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# Chamfort, Doctor of Morals: The Maxim and the Medical Aphorism in Late Eighteenth-Century France

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The increasing prestige of medicine as a science, accompanied by the social rise of the doctor, in eighteenth-century France is well-documented.<sup>1</sup> What I would like to argue here, however, is that there exists a correspondence between the establishment of medicine as an independent field of study in eighteenth-century France and the increasing use and influence of an autonomous form of medical discourse, namely, the aphorism, in this period. This is not so much a question of the language used by the more renowned doctors of the day but of a form of discourse deeply imbued and associated with medical practice. (It is nonetheless true that certain famous physicians combined medical and literary roles. For instance, Théophile Bordeu intervenes significantly in Diderot's *Le Rêve d'Alembert*, and Vicq d'Azyr, Marie-Antoinette's doctor, was elected to the Académie Française in 1788, in a sort of social consecration of medical discourse, implicitly incorporating his medical figure and figures into the socio-linguistic norms of 'le bon usage' promoted by the Académie itself.) Yet what interests me particularly here is the insinuation of the medical aphorism itself into other fields of late eighteenth-century discourse, notably those of literature and politics, the traditional domains of the maxim.

To explore this phenomenon in more detail we need first to understand just what the term *aphorisme* meant in late eighteenth-century France. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1762) gives the following definition: 'Aphorisme, Proposition qui renferme en peu de mots une maxime generale. Les Aphorismes d'Hippocrates. Les aphorismes de médecine sont fondés sur l'expérience.'" Two important points are made in this definition: the term is traced back to Hippocrates (a trait consistently found in other dictionaries of the time) and it is associated with empirical medical practice.<sup>3</sup> In fact, these two things go hand in hand. Hippocrates, author of the classical medical work entitled *Aphorisms*, was adopted as a figurehead by many of the more empirically minded doctors of the late eighteenth century, in opposition to the increasingly discredited Galenic pathology of the 'humours'. As such, Hippocrates is identified with a scientific practice (empiricism) which, already in its contemporary English incarnation, claimed as its founder another influential practitioner of the aphoristic form: Francis Bacon.

As early as 1605 in his *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon had advocated the use of 'aphorisms', as opposed to what he called the scholastic 'method', in writing scientific treatises. He notes of the aphorism:

It trieth the writer, whether he be superficial or solid: for aphorisms, except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences; for discourse of illustration is cut off; discourse of connexion and order is cut off; descriptions of practice are cut off. So there remaineth nothing to fill the aphorisms but some good quantity of observation.<sup>4</sup>

Hence the Academie's definition draws concurrently on Hippocrates and English empiricism to establish the character of the aphorism for its late eighteenth-century readers. More significantly, for the purposes of my argument, the Academie's lexicon goes on to allow 'Aphorismes de Morale, Aphorismes de Droit, de Politique' (i.81). This appears to confirm that by the latter part of the eighteenth century, writing aphorisms was no longer restricted to purely medical practice but had extended into other, more contentious areas of discourse.

However, the Academie's extension of the aphorism's prescriptive field was far from being sanctioned by all lexicographers of the time. J.-F. Féraud, writing in his *Dictionnaire critique de la langue Française* (1787-1788), notes that 'Pour la Morale et la Politique, on dit *maximes* plutôt qu'*aphorismes*, et celui-ci ne peut se dire qu'en se moquant, ou dans un style burlesque ou marotique'.<sup>5</sup> Yet Feraud is rebutted *avant la lettre*, so to speak, and with customary robustness, by the eponymous hero of Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste*, who declares: 'J'ai remarqué une chose assez singulière; c'est qu'il n'y a guère de maxime de morale dont on ne fit un aphorisme de médecine, et réciproquement peu d'aphorismes de médecine dont on ne fit une maxime de morale.'<sup>6</sup> Although Jacques still qualifies maxims and aphorisms by their moral or medical provenance, his inversion of the terms reinforces the impression that maxims and aphorisms themselves were increasingly indifferently interchanged towards the end of the eighteenth century in France.

And it is this interchangeability that I believe to be important here. More specifically, Jacques's remarks would seem to suggest that the medical form of the aphorism impacts above all on the 'moral' – that is, literary-political – maxim of the period. To examine this point in greater detail, I shall focus on the *sententiae* of one of the most remarkable moralists of the late eighteenth century, the playwright, journalist and revolutionary, Sebastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort, whose masterpiece, *Maximes et pensées, caractères et anecdotes*, was published posthumously in 1795. I shall contend that Chamfort's text reveals at once the subtle, yet far-reaching, influence that the medical aphorism exerts on the literary maxim of the time and, perhaps more significantly, also points to the political implications of this influence.

From the Academie's own definition of an aphorism, what is clear is that the aphoristic form offers a restricted order of truth different from those

handed down by Church precept and State law or, indeed, by the moralist tradition of the seventeenth century. It is one 'fondee sur l'experience' (both experience and experiment): and this grounding of its truth-claims in empirical evidence is what I shall call the aphorism's 'truth function': its connotation of the truthfulness of empirical medical observation and practice, especially when this is transferred to matters moral and political. beyond its customary sphere of expertise.

Yet, initially at least, Chamfort's maxims appear to owe more to the literary values of an earlier age than to the eighteenth century's preoccupation with empirical (medical) truths. For instance, he writes:

Vivre est une maladie dont le sommeil nous soulage toutes les seize heures. C'est un palliatif. La mort est le remede. (113)<sup>7</sup>

L'amour est comme les maladies epidemiques. Plus on les craint, plus on y est exposé. (348)

Otez [l'amour-propre de l'amour, il reste trop peu de chose. Une fois purge de vanité, c'est un convalescent affaibli, qui peut a peine se trainer. (358)

These maxims on love and death make use of a set of stock-in-trade medical figures (illness and remedy, love as sickness, purging makes weak) which never signify more than their purely figurative roles allow; they illustrate a general point; they are not indices of an alternative socio-historical 'truth'. The last two especially recall La Rochefoucauld, echoing his favourite themes: man's lack of self-mastery, his unavowed subordination to his passions, to his 'amour-propre'. In terms of their form, too, they reproduce the predominance of abstract nouns, the verb *être* and verbs in the infinitive found in La Rochefoucauld's work.<sup>8</sup> In all three instances medical figures serve only to embellish, never to revise or particularise their general statements.

Another of Chamfort's *sententiae* uses a similar medical figure and appears to offer the same deference to the values of the seventeenth-century moralist tradition. It reads: 'Il y a certains défauts qui préservent de quelques vices epidemiques: comme on voit, dans un temps de peste, les malades de fièvre quarte échapper a la contagion' (117). However, its case is more interesting, and ultimately reveals a shift in the balance of authority underpinning its sententious remarks. For, on closer inspection, we see that the opening statement *à la* La Rochefoucauld is already influenced (one might even say contaminated) by the later medical figure which purports only to illustrate its general proposition. Already the 'vices' in question are qualified as 'epidemiques', as though the medical analogy following on from this statement had predetermined the character of its argument. The medical 'truth function' is not only present in this maxim but it exerts a transforming influence on the 'moral' message in which it participates. Derived from the observation of the immunity of victims of quarternary fever to the plague, the 'truth' of medical practice serves to revise the nature of the relationship

postulated between one's faults and one's vices, which the moralist tradition might have retained in the general formulation: 'Il y a certains défauts qui préservent de quelques vices.'<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, this medical 'truth function' itself becomes the subject of another of Chamfort's reflections. Not only does he derive the 'truth' of his maxims from the aphorism's empirical, conditional investigations but he presents the anatomist as the working model for the 'philosophe', that is, the moralist of his day:

Quand on veut devenir philosophe. il ne faut pas se rebuter des premieres découvertes affligeantes qu'on fait dans la connaissance des hommes. Il faut. pour les connaître, triompher du mécontentement qu'ils donnent. comme l'anatomiste triomphe de la nature, des ses organes et de son degodt. pour devenir habile dans son art. (86)

The figure of the anatomist triumphing over the physical and intellectual feelings of revulsion aroused in him by the truths he has uncovered introduces at the same time a different source of truthfulness into Chamfort's more general statement ('Quand on veut devenir philosophe, il ne faut pas se rebuter des premieres découvertes affligeantes qu'on fait'). It is an anatomical 'truth function' which again distinguishes Chamfort's observation from those of the more abstract, classical maxim writing tradition."

Thus Chamfort's *sententiae* become the meeting place of an increasingly challenged and overly abstract moralist tradition (maxim) and an increasingly powerful, medically informed, prescriptive prose (aphorism).<sup>11</sup> What allows Chamfort to ally these two discourses is the presupposition of some common ground between them. That common ground is reason. Two of Chamfort's maxims attest to a very direct identification of reason with medicine, both as a practice and as a profession:

La pensée console de tout et remédie a tout. Si quelquefois elle vous fait du mal, demandez-lui le remède du mal qu'elle vous a fait. et elle vous le donnera. (29)

Notre raison nous rend quelquefois aussi malheureux que nos passions: et on peut dire de l'homme, quand il est dans ce cas, que c'est un malade empoisonné par son medecin. (46)

The latter maxim, in particular, suggests that Chamfort's conception of reason, identified here with a maladroït doctor, is a reason which is both practical and fallible. Not only does this qualification associate reason yet more closely with an empirical medicine that ministers in aphorisms, it also signifies that Chamfort stands as a moral judge of medical reason itself, and thus of medicine as an art or science. In this instance, medicine is no longer an external source of truthfulness to which the moralist might appeal by way of using medical figures in his work. Here medical practice itself passes into the care of the moralist. By appropriating the form in which medicine reasons – the aphorism – Chamfort is then able to reason on medicine itself through its own language.

So having secured a medical 'truth function' for his work by his various evocations of medical figures, he has now to become a doctor himself, to go beyond the stage of writing about medicine in order to begin practising it, no longer using the aphorism for medical description but for moral prescription. Let us then consider the following two maxims in this light:

Celui-là fait plus, pour un hydropique, qui le guérit de sa soif, que celui qui lui donne un lonneau de vin. Appliquez cela aux richesses. (121)

Diminuez les maux du peuple, vous diminuez sa férocité, comme vous guerissez ses maladies avec du bouillon. (523)

In the first, a statement of general medical import about dropsy becomes a particular political injunction about the iniquities of wealth; in other words, a medical prescription becomes a socio-political one. In the second, social ills inciting the insurgent people to feverish violence are to be cured like physical illnesses, by the application of unspecified political sops.

What also becomes clear from maxims 121 and 523 is that, by invoking a medical 'truth function' in his maxims, Chamfort also accommodates his moral-political subject matter into a modified form of *sententiae*. In other words, adopting the medical aphorism's 'truths' also requires adapting his maxims to the medical aphorism's form. To understand what the aphorism brings to the classical maxim in terms of form, we must first define the form of the classical maxim itself. Philippe Moret, in his recent work, *Tradition et modernité de l'aphorisme*, describes the classical maxim of seventeenth-century France according to three criteria: 'brevete, discontinuité, gnomicité'.<sup>12</sup> Gnomicity means the fraught, problematical relation of such sententious forms to the 'truth' – something I have already considered in respect of the medical aphorism. The remaining criteria, brevity and discontinuity, are both relative terms and presuppose a more definite functional, if not formal, quality of the maxim: its autonomy, or self-sufficiency, of meaning (something guaranteed neither by brevity nor discontinuity alone). It is this autonomy which then defines the classical maxim in its generic form.

Following Quintilian, Moret characterises the autonomy of the maxim by what he terms its *brevitas*. This is a quality which is not simply synonymous with 'concision' but has more to do with a sense of syntactical 'fullness' and semantic density: '*Brevitas* ne veut pas forcément dire *abbreviatio*, et le terme ne s'oppose pas à la *rotunditas*, qui définit une qualité de plénitude: bien au contraire.'<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is this fullness of form which allows *sententiae*, such as the classical maxim, an autonomy with regard to their context.

Yet if we return again to the dictionary definition of an *aphorisme* in late eighteenth-century France, we find that it is described precisely as 'Proposition qui renferme en peu de mots une maxime générale'. And this sense of abridgement or concentration of the maxim form found in the Academie's lexicon is reiterated in other dictionaries of the time. The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* reproduces, almost word for word, the Academie's

definition. while the *Encyclopédie* is even more to the point (echoing in the process what I have said of the aphorism's medical 'truth function'): 'APHORISMES. en Droit et en Medecine, sont de courtes maximes. dont la verite est fondee sur l'experience et sur la reflexion. et qui en peu de mots comprennent beaucoup de sens.'<sup>14</sup> 'Renferme en peu de mots', 'en peu de mots comprennent', 'sont de courtes maximes'. Based on what Moret wrote of the maxim's formal *brevitas*, its self-sufficient density of meaning, it appears that the medical aphorism goes one better: it makes this formal *brevitas* into a functional *abbreviatio*. It foregrounds not only its density of meaning but also a concerted brevity of phrase. It is an abridged maxim, a maxim whose own propensity to summarise or condense an argument is taken a stage further to the point where the resulting statement gains an even greater autonomy over its context.

Returning to Chamfort's maxims 121 and 523, we can see that both these maxim-aphorisms bring something else to the classical sententious form of the previous century. Both maxims condense their meaning by using the *vous* form of address directly – 'Appliquez', 'Diminuez' – as a directive, if not an imperative. This form is almost wholly unknown in writers of classical maxims, such as La Rochefoucauld and Vauvenargues.<sup>15</sup> Again it appears to be inspired by medical practice, imitating the precepts handed down to junior physicians by their seniors, in the tradition of those written by Hippocrates himself.<sup>16</sup> Once again, such a modification of the classical maxim's form represents its quality of *brevitas* operating as *abbreviatio*, its density of meaning compacted still further, producing a yet more autonomous, and therefore disruptive, form of *sententiae*.

In Chamfort's work at least, it seems that the medical aphorism of late eighteenth-century France affects the maxim form in two significant ways: it confers upon it a medical-empirical 'truth function', allowing his maxims to draw on an alternative, conditional order of truth; equally, it condenses or concentrates the form of the classical maxim, intensifying the formal autonomy (*brevitas*) of the discourse, making it operate as *abbreviatio*, a greater semantic density in a frequently reduced syntactical unit or series of interlocking units.

So what then are the political implications of these modifications to Chamfort's *sententiae*? Maxim 526 in his *Maximes et pensées* perhaps points to a number of answers to this question. It reads:

L'Assemblée nationale de 1789 a donné au peuple français une constitution plus forte que lui. Il faut qu'elle se hâte d'élever la nation a cette hauteur. par une bonne education publique. Les législateurs doivent faire comme ces médecins habiles qui, traitant un malade épuisé, font passer les restaurants à l'aide des stomachiques.

Once again Chamfort strengthens a general (political) proposition by marrying it to a particular (medical) practice of the time. Thus its general truth value is reinforced by what I have called a medical 'truth function'.

Moreover, in this maxim, the medical practice in question is further affirmed as 'habile' – ironically, a term of approval of the doctor's skilfulness here which is, however, a synonym for deceit in classical moralist prose.<sup>17</sup> Maxim 526 also couches its political injunctions in a medical form of expression, prescribing a course of action to its political 'patients': 'Il faut que [l'Assemblée nationale]', 'Les législateurs doivent faire [...]'. And if the aphoristic qualities evident in maxim 526 do not seem to abridge or condense this particular maxim syntactically, there is nonetheless a foreshortening in the semantics of its proposition. Thus Chamfort's use of the dead metaphor of the political 'constitution' is resuscitated, so to speak, by its newly acquired medical context. As in maxim 117, the medical figure which seems only to illustrate the general argument of the maxim effectively shapes its whole meaning; the extended analogy to a particular medical practice which closes the maxim revises the sense of the general proposition preceding it.<sup>18</sup>

Thus the revolutionary constitution of 1791 is reinvested in Chamfort's maxim with physiological as well as political significance. A reinvestment of meaning which is not without importance, since it transforms the Nation not only into a living organism but implies its susceptibility to disease (conspiracy from within) and potential mortality (the need for self-preservation against enemies from without). It also contributes to the ambiguity of the term Constitution, which, as Keith Michael Balcer has shown, represents one of the major dynamics of revolutionary change, especially from 1791-1793.<sup>19</sup>

More significantly, perhaps, Chamfort's adoption and adaptation of the medical aphorism of his day also makes it a specific vehicle for discursive change too. By its transmission of highly partisan political sentiment, coupled with its direct appeal to the reader, Chamfort's use of the medical aphorism allows him to furnish a median term between the classical moral maxim and the revolutionary political slogan. This development of the [unction of his *sententiae* is every bit as practical as it is theoretical. For it was Chamfort who famously gave Sieyès the incisive title and series of rhetorical questions prefacing his inflammatory brochure of 1759: *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*<sup>20</sup> More pertinently still, as John Renwick has shown, Chamfort was directly involved in writing republican and revolutionary propaganda in late 1792.<sup>21</sup> It was also at this time that, according to Roederer, Chamfort coined the revolutionary slogan 'Guerre aux châteaux! paix aux chaumières!' to accompany the French troops into Belgium in late 1792 and early 1793.<sup>22</sup>

So I would conclude by arguing that Chamfort's innovative use of the maxim owes much to the medical aphorism of his time. More specifically, his direct and partisan maxim-aphorisms give the lie to the more common literary notion of 'aphorism' when applied to Chamfort's sententious prose: a notion which defines it as being 'a game of boxes within boxes which can never be finished or won. [...] So it is with Chamfort that the maxim becomes a game of language played for its own sake, that the poetic takes precedence

over the referential and metalingual', as 'un système purement langagier'.<sup>23</sup> These are anachronistic identifications of Chamfort's *sententiae* with the use of the aphorism in twentieth-century literature. (In fact, it would be much more appropriate to consider Lichtenberg and Joubert as pioneers of this ironic, self-referential conception of the aphorism.)

Instead, I would tentatively suggest that Chamfort's moral and political exploitation of the medical aphorism points instead toward the more overt forms of political propaganda of the nineteenth century: the use of slogans by both conservative and socialist political theorists (De Maistre, Saint-Sirron, Proudhon) and its incorporation into the narrative of politically weighted novels, especially those of Stendhal and Balzac, both confirmed readers of Chamfort." Paradoxically, then, the empirical 'truth function' and the compaction of meaning and phrase brought to the classical maxim by the medical aphorism lead not to closure (as in classical rhetoric) or to linguistic introspection (as in twentieth-century aphorisms) but to an opening up of the form, allowing precisely for its survival, indeed its flourishing at the heart of the political manifesto and the novel, the dominant forms of French prose of the early to mid-nineteenth century.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Laurence Brocbliss and Colin Jones. *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford 1997), esp. ch.7, 'The Medical Enlightenment', p.411-79; or John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment* (Oxford 1981), p.24-58.

2. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*. 4 vols (Paris 1762), i.81. All further references are to this edition.

3. For a further instance of the association of the aphorism with Hippocrates in particular, see *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin: vulgairement appelé Dictionnaire de Trévoux*. 8 vols (Paris 1771). i.404.

4. Francis Bacon. *The Advancement of Learning* (Oxford 1974). p.135-36.

5. J.-F. Feraud. *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française*. 2 vols (Marseille 1787-1788), 1.222.

6. Denis Diderot. *Œuvres romanesques* (Paris 1962), p.755.

7. Sébastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort. *Maximes et pensées, caractères et anecdotes*, ed. Jean Dagen (Paris 1968). All further references and numbering of maxims pertain to this edition.

8. See Serge Meleuc. 'Structure de la maxime', *Langages* 13 (1969), p.69-99.

9. Compare this to La Rochefoucauld's maxim 251: 'Il y a des personnes à qui les défauts siéent bien, et d'autres qui sont disgraciées avec leurs bonnes qualités.' Taken from François duc de La Rochefoucauld. *Maximes et réflexions diverses* (Paris 1977), p.67.

10. Again compare this with La Rochefoucauld's 'maxime supprimée' 74: 'On doit se consoler de ses fautes, quand on a la force de les avouer': see also Luc de Clapiers, marquis de Vauvenargues, *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols (Paris 1968), ii.453. for his maxim 467: 'Il n'appartient qu'aux âmes fortes et pénétrantes de faire de la vérité le principal objet de leurs passions.'

11. For instances of writers of the period calling into question the seventeenth-century moralists' tendency to generalise and abstract, we need look no further than Chamfort, himself, who writes: 'Les moralistes, ainsi que les philosophes qui ont fait des systèmes en physique ou en métaphysique, ont trop généralisé, ont trop multiplié les maximes. Que devient, par exemple, le mot de Tacite: *Neque mulier, amissâ pudicitia, alia abnueri*, après l'exemple de tant de femmes qu'une faiblesse n'a pas empêchées de pratiquer plusieurs vertus? J'ai vu madame de L.... après une jeunesse peu différente de celle de Manon Lescaut, avoir, dans l'âge mûr, une passion digne d'Héloïse. Mais ces exemples sont d'une morale dangereuse à établir dans les livres. Il faut seulement les observer, afin de n'être pas dupe de la

charlatanerie des moralistes' (295): a maxim which is itself a paraphrase, leavened with a specific example, of the marquis de Saint-Lambert's denunciation of La Rochefoucauld in particular in the article 'Intérêt' in the *Encyclopédie*: 'C'est la folie des moralistes de generaliser leurs idées, de faire des maximes. Le public aime les maximes parce qu'elles satisfont la paresse et la présomption; elles sont souvent le langage des charlatans répété par les dupes' (cited in Corrado Rosso, *Procès à La Rochefoucauld et à la maxime*, Pisa 1986, p.19-20).

12. Philippe Moret, *Tradition et modernité de l'aphorisme: Cioran, Reverdy, Scutenaire, Jourdan, Chazal* (Geneva 1997), p.10.

13. Moret, *Tradition et modernité*, p.105.

14. *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, 17 vols (Paris 1751-1765), i.524-25.

15. For exceptions in Vauvenargues, see maxims 342, 394, 710.

16. Although Hippocrates's 'Aphorisms' are overwhelmingly impersonal in tone and style, they nonetheless are directed at a specific, concrete audience – aspiring physicians. As such, they are occasionally explicit in their address, as in Section II, 10: 'Bodies not properly cleansed, the more you nourish the more you injure'; Section IV, 15: 'When you wish the hellebore to act more, move the body, and when to stop, let the patient get sleep and rest'; Section VII, 71: 'When you wish to purge the body, you must bring it into a state favourable to evacuations: and if you wish to dispose it to evacuation upward, you must bind the belly: and you wish to dispose it to evacuation downward, you must moisten the belly.' There are also more complicit precepts using the second person plural, 'we', taking physicians senior and junior as one body. Quotations from *The Genuine Works of Hippocrates*, trans. Francis Adams (Baltimore 1939), p.295, 303, 321.

17. Compare this, for example, to La Rochefoucauld's maxim 245: 'C'est une grande habileté que de savoir cacher son habileté'; see also his maxims 129 and 170. Or, again, Vauvenargues, maxim 98: 'La probité, qui empêche les esprits médiocres de parvenir à leurs fins, est un moyen de plus de réussir pour les habiles.'

18. The classical rhetorical figure that Chamfort appears to be using here is *metalepsis*. See Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford 1988), in which *metalepsis* is defined as 'a figure where a statement must be understood either from what precedes it or from what follows it' (p.365); and again, as a figure 'attributing a present effect to a remote cause' (p.496). Chamfort's medical figures in maxims 117 and 526 would seem to combine these definitions in their effects.

19. See Keith Michael Balzer, 'Fixing the French Constitution', in *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge 1990), p.252-305.

20. See John Renwick, *Chamfort devant la postérité, 1794-1984*, *SVEC* 247 (Oxford 1986), p.170.

21. John Renwick, 'Chamfort: patriote en coulisses: réflexions sur une lettre inédite à Roland', *SVEC* 183 (1980), p.165-76.

22. See Sébastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort, *Œuvres complètes*, 5 vols (Paris 1824-1825), v.345.

23. See, respectively, John J. Humphries, 'The Mad Judge, or Manners without Morals: From La Rochefoucauld's *mot juste* to Chamfort's *mot fou*', *L'Esprit créateur* (Lexington, KY 1982), Pall. 22.3, p.46-58 (58, 55), and Monique Nemer, 'Les Intermittences de la vérité: maxime, sentence ou aphorisme: notes sur l'évolution d'un genre', *Studi francesi* (Turin 1982) September-December 26.78, p.485-93 (491).

24. Stendhal most famously advised his sister, 'Lis Chamfort', in a letter of 7 February 1806. See *Correspondance de Stendhal*, 3 vols (Paris 1962-1968), i.285: see also Jean-Luc Busset, 'Stendhal lecteur de Chamfort', *French Studies Bulletin* 63 (Summer 1997), p.15-17. On Balzac and Chamfort, see Pierre Citron, 'Balzac, lecteur de Chamfort', *L'Année balzacienne* (Bagnole 1969), p.293-301.