphorical implications are not clearly spelled out. The simple fact of never saying “Tristan is like Campanella” provides a minimal form of protection. This type of metonymical juxtaposition makes plain the conclusions to be drawn, but carefully avoids taking the ultimate step of drawing them.

Libertine listings with their discreet use of names are characteristic only of the novels of Tristan and Cyrano and are no longer found in those following the Fronde. Cyrano destroys all libertine unity, first with his politically based attacks in “Contre les frondeurs,” then with subsequent lettres publiques such as “Contre Chapelle, brigand de pensées” and “Satire contre Soucidas,” both containing a wild vision of former friends as plagiarists. Afterward, discretion is thrown to the winds, and Chapelle and D'Assoucy respond by going beyond the mere naming of libertine names to make the implications of such a gesture explicit. In the Voyage and the Avantures, the proper name is always accompanied by accusations capable of wounding both personally and politically the coworker become adversary.

Chapelle launches the assault by turning his acid pen, not against the more logical target, Cyrano, but against D'Assoucy. Two passages of the Voyage are devoted to what can only be viewed as a savage and gratuitous attack on the already sullied remains of D'Assoucy's reputation. They recount parallel meetings with a bedraggled Emperor of the Burlesque, no longer welcomed by his admirers but obliged to flee like a criminal before the angry crowds pursuing him. Chapelle leaves the first and most dramatic vignette deliberately vague and inconclusive. The women of Montpellier are rioting en masse against D'Assoucy—“Elles avoient déjà déchiré deux ou trois personnes”—so Chapelle and Bachaumont decide it would be prudent for them to leave. On their way out, they encounter D'Assoucy. If he is able to elucidate the mystery of the riot, this information is not passed on to the reader, who is left with only two clues that hint at the source of Chapelle's mockery: the description of the women of Montpellier raging as though D'Assoucy “les auroit toutes violées. Et cependant il ne leur avoit jamais rien fait”; and the insistence on the
shadowy figure accompanying D’Assoucy, “un petit page assez joli.” Chapelle finally reveals his hand with his account of his subsequent nocturnal conversation with “ce malheureux,” obliged by then to hide his face in the edge of his long cape, but still followed by “ce petit garçon.” The accusation of homosexuality that follows and on which he chooses to end his text must surely have been one of the most scandalous literary bombshells of the period (pp. 97–98).

D’Assoucy’s response to the accumulated insults of his former friends Cyrano and Chapelle is, understandably enough, compounded of amazement, rage, and desire for revenge. He pretends to seek an explanation for Cyrano’s bitterness, and decides that it must have had its source in an incident in which D’Assoucy hid a freshly roasted capon under Cyrano’s bed, leaving only its aroma to tantalize the hungry “Démon de la bravoure” (pp. 192–93). Perhaps D’Assoucy felt free to burlesque psychology because Cyrano was already dead at the time of the composition of the Avantures. It was too late to do anything more than continue to thwart the mystified outsider by dressing up a ridiculous anecdote as an explanation. When D’Assoucy turns his energies to Chapelle, however, any such delicacy is cast aside.

Car il faut par nécessité
Parer le coup qu’il m’a porté:
C’est un destin inévitable.

(P. 188)

The resulting accumulation of insulting accusations becomes staggering. In addition to repeated descriptions of his alcoholism (e.g., pp. 184, 201) and cowardice (p. 197), Chapelle is called a plagiarist (p. 198), in somewhat veiled terms an atheist (p. 189), and in the chapter entitled “ample réponse de Dassoucy au Voyage de Monsieur Chapelle,” D’Assoucy finally turns the accusation of homosexuality made against him back at Chapelle himself (p. 201). Looming large behind all these blows is the awareness of what is obviously for D’Assoucy the greatest of Chapelle’s sins, that of disloyalty. The naming that served for Cyrano and Tristan as a sign of libertine recognition and a positive force in their works is used for the last time clouded with the sadness of an old man who has seen the end of an era. D’Assoucy
retraces the history of their friendship, as he cries out against the ultimate betrayal, the simultaneous betrayal of the bonds of friendship and of those of a literary and ideological tradition:

Pourquoi donc, après tant de témoignages réciproques d’amitié, l’avez-vous pu traitter ainsi, ce pauvre Dassoucy qui ne vous fit jamais rien, et qui seroit bien marry de vous avoir fait quelque chose? . . . Est-ce ainsi que vous traitiez vos amis, vous qui, du temps que vous recherchâtes ma connoissance, n’estiez encore qu’un Ecollier, et qui . . . n’avez point eu d’autre guide que moy? . . . Est-ce là le progrès que vous avez fait, marchant dessus mes traces et suivant le chemin que je vous ay frayé? Indigne fils des Filles de la Mémoire (p. 179).

4. THE MEANING OF LIBERTINE

Other critics have already proposed that the texts I am examining here be grouped together as not-so-strange bedfellows. In surveys of the novel in France in the seventeenth century, most of these novels are found under the same heading, the title of which varies according to critical bias or interpretation. Fournel includes them in a chapter entitled “Du roman comique, satirique et bourgeois.” For Reynier, they are members of the class “roman réaliste,” established in opposition to the “roman sentimental.” In Adam’s system, their place is with either the “tradition réaliste” or the “romans satiriques et comiques.” Coulet uses the term “roman personnel” to characterize them. All these categories, however, share the defects of being neither exclusive nor particularly illuminating. Works are included in them either because of surface similarities or because they fit in no other classification. Hence these novels may be discussed in the same breath with, for example, the Roman bourgeois and the Roman comique, with which they have little in common, simply because they are all very definitely not romans héroïques. The creation of systems of classification may not provide an adequate rationale for a critic’s existence, but it does constitute a first step in the direction of a potential reevaluation of a body of works.

Although this study does not claim to be the badly needed updating of Reynier’s survey of seventeenth-century prose fiction, my hope is to provide at least a reasonably appropriate framework for the examination of a group of novels whose importance has been largely underestimated until now. I propose to adopt the
term *libertine* to characterize this tradition of French seventeenth-century prose narrative for three reasons: the texts to be discussed here were produced by men associated with the circle of *libertins érudits*; it is possible to trace through them the evolution of that movement; and their authors are freethinkers not only in the domain of philosophy but in that of literature as well.

It is immediately obvious that my use of *libertine* has little in common with the manner in which it has been adopted with regard to the eighteenth-century French novel—in recent studies by Herbert Josephs, Jacqueline Marchand, and Ernest Sturm, to cite but a few examples—and, by extension, although more rarely, with regard to the seventeenth-century novel as well—as in Barry Ivker’s *Anthology of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Libertine Fiction*. At least part of this recent trend originates, as Ivker demonstrates, in Sade’s search for his literary ancestors in the third version of *Justine*. Hence the tradition of libertine fiction is currently defined by a blending of eroticism and rationalism, with the accent generally placed on the erotic. The adjective “libertine” has thus come to be more or less synonymous with “titillating” or “pornographic,” and its implications of ideological freethinking are often relegated to the domain covered by “philosophical.” Seekers of libertine fiction in this sense of the term certainly have a vast terrain to explore in the novels produced in France in the eighteenth century, but when this meaning of the adjective is extended to the seventeenth century, its boundaries are greatly restrained. The student of seventeenth-century erotic libertine fiction is restricted to texts of quite limited interest, such as Millot’s *L’École des filles* (1655), Chorier’s *Le Meur­sius français ou L’Académie des dames* (1680), or Barrin’s *Vénus dans le cloître ou la religieuse en chemise* (1683). To attempt to revive interest in these novels seems to me a fruitless critical venture. “Libertine” as a stand-in for “erotic,” with or without a modicum of rationalism, is simply not a flourishing concept in the seventeenth century. Ivker’s assertion that the history and definition of seventeenth-century libertine literature are more clearly established than those of the eighteenth century is based on a forced and erroneous analogy between Pintard’s use of “libertine” and that accepted by *dix-huitièmes*. If any claim is to be made for the existence of a libertine novel in the seventeenth century, a
definition of the adjective that corroborates the research of Pintard, Lachèvre, and Adam should first be agreed upon.

Lachèvre's most concise and least scornful formulation of his conception of the seventeenth-century libertine writer—"un esprit fort doublé d'un débauché"—serves as an excellent springboard, especially when viewed in the light of definitions in dictionaries of the period. The notion of the "esprit fort" is a complex one, comprising a refusal to conform to the laws of both civil and ecclesiastical authority, as expressed in the only definition of the adjective found in both Furetière and Richelet: "qui hait la contrainte." The purely religious aspect of "libertin," clearly the most threatening to all defenders of the faith from Garasse to Lachèvre, is formulated, interestingly enough, only in Furetière: "se dit principalement à l'égard de la Religion, de ceux qui n'ont pas assez de veneration pour ses mysteres, ou d'obeissance pour ses decisions." For Lachèvre, the "espirit fort" is always a "débauché," and the vision of the debauched libertine is also prominent among Richelet's definitions. However, the seventeenth-century excesses must be carefully distinguished from the eighteenth-century dissipations with which they too readily invite comparison. Eroticism, veiled or explicit, is totally absent from all of these texts but Francion. Aside from the problematic, but totally nonerotic, homosexual allusions, their wildest debauchery involves gastronomic indulgence (from D'Assoucy's capons to Chapelle's partridges) and gambling sprees (the source of problems for D'Assoucy and the page's undoing on several occasions). Wine and song, maybe, but never women.

"Libertine" in this context is applicable above all to the defense of liberty and liberation against any form of restraint. These novels are dedicated to a glorification of freedom in all possible forms, from the freedom to carouse in bands and frequent cabarets to the freedom to believe in, and defend, the teachings of a Cardano or a Galileo. They all trace the path from nonconformity to the alienation it seems inevitably to create. Even though none but L'Autre Monde can be said to constitute an attempt at undermining officially sanctioned systems of belief, all are characterized by an underlying spirit of questioning. For this reason, the adjective "libertine" finds in them an application worthy of its seventeenth-century connotations.
The term novel, given that it suggests an (almost completely) fictionalized content, is often inadequate to describe these texts. Because of the exceptional mixture of unveiled fact and fiction found in them, they could more accurately be referred to as “life-novels.” This blending places them in a no-man’s-land between novel and memoir, although somewhere closer to the novel’s border, and bestows on them a status unique in their century, and perhaps in any but the twentieth. This unusual blurring of fact and fiction, of which the libertine naming already discussed constitutes but one component, is the first of a number of shared similarities that serve to link these texts in a group meriting study under the same name. Such resemblances are anything but accidental. They originate in a common desire to express the libertine experience with the greatest degree of freedom possible, and to express it through the self-censored reading they impose on their own texts. When Gassendi worried that he would be unable to find a language to convey messages of consolation to Galileo in prison, Peiresc advised him: “Je vous conseillerois bien de les concevoir en termes si reservez et si ajustez, qu’il y ayt moye n’d’entendre une bonne partie de voz intentions sans que le littéral y soit si preciz.”

The effort to “adjust their terms” leads the libertines to locate their writing in the middle ground between autobiography and novel. The various libertine novels—with the exception of the frame narrative of Francion—are all written in the first person. This constitutes a break with the dominant contemporary tradition of the roman héroïque, always narrated in the third person, as befits the self-proclaimed heir of the epic tradition. As Démostris points out, this switch in person is one of the principal “signatures” of the libertine novel. These texts are also united by the structure of their narration. With the exception once again of Francion, they are all divided either into chapters or into another type of clearly independent, short sections, substituting tens of pages for the hundreds that constituted the basic units of the roman héroïque. These narrative fragments are also organized in a characteristic manner: the brief compositional units do not so much build to a conclusion as they juxtapose episodes of equal weight for varying effects. Fragmentation may even include an alternation between prose passages and verse interludes, a re-
minder of what is an essential tradition for all these authors, Menippean satire. The final narrative characteristic of the libertine novel is its open-endedness. In these texts, conclusions are never drawn, and there is no final word to be pronounced. Furthermore, the notions of fragmentation and open-endedness are intimately linked to a number of almost obsessional recurring themes: magic, madness, and dream. The desire to inscribe the taboo in their works and their remarkably similar vision of the taboo also unite the libertine writers. Their récit centers around a vision of alienation with a basic and inevitable thematic unity.

The similarities among these libertine novels are conscious, the result of a sense of tradition unique in their time and rare in the history of the novel in general. The ever-present weight of this libertine tradition with its system of reminders and references to other moments creates a type of intertextual play that generates a first level of dialogue among these texts. In addition, they explore the “other” logic of the various themes of alienation with which they are concerned, a logic that is perpetually dialogic. Their sense of tradition is, finally, linked to the notion of self-consciousness—the problem of the histoire comique goes beyond the subtitle three of them share and permeates the texts. These three related questions—intertextuality, exploration of the logic of the “other,” and self-consciousness—make the libertine novels the most completely dialogic works of seventeenth-century French literature and ensure their special status in seventeenth-century prose fiction.

The libertine novel is perhaps the most interesting current of the seventeenth-century novel, and one that has the potential today of attracting the readers it has often lacked at other periods. After all, topics such as autobiography, madness, fragmentation, and dialogue are among the most intense preoccupations of students of literature in the twentieth century. This rather amazing conjunction could be explained by a parallelism in intellectual revolutions. To characterize a recent bouleversement, Evgeny Zamiatin wrote, “Euclid’s world is very simple and Einstein’s world is very difficult,” and “When Lobachevsky crumbles with his book the walls of the millenial non-Euclidean space, that is revolution.” In his formulation, the name of Aristotle could be substituted for that of Euclid and Galileo for those of Einstein.
and Lobachevsky without producing significant distortion. Surely those living in the wake of these two uneasy, threatening revolutions share an enormous intellectual heritage. Modernity is constantly in the process of reevaluating itself, and occasionally it manages to come up with the same answers twice.


2. The *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* describes the peculiarities of the first name in this way: “Ce n’est pas qu’il n’arrive souvent que le nom propre ne convienne à plusieurs, comme Pierre, Jean, etc., mais ce n’est que par accident, parce que plusieurs ont pris un même nom. Et alors il faut y ajouter d’autres noms qui le déterminent, et qui le font rentrer dans la qualité de nom propre, comme le nom de Louis qui convient à plusieurs, est propre au Roy qui regne aujourd’hui, en disant Louis quatorzième. Souvent même il n’est pas nécessaire de rien ajouter, parce que les circonstances du discours font assez voir de qui l’on parle” (p. 36).

3. To give but one example of inconsistent classification, in vol. 1 of Antoine Adam’s *Histoire de la littérature française au dix-septième siècle*, the “index des noms cités” contains a listing for “Bergerac, Cyrano de.” In vol. 2, however, the page references are found under the heading “Cyrano de Bergerac.”


5. Amédée Carriot, *Bibliographie des œuvres de Tristan L’Hermite*. N. M. Bernardin believes that the first edition received little interest at the time of its publication because the public’s attention was completely diverted by the complexities of the political situation (the execution of Cinq-Mars and De Thou, etc.): “Qui pouvait alors, à la cour et même à la ville, se soucier beaucoup d’un roman, quelque agréable qu’il fût?” (Un Précurseur de Racine, Tristan L’Hermite, p. 227). This answer could be used to explain in various ways the disappearance of the first edition: either few copies were sold or the novel attracted no public, so copies were not preserved. Any such reasoning, however, remains suspiciously facile. A work’s success is not often determined by the political situation at the time of its publication—unless it is written, like the *Mazarinades*, to capitalize on that situation. The events of 1642 were not grave enough to hinder the success of all novels published in their wake—La Calprenède’s *Cassandre*, for example. Besides, the lack of contemporary interest in the Page must also be viewed in the light of the fate suffered by other novels whose authors frequented libertine circles.

6. I use this title when referring to the first part of Cyrano’s imaginary voyage in conformity with current critical tradition (Laugaa, Démoris, etc.). The Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript bears on its spine *L’Autre Monde ou Les Estats et Empires de la Lune*. The work has, however, always been referred to by a wide variety of titles. To give but a few examples, first among Cyrano’s contemporaries: Ménage speaks of the *Voyage de la lune*, Jean Royer de Prade of the *Estats et*
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empires de la lune, not to mention Le Bret's choice of Histoire comique. For his edition, Lachèvre groups both voyages under the title L'Autre Monde, even though he maintains that Cyrano reserved this title only for the voyage to the moon. Georges Mongrédien refers in his biography of Cyrano to the Voyage aux estats et empires de la lune, and the author of the most recent study of Cyrano's novels, Jacques Prévot, returns to Royer de Prade's Estats et empires de la lune. This selection far from exhausts the range of possibilities, but my purpose is merely to illustrate once again the extent to which naming—or rather, the absence of stability in this area—is a problematic issue when dealing with these authors.


8. In Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, Rousseau demonstrates his fear that the loss of his family name would be permanent: “J'ai pris la liberté de reprendre dans ces entretiens mon nom de famille que le public a jugé à propos de m'ôter, et je me suis désigné en tiers à son exemple par celui de baptême auquel il lui a plu de me réduire” (Oeuvres complètes, 1:663).

9. On the other hand, first names are generally judged to be superfluous for great authors. One finds editions of their works marked simply “Racine,” “Corneille,” “Freud,” without “Jean,” “Pierre,” or “Sigmund,” as though they had no kin. This onomastic system is not universally valid. In Italy, for example, it was common for great figures to be known by their given names. “Galileo” is a late example of this custom. Perhaps Garasse had this Italian model in mind when he described the fact that Théophile de Viau was known by his first name alone as a sign of libertine egotism. He believed that Théophile chose to give up his family name because he believed himself to be so well known that he could be identified without it (Doctrine curieuse, p. 1023).

10. Cyrano's grandfather was the “Savinien” for whom he was named. By adopting “Bergerac,” Cyrano re-created in his own fashion the onomastic link originally forged for him by his family.

11. Cyrano and other members of his family also enjoyed appropriating titles and fake coats of arms. The Cyranos were fined several times during the seventeenth century for “usurpation de noblesse.” Jean-Baptiste L'Hermite appears to have been so jealous of Tristan's genealogical coup that he also decided to adopt the same famous name from their alleged ancestry. In the signatures of his various genealogical treatises, three variants of his signature involving “Tristan” appear: “J.-B. L'Hermite, dit Tristan,” “J.-B. Tristan L'Hermite,” and “Tristan L'Hermite de Solier.” In similar fashion, the title of one of his works indicates that Théophile's brother either took on his better-known sibling's first name or was given it by editors who assumed that “Théophile” was a family name: Le Sacrifice des muses à M. le Prince et à Mme. la Princesse de Conde par le sieur H. Théophile, Frère du défunt S. Théophile (J. Guillemot, 1627). Since the brother's name was Paul, it is hard to imagine what the letters “H” and “S” stand for.

12. The first edition of the Page disgracie complicates matters even further by identifying the work's author as “Mr. de Tristan” (Toussaint Quinet, 1643).

13. The orthography of D'Assoucy's family name also varies. In addition to the common hesitation between “Coippeau” (used by Emile Colombey) and “Coyppeau” (Lever, Bibliothèque Nationale catalogue), it is sometimes written “Couppaeau” (Adam)—and even “Coypeau” by D'Assoucy himself (Avantures,
ed. Emile Colombey, p. 154; all subsequent references to the Avantures and the Avantures d'Italie are to this edition, and will be given as page numbers in parentheses—a practice I will follow with all works from which I quote frequently).

14. In Cyrano's case, his rejection of paternal authority culminated in his behavior at the time of his father's terminal illness. Cyrano's biographers interpret the dying man's testimony to mean that Cyrano and his brother Abel took advantage of their father's helplessness to pillage his house before his very eyes: "On a forcé les serrures des armoires et coffres où étaient lesdites choses et atten­du qu'il sait par quelles personnes lesdites choses lui ont été soustraites, les noms desquelles il ne veut être exprimés par certaines considérations, il en décharge entièrement ladite Descourtieux et tous autres." The onomastic rejection seems mutual. Even in his accusation, Cyrano's father joins in the suppression of his son's name.

15. The existence of a libertine "family" was noted by Théophile's archenemy, Garasse. In his Doctrine curieuse, he traces the libertine genealogical tree and calls attention to the libertine penchant for onomastic deviousness: "Entre mille coquins qui ont déclaré la guerre à Jésus-Christ, et sont sortis de son Église pour faire bande à part, ou d'Hérésie, ou de Schisme, ou de Libertinage, ou d'A­theisme, il y en a neuf cens cinquante qui ont changé de nom" (p. 1018).

16. Gautier refers to the latter as "Cyrano Bergerac," thereby adding still another variant.

17. Gautier, pp. v, vi, viii.


23. French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire, p. 6.


25. The origin and the spelling of "Chapelle" also present problems. In the preface to his edition of the Voyage, Nodier explains: "On a écrit partout que Claude-Emmanuel Luillier . . naquit en 1626 au village de la Chapelle . . Le nom de Chapelle ou La Chapelle lui resta, et il s'en est si peu soucié de son vivant, qu'on ne sait pas quel est celui qu'il a préféré" (p. xix). On the title page of Maurice Souriaux's edition of the Voyage à Encausse, the only edition based on a contemporary manuscript copy, Chapelle's name is written "Chappelle."


30. Charles Sorel's life, as Adam admits, "est obscure. Ses biographes n'en disent pas grand'chose, et en savent moins qu'ils n'en disent" (*Histoire*, 1:142). His close ties with Théophile and others associated with the libertine movement can be established by citing two cases of literary collaboration. In 1623, Sorel joined forces with Théophile and others to compose the ballet *Les Baccanales*, and he later (pub. 1650) coauthored with François de La Mothe Le Vayer a novel, *Le Parasite Mormon, histoire comique*.

31. "Il existe un roman de cette époque qui ne s'explique pas sans l'existence du mouvement libertin. . . . Le héros de son roman fait plus d'une fois penser à Théophile, et l'oeuvre a été écrite pour développer certaines thèses essentielles des libertins" (*Les Libertins au dix-septième siècle*, p. 61). Adam also explains the changes between the first and second editions of *Francion* as due to Sorel's fear after Théophile's imprisonment and trial (*Histoire*, 1:154).

32. It is impossible to determine the date of the composition of Cyrano's novels. *L'Autre Monde* was probably written in the late 1640s, at any rate before 1650. *L'Autre Monde* was first published in 1657 under the title *Histoire comique*, and *Les Estats et empires du soleil* in 1662.

33. Indeed, in Lever's bibliography, which stresses in its preface its attempts to eliminate nonfiction texts previously classified as novels from its listings, D'Assoucy's two works find a place, but not Chapelle's *Voyage*.


37. Spink, p. 12.


40. The first section of chapter two of this study is devoted to the relationship between the roman à clef and libertine fiction.

41. Pintard, pp. 625–26. Pintard's identifications have recently been defended by Jacques Prévot, who extends the limits of the game to suggest that the Spaniard on the moon represents Campanella, despite the fact that Campanella actually appears in the *Estats et empires*: "L'Autre Monde prend place dans notre littérature romanesque comme un Grand Cyrus du Libertinage" (*Cyrano de Bergerac romancier*, p. 105).

42. Earlier libertine men of letters inaugurated this practice of openly naming their predecessors. Cardano, for example, is constantly aware of parallel situations and influences and mentions both the sad end of Corneille Agrippa and the importance of Artefius's treatises of divination for his own (*Les Livres de H. Cardanus medecin Milanais intitulez de la Subtilité, et subtiles inventions, ensemble les causes occultes, et raisons d'icelles*, pp. 441b, 452).

43. Théophile de Viau, p. 125. Because of the presence of "méprise" in this passage, Madeleine Alcover rejects a reading of it as a eulogy (*L'Autre Monde*, preface, p. 68). I would argue that "méprise" simply indicates the demon's aware-
ness that his speech is an "error" or "fault" because of the dangerous con­sequences it could have for Tristan.

44. For Cyrano, the rejection of the proper name in favor of the anagram is appropriate only in the context of the letter of insult.

45. D'Assoucy's counterattack probably also included a posthumously published satirical pamphlet attributed to him, the *Combat de Cirano [sic] de Bergerac avec le singe de Brioché au bout du Pont-neuf*. The pamphlet recounts an anecdote that can be described as a burlesque version of Cyrano's exploits as the *Démon de la bravoure* (Cyrano singlehandedly routing a hundred men at the *porte de Nesles*, etc.). i.e., Cyrano's fight to the death with the "presqu'homme des marionnettes," a monkey dressed as a *laquais*.

46. *Oeuvres de Chapelle et Bachaumont*, pp. 84-85. I follow the "libertine" practice (D'Assoucy's references in the *Aventures*, for example) of naming Chapelle alone as author of the work.


49. "Towards a Definition of Libertinism in Eighteenth-Century French Fiction," p. 221. This article constitutes an attempt to annex ancestors for the eighteenth-century tradition culminating in Sade.


51. For a survey of definitions found in seventeenth-century dictionaries, see Walter Lemke's "'Libertin': From Calvin to Cyrano."

52. I borrow the term *lebensroman* from Fritz Neubert (*Die Französischen Versprosa Reisebrieferzählungen*, p. 40). Neubert uses it to describe D'Assoucy's *Aventures*.

53. Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, *Lettres*, 4:410. Pintard's description of libertine self-censorship is quite similar: "Tous, s'ils écrivent, sont condamnés à seindre plus ou moins les opinions ordinaires, ou à poser les questions de biais, et, par une démarche oblique, à approcher des points brûlants sans les toucher. . . . Si variées que puissent être leurs dispositions intimes, leurs indépendances utilisent les mêmes détours et revêtent des apparences analogues; ils forment une famille d'esprits; cruellement marquée des stigmates de la contrainte, mais à qui ces stigmates mêmes confèrent une curieuse originalité" (p. 566).

54. On this point, see Jean Rousset's discussion in *Narcisse romantier* (p. 53 and passim) of Madeleine de Scudéry's difficulties with the problem of the hero's *récit*, where she delegates authority to secondary characters, thereby avoiding the use of the first person.

55. "Les récits à la première personne sont, de façon fort claire, reliés aux écrivains qui, en ce début du dix-septième siècle, constituent la tradition libertine, même si, comme Tristan et Sorel, ils ont été amenés plus tard à s'en écarter" (*Le Roman à la première personne*, p. 54).

56. A discussion of seventeenth-century novels resembling libertine works is included as an appendix.
