



Policing Writers in Paris Circa 1750

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. [Please share](#) how this access benefits you. Your story matters

Citation	Darnton, Robert. 1984. Policing writers in Paris circa 1750. <i>Representations</i> 5(1): 1-31.
Published Version	http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/rep.1984.5.1.99p0031m
Citable link	http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3403048
Terms of Use	This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA

Policing Writers in Paris circa 1750*

FROM 1748 TO 1753, a police officer in Paris wrestled with a problem that is still bedeviling the sociology and history of literature: how do intellectuals fit into the social order? Of course he did not put the question in quite those terms. He had never heard of intellectuals or sociology; he merely wanted to gather information about writers. But he gathered so much of it that his reports, 500 of them lying unpublished in the Bibliothèque Nationale, constitute a virtual census of the literary population of Paris—from the most famous philosophes to the most obscure hacks—at the height of the Enlightenment.¹

Just why Joseph d'Hémery, inspector of the book trade, undertook such a task is difficult to say. The reports appear in three large registers under the title "Historique des auteurs" without any introduction or explanation. As d'Hémery took up his office in June 1748, he may simply have intended to survey his new administrative territory, which included the inspection of authors as an activity involved in the policing of books. But d'Hémery had some extraordinary books to police during his first five years in office: *L'Esprit des lois*, the *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau's first discourse, Diderot's *Lettre sur les aveugles*, Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, Toussaint's *Les Moeurs*, and the scandalous thesis by the abbé de Prades. The whole Enlightenment seemed to burst into print during the mid-century years. At the same time, the tax reforms of Machault d'Arnouville, the Jansenist-Jesuit controversy, the agitation over the *billets de confession*, the struggle between the crown and the *parlements*, and the *frondeur* spirit following France's humiliation in the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle produced a general heating-up of the ideological atmosphere. However absolute the monarchy claimed to be, it had to take account of public opinion and of the men who directed it with their pens.

The new inspector of the book trade clearly had his work cut out for him, and he went about it systematically. He built up dossiers from all kinds of sources: journals, spies, concierges, café gossips, and interrogations in the Bastille. Then he selected information from the dossiers and transcribed it on standard forms with printed headings, which he filed in alphabetical order and brought up to date as the occasion arose. The procedure was more thorough than anything done previously, but it seems primitive when viewed in the light of the subsequent history of ideological police work. Instead of adapting data to a computerized program, d'Hémery recounted anecdotes. In the report on Crébillon *fils*, for example, he noted: "His father said, 'There are only two things that I regret having done, *Semiramis* and my son.' 'Oh, don't worry,' the son replied, 'No one attributes

Diagram I

**Age of Authors in 1750, as Listed in Bib. Nat.
ms. nouv. acq. fr. 10781-10783 and Supplementary Sources**

Age	Number of Authors	Number of Authors, age by decades
70-over	9	42
68-69	4	
66-67	7	
64-65	3	
62-63	2	
60-61	17	<i>Montesquieu 61</i>
58-59	10	50
56-57	8	
54-55	8	
52-53	11	
50-51	13	
48-49	12	75
46-47	11	
44-45	13	
42-43	14	
40-41	25	
38-39	16	<i>Rousseau 38</i>
36-37	23	<i>Diderot 37</i>
34-35	29	106
32-33	17	<i>d'Alembert 33</i>
30-31	21	86
28-29	19	
26-27	15	
24-25	21	
22-23	13	
20-21	11	
under 20	7	
Median Age: 38		Total: 359

either of them to you.' ” Not only did d’Hémery go about information retrieval with an unscientific sense of humor, he also exercised literary judgment. La Barre wrote passable prose but could not manage verse, he observed. And Robbé de Beauveset sinned in the opposite way: “There is some genius in his poetry, but he writes harshly and has very little taste.” D’Hémery would not have gone down well with the *Deuxième Bureau* or the F.B.I.

It would be a mistake, therefore, to treat d’Hémery’s reports as hard data of the kind to be found in a modern census. But it would be a greater mistake to dismiss them for excessive subjectivity. D’Hémery had a more intimate knowledge of the eighteenth-century world of letters than any historian can hope to

acquire. His reports provide the earliest known survey of writers as a social group, and they do so at a critical moment of literary history. Moreover, they can be checked against a vast array of biographical and bibliographical sources. After having worked through all this material and compiled the statistics, one can enjoy the first clear view of the Republic of Letters in early modern Europe.

D'Hémery actually reported on 501 persons, but 67 of them never published anything, or anything beyond a few lines in *La Mercure*. So the reports cover 434 active writers. For 359 of them, the date of birth can be established, for 312 the place of birth, and for 333 the socio-occupational position. The statistical basis of the survey therefore seems wide enough to support some firm conclusions.

But how widely had d'Hémery cast his net in the first place? The only source against which to compare his survey is *La France littéraire*, a literary almanac, which purported to list every living French author in 1756. As the list ran to 1,187 names, it seems likely that d'Hémery covered about a third of the total population of French writers. But which third? That question raises the further problem of defining a writer. D'Hémery used the term "*auteur*" without explaining it, and *La France littéraire* claimed to include everyone who had ever published a book. But the "books" it listed were mainly ephemeral works—sermons by village curés, orations by provincial dignitaries, medical pamphlets by small-town doctors, in fact anything that anyone wanted to have mentioned, for the authors of the almanac had offered to include in their own list the names of any books and authors that the general public could supply. As a result, *La France littéraire* favored the minor provincial literati. By contrast, d'Hémery dealt with a broad range of writers, but he restricted himself almost entirely to Paris. It seems reasonable to conclude that his files covered a major proportion of the active literary population and that the statistics drawn from them may give a fairly accurate picture of literary life in the capital of the Enlightenment.²

The demographic structure of the group is revealed in Diagram I. In 1750, the writers ranged in age from ninety-three (Fontenelle) to sixteen (Rulhière), but most of them were relatively young. Rousseau, at thirty-eight, represented the median age exactly. The inner circle of Encyclopedists was composed mainly of men in their thirties, beginning with Diderot, thirty-seven, and d'Alembert, thirty-three. Thus the bulge in the bar graph suggests something akin to a literary generation. With exceptions like Montesquieu and Voltaire, who each had a foot in the France of Louis XIV, the philosophes belonged to cohorts who reached their prime at mid-century.³

The geographical origins of the writers, which appear in Map I, fall into a familiar pattern. The south looks backward, except in urban areas scattered around the Rhône delta and the Garonne. Three-fourths of the writers were born above the celebrated Saint Malo-Geneva line, in northern and northeastern

Table I Authors by Estate and Occupation, as Identified in
Bib. Nat. ms. nouv. acq. fr. 10781-10783

Estate/Occupation	Number of Authors				Identified Fathers	
	in 1750	unspecified date	total ^a	per cent ^b	number	per cent
Upper clergy, secular	3		3	0.9	-	-
Upper clergy, regular	1		1	0.3	-	-
Lower clergy, secular	31		31	9.3	-	-
Lower clergy, regular	4	1	5	1.5	-	-
Titled nobility, no office	11		11	3.3	16	10
Officer, high administration	4		4	1.2	1	1
Officer, military	20	7	27	8.1	12	8
Officer, sovereign courts	10	2	12	3.6	12	8
Officer, high finance	2		2	0.6	6	4
Officer, lower courts	4	2	6	1.8	8	5
Lower administration	20	10	30	9.0	22	14
Lawyer, attorney	26	2	28	8.4	19	12
Law personnel	3		3	0.9	1	1
Doctor	6		6	1.8	1	1
Apothecary	0	1	1	0.3	4	3
Professor	10		10	3.0	0	0
Lower finance	2	1	3	0.9	2	1
Merchant	1		1	0.3	11	7
Manufacturer	0		0	0.0	0	0
Rentier	10		10	3.0	0	0
Journalist	9	11	20	6.0	0	0
Private teacher	27	8	35	10.5	4	3
Librarian	6		6	1.8	0	0
Secretary	15	10	25	7.5	1	1
Sinecure	10	1	11	3.3	0	0
Actor	8	1	9	2.7	1	1
Musician	1		1	0.3	1	1
Student	3		3	0.9		
Employee	5	1	6	1.8	8	5
Shopkeeper	2		2	0.6	6	4
Artisan	6	1	7	2.1	14	9
Servant	1	1	2	0.6	1	1
Wives, widows	9		9	2.7		
Other	1	2	3	0.9	5	3
Total	271	62	333	99.9	156	100

NOTES:

^a67 non-authors are excluded; 101 are unidentified. Total: 271 + 62 + 101 = 434 "writers."

^bI.e., per cent of total of first two columns = 333. Column total reflects rounded-off numbers.

^cOwing to their relatively small number, the authors' fathers have been calculated in whole numbers in the per cent column. There is no information on the fathers of the priests.

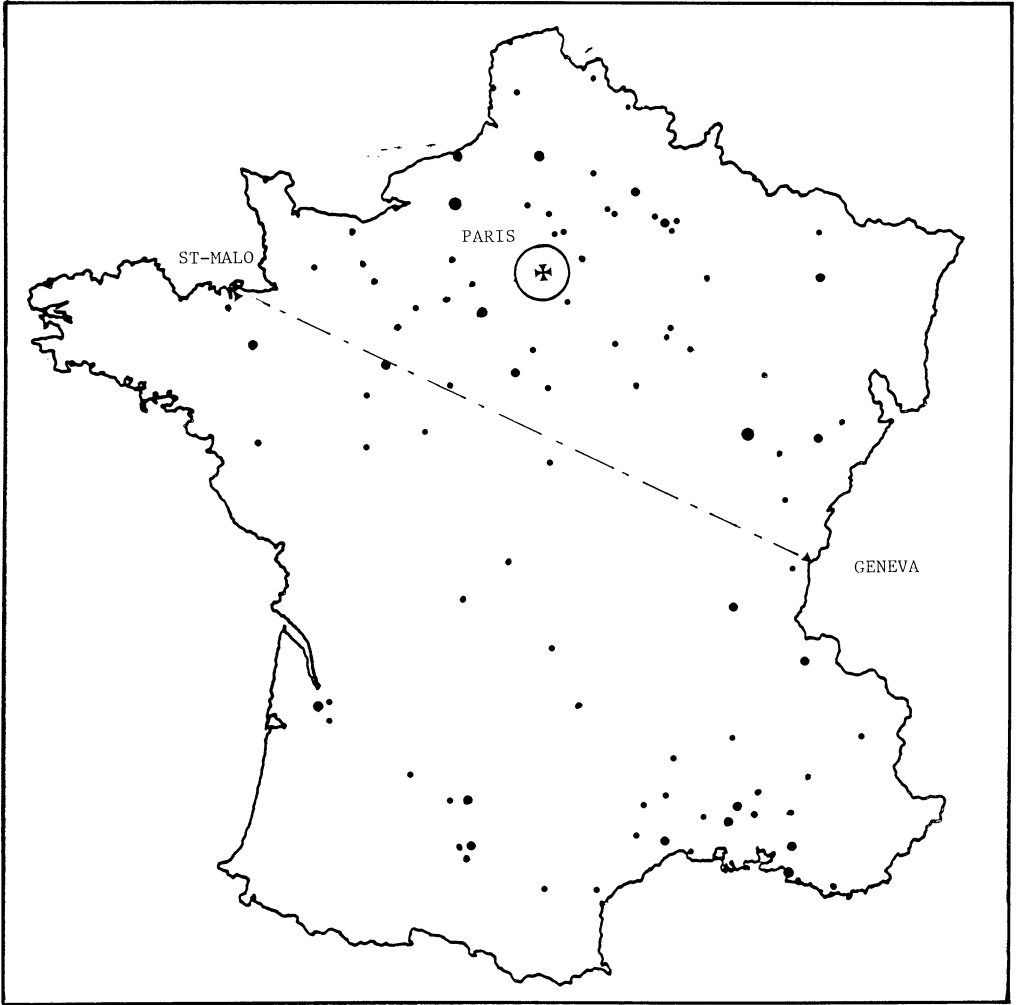
France, where literacy and schools were densest. Paris supplied a third (113) of the writers. So the map does not bear out another cliché of cultural history—namely, that Paris has always dominated the country by soaking up talent from the provinces. There were more home-grown authors than one might have expected in the Paris of 1750.⁴

Any attempt to analyze the social composition of a group of Frenchmen who lived two centuries ago is liable to flounder in faulty data and ambiguous classification schemes. But just over three-fourths of d'Hémery's writers can be identified and classified unambiguously according to the categories in Table I. The remaining 23.2 per cent of unidentified writers contains a large number of "*gens sans état*"—hacks who drifted from job to job as Diderot and Rousseau did for many years. Although a good deal of information exists about many of them, they defy classification and statistical analysis. But if one makes allowances for their existence in the unfathomable floating population of the Old Regime, one can take Table I as a reliable indication of the social dimensions of the Republic of Letters in Paris.

The privileged orders occupied a far more important place in d'Hémery's files than they did within the population at large. Of the identified authors, 16.8 per cent were noblemen. Although they include some serious writers, like Montesquieu, they tended to be gentleman amateurs, and to write incidental verse or light comedies. As in the case of the marquis de Paulmy, who published novelettes under the name of his secretary, Nicolas Fromaget, they did not often want to be identified with such frothy stuff. Nor did they write for the market place. D'Hémery noted that the comte de Saint-Foix ". . . works as a gentleman author and never takes any money for his plays." Aristocratic writers generally appear in the reports as power brokers, channeling patronage toward more lowly *littérateurs*.

Writing also tended to be a secondary activity for the clergymen in the reports, and there were a great many of them: 12 percent of the authors who can be identified. Only four belonged to the upper clergy, in contrast to dozens of abbés, among them Condillac, Mably, Raynal, and the threesome of the *Encyclopédie*, Yvon, Pestré, and de Prades. A few priests, like J.-B.-C.-M. de Beauvais and Michel Desjardins, continued to produce court sermons and funeral eulogies in the style of Bossuet. But in general the courtier-cleric had given way to the omnipresent abbé of the Enlightenment.

Although 71.1 per cent of the writers came from the third estate, few of them can be considered "bourgeois" in the narrow sense of the term—that is, capitalists living from trade and industry. They included only one merchant, J. H. Ourcel, the son of a printer, and no manufacturers. There was a certain business element—eleven merchants—among their fathers, 156 of whom can be identified. But literature flourished less in the market place than in the professions and the royal administration. Of the writers, 10.2 per cent were doctors or lawyers; 9 per cent held minor administrative offices; and 15.6 per cent belonged to the



Map I

**Birthplaces of Authors Identified in Bib. Nat.
ms. nouv. acq. fr. 10781-10783**

PROVINCES: Villages, unspecified
(not appearing on map)

Anjou, 1	Languedoc, 3
Bourgogne, 1	Lorraine, 1
Champagne, 1	Normandie, 2
Dauphine, 1	Saintonge, 1
Gascogne, 1	

LEGEND

Number of Author-natives

•	1
•	2-5
●	6-11
○	100+

apparatus of the state, if magistrates from the *parlements* and lower courts are included in the count. The largest group of fathers, twenty-two, came from the lower administration; the next largest, nineteen, were lawyers. After sifting through the statistics and reading hundreds of biographical sketches one gets the impression that behind many literary careers stood an ambitious, sharp-witted, royal bureaucrat. French literature owes an incalculable debt to the *commis* and the law clerk as well as to the abbé. Prévost epitomized this species. The son of a lawyer turned court official in the *bailliage* of Hesdin, he was an abbé many times over. "He has been a member of every religious order," d'Hémery observed.

When it came to earning a living, however, the largest group of writers depended upon what may be called the intellectual trades. Thirty-six per cent of them worked as journalists, tutors, librarians, secretaries, and actors, or else relied on the income from a sinecure procured for them by a protector. This was the bread-and-butter element in the Republic of Letters; and as it was dispensed by patronage, the writers knew which side their bread was buttered on. Moncrif certainly did:

He was a tax inspector in the provinces when M. d'Argenson was intendant. The pretty songs he composed made him noticed by d'Argenson, who brought him to Paris and gave him a position. From that time on, he [Moncrif] has always been attached to him. . . . He is also secretary general of the French postal service, a position that brings him in 6,000 livres a year and that M. d'Argenson gave to him as a present.

At a lower level, the literary population contained a surprising proportion, 5.1 per cent, of shopkeepers, artisans, and minor employees. They included both master craftsmen—a printer, an engraver, a painter-enameler—and relatively humble workers—a harness maker, a binder, a gatekeeper, and two lackeys. D'Hémery noted that one of the lackeys, Viollet de Wagnon, published his *L'Auteur laquais* with the help of a valet and a grocer. Favart reputedly acquired his facility with verse by listening to his father improvise songs while kneading dough in the family's pastry shop.⁵ Thus the lower classes played some part in the literary life of the Old Regime—a considerable part, if one considers the writers' fathers, of whom 18.5 per cent belonged to the *menu peuple*. They were ordinary artisans for the most part—cobblers, bakers, and tailors. So the careers of their sons, who became lawyers, teachers, and journalists, showed that exceptional possibilities of social advancement sometimes opened up for young men who could wield a pen. The literary world remained closed, however, to one social group, the peasantry. Of course d'Hémery did not look for writers in the countryside, but he did not find the slightest peasant element in the background of writers who came to Paris from the provinces. Restif de la Bretonne notwithstanding, literary France seems to have been primarily urban.

It was also mainly male. Women presided over the famous salons and therefore won a few places in the police files. But only-sixteen of them ever published

anything. Like Mme. de Graffigny, the most famous of their number, the female authors often turned to writing after being widowed or separated from their husbands. Most of them were independently wealthy. Two were teachers. One, Charlotte Bourette, "*la muse limonadière*," ran a soft-drink shop, and one was a courtesan. The report on the courtesan, Mlle. de Saint Phalier, reads like the précis of a novel. After leaving her father, a horse dealer in Paris, she became a chamber maid in the house of a wealthy tax farmer. The son of the house seduced and abducted her, only to be arrested by the father, who then forced him to marry a more suitable woman, leaving Mlle. de Saint Phalier in the streets. By the time the police ran across her, she had become a kept woman, consorted with actresses, and was about to publish her first book, *Le Portefeuille rendu*, dedicated to Mme. de Pompadour.

D'Hémery had sadder stories to tell when he filled in the entries under the rubric "*histoire*," for many careers followed trajectories that led from the garret to the gutter, with stopovers in the Bastille. L.-J.-C. Soulas d'Allainval illustrates the pattern. Unable to support himself by the farces he wrote for the Comédie Italienne, he took up political *libelles* and clandestine journalism, which brought him straight to the Bastille. After his release, he sank deeper into debt. Ultimately, he was unable even to get paper from his stationer, who cut off the pittance he received from the box office of the Italiens in order to collect an unpaid bill of sixty livres. D'Allainval began to sleep "*à la belle étoile*." His health gave out. D'Hémery recounted the rest:

He was struck down by an attack of apoplexy in September, 1752 while a dinner guest of M. Bertin of the parties casuelles, who put two louis in his pocket and sent him off. As there was no means of nursing him at his place, he was brought to the Hôtel-Dieu [paupers' hospital], where he vegetated for a long while. He finally remained paralyzed and now is reduced to looking for a place at Bicêtre or at the Incurables. What a sad end for a talented man.

D'Hémery expressed less sympathy for François-Antoine Chevrier, "a bad subject, an audacious liar, trenchant, critical, and unbearably pretentious." After failing as a lawyer, soldier, playwright, and poet, Chevrier turned to pamphleteering, underground journalism, and espionage. The police chased him with a *lettre de cachet* through Germany and the Low Countries; but just as they were closing in on him he died, down and out in Rotterdam. They got their man in the case of Emmanuel-Jean de La Coste, a defrocked monk aged fifty-nine, who was condemned to a whipping and the galleys for the rest of his life. He had run off to Liège with a young girl and had supported himself by peddling anti-French pamphlets, counterfeit lottery tickets, and, it seems, the girl herself. These characters belonged to Grub Street, an important stratum in the Republic of Letters. To be sure, most writers did not sink so low as d'Allainval, Chevrier, and La Coste; but many shared an experience that marked the men of Grub Street: *embastillement*. Forty-five writers, 10 per cent of those in the survey, were locked up at least once

in a state prison, usually the Bastille.⁶ If the Bastille was almost empty on July 14, 1789, it was full of meaning for the men who made it into the central symbol of radical propaganda before the French Revolution.

Of course no one could foresee 1789 in 1750. At mid-century the literary population may have been restive, but it was not revolutionary. Most of its members were struggling to get a review in *La Mercure*, an *entrée* in the Comédie Française, or a seat in the Academy. They supported themselves in dozens of ways, some from *rentes*, some from offices, some from professions, and a great many from the jobs that were open to men of the pen: journalism, teaching, secretaryships, and, for the fortunate, sinecures. They came from all sectors of society except the peasantry and from all corners of the kingdom except the backward areas of the south. They included a small number of women and a large number of bright young men, sons of minor officials and artisans, who won scholarships, published poems, and ended up as lawyers and civil servants—or, in a few cases, full-time writers, living like Diderot, “*aux gages des libraires*” (in the pay of the booksellers).

It would be satisfying to end on that note, with a pattern firmly established and the philosophes located within it. Unfortunately, however, literary theorists have taught historians to beware of texts, which can be dissolved into “discourse” by critical reading, no matter how solid they may seem. So the historian should hesitate before treating police reports as hard nuggets of irreducible reality, which he has only to mine out of the archives, sift, and piece together in order to create a solid reconstruction of the past. The reports are constructions of their own, built on implicit assumptions about the nature of writers and writing at a time when literature had not yet been recognized as a vocation.

In drafting his reports, d'Hémery acted as a kind of writer himself. He, too, played a role in the Republic of Letters while at the same time remaining subordinate to the lieutenant-general of police and other officials in the French state. The reports show a combination of literary sensitivity and bureaucratic orderliness that would be unthinkable in most police headquarters today. They contain as many remarks about the quality of the authors' style as about the character of their religious and political opinions. In the report on the marquise de Créquy, for example, d'Hémery included a three-page excerpt of a dialogue she had written, not because it had any relevance to the ideological issues of the day but because it demonstrated her perfect mastery of prose. He praised “taste,” “wit,” and “talent” wherever he found it, even among “bad subjects” like Voltaire. “*Esprit*” (cleverness) was his favorite term. It seems to have been the first quality he looked for in a writer, and it compensated for a good deal of straying from the straight and narrow. The abbé Paul-François Velly was “a very clever man” and a skirt-chaser, but so were “almost all monks when they leave the monastery.” The same

went for Jean-Pierre Barnard, a “clever” priest with a special talent for funeral sermons: “He is a jolly old boy who enjoys pleasure and spends an evening with the girls whenever he gets a chance.”

D’Hémery understood the ways of the world. He did not take offense at a little bawdiness or anticlericalism, especially when it was offset by “genius,” as in the work of Alexis Piron: “His biting wit and reputation for impiety mean that he is not a member of the Académie Française. M. de Crébillon advised him never to think of being elected. But *Les Fils ingrats*, *Gustave*, and *La Métromanie* bear sufficient testimony to his genius. He can succeed in anything he undertakes.” D’Hémery admired the philosophes, at least the moderate ones, like Fontenelle, Duclos, and d’Alembert. But he was horrified at atheism, and he seems to have sincerely believed in the official orthodoxies. His values show through clearly in all the reports, but especially in off-hand remarks on ordinary writers, like Jean-Baptiste Le Mascrier:

He was a Jesuit for a long time. He edited *Télliamed* and various other publications for the booksellers. He contributed to the *Cérémonies religieuses* and worked over the *Mémoires de M. de Maillet sur la description de l’Égypte*, which does great honor to him by its style. He turns poems very nicely, as is clear from a prologue to a play that was performed some years ago.

The Benedictines, where he has worked, agree that he is a man of talent. Too bad that he isn’t more creative. He has published an excellent work of piety, a book that is useful for every true Christian, but the people who know him most intimately think that the need to produce copy is making him gradually shift to different sentiments.

In short, d’Hémery took stock of the literary world with sympathy, humor, and an appreciation of literature itself. He shared some of the values held by the people under his surveillance, but he did not waver in his loyalty to church and state. Nothing could be more anachronistic than to picture him as a modern police officer or to interpret his police work as witch-hunting. It really represents something less familiar and more interesting: information-gathering in the age of absolutism. No one expected to uncover revolutionary conspiracies in the mid-eighteenth century, when the Revolution was still unthinkable; but many bureaucrats in the Bourbon monarchy wanted to learn as much as possible about the kingdom—about the number of its inhabitants, the volume of its trade, and the output of its presses. D’Hémery belonged to a line of rationalizing officials that extended from Colbert and Vauban to Turgot and Necker. But he operated at a modest level—an inspector of the book trade belonged a notch or two below an inspector of manufactures—and he built up his files on a smaller scale than some of the surveys undertaken by ministers and intendants.⁷

The texts of the reports contain some evidence about the way they were written. They often contain remarks such as “See the attached sheets,” or “See his dossier,” which indicate that d’Hémery kept a file on each writer. Although the dossiers have disappeared, the references to them in the reports reveal the

kind of information they contained. They included clippings from journals, prospectuses from booksellers, notes that d'Hémery made when he went on his rounds, records of interrogations in the Bastille, letters from authors who wanted to ingratiate themselves or to undermine their enemies, and reports from spies in the hire of the lieutenant-general of police. Some of the spies had dossiers of their own. The report on Charles de Fieux, chevalier de Mouhy, shows how they worked: "He is a spy for M. Berryer [the lieutenant-general of police], to whom he furnishes a daily report on everything he sees in the cafés, theatres, and public gardens." One can also find traces of Mouhy's activities in other reports, such as the one on Mathieu-François Pidansat de Mairobert: "He has just been arrested and taken to the Bastille for having distributed some [verse] attacking the king and Mme. la marquise [de Pompadour] in cafés. Some was even found in his pockets upon his arrest. It was the chevalier de Mouhy who denounced him." Denunciations also arrived from jilted lovers, angry sons, and estranged wives. Booksellers and printers produced a steady flow of information about the sources of their copy—and especially the copy of their competitors. Landladies and curés supplied further details, and at the bottom of many dossiers d'Hémery could find scraps collected from neighborhood gossips, not all of it malicious. Thus he wrote of Etienne-André Philippe de Prétot: "As to his conduct, it is fairly good. He is married and has children, which forces him to be orderly. He is well spoken of in his neighborhood."

D'Hémery culled through all this material before composing a report. The sifting and selecting must have been difficult, because the dossiers contained such a disparate mixture of hard data and loose gossip. So d'Hémery used standard forms—large folio sheets with six headings printed in bold type: name, age, birthplace, description, address, and "*histoire*" (story). The headings provided a grid for classifying the information, and the dates and handwriting of the entries under them provide some clues about d'Hémery's mode of composition. Most of the entries are written in a clear, scribal hand, but at later dates d'Hémery added new information in his own scrawl, which can be recognized easily from the letters and memorandums by him in the Bibliothèque Nationale. About half the reports are dated on the first day of the month, many of them on the first of the year. It seems likely, therefore, that d'Hémery set aside special days to work over his files, called in one of the secretaries in the police administration, and dictated the reports, selecting the information that seemed most important to him, dossier by dossier. The whole process suggests an attempt to be systematic, a will to impose order on an unruly world of garret scribblers and salon lions. And it also expresses the ordering impulse behind the standardizing, pigeonholing, filing-and-classifying tendency of the modern bureaucracy.

D'Hémery represents an early phase in the evolution of the bureaucrat; so his own voice can be heard quite clearly through the standard format of the reports. He composed in the first person singular and in a casual style, which contrasts

markedly with the formal and impersonal tone of his official correspondence. Whereas his memos and letters were often directed to “Monseigneur,” Nicolas-René Berryer, the lieutenant-general of police, his reports seem to have been addressed to himself. While filling in the birthplace of Le Blanc de Villeneuve, for example, he corrected himself off-handedly: “From Lyon. No, I’m wrong; it’s Montélimar, the son of a captain.” His report on the chevalier de Cogolin noted:

July 1, 1752. I have been informed that he died insane at the house of his brother, the almoner of the King of Poland and Duke of Lorraine.

December 1. That isn’t true.

The report on a poet named Le Dieux contained an equally casual remark: “Julie told me that he wrote a great deal of verse. That’s true.” Occasionally d’Hémery used foul language and spoke of important personages in a tone that would not have been appreciated by his superiors.⁸ The closer one studies the reports to see whether they seem to be aimed at an implicit reader located somewhere in the hierarchy of the French administration, the more one comes around to the view that d’Hémery wrote them for himself and used them in his everyday activities, especially during his first years on the job, when he needed points of reference in order to steer a course through the complex subculture of literary factions and publishing intrigues.

Like everyone else, d’Hémery had to see some order in the world, but he also faced the task of finding his way around his beat. How did an inspector “inspect” the Republic of Letters? As a start, he had to be able to recognize writers; so he took some care in filling out the entries under the rubric “*signalement*” (description). They suggest the way he looked at the authors under his surveillance. Thus, for example, the *signalement* of Voltaire: “Tall, dry, and the bearing of a satyr.” Descriptions involved something more than the impact of an image on the eye. They were charged with meaning: “Nasty, toad-like, and dying of hunger” (Binville); “fat, ungainly, and the bearing of a peasant” (Caylus); “nasty, swarthy, small, filthy, and disgusting” (Jourdan). D’Hémery went beyond simple categories like handsome or ugly and short or tall, because he perceived messages in faces. Thus the chevalier de La Morlière: “Fat, full-faced, and a certain something in the eyes.” This practice of reading faces for character probably derived from physiognomy, a pseudoscience that had emerged during the Renaissance and had spread everywhere during subsequent centuries through popular chapbooks.⁹ D’Hémery’s descriptions contained a great many remarks such as “a harsh physiognomy and character, too” (Le Ratz), “a very honest physiognomy” (Foncemagne), “detestable physiognomy” (Coq), “perfidious physiognomy” (Vieuxmaison), “hideous physiognomy” (Biliena), and “the saddest physiognomy in the world” (Boissy).

Similarly, addresses gave off meanings. Pidansat de Mairobert lived alone “in the rooms of a washerwoman on the third floor, rue des Cordeliers.” He was

obviously a marginal type, like a student-poet named Le Brun, who lived in the “rue de La Harpe, facing the Collège d’Harcourt, in a furnished room kept by a wig-maker, on the second floor at the back” and an equally obscure versifier named Vauger, who lived “in the rue Mazarine in a furnished room kept by the first wig-maker on the left, entering from the Carrefour de Buci, on the second floor on the street side, the door facing the stairs.” Such men bore watching. They had no fixed *état*, no grounding in property, family, and neighborhood connections. Their addresses alone sufficed to place them.

The rubric “*histoire*” provided the most room for situating the writers, and d’Hémery accorded it the largest space on his printed forms. It was in composing *histoires* that he had to do the most selecting and organizing of material from the dossiers, for his compositions were narratives, as complex in their way as contemporary folktales. Some of them even read like digests of novels. Thus the *histoire* of the playwright Charles-Simon Favart:

He is the son of a pastry-cook, a very clever boy who has composed the prettiest comic operas in the world. When the Opéra Comique was closed, the maréchal de Saxe made him the head of his troupe. Favart made a lot of money there; but then he fell in love with the maréchal’s mistress, *la petite* Chantilly, and married her, although he agreed to let her continue to live with the maréchal. This happy union lasted until the end of the war. But in November 1749, Favart and his wife quarreled with the maréchal. After having used his influence to get a place in the Comédie Italienne and squeezed a lot of money from him [the maréchal], Mme. Favart wanted to leave him. The maréchal obtained an order from the king to have her arrested and to have her husband exiled from the kingdom. They fled, he in one direction, she in another. The wife was captured at Nancy and imprisoned, first at Les Andelys, then with the Pénitentes of Angers. This affair stirred up a terrific storm among the actors, who even sent a deputation to the duc de Richelieu to demand the return of their comrade. He let them cool their heels in his antechamber. Finally, after they had had their arrival announced a second time, he agreed to see them; but he gave them a very cold reception and especially mistreated Léo [Antoine-François Riccoboni], who quit the troupe as a result. So la Favart was not given her liberty until she agreed to go back to the maréchal, who kept her until his death. After that, she returned to her husband, who had been wandering outside France all that time. Soon afterward, she took up a place once more in the Comédie Italienne. Then, when the Opéra Comique was restored, both of them wanted to join it. But the Italiens gave her a full share in their troupe and gave him a pension in exchange for a regular supply of parodies; so they are now attached to that theatre.¹⁰

D’Hémery chose simple phrases and organized his narrative around a straightforward chronological line, but he recounted a complicated story. Although he did not embellish it with editorial comments, he got across the notion of two young people from humble origins living by their wits in a world of courtiers and *lettres de cachet*. D’Hémery did not sentimentalize over the plight of the underprivileged. On the contrary, he noted Favart’s readiness to share his wife with the maréchal and her ability to turn the situation to her own advantage. But the narrative develops a powerful undertow, which sweeps the reader’s sympa-

thies away from the rich and powerful. Favart sets out to make his fortune like a hero from a fairy tale. He is small, poor, and clever (“*Signalement*: short, blond, and with a very pretty face.”) After all kinds of adventures in the land of giants—and the maréchal de Saxe was probably the most powerful man in France, aside from the King, in the 1740s—he wins the girl and they live happily ever after in the Comédie Italienne. The structure of the story corresponded to that of many popular tales. Its moral might have come from “Puss in Boots.” But d’Hémery did not draw a moral. He went on to the next dossier, and one can only wonder whether the world of letters, as he inspected it, fit into a framework that had originally been devised in the world of peasants.

In any case, the construction of a police report involved an element of storytelling, and the inspection of writers took place within a frame of meaning. One can therefore read the *histoires* as meaningful stories, which reveal some basic assumptions about literary life under the Old Regime. Few of them are as elaborate as Favart’s. Some contain only two or three sentences, unconnected by a narrative line. But they all proceed from presuppositions about the way the literary world operated, the rules of the game in the Republic of Letters. D’Hémery did not invent those rules. Like the writers themselves, he took them for granted and then watched them at work in the careers under his surveillance. Despite their subjective character, his observations have some general significance, for they belong to a common subjectivity, a social construction of reality, which he shared with the men he observed. In order to decipher their common code, one must reread for what remains between the lines, assumed and thus unsaid.

Consider a typical report about an eminent citizen of the Republic of Letters, François-Joachim de Pierres, abbé de Bernis. He had sat in the Académie Française from the age of twenty-nine, although he had published only some light verse and an insubstantial treatise, *Réflexions sur les passions et les goûts*. A member of a distinguished family and a favorite of Mme. de Pompadour, he was rising rapidly through the offices of church and state, which eventually would lead to a cardinal’s hat and the ambassadorship in Rome. What information did d’Hémery select for a report on such a man? After noting Bernis’s age (in his prime—38), address (good—rue du Dauphin) and looks (also good—“handsome physiognomy”), he stressed six points: (1) Bernis was a member of the Académie française and count of Brioude and of Lyon; (2) “He is a lecher who has had Madame la princesse de Rohan”; (3) he was an accomplished courtier and a protégé of la Pompadour, who had persuaded the pope to grant him a benefice, using the duc de Nivernais as an intermediary; (4) he had written some “pretty pieces in verse” and the *Réflexions sur les passions*; (5) he was related to the maréchal de La Fare, who always advocated his cause at court; and (6) he extended his own protection

to Duclos, whom he had had named to the position of historiographer of France.

D'Hémery did not pay much attention to the literary works of the abbé. Instead, he situated him in a network of family relations, clientages, and "*protections*," a key term, which runs through all the reports. Everyone in the police files was seeking, receiving, or dispensing *protection*, from princes and royal mistresses down to two-bit pamphleteers. Just as Mme. de Pompadour got Bernis an abbey, Bernis got Duclos a sinecure. That was how the system worked. The police did not question the principle of influence peddling. They assumed it: it went without saying, in the Republic of Letters as in society at large.

That it prevailed at the middle and lower ranges of literary life can be appreciated from the reports on writers located well below the abbé de Bernis. Pierre Laujon, for example, followed a well-traveled route through the upper middle ranks of the Republic of Letters. Like many writers, he began as a law student and wrote verse for pleasure. The versifying resulted in a hit at the Opéra Comique; the hit attracted protectors; and the protectors procured sinecures. It was a classic success story, whose stages stand out clearly in d'Hémery's narrative:

This young man is very clever. He wrote some operas, which were performed at the [Opéra Comique] and the Petits Apartements of Versailles, which won him the protection of Mme. de Pompadour, of M. le duc d'Ayen, and of M. le comte de Clermont, who gave him the post of secretary to his headquarters. That prince also made him secretary to the government of Champagne, a position worth 3,000 livres a year.

To be sure, Laujon had natural assets: wit, good looks ("*Signalement*: blond and with a very pretty face"), an attorney for a father, and a relative who was the mistress of the comte de Clermont. But he played his cards right.

So did Gabriel-François Coyer, though he had a weaker hand and never rose above a middle rung in the literary hierarchy. Without wealth, family connections, or a pleasing face ("*disagreeable and elongated physiognomy*"), he nonetheless persevered in turning out books and *belles-lettres*. Finally a source of steady income opened up, and he snatched it.

He is a priest who is clever, although a little inclined toward pedantry. For a long time he haunted the streets of Paris, broke and without employment. But at last he found a place as tutor for the prince de Turenne. Having served in it to the satisfaction of the prince, the latter rewarded him with the post of almoner for the colonel-general of the cavalry. As the revenue of that post now goes to the comte d'Evreux, M. de Turenne has provided him with a pension of 1,200 livres, which he will collect until the death of d'Evreux.

One of Bernis' protégés, Antoine de Laurès, occupied a precarious position on a lower-middle rung of the ladder. When he drafted the original report on Laurès, d'Hémery could not predict which way the young man's career would turn. On the one hand, he came from a good family: his father was dean of the chamber of

audits in Montpellier. On the other, he had run out of money. In fact, he would starve in his garret, if his odes to the king and to Mme. de Pompadour did not bring in some patronage soon. But according to a note added later to the report, the verse seemed to be working.

He managed to get himself introduced to the marquise [de Pompadour], thanks to the credit of the abbé de Bernis, and he has boasted that she gave him permission to look out for an affair that will bring in some money and that she will make him succeed. Some time later he managed to get an introduction to the comte de Clermont, to whom he now pays court, thanks to the intervention of M. de Montlezun, his relative.¹¹

On a still lower rung, Pierre-Jean Boudot, the son of a bookseller, compiled, abridged, and translated prodigiously. But he depended on protectors for his living. “He is very clever and is very protected by the président Hénault, who got a job in the Bibliothèque du Roi for him,” d’Hémery noted, adding that Boudot was believed to have written most of the *Abrégé de l’histoire de France* that appeared under Hénault’s name. Meanwhile, Pierre Dufour, the twenty-four-year-old son of a café owner, was trying to make his way at the bottom of the literary world. He worked as a devil in a printing shop. He peddled prohibited books. He insinuated himself among the actors and playwrights of the Comédie Italienne and the Opéra Comique, thanks to the favor of Favart, his godfather. And somehow he attached himself to the comte de Rubanprez, who gave him lodging and some ineffectual protection. D’Hémery put Dufour down as a suspicious character, a scammer and hustler, who would write and peddle underground literature while pretending to keep an eye on it for the police: “He is a devious little guy, and very slippery.” Dufour actually wrote a great deal—a half-dozen plays and skits, a book of poems, and a novel. But he failed to parlay any of it into a position; so he finally gave up writing and settled for a job in a bookstore.

The constant, unremitting quest for protection stands out everywhere in d’Hémery’s accounts of literary careers. François Augier de Marigny hears a position has opened up in the Invalides and dashes off some poems in praise of the comte d’Argenson, who will name someone to it. Charles Batteux cultivates the doctor of Mme. de Pompadour and therefore wins a vacant professorship in the Collège de Navarre. Jean Dromgold notes that the valor of the comte de Clermont is not adequately celebrated in a poem about the battle of Fontenoy. He attacks the poem in a pamphlet and is promptly named secretary to the headquarters of Mgr. le comte de Clermont.

Such were the facts of literary life. D’Hémery recorded them unblinkingly, without any moralizing about toadyism among the writers or the vanity of protectors. On the contrary, he sounded shocked when a protégé deviated from the unswerving loyalty he owed to his patron. Antoine Duranlon had won the favor of the house of Rohan, which had him named principal of the Collège de Maître Gervais after he had served the family satisfactorily as a tutor. But once he was installed, Duranlon sided with a faction in the Sorbonne that opposed the Rohans

in a quarrel over some honorific rights claimed by the abbé de Rohan-Guéméné. The Rohans had Duranlon stripped of his post and exiled to Bresse—and it served him right, d'Hémery observed, for the protégé had responded to the protector with “the blackest ingratitude.” How laudable, by contrast, was the behavior of F.-A. P. de Moncrif. Moncrif owed everything to the comte d'Argenson, who as already mentioned had seen him through all the steps of an ideal literary career: three secretaryships, a cut of the revenue of the *Journal des savants*, a seat in the Académie française, an apartment in the Tuileries, and a position in the postal service worth 6,000 livres a year. When Moncrif uncovered some satires against the king and Mme. de Pompadour emanating from the anti-d'Argenson, pro-Maurepas faction of the court, he promptly denounced their authors—and rightly so: not only should a writer never bite the hand that fed him, he should also smite all hands in the enemy camp.

Thus protection functioned as the basic principle of literary life. Its presence everywhere in the reports makes another phenomenon, the literary market place, look conspicuous by its absence. Occasionally d'Hémery mentioned a writer who attempted to live by his pen. Gabriel-Henri Gaillard, for example, ventured into the market for a while in 1750, after living from jobs dispensed by Voltaire (for established writers also functioned as protectors themselves):

He was sublibrarian in the Collège des Quatre Nations, an unimportant position, which he quit in order to take up a job as a children's tutor, which M. de Voltaire arranged for him. He only stayed in it for six months, and now he lives from his writing. . . . His last works are full of praise for Voltaire, to whom he is completely dedicated.

But soon afterwards he took up a job on the *Journal des savants*, which kept him solvent for the rest of his career. D'Hémery also mentioned a pamphleteer named La Barre, who tried to write himself out of a state of “frightful indigence” when the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle put an end to his employment as a propagandist in the ministry of foreign affairs. “Having no resources whatsoever after the end of the war, he gave himself over to La Foliot [a bookseller], who keeps him alive and for whom he writes a few things from time to time.” But such cases were rare, not because there was any lack of writers who needed support but because booksellers were unwilling or unable to provide it. And in a later entry in La Barre's report, d'Hémery noted that he had finally snared “a small job on the *Gazette de France*,” thanks to the intervention of the lieutenant-general of police.

When desperate for money, writers generally fell back on marginal activities, such as smuggling prohibited books or spying on the smugglers for the police. They could not hope to strike it rich with a best seller, because the publishers' monopoly of book privileges and the pirating industry made it impossible to expect much from sales. They never received royalties, but sold manuscripts for lump sums or a certain number of copies of the printed book, which they peddled or gave to potential protectors. Manuscripts rarely fetched much, despite the

famous case of the 6,000 livres paid to Rousseau for *Emile* and the 120,000 livres that went to Diderot for twenty years of labor on the *Encyclopédie*. D'Hémery noted that François-Vincent Toussaint received only 500 livres for the manuscript of his best seller, *Les Moeurs*, although his publisher, Delespine, made at least 10,000 livres from it. Toussaint's case illustrated a general proposition: "He works a great deal for booksellers, which means that he has a hard time making ends meet." D'Hémery remarked that Joseph de La Porte supported himself by his pen, "and has only that to live on," as if that were unusual. The common pattern was to aim at enough *succès de prestige* to attract a protector and land a place in the royal administration or a wealthy household.

One could also marry. Jean-Louis Lesueur did not leave much of a mark in the history of literature, but his career represented an ideal type from the viewpoint of the police: beginning with little more than talent and amiability, he acquired a respectable reputation, a protector, a sinecure, and a wealthy wife.

He is a clever young man, who wrote some comic operas that were performed with a fair amount of success. M. Bertin de Blagny got to know him at the theatre, befriended him, and gave him a job in the parties cásuelles worth 3,000 a year. That is where he is now employed.

He just married a woman who has brought him something of a fortune. He certainly merits it, because he is a nice boy with a most amiable character.

D'Hémery did not take a sentimental view of matrimony. He treated it as a strategic move in the making of a career—or else as a mistake. Writers' wives never appeared as intelligent, cultivated, or virtuous in the reports; they were either rich or poor. Thus d'Hémery did not waste any sympathy on C.-G. Coqueley de Chaussepierre: "He married an unimportant girl from his village, who has neither birth nor wealth. Her sole merit is that she is related to the wife of the former attorney general, who only married her [the relation] as a matter of conscience, after having kept her for a long time as his mistress." Similarly, Poiteven Dulimon seemed unlikely to scribble his way out of obscurity, because "he made a bad marriage in Besançon." "Bad" marriages produced children rather than money, and so the reports show a succession of unhappy *pères de famille* battling against unfavorable demographic odds—Toussaint: reduced to hack writing because he had eleven children; Mouhy: spying for the police because he had five; Dreux de Radier and René de Bonneval: weighed down with offspring and therefore condemned to Grub Street for the rest of their lives.

It followed that writers who needed "good" marriages but could not make them should avoid matrimony altogether. Apparently most of them did. D'Hémery kept an eye on family connections, but he mentioned wives and children in only two dozen reports. Although the information is too scattered to lend itself to firm conclusions, it seems that the majority of writers, especially those in the "intellectual trades," never married. And if they did, they often waited until they

had acquired a reputation and a sinecure—or even a seat in the Académie Française. Thus the career of J.-B.-L. Gresset, another success story in the eyes of the police: first several hits in the Comédie Française, then election to the Académie, and finally, at age forty-four, marriage to the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Amiens.

But how was a writer to steer clear of passion while working his way up to immortality? D'Alembert urged all philosophes to embrace a life of chastity and poverty.¹² But d'Hémery knew that that was more than flesh would bear. He recognized the existence of love just as he acknowledged the economics of marriage. Marmontel and Favart both appear as “*amourachés*” (in love) in their reports—each with an actress kept by the maréchal de Saxe. Marmontel's *histoire* is as rich in intrigues as Favart's; in fact, it reads like a plot from one of their plays: The young playwright falls in love with the actress, Mlle. Verrière, behind the back of the old maréchal. They dismiss a lackey so that they can give full rein to their passion without being observed. The lackey, who operates as a spy for the maréchal and perhaps for the police as well, learns of their liaison nonetheless; and soon they face disaster—the loss of 12,000 livres a year for the actress and the severing of *protections* for the author. But all ends well, because Mlle. Verrière apparently succeeds in repairing the damage with the maréchal while Marmontel moves on to one of her colleagues, Mlle. Cléron. After looking through a great many keyholes, either directly or through intermediaries, d'Hémery saw quite clearly that most writers would take mistresses.

Easier said than done. Actresses from the Comédie Française did not often throw themselves into the arms of impecunious authors, even those with physiognomies like Marmontel's and Favart's. The men of Grub Street lived with women from their own milieu—servants, shop girls, laundresses, and prostitutes. The setting did not tend to produce happy households, and few of d'Hémery's *histoires* had happy endings, especially if seen from the woman's point of view. Consider the love life of A.-J. Chaumeix, an unknown author who arrived in Paris with little money and great expectations. At first he survived by part-time teaching in a boarding school. But the school collapsed, and he retreated to a rooming house, where he seduced the servant girl, after promising marriage. He soon fell out of love with her, however. And as he had begun to make some money by writing anti-Enlightenment tracts for the bookseller Herissant, the jilted fiancée, who was probably pregnant, demanded reparations from Herissant and managed to collect 300 livres from Chaumeix's account. Chaumeix then took up with the sister of another free-lance teacher. This time he did not escape marriage, even though the woman was “a she-devil, who is worth nothing and from whom he got nothing,” according to d'Hémery. But some years later, he ran off to a tutoring job in Russia, leaving his wife and a baby daughter behind.

Liaisons were dangerous for a man of letters, because he might marry his mistress, no matter how “bad” the match. D'Hémery reported that A.-G. Meus-

nier de Querlon fell in love with a procuress and married her in order to get her out of prison. Before long he had his back to the wall and a family to support. An appointment to the *Gazette de France* followed by the editorship of the *Petites affiches* saved him from destitution. But he never accumulated enough to provide for himself in his old age; when he had to be saved once again by a pension granted by a financier. Several other authors lost their hearts in brothels, according to the accounts of their private lives that appeared in d'Hémery's files. A poet named Milon found himself unable to escape from a passion for the procuress of an establishment at the Carrefour des Quatre Cheminées, where he was a regular customer. The playwright and future journalist Pierre Rousseau lived with the daughter of a prostitute, whom he passed off as his wife. And two other hacks, the compiler F.-H. Turpin and a pamphleteer named Guenet, not only frequented prostitutes but married them. Grub Street marriages occasionally worked out. D'Hémery noted that Louis Anseaume had been living down and out as a part-time teacher until he married the sister of an actress in the Opéra Comique—"a marriage that he made from need rather than from inclination." Two years later he was doing quite well, writing and producing comic operas. But marriage usually dragged an author down. The normal pattern shows up clearly in two brutal sentences in the report on the indigent playwright Louis de Boissy: "He is a gentleman. He married his laundress." Seen from the perspective of the other reports, the marriages of Rousseau and Diderot—to a semiliterate laundry maid and the daughter of a washerwoman, respectively—do not look unusual.

If writers could not expect to live by their pens and to lead a respectable family life, how did writing itself appear as a career? The dignity of men of letters and the sanctity of their calling had already emerged as a *leitmotiv* in the works of the philosophes,¹³ but no such theme can be found in d'Hémery's reports. Although the police recognized a writer when they saw one and sorted him out from other Frenchmen by giving him a place in d'Hémery's files, they did not speak of him as if he had a profession or a distinct position in society. He might be a gentleman, a priest, a lawyer, or a lackey. But he did not possess a *qualité* or *condition* that set him apart from nonwriters.

As the French phrases suggest, d'Hémery used an ancient social vocabulary, which left little room for modern, free-floating intellectuals. He may have been out of date in comparison with Diderot and d'Alembert, but his language probably corresponded quite well with the conditions of authorship in the mid-eighteenth century. The police could not situate the writer within any conventional category, because he had not yet assumed his modern form, freed from protectors, integrated in the literary market place, and committed to a career. Given the conceptual cloudiness surrounding this uncertain position, what sort of status did he have?

Although the police reports do not provide a clear answer to that question, they contain some revealing remarks. For example, d'Hémery often referred to writers as "boys" (*garçons*). The expression had nothing to do with age. Diderot appeared as a "boy" in his report, although he was then thirty-seven, married, and a father. The abbé Raynal, the abbé de l'Ecluse-des-Loges, and Pierre Sigorgne were all "boys" in their mid-thirties; and Louis Mannory was a "boy" of fifty-seven. What set them apart from writers classified implicitly as men, and often explicitly as gentlemen, was their lack of social distinction. Whether journalists, teachers, or abbés, they occupied vague and shifting positions in the lower ranks of the Republic of Letters. They moved in and out of Grub Street and clustered in the sector of the socio-occupational spectrum referred to above as the "intellectual trades." One must fall back on that anachronism, because the Old Regime did not have a category for people like Diderot. "Boy" was the best d'Hémery could do. He would never think of applying such a term to the marquis de Saint-Lambert, a military officer, who was only thirty-three at the writing of his report, or to Antoine Petit, a doctor, who was thirty-one. "Boy" implied marginality and served to place the unplaceable, the shadowy forerunners of the modern intellectual, who showed up in the police files as *gens sans état*.

D'Hémery's use of language should not be attributed to the peculiarities of a status-conscious bureaucrat. He shared the prejudices of his time. Thus in the report on Pierre-Charles Jamet, he remarked as a matter of course, "He is said to be from a good family"; and he noted that Charles-Etienne Pesselier, a tax farmer, was "a man of honor [*galant homme*], which is saying a lot for a poet and a financier." But d'Hémery was no snob. In his report on Toussaint, he wrote, "He is hardly well born, since he is the son of a shoemaker in the parish of Saint Paul. He is no less an estimable person for all that." When the reports disparage writers, they do not seem to express d'Hémery's personal views so much as attitudes embedded in his surroundings. Of course one cannot distinguish clearly between the personal and the social ingredients in such statements. But in some places, especially in off-guard moments or casual asides, d'Hémery seemed to articulate general assumptions. For example, in the *histoire* of Jacques Morabin, he observed in a matter-of-fact manner, "He is clever and is the author of a book in two volumes in quarto entitled *La Vie de Cicéron*, which he dedicated to M. le comte de Saint Florentin, who protects him and for whom he was secretary. It is this lord who gave him to M. Hénault." A writer could be passed from one protector to another, like a thing.

The tone of such remarks corresponded to the treatment that ordinary writers received. The drubbing given Voltaire by the servants of the chevalier de Rohan is often cited as an example of the disrespect for authors at the beginning of the century. But writers who offended important personages were still thrashed in the era of the *Encyclopédie*. Pierre-Charles-Roy, a fairly distinguished elderly playwright was nearly killed by a pummeling from a servant of the comte

de Clermont, who wanted to exact revenge for a satirical poem written during a disputed election to the Académie Française. G.-F. Poullain de Saint-Foix terrorized audiences throughout the 1740s by bashing anyone who jeered his plays. He was rumored to have dispatched several critics in duels and to have threatened to cut off the ears of any reviewer who panned him. Even Marmontel and Fréron got involved in a brawl. While the *beau monde* strolled between acts in the foyer of the Comédie Française, Marmontel demanded satisfaction for some satirical remarks that Fréron had leveled at him in the *Année littéraire*. Fréron suggested that they step outside. After crossing swords a few times, they were separated and turned over to the marshals of France, who handled affairs of honor. But the maréchal d'Isenquien dismissed them as "small game, good only for the police," and the affair appeared in d'Hémery's reports as "comic." To d'Hémery as to everyone else, there was something laughable about the notion of a writer's honor and the spectacle of writers defending it as if they had been gentlemen.

Of course many writers did not need to worry about being protected, physically abused, or made into the butt of jokes. It was unthinkable for them to marry prostitutes or to be called "boy," for they had an independent *dignité*, an established position as magistrates, lawyers, or government officials. But the common writer remained exposed to the brutalities of a rough-and-tumble world, and his contemporaries did not raise him on a pedestal. While the philosophes laid the foundation of the modern cult of the intellectual, the police expressed a more ordinary, down-to-earth view of their "game." Writing might embellish the career of a gentleman and lead to a sinecure for a commoner. But it was more likely to produce ne'er-do-wells. D'Hémery sympathized with the family of Michel Portelance, a bright young man who might make something of himself, if only he could give up his penchant poetry: "He is the son of a domestic servant, and he has an uncle who is a canon, who made him study and intended to make something of him. But he has given himself over completely to poetry, which has driven the uncle to despair."

At the same time, d'Hémery admired talent. To him, Fontenelle was "one of the most beautiful geniuses of our century," and Voltaire was "an eagle in his spirit but a very bad subject in his opinions." Although the voice of the police inspector could be heard in that remark, it contained a note of respect. D'Hémery gave quite a sympathetic account of Montesquieu's difficulties with *L'Esprit des lois* and of Montesquieu himself: "He is an extremely clever man, terribly troubled with poor eyesight. He has written several charming works, such as the *Lettres persanes*, *Le Temple de Gnide*, and the celebrated *L'Esprit des lois*."

Such remarks would have been unthinkable under Louis XIV, when Vauban and Fénelon were exiled from court for less daring publications and when Racine gave up writing in order to take up gentility. Nor would they have been in place in the nineteenth century, when Balzac and Hugo established the heroic style of authorship and Zola consummated the conquest of the market place. D'Hémery

expressed an in-between stage in the evolution of the writer's status. He did not think of writing as an independent career or a distinct estate. But he respected it as an art—and he knew it bore watching as an ideological force.

Although ideology did not exist as a concept for d'Hémery, he ran into it every day—not as a downward streaming of Enlightenment or an upward surging of revolutionary consciousness, but as a form of danger that he encountered at street level. The notion of danger appears in several reports, usually in connection with remarks on suspicious characters. D'Hémery used a graduated scale of epithets: “good subject” (Fosse), “fairly bad subject” (Olivier, Febre, Néel), “bad subject” (Courtois, Palmeus), and “very bad subject” (Gournay, Voltaire)—or “not suspicious” (Boissy), “suspicious” (Cahusac), and “extremely suspicious” (Lurquet). He seemed to measure his language carefully, as if he were gauging the degree of danger in each dossier. And the context of his remarks suggests that he associated danger with “bad subjects” in a way that was peculiar to police work under the Old Regime. Palmeus was “a dangerous, bad subject,” because he wrote anonymous letters against his enemies to people in authority. Mlle. Fauque de la Cépède looked just as bad, because she had embroiled two lovers by counterfeiting their handwriting in fake letters—an intrigue that might seem trivial today but that d'Hémery took seriously: “That talent is very dangerous in society.” The ability to compromise someone seemed especially threatening in a system where individuals rose and fell according to their “*crédit*” or reputation. Those most “*en crédit*,” the placemen, or “*gens en place*,” had most to lose by falling from favor. So d'Hémery was especially wary of persons who collected information in order to damage reputations in high places. Thus P.C. Nivelles de la Chaussée: “He has never done anything suspicious, yet he is not liked because he is considered dangerous and capable of hurting people secretly.”

Secret hurting—an idea transmitted by verbs such as “*nuire*” and “*perdre*” (to harm, to ruin)—usually took the form of denunciation, the principle contrary to protection, which operated throughout the system as a countervailing force. D'Hémery encountered denunciations everywhere he went. An impecunious poet named Courtois hired himself out to an army captain who wanted to put an enemy behind bars by providing information in an anonymous letter to the police. A Mme. Dubois quarreled violently with her husband, a sales clerk in a tailor's shop, and then tried to get him shut up in the Bastille by means of a letter under a false name, saying she had seen him reading a violent poem against the king to a crowd during the Mardi Gras celebrations. A banker, Nicolas Jouin, had his son's mistress thrown in prison; and the son retaliated with an anonymous letter, which brought the father to the Bastille by revealing that he had written a series of Jansenist tracts, including a pamphlet against the archbishop of Paris.

The surveillance of this slander was a full-time job for the police. D'Hémery did not bother with cases in which reputations of humble people were at stake. He turned a deaf ear to a café waitress who complained about being pilloried in a pamphlet by her jilted lover, a poet named Roger de Sery. But he paid close attention to Fabio Gherardini, who maligned the genealogy of the comte de Saint-Séverin in a pamphlet; to Pierre-Charles Jamet, who defamed the controller general and his ancestors; and to Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy, who wanted to publish a history of the Regency, which was "full of very strong things against families in power." When clans and clientages were slandered, it was an affair of state; for in a system of court politics, personalities counted as much as principles, and personal credit could be sapped by a well-placed pamphlet.

Thus ideological police work was often a matter of hunting down pamphleteers and suppressing *libelles*, the form that slander took when it appeared in print. D'Hémery took special care to protect the reputation of his own protectors—notably Berryer, and the d'Argenson faction of the court—and his reports sometimes show that in trailing a writer he was acting on orders from his superiors. In the report on Louis de Cahusac, for example, d'Hémery noted that Berryer had "told me that he was considered suspicious in court and that he should be investigated closely." Cahusac did not write revolutionary tracts. But he looked like a "bad subject" because he went through a succession of clientages—from the comte de Clermont, to the comte de Saint Florentin, to the tax farmer la Poplinière—and came out with a pseudo-Japanese novel, *Grigri*, which contained enough information to ruin a great many reputations in court. Similarly, Berryer warned d'Hémery to keep an eye on J.-A. Guer, a "bad subject" in the Machault faction of the court, because he had recently traveled to Holland in order to arrange for the printing of some "suspicious manuscripts."

Adjectives like "suspicious," "bad," and "dangerous" proliferated in the reports on such characters. D'Hémery described L.-C. Fougeret de Montbron as particularly "bad," because he specialized in *libelles*:

He recently had printed in The Hague a work of eight to nine sheets entitled *Le Cosmopolite, citoyen du monde*. It is a satire against the government of France and especially against M. Berryer and M. d'Argens, who is a particular target of his resentment, because he thinks that he [the marquis d'Argens] had him run out of Prussia, where he used to live.

The most dangerous *libellistes* aimed at the most elevated figures in the kingdom, firing from beyond its borders. In April 1751, d'Hémery noted that L.-M. Bertin de Frateaux "is presently in London and was formerly in Spain. He is still saying bad things about his country and has banded with a group of bad subjects to produce satires against it." A year later d'Hémery reported that Bertin was in the Bastille. After seizing some manuscripts that he had hidden in Paris, the police had sent an agent to lure him out of London, and had captured him in Calais. He

remained in prison for two and a half years for having written “*libelles* of the greatest violence against the king and the entire royal family.”

D’Hémery’s job, as he understood it, involved the protection of the kingdom by the suppression of anything that could damage the authority of the king. The scurrilous pamphlets about Louis XV and Mme. de Pompadour, which may strike a modern reader as little more than rumor-mongering, looked like sedition to him. So he reserved his strongest language for *libellistes* like Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy, “a dangerous man, who would overthrow a kingdom,” and for the pamphleteers and *frondeurs* who gathered in the salons of Mme. Doublet and Mme. Vieuxmaison, “the most dangerous [society] in Paris.” These groups did not merely gossip about court intrigues and politics, they wrote up the most damaging news in *libelles* and manuscript gazettes, which circulated “under the cloak” everywhere in France. A half-dozen of these primitive journalists (“*nouvellistes*”) figure in d’Hémery’s reports. He took them seriously, because they had a serious effect on public opinion. His spies heard echoes of their *nouvelles* in cafés and public gardens, and even among the common people, where news traveled by word of mouth. Thus a spy’s account of a harangue by Pidansat de Mairobert, a key *nouvelliste* from the Doublet salon and “the worst tongue in Paris,” according to d’Hémery: “Mairobert said in the café Procope, while talking about the recent reforms [the *vingtième* tax], that someone from the army ought to wipe out the whole court, whose sole pleasure is to devastate the common people and perpetrate injustice.”

Police agents were always picking up seditious talk (“*propos*”), and writers were often jailed for it. D’Hémery kept track of it all in his files, where one often runs into suspicious characters like F.-Z. de Lauberivière, chevalier de Quinsonas, a soldier turned *nouvelliste* who was “extremely free in his *propos*,” J.-F. Dreux du Radier, exiled “for *propos*,” F.-P. Mellin de Saint-Hilaire, sent to the Bastille “for having made *propos* . . . against Mme. de Pompadour,” and Antoine Bret, also in the Bastille for “seditious *propos* against the king and Mme. de Pompadour.” Sometimes one can almost hear the talk. D’Hémery’s report on Pierre-Mathias de Gournay, a priest, geographer, and “very bad subject,” reads like a stenographic account of what was in the air in public places:

On March 14, 1751, while walking through the gardens of the Palais Royal and talking about the police, he said that there had never been a more unjust and barbarous inquisition than the one that rules over Paris. It is a tyrannical despotism, which everyone holds in contempt. The source of it all, he said, is a feeble and sensual king, who doesn’t care about any affairs except those that give him a chance to besot himself with pleasure. It is a woman who holds the reins. . . . It wasn’t possible to hear the rest.

The same theme appeared in the poem that the sales clerk’s wife, Mme. Dubois, sent to the police in order to inculcate her husband and in several other poems

that were set to the tunes of popular songs and sung throughout the streets. Police agents heard people from every milieu singing verse such as:

Lâche dissipateur des biens de tes sujets,
Toi qui comptes les jours par les maux que tu fais,
Esclave d'un ministre et d'une femme avare,
Louis, apprend le sort que le ciel te prépare.

(Indolent dissipator of your subjects' wealth,
You, who reckon the days by the evil that you do,
Slave of a minister and of an avaricious woman,
Louis, hear what heaven has in store for you.)

The king was getting a bad press in all the media of the time—in books, pamphlets, gazettes, rumors, poems, and songs. So the kingdom looked rather fragile to d'Hémery. If the supreme protector lost command of his subjects' loyalty, the whole protection system might collapse. D'Hémery did not foresee a revolution; but in inspecting the Republic of Letters, he saw a monarchy that was becoming increasingly vulnerable to hostile waves of public opinion. While courtiers rose and fell through shifting clientages, pamphleteers eroded the respect for the regime among the general public; and danger lurked everywhere—even in the shabby room off the Place de l'Estrapade, where a "boy" named Diderot was scribbling on a "*dictionnaire encyclopédique*."

On the face of it, however, it seems odd that d'Hémery should have associated Diderot with danger. Diderot did not write *libelles* but Enlightenment tracts, and the Enlightenment does not appear as a threatening force in the reports. In fact, it does not appear at all. D'Hémery never used terms like *Lumières* and *philosophe*. Although he compiled dossiers on virtually all the philosophes who had published anything by 1753, he did not treat them as a group; and he often gave them a clean bill of health as individuals. Not only did he write respectfully about older, distinguished figures like Fontenelle, Duclos, and Montesquieu; but he also described d'Alembert as "a charming man, both in his character and in his wit." Rousseau figures in the reports as a prickly character but a person of "eminent merit" and "great intelligence," who had a special talent for music and literary polemics. Even Voltaire, "a very bad subject," appears primarily as a notoriety and an intriguer in the world of letters and the court. D'Hémery mentioned only two of the famous philosophic salons—those of Mme. Geoffrin and the marquise de Créquy. And he referred to them only in passing, while completely neglecting the important groups of intellectuals who clustered around Mlle. de Lespinasse, Mme. du Deffand, Mme. de Tencin, and the baron d'Holbach. Apparently he did not identify a philosophic milieu and did not conceive of the Enlightenment as a coherent movement of opinion, or did not conceive of it at all. The intellectual tide that appears as a mainstream of cultural history in most textbooks does not surface in the police reports.

It is there, however,—below the surface. Unlike the *libellistes* and *nouvellistes*, Diderot represented an insidious variety of danger: atheism. “He is a young man who plays the wit and prides himself on his impiety; very dangerous; speaks of the holy mysteries with scorn,” d’Hémery noted. The report explained that after having written such horrors as *Les Pensées philosophiques* and *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, Diderot had gone to prison for the *Lettre sur les aveugles* and now was working on the “*dictionnaire encyclopédique*” with François-Vincent Toussaint and Marc-Antoine Eidous. Those writers had dossiers of their own in d’Hémery’s files, and so did their predecessor in the original *Encyclopédie* enterprise, Godefroy Sellius, as well as the booksellers who financed it. They all appeared as dubious characters, who lived in Grub Street fashion, turning out a compilation here and a translation there, interspersed with bits of pornography and blasphemy. Thus d’Hémery noted that Eidous had furnished some of the salacious material for Diderot’s *Bijoux indiscrets*, which one of the *Encyclopédie* publishers, Laurent Durand, had put out clandestinely in 1748, while another Encyclopedist, Jean-Baptiste de la Chapelle, had supplied impieties for the *Lettre sur les aveugles*: “He pretends that Diderot took the conversation of Saunderson from him, which is the strongest thing against religion in the *Lettre sur les aveugles*.”

The cross reference in the reports certainly made it look as though Diderot kept bad company, and the company reflected badly on the *Encyclopédie*, especially after one of Diderot’s collaborators, the abbé Jean-Martin de Prades, was run out of France for heresy. In early 1752, just as the second volume of the *Encyclopédie* was being published, the professors of the Sorbonne discovered impieties scattered throughout the thesis that de Prades had recently defended successfully for a licentiate in their own faculty of theology. It was distressing enough to find philosophical rot—not to mention lax examination procedures—in the temple of orthodoxy, but de Prades seemed to take his text from the Preliminary Discourse to the *Encyclopédie*. He actually supplied Diderot with copy on theological questions and shared rooms with two other collaborators, the abbés Yvon and Pestré. Moreover, the trio of abbé-Encyclopedists had ties with abbé-philosophes: the abbé Edme Mallet, another contributor to the *Encyclopédie*; the abbé Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, later notorious as the author of the outspoken *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*; and the abbé Guillaume-Alexandre Méhégan, who later became an editor of the *Journal encyclopédique* and went to the Bastille in 1752 for his *Zoroastre*, which d’Hémery described as “an atrocious *libelle* against religion, which he dedicated to M. Toussaint.” De Prades and Yvon escaped the same fate only by fleeing from France, but they did not lose contact with their former associates. D’Hémery noted that Yvon continued to write for the *Encyclopédie* from his place of refuge in Holland, and that Pestré was correcting proofs for a pamphlet vindicating de Prades, who had settled safely with Frederick II in Prussia.

The combination of heretical abbés and garret atheists made the *Encyclopédie*

look suspicious; but unlike subsequent commentators, such as the abbé Barruel, d'Hémery did not detect any conspiracy behind it. He apparently made no special effort to track down its contributors. Only twenty-two of them appear in his reports—less than 10 per cent of all those who had written at least one article by 1765, when the final volumes of text were published. Between 1748 and 1753, the book had not yet become anathema to the authorities and a symbol of the Enlightenment to the reading public. It was still a legal enterprise, protected by d'Hémery's superior, Lamoignon de Malesherbes, Director of the Book Trade, and dedicated to the comte d'Argenson, Minister of War. So d'Hémery did not treat it as a serious ideological threat, although he kept an eye on the original nucleus of its authors.

But he did see danger in Diderot—not because of *Encyclopédisme*, a concept that does not appear in the reports, but because Diderot contributed to a current of free-thinking that seemed to be flowing everywhere in Paris. D'Hémery took special note of the fact that Diderot was reported to mock the sacraments: “He said that when he gets to the end of his life, he will confess and receive [in communion] what they call God, but not from any obligation; merely out of regard for his family, so that they will not be reproached with the fact that he died without religion.” The distressing thing, as d'Hémery saw it, was that plenty of other writers shared that attitude. Several of them appear in the reports with the epithet “*libertin*” (free-thinker) attached to their names: thus L.-J.-C. Soulas d'Alainval, Louis-Mathieu Bertin de Frateaux, and Louis-Nicolas Guérout. D'Hémery turned up popularizers of science, like Pierre Estève, who wrote a materialist tract on the origins of the universe; historians like François Turben, who transformed a history of England into a general indictment of religion; and a whole flock of impious poets—not merely well-known *libertins* like Voltaire and Piron, but obscure versifiers like L.-F. Delisle de la Drevetière, J.-B. La Coste, an abbé Ozanne, an abbé Lorgerie, and a clerk named Olivier. D'Hémery knew what manuscripts these men kept in their portfolios and what they were currently writing: Lorgerie had just completed “an epistle against religion,” and Delisle was working on “a poem in which religion is mistreated.” As he received reports on what was being said in salons and cafés, d'Hémery also knew that the comte de Maillebois had recited an obscene poem about Jesus Christ and John the Baptist at a dinner party, that the abbé Méhégan openly preached deism, and that César Chesneau du Marsais was an outright atheist. Surveillance of religion was an important part of police work, and for d'Hémery it seemed to be a matter of measuring a rising tide of irreligion.

How this policing took place and why it was important can be illustrated by a final example, the report on Jacques le Blanc, an obscure abbé who wrote antireligious tracts from a room in Versailles. After completing a treatise entitled *Le Tombeau des préjugés sur lesquels se fondent les principales maximes de la religion*, Le

Blanc began to look for a publisher. He ran into a man called Valentin, who claimed to know his way around the Parisian book industry and offered to act as his agent. But a reading of a synopsis of the manuscript convinced Valentin that he could make more money by denouncing Le Blanc to the archbishop of Paris in return for a reward. The archbishop sent him to the police with instructions to set a trap to catch the abbé “*en flagrant délit.*” Valentin and d’Hémery concocted a rendezvous in an eating house at the rue Poissonnière in Paris. Then Valentin instructed Le Blanc to come in disguise, so he would not be recognized, and to bring the manuscript, because two booksellers were eager to buy it. The abbé changed his clerical gown for an old black suit and an ancient wig. Looking like a down-at-the-heels highwayman, according to d’Hémery’s rather sympathetic account, he arrived at the appointed time. Valentin introduced him to the booksellers, who were actually policemen in disguise. Then, just as they were about to close the deal, d’Hémery swooped in, gathered up the manuscript, and hauled Le Blanc off to the Bastille. The masquerade could have made an amusing *histoire*. But it appears sad and serious in d’Hémery’s narrative. Valentin is a nasty adventurer, Le Blanc a misguided victim, and the manuscript a work of iniquity. D’Hémery summarized its propositions as follows: the Bible is a collection of fairy tales; the miracles of Christ are fables, used to dupe the credulous; Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are equally false; and all proofs of the existence of God are absurdities “invented for political reasons.” The political implications of the episode seemed especially important to d’Hémery: “At the bottom of his manuscript is written, ‘Done in the city of the sun,’ which is Versailles, where he lived when he wrote it, ‘in the harem of hypocrites,’ which is his monastery.”

D’Hémery did not separate impiety from politics. Although he had no interest in theological arguments, he believed that atheism undercut the authority of the crown. Ultimately, then, *libertins* constituted the same threat as *libellistes*, and the police needed to recognize danger in both forms, whether it struck below the belt as personal defamation or spread abroad from the garrets of philosophers.

Diderot therefore appears as the incarnation of danger in the files of the police: “He is a very clever boy but extremely dangerous.” Seen in the light of 500 other reports, he also seems to fit into a pattern. Like many other writers, he was a male, in early middle age, from a family of educated artisans and a small city outside Paris. He had married a woman of equally humble origins, and he had spent three months in the prison of Vincennes as well as a great deal of time in Grub Street. Of course many other patterns can be seen in the reports. No sociological formula will do justice to them all, for the Republic of Letters was a vague, spiritual territory, and its authors remained scattered through society, without a clear professional identity. Nonetheless, in identifying Diderot, d’Hémery distin-

gushed a critical element in the Old Regime and one that especially needed watching from the perspective of the police. By watching the police watch the likes of Diderot, one can see the dim figure of the intellectual¹⁴ take on a perceptible shape and emerge as a force to be reckoned with in early modern France.

Notes

- * This essay was written as chapter four of a book to be published in 1984 by Basic Books, Inc., entitled *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. A preliminary sketch appeared in J. P. Hardy and J. C. Eade, eds., *Papers presented at the Fifth David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar*, Canberra 1980 (Oxford, 1983), pp. 143–55.
1. This study is based on the manuscript reports of Joseph d'Hémery in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, nouv. acq. fr. 10781–10783. All quotations come from that source and can be identified easily in the manuscript, because the reports are arranged alphabetically according to the names of the authors under investigation. I plan to publish the full texts of the reports in a volume to be edited in collaboration with Robert Shackleton and eventually to use them for a book on the rise of the intellectual in France. Although they have never been studied as a whole, the reports have been consulted for a few biographical works, notably *Jeunesse de Diderot 1713–1753* (Paris, 1939) by Franco Venturi.
 2. Jacques Hébrail and Joseph de La Porte, *La France littéraire* (Paris, 1756). The authors explained the character and purpose of their work in an "Avertissement" which contained a general appeal for bibliographical information to be sent in by anyone, and especially by unknown writers. The new information appeared in the form of "additions" in the edition of 1756, and "suppléments" were published in 1760, 1762, 1764, and 1784. In the edition of 1762, p. v, the authors estimated that somewhat more than 1,800 "auteurs" were then alive in France. Allowing for growth in the population, in the prestige of authorship, and in book production, it seems likely that about 1,500 Frenchmen had published a book or pamphlet in 1750.
 3. On the much-debated questions concerning generations, cohorts, and other age groups, see Clifton Cherpak, "The Literary Periodization of Eighteenth-Century France," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LXXXIV (1969), 321–28, and Alan B. Spitzer, "The Historical Problem of Generations," *The American Historical Review*, LXXVIII (1973), 1353–83.
 4. On the Saint Malo-Geneva line as a demarcation of socio-cultural history, see Roger Chartier, "Les deux France. Histoire d'une géographie," *Cahiers d'histoire*, XXIV (1979), 393–415. For a discussion of the Paris-province question, see Robert Escarpit, *Sociologie de la littérature* (Paris, 1968), pp. 41–44. Of course as Paris is located in the north, one might expect a map of the birthplaces of authors living in Paris to under-represent the south. It also seems unreasonable to expect a close correlation between the birthplaces of authors and crude indicators of literacy such as those discussed in François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire. L'Alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1977).
 5. See the article on Favart in J.-F. and L.-G. Michaud, eds., *Biographie universelle* (Paris, 1811–1852), vol. XIII, pp. 440–42 as well as the more scholarly studies of Georges Desnoiretteres, *Epicuriens et lettrés* (Paris, 1879) and Auguste Font, *Favart, l'Opéra-Comique et la comédie-vaudeville aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1894).

6. In almost half the cases, the *embastillement* came after the completion of d'Hémery's report. Despite their vigilance concerning suspicious characters, the police did not orient their surveillance toward the criminal element in the Republic of Letters but rather attempted to do a general survey of all the writers they could find.
7. The attempts of officials to increase the power of the state by systematic study of its resources goes back to Machiavelli and the development of "reason of state" as a principle of government. Although this tendency has usually been treated as an aspect of political theory, it also belongs to the history of bureaucracy and to the spread of "rationalization" (rather than Enlightenment), as Max Weber understood it. For a recent survey of the literature on the intellectual history side of the question, see Michael Stolleis, "*Arcana imperii* und *Ratio status*. Bemerkungen zur politischen Theorie des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts," *Veröffentlichung der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, no. 39 (Göttingen, 1980), 5-34.
8. Thus the report on Jean-François de Bastide: "He is a Provençal, is witty but not talented, and fucks Madame de Valence, the mistress of M. Vanoé, the ambassador of Holland."
9. See Robert Mandrou, *De la culture populaire aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. La Bibliothèque bleue de Troyes* (Paris, 1964).
10. For more information on all these intrigues, see the works cited in note five.
11. The character of Laurès' poetry, now deservedly forgotten, can be appreciated from a glance at his *Epître à M. le comte de Bernis* (Paris, 1752) and his *Epître à Madame la marquise de Pompadour* (n.p., n.d.).
12. See d'Alembert, *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands, sur la réputation, sur les mécènes et sur les récompenses littéraires*, in d'Alembert's *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (Amsterdam, 1773; 1st ed., 1752).
13. This theme appears most prominently in d'Alembert's *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres*, Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* of 1734, the anonymous tract *Le Philosophe* of 1743, and the article *Philosophe* in volume XIII of the *Encyclopédie*.
14. I have used the term "intellectual" without defining it, because I have tried to establish its boundaries by reconstructing the contemporary context of "authors." I should explain, however, that I do not think that intellectuals and authors are the same thing and that I derive my concept of the intellectual from sociologists like Karl Mannheim, Edward Shils, and Pierre Bourdieu. See especially Bourdieu, *Questions de sociologie* (Paris, 1980).