CHAPTER 8

The “Ready-Made-Writer” in a Selection of Contemporary Francophone Literary Advice Manuals

Françoise Grauby

INTRODUCTION¹

“On the scene of literary enunciation, the author always presents and expresses himself or herself equipped with his *persona* or posture” insists Jérôme Meizoz (Meizoz 2009, p. 2). “*Posture*,” “ethos,” and “persona” are terms referring to the importance of the art and style of declaring oneself an author in the literary field. If, as Meizoz suggests, authorial stance takes effect at the time of publication, at the moment of the author’s official recognition, can we then assume that discourses on the writer’s voice and body which infiltrate literary advice manuals intended to teach the art of writing, contribute to the making of the author as much as technical guidelines? The terms “voice” and “body” are consciously

Translation by Claire Merrigan

F. Grauby (✉)
University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

employed here in reference to a notion of authorial stance that closely intertwines ethics and aesthetics. This entrenched condition of “art” and “manner,” a kind of corporeal dramaturgy which is considered an essential prerequisite to creation, is referred to as “posture” by Jérôme Meizoz. Emphasizing its theatrical nature, José-Luis Diaz prefers to speak of an “auctorial scenography” which “functions first and foremost in terms of adopted postures, proposed self-images and role-playing” (Diaz 2007, p. 11). For Meizoz, the authorial stance refers to the game that is played “on the scene of literary enunciation and to the mask that is attached to the author” (Meizoz 2007, p. 7). While, as Meizoz has argued in his research on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, posture is not a product of an era of (mass) media, the game of seduction that defines it is nonetheless inherent to the public dimension of all literary activity.

Let us recall some historical perspectives on authorial ethos developed by Meizoz, following Bourdieu (1980) and Viala and Molinié (1993). Derived from the Latin “*positura*” (disposition), the word “*posture*” can be understood both literally (as a particular position of the body) and figuratively (as a moral attitude and/or social condition). Barthes recognizes that “One copies a role, then, by metonymy, an art: I begin producing by reproducing the person I want to be” (Barthes 1994, p. 103). The notion of *posture*, as taken up and developed by Meizoz, refers to the manufacturing of a writer’s self, through the management of both his verbal discourse and his public, literary conditions. This concept evokes Paul Valéry’s sentiment: “To write, means to step on stage – The author must not proclaim that he’s not a performer. There’s no escaping the role” (Valéry 2007, p. 317).

Writers express their stance through a series of indicators: a particular style, choice of literary genre, register, themes, and a variety of paratextual signs ranging from the cover of a book to the mention of biographical details, interviews, correspondence, and essays on the art of writing. The sum of these culminate in a certain way of presenting oneself in the public arena. Non-discursive indicators also play a considerable role in the representation of self, such as the way one dresses, poses in front of a library shelf, or behaves and reacts in response to solicitations. Liesbeth Korthals Altes (2014) rightly mentions the author Houellebecq’s charged silences, which may suggest a stance of marginality or unease. Furthermore, Houellebecq is a contemporary author whose postures are frequently deciphered with such observations: “Aware of the stakes of the media coverage of a writer, Houellebecq involves his entire public

persona in the promotion of his novels and even *includes it in the space of the work itself*: his writings and the posture that promotes them become part of one and the same performance” (Meizoz 2014, p. 5).

The perspectives offered by Meizoz and Diaz, as well as the research carried out by Ruth Amossy (1999) and Dominique Maingueneau (2004) on discursive ethos, provide us with new pathways to consider how the authority and values of a writer are socially negotiated on the public scene, in particular through formats which could be described as “ready-mades.” Diaz, for instance, speculates that aspiring writers consulting literary history may select from the “ready-made” “repertoire of existing *postures* on the market” (Diaz in Amossy and Maingueneau 2009, p. 2). There can be no *coming to writing* without an awareness of the self as a writing subject.

This brings us to the postures of authors put forward by literary advice manuals and how they paint a picture of their readers as legitimate artists and credible writers, as well as the ethical and aesthetic options they propose as indicators of the posture of the budding writer. By obeying the demands of a particular didactic genre and subscribing to the practice of writing workshops, literary advice manuals suggest different ways of inhabiting a creative space. In trying to teach their readers how to behave professionally, they present them with authorial images which are filtered through existing literary models, and are therefore invested with a collective imagination. As such, they offer a kind of identity card for the writer, which is in accordance with a culturally expected archetype. As Sylvie Ducas argues, “becoming a writer and acting as a writer come together in one and the same phantasm” (Ducas 2002, p. 208). If, according to Diaz, “the way of being, the lifestyle, the way of behaving and posing, what he has at his disposition to construct an identity, are [...] just as essential to a writer as the way in which he writes,” then literary advice manuals must include a corporal ethos, postures, and images of the self, which aspiring authors can adopt when they make the decision to write and to be published (Diaz in Amossy and Maingueneau 2009, p. 2). There can be no product without a producer, no novel without an author.

This chapter will examine five twenty-first-century Francophone literary advice manuals that represent the dominant discourse of this tradition: Nadège Devaux, *L’ABC de l’écrivain* (2006, The Writer’s ABC); Faly Stachak, *Ecrire: 350 techniques d’écriture* (2006, Writing: 350 Writing Techniques); Louis Timbal-Duclaux, *J’écris mon premier roman* (2009, I Write my First Novel); Bernard Baudouin, *Comment écrire votre*

premier livre (2002, *How to Write your First Book*); and Alain André, *Devenir écrivain* (2007, *Becoming a Writer*).² These works contain examples of daily writing practices and offer individual exercises to the aspiring writer, while also providing advice on ethos and *posture*. Indeed, in every apprenticeship, a desire for recognition lies dormant: the question of who to be (or who to succeed in being) as a writer on the literary scene becomes a guiding force of his or her writing process and publication projects. As the title indicates, *Devenir Ecrivain* is a work soliciting aspiring writers to create “(a) novel in which you are the hero” because ultimately “it is about knowing what kind of writer you could be” (André 2007, pp. 8, 33). Faly Stachak adds of the author: “You are the greatest hero of this universe!” (Stachak 2006, p. 163). Alain André contemplates the “kind of qualities should you preferably have in order to embark on this adventure” of writing (André 2007, pp. 33–34) and proceeds to underline the indispensability of sensitivity and innocence with regard to the creative act, the importance of maintaining a wholesome distance, and the necessity of working hard. He summarizes these qualities in a stylized formula in which the author is turned into something of an explorer of literature. An oxymoronic logic, sensitive yet resistant, is established to provide us with a key image of the contender for the title of author.

Even if a book, with its quality as a literary artifact, is the desired outcome, its production cannot be envisioned without the fiction of its producer, who constructs and makes visible a creative self. In this respect, it is worth recalling Paul Valéry’s words: “(t)hey write to recreate themselves” (Valéry 2000, p. 251), which highlight that a “fiction of the author” accompanies and supports any declarative position. This underlying portrait of the author goes hand in hand with the apprenticeship of the art of writing. The channeling of creative energy, perceived as an uncontrollable power that transforms a concept into a material object through hard work and discipline, is accompanied by several distinct yet complementary postures. According to Timbal-Duclaux, from the visionary creator to the apprentice, and finally to the small entrepreneur “a writer is like a small one-man business who works for the benefit of large companies: the press and publishing groups” (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 150). Every applicant must make their entry into the field and this requires a series of decisions concerning appearance, context, and literary and postural heritage, as well as their personal literary production. We will study the stages of creation as postulated in literary advice

manuals by comparing them to a number of “collective scenographies” (Diaz 2007, p. 40).

THE BIRTH OF THE CREATOR

Body and Energy

Adopting a writerly posture implies the appropriation of a number of character traits and habits, among which physical characteristics play an important role. The artist’s body, considered as the external physiognomy of an internal system, must learn to self-style and function within a coherent aesthetic regime. Given that the body is visible and tangible, its expressive qualities are decoded and exploited for strategic purposes. Bourdieu’s “bodily hexis” described as the “political mythology realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, durable manner of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu 1977, pp. 93–94), immediately intervenes in the form of a voluntary commitment for the author’s desire to write in a manner which is “pegged to the body” (André 2007, p. 29), or expressed “with his guts” (Devaux 2006, p. 11). As Baudouin highlights, this significant emphasis “to wait to feel the subject ‘vibrate’ in you, to see it come to life” (Baudouin 2002, p. 44) emerges from another commonplace in the discourse on creative writing, namely, that of the physiology of style, wherein writing becomes a quasi-biological disposition: “To write as if we breathe in, breathe out the air from our lungs, except that here, words are leaving our mind” (ibid., p. 13). This birth depends on the passage from the inside to the outside and on a rational management of expenditure.

An energetic imaginary emerges, expressed through caloric images such as Devaux’s claim: “Writing is a burning fire that smolders in you” (Devaux 2006, p. 9) as well as Baudouin’s images of expulsion, such as “(w)riting then becomes the channel through which an energy is diffused that only asks to flow, to take shape, to go towards others” (Baudouin 2002, p. 17). Natural phenomena, particularly thermal ones such as fires and volcanoes, are solicited to express the effectiveness and natural issuance of the creative impulse.

Aspiring authors are invited to engage in a process of intimate speleology, by drawing and drilling into the depths of the self. This operation is nothing less than the discovery of a mysterious creative source, by means of an alchemical operation or even “white magic” (André 2007,

p. 78). Indeed, the reiteration of the magical and uncontrollable nature of writing constitutes an insistent line of force in the majority of these literary advice manuals. The expression “to ride the dragon” refers to the Faustian aspects of creation where “writing is white magic, catharsis, intimate voodoo” (ibid., pp. 24, 128). André also metaphorically describes the process of writing in terms of incantation: “You draw the circle of chalk, make the gestures, pronounce the incantations, and the demon you have summoned appears” (ibid., p. 136). As an ancient way of evoking bursts of inspiration, sprouting from an uncharted territory in the mind, these images are used as a way of recalling primitive sources which precede rules and laws. Behind this uncontrollable force in its purest form, then, lies an archaic anarchy and original chaos.

The preface to *L'ABC de l'écrivain* endorses the idea of an exhilarating plunge: something precious lies dormant in each of us. Such drilling metaphors reinforce the idea of tapping into an untamed power where “as soon as we know how to read and write fluently, we just have to abandon ourselves: to our great surprise, the words, which are our history, emerge all on their own” (Stachak 2006, p. 5). Every book is assumed to have deep roots. In the introduction to Eva Kavlan's *Ecrire et faire écrire*, the injunction “Write!” draws its strength from the illocutionary power of the cry (Kavlan 2018, p. 5). In André's text, the imperative phrases “Be mad!” and “Let yourself be carried away!” (André 2007, pp. 164, 187) command and compel, turning the military virtues of courage and boldness into forceful motifs.

The creator's energetic potential is reinforced by a series of techniques including visualization, concentration, and conditioning. This leads to the exploration of a series of adventurous identities, that are in stark contrast to the pervasive motif of the passive writer. Transformed into a skier, marathon runner, or football player, the writer charges himself like a battery through metaphors of virility and vitality, claiming “crafting a book is to writing what marathons are to running” (Baudouin 2002, p. 78). Or similarly: “We believe that writing is a light sport: pen and paper. That is like talking about the footballer – shorts and spiked shoes, a ball – while forgetting that he needs the stadium” (André 2007, p. 108). We find advice insisting upon the necessity of having an alert and balanced body, which then improves performance: “If you can't find the thread of your speech, leave the table and go for a walk. Alone, of course” (André 2007, p. 139).

Breaking dikes, exploring abysses, opening up to the realm of possibilities: the strength and desire to write resides in the depths of the body, ready to be unleashed. Whatever the end product, the most important thing is to launch the creation machine, to give the endeavor a chivalrous outlook. The manual awakens a buried desire and relies for this on a particular heroic paradigm, namely, that each writer aspires to adventure. The fact that the adventure is an internal one does not erase the physical prospect of willful conquest and action involved. To experience one's own strength, to make impulse the starting point of writing, is to paint the writer in the manner of a Hernani, as a “force that goes” (Hugo 1830, p. 80).

Decor and Characters

It is important to note that the self-stylization of the writer also implies putting the creative self on display, who is concerned, through rituals and practices, with the gaze of the other. While emphasizing the importance of theatrical figuration, Diaz underlines that “these images do not come alone, but are accompanied by a whole decor and by secondary characters” (Diaz in Amossy and Maingueneau 2009, p. 2). Concomitant to the imaginary writer who is unfolded in the pages of the literary advice manuals, a veritable scenography of space and time emerges. In Baudouin, several pages describe the quest for the most suitable location for creation, directing prospective authors to “locate as precisely as possible, and very concretely, the framework in which your editorial activity will take place” (Baudouin 2002, p. 46).

Even if writing is, as we have seen, born out of an accumulation of forces, these still need to be confined to a private space. Having a room of one's own becomes a matter of programmatic importance, as Stachak advises: “Dig yourself a little writing nest, just for yourself” (Stachak 2006, p. 6). The importance of withdrawal, studious retreat, and creative isolation are nicely illustrated in *L'ABC de l'écrivain*:

To do this, you must obviously isolate yourself in a calm and comfortable place, where no one will disturb you, a room in your home in which you feel at ease. If you write during the day, soft music of your choice will create an atmosphere conducive to your inspiration. If you write in the evening, in addition to music, subdued lighting, the light of fireplaces

and candles are companions that encourage meditation, as do aquariums. (Devaux 2006, p. 11)

Generic choices and creative frameworks complement each other, at times intertwining. Shifts and mimetic exchanges occur between the general framework and the chosen forms. Haikus, for instance, should only be composed in a quiet, even rural place, conducive to the observation of nature, with a notebook in hand. According to Stachak, to be written, poetry must issue from “the center of a sacred space” (Stachak 2006, p. 82). For André, this requires mystical contemplation and a high degree of technique, perhaps facilitated by a space “marked by a circle of chalk within which (one can) only [...] practice alchemical games” (André 2007, p. 105). There is a keen awareness that, in order to access the celestial space of poetry, it is necessary to build “a small temple” and to become one with nature (*ibid.*, p. 106).

A fetishistic attachment to writing tools and to the book as an object is already displayed on the covers of these guides. This paratext is ideally suited to paint a picture of the writer adorned with the symbolic accessories of his profession. Typewriters, pens, fountain pens, inkwells, and notebooks become essential elements of the poetic performance and serve as the mythical backdrop to a labor that is perceived as manual. As such, the smallest objects of everyday life transform into literary and auctorial emblems: a pen, a blank sheet of paper, and the small notebook always carried on oneself, serve as the formal signs of writing as a solitary craft, pursued in a private room with tools at hand. These iconic images of writers also emerge in photographs of authors at their desks.

In addition to these artisanal aspects (set against a backdrop of renunciation of worldly goods), isolation and sacrifice enter the construction of self, required of the apprentice: “If Ponge was satisfied with eight square meters of an old bathroom, you can write as well in a room that is not a work of art” (André 2007, p. 107). Adopting the *posture* of the recluse implies having few social interactions. There are little to no secondary characters in this type of authorial scenario. In *L’ABC de l’écrivain*, collective writing is not recommended because “alone, you remain your own master” (Devaux 2006, p. 14). Letting friends read your manuscript also warrants extreme caution, as one “could receive comments that are sometimes clumsy or thoughtless and could hurt you and demoralize you” (*ibid.*). *Comment écrire votre premier livre* confirms that gregariousness is uncalled for: “These are all challenges to be faced alone, because writing

a book is primarily a matter of the writer. It is only after, later, when the book exists materially, that the gaze of others intervenes and generates, in turn, other uncertainties” (Baudouin 2002, p. 7).

All of these choices have a significant impact. They are, as Bourdieu would say, “as many opportunities to experience or assert one’s position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept” (Bourdieu 1984, p. 57). They posit the image of a solitary writer who keeps a malicious or censoring audience at bay. The literary advice manuals target students who are already perceived as producing in isolation, cut off from the world (locked in what we could call a “Flaubertian” conception of literature³), away from all cultural, political, and social concerns. In so doing, they favor the antisocial nature of writing and the “regime of singularity” (Heinich 2000, p. 26), which privileges all which is unusual, original, and unique.⁴ The instructions provided by creative literary advice manuals reflect traditional beliefs about the autonomous nature of the self and the hierarchical nature, centered on the educator, of learning itself. As the prospective author advances in the pedagogical process, the visionary will be transformed into an apprentice.

THE STUDIOUS APPRENTICE

The dialogue with past authors highlights the need to join a community. Sylvie Ducas notes to what extent “the imperative of singularity inherent in the auctorial *posture* implies being part of the plural of a group” (Ducas 2011, p. 244). The aspiring author must own a library “as if bibliophilia were the best proof of the cult that every writer must dedicate to the book” (Ducas 2002, p. 203). The ideal library, which functions as a center of gravity for the author’s work and provides him/her with spiritual nourishment, is another emblematic sanctuary from which to draw strength and originality: “To create a library, to have the books you have particularly loved close to you, to read them, to reread them, to know certain sentences by heart, is never to be alone and naked in front of the blank page again” (André 2007, pp. 83–84).

Whatever the books, the writer needs to be passionate about them. They function as a “writer’s capital” to which he/she is obliged to refer (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 59). At times, after opening a book, the writer indicates that he starts browsing through it:

Here, for example, I take, at random, from the library a collection of poems by Blaise Cendrars [...] In front of you, I now open the collection and go from page to page, stopping here on a title, wandering there on a line. (Stachak 2006, p. 135)

At other times, however, he goes through it more voraciously, invoking the advice of great author s in formulas charged with intensity: “It suffices to knock at someone’s door, Hemingway, for example, and read his advice to young authors, behold, I was sure of it, even he tells you: ‘Read incessantly’” (André 2007, p. 75). The effects of reading are part of the same magical communion already mentioned: “It is a magical potion [...], it is rediscovering a very ancient ritual that consisted of drinking from the skull of ancestors” (ibid., p. 76). It is partaking in a Golden Age, by evoking a mystical and posthumous communion across centuries through the mediation of the book.

The practice of reading invites us to establish a series of influences: “If you have just discovered Claude Simon, why not attack Proust now, who is so present in Simon’s pages? Roubaud? Or Queneau, for example” (ibid., p. 78). Each budding author is invited to bow before “great ancestors from whom he borrows beliefs, motives, forms and *postures*” (Meizoz 2008, p. 2). For André, again, these authorities go by the names of Georges Perec, Michel Leiris, Pascal Quignard, and Louis Aragon, who are not simply authors, but father figures, representing coded programs. Relay figures, colloquially referred to as “uncles” (to highlight their paternal stature) or “construction workers” (underlining their technique), are deliberately used as reminders of their literary choices, their adopted genres, and the way they imposed their voice (André 2007, pp. 40, 86). They illustrate the importance of providing the novice with structures of identification. At the same time, their conduct embodies a particular mode of being in literature which serves as a touchstone for the apprentice.

Timbal-Duclaux’s work refers to the guardian spirit of Simenon, whom he posits as the model of a writer who is both recognized and popular, therefore managing to reconcile two regimes (the professional and the vocational) of writing. His method, his flash cards, his work rhythm (one chapter a day), and even his way of walking with his nose in the air present themselves as a creative “ready-made”:

This is the technique Simenon himself or herself used when he was 'hatching' a Maigret. He went for a walk in the countryside and for a long time took in the fresh air of the trees, flowers, the smell of farms and animals, the smell of the streets, shops, bistros [...] He let his memories of characters and scenes from the past rise inside of him and wrote them down in his mind before returning to his office. [...] Let us add this important detail: during the 15 days he wrote his book, Simenon, who wrote every morning, would start his walk again in the afternoon to revive his memories as his chapters progressed. (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 61)

Literary advice manuals are fond of author biographies and the countless resources and variety of examples that they provide. Taken as a whole, they constitute an anthology of writers' practices, ranging from working hours, to work sequences, and lifestyle. When matters of filiation and genealogy become core aspects of identity, imitation also becomes an important tool in the identity construction of a writer: "That literary influence or imitation fully partake in identity construction, is proven by the dialectical relationship in which, by copying others, the writer discovers himself and forms his own style" (Ducas 2002, p. 199).

Students of these literary advice manuals are regarded as apprentices of an authority which is entirely constructed on the basis of the names and examples of authors. We have already seen that the quest for the self through books is similar to the search for an intimate truth, but it is also expressed through the respect for genealogy, or filiation, via a chain of authors-fathers. The initial encouragements to write are followed by warnings to temper the visionary power of the creative genius through study, imitation, and frugality. The reckless self-explorer quickly becomes a wise and patient schoolchild. A certain assumption of power takes place, reflected in a "contract" between the apprentice and the guide, who has now become an instructor.

This pact of trust and collaboration, in the form of an apprenticeship contract, stipulates obedience to the rules and is a way of binding oneself to the apprentice. Through this bond, a pact is made between the author of the literary advice manual and the apprentice, wherein the latter vows to become a writer-craftsman who "manufactures" customized literary objects. It is not enough to call oneself a writer; it is also necessary to support this project through an actual investment of time, measured in sacrifices and commitments, combining, as we have seen, a vocational and a professional logic. In *Comment écrire votre premier livre*, each

chapter ends with a rule presented in a box, which recalls the stipulations of a professional contract: “Second rule: At no time, until my book is finished, should I be distracted by another writing subject” (Baudouin 2002, p. 45). The rules are summarized at the end of the book under the title, “Reminder of the fundamental rules of book writing” just before the section “Writers talk about writing,” as if to emphasize the scholastic aspect of the literary advice manual’s teaching method.

In several manuals, exercises are presented as lessons. Discipline, methods, and time-management punctuate the life of the worker-writer. For example, *L’ABC de l’écrivain* is divided into 18 chapters, with titles such as “Your daily writing exercises,” “Different work plans,” and “The organization of your writing work” which are indicative of a methodical logic, measured and counted in steps, at the end of which the writer can obtain recognition (or a virtual diploma) in the form of two “degrees” of either (i) publication or (ii) initiation into a fraternity. As such, if there is one virtue taught by the great ancestors, it is that of diligent work: “writers (and the greater they are, the more this holds true) are driven by an almost soaring desire to work, correct, copy, all of which is exercised despite discomfort or emotional misery” (André 2007, p. 116). Capturing the poetic *furor* in the magic circle is one thing, subordinating the creative project to a clear methodical approach, with a work plan and canvas, is another.

It is implied that those who are rewarded with a publication have systematically followed a pre-determined path. More than merely suggesting rules of conduct, the literary advice manuals suggest rules of life that must be complied with if one wishes to earn the title of “author.” By deeming everyone capable of following an impeccable pre-professional path, the guides assume that every individual acts in a homogeneous, coordinated, and systematic fashion. Not being deemed worthy of the title “author,” then, does not simply imply that one is not able to write well, but also that one is no longer allowed to participate in the literary banquet.

The lessons which are put forward, however, are characterized by the ambiguous desire to reconcile two different and diverging author images: that of the whimsical artist and that of the studious worker. On the side of discipline, Devaux advises: “Whether you write a simple paragraph, a page or more, the essential thing is that you take up your pen every day to perfect yourself and learn to make your ideas, your words and your sentences dance, in order to bring them together” (Devaux 2006,

p. 13). The literary advice manuals are committed to bringing together a solid work effort driven by combining perfecting and learning with the impalpable freedom of inspiration (making ideas dance), which leads to an at times incompatible mix of dedication and liberty. The *posture* of an accountant classifying his records who must “catalog, classify, cut out, enumerate, group, prioritize, number, order, distribute” (André 2007, p. 328) must coexist with the libertarian desires of a free and inspired creator.

ENTREPRENEUR

Another intellectual classification has now crept into the operation, namely, that of the distinction between the “chosen ones” and the “others.” Aligning oneself with those who identify as writers automatically means distinguishing oneself from those who do not. The very fact of publishing one’s work constitutes a magnificent moment which, according to these literary advice manuals, is both exceptional (as in, rare) and sacred (as in, aspired to): “This sudden recognition has all the appearances of a religious conversion. You receive a call, if not from God himself, then at least from one of his archangels. Clinging to your mobile or land line, you stagger, like Claudel struck by grace next to his pillar [...] you are on a cloud” (André 2007, p. 32).

The sought-after reward is not only a publication as such, but also membership to the “great family of writers” (Devaux 2006, p. 13) which resembles admission to a select circle. The next step consists of initiating the novice into a milieu which not only has its own rules and practices, but also its own secrets. As such, it holds the key to typical constraints, such as knowing how to present your manuscript or how to choose your publisher, as well as the mysteries of publication. The literary advice manuals provide information on how to transition from amateur to professional and put forward the idea of a writers’ corporation as well as that of a commercial enterprise. The writer is transformed into a producer. A more bourgeois way of being emerges, aimed at bringing together a creator, who is taking his first steps into the professional arena, and an already established production circuit. If the book is the product of a self, it is a self shaped according to specific rules, which are those of the market. In literature as well, “(t)he laws of supply and demand apply, as in any industry or trade” (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 150).

While every manuscript inevitably bears the traces of its writer's body, "his flesh and blood" (André 2007, p. 336) the finished product must be impeccably groomed in order to be marketed: "You must not present yourself as a genius, but as a good professional. Use a nice piece of writing paper, send clean, if not impeccable, manuscripts" (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 151). Authors must adopt new postures in this phase: not only do they have to protect themselves from successive rejections by putting up a shield, they also must accept the necessity of positioning themselves in the literary market, by questioning where they will be positioned within that market, and therefore what type of author they will be.

The time has now come to remind the candidate of the reality of the publishing world and its selling imperatives as well as of the strategies the author must deploy to overcome these challenges (e.g., the need to acquire a second profession). In addition to those realistic postures, the manuals also evoke a more rebellious attitude which functions as an expression of the apprentice's authenticity. André acknowledges this, "when you want to write, you don't want to hear this advice, especially if you are under thirty-five years old and are, at the very least, inclined to revolt against the constraints of an 'ordinary' life, that of people who do not write" (André 2007, p. 352). Indeed, an impetuous individual who casts off a docile nature and refuses any compromise could still adopt a noble posture, inspired by a long-standing Romanticist tradition, but this would not be consistent with the desire for economic benefits. This epoch demands a more flexible idea of the writer's status.

This conjunction of a social and institutional inscription (through the figure of the author) with an imaginary world (through the figure of the creator) inevitably creates certain tensions. These dialectical contortions reveal that literary advice manuals are fraught with tension, oscillating between "pantheon and factory" (Ducas 2013, p. 191), professionalization and vocation, bestseller and high literature, routine and adventure. By bringing together "consumption and consecration" (ibid., p. 199), they combine a vocational logic (closely bound to an imperative of singularity) with a professional or even commercial logic, and attempt, with varying degrees of success, to reconcile them.

CONCLUSION

Like one of the versatile characters from the *Comédie humaine*, the budding writer has to adopt many different faces and must allow different imaginations to coexist. Writers are at the same time the masters of their own imagination, disciples of the great masters of the past, and toys in the hands of publishers, who are subject to the laws of the market. As such, they switch between operations and roles, which they have to acquire through identification. Each context requires its own appropriate *postures* and values, which will be projected in their work, and made visible through the choices they make.

Which traces of the writer can be found in the literary advice manuals, then? The scenographies of the three main “scenes” in which the emergence of the writer-apprentice (the chosen one, the student, and the entrepreneur) play out, put forward three different kinds of representations, which are at times in competition with one another, and at other times, supplementary. Our brief overview of a number of francophone literary advice manuals points toward an image of a sovereign writer, the sole owner of intellectual rights, who composes original, solitary, unique works. The literary advice manuals insist on a single author, a single theme, a single genre, a single theory. The ideal artist must therefore be solitary, possess physical and mental strength, and always keep the company of her intellectual mentors, who abide in an entirely internalized space. A closer look, however, shows that French-language literary advice manuals are fraught with tensions: perpetuating the canon while emphasizing personal practice, they remain heavily invested in a certain mythology of writing, the *furor poeticus* or the magic of creation.

NOTES

1. Most of the texts in this chapter have not been translated. All translations are by Claire Merrigan, unless otherwise indicated. Like Liesbeth Korthals Altes, we have chosen to maintain Meizoz’s French notion of “posture,” which is most accurately translated as “authorial stance” in most of the text, italicizing it to indicate that it is the French term.
2. The authors selected all combine the unique history of the French literary milieu and the literary models with the relatively recent contribution of the Anglo-Saxon pragmatism/techniques that is dominant in literary advice at present. The authors also hold important positions in creative writing instruction. For instance, Alain André is the founder of Aleph-Ecriture, the

foremost provider of creative writing schools/workshops in France. Similarly, Timbal-Duclaux is a well-respected specialist of popular literary advice manuals.

3. Flaubert is undoubtedly one of the most cited authors in Francophone literary advice manuals. There are, for example, six consecutive quotations from his *Correspondence* in Baudouin's chapter "Les écrivains parlent de l'écriture/Writers talk about their craft" (Baudouin 2002, pp. 180–181). Timbal-Duclaux presents *Madame Bovary* as a novel that "will serve you both as a model and a rival. Analyze Flaubert's technique and position yourself in relationship to him" (Timbal-Duclaux 2009, p. 74).
4. In her research on self-representation and the definition of the writer, Nathalie Heinich distinguishes between two vocational models: the professional, who inscribes himself or herself in a profession and values professional competence, and the vocational. These two registers are expressed through different indicators and linked to two regimes: the regime of singularity (emphasizing originality and singularity) and the regime of community, through which writers ally themselves with the collective good (Heinich 2000, pp. 240, 153).

REFERENCES

- André, Alain. 2007. *Devenir écrivain*. Paris: Leduc.
- Amossy, Ruth. 1999. *Images de soi dans le discours*. Lausanne and Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé.
- Amossy, Ruth, and Dominique Maingueneau. 2009. Autour des 'scénographies auctoriales': Entretien avec José-Luis Diaz, auteur de *L'écrivain imaginaire*. *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours*. <http://aad.revues.org/678>. Accessed 21 November 2019.
- Barthes, Roland. 1994. *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Baudouin, Bernard. 2002. *Comment écrire votre premier livre: Depuis le désir d'écrire jusqu'à la conception, la création et la publication*. Genève: Ambre.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1980. *Questions de sociologie*. Paris: Minuit.
- . 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Devaux, Nadège. 2006. *L'ABC de l'écrivain: Guide pratique de l'écriture*. Québec: Les Editions du Cram.
- Diaz, José-Luis. 2007. *L'écrivain imaginaire: Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique*. Paris: Champion.

- Ducas, Sylvie. 2002. Roman auctorial et fiction biographique: L'Ecrivain-lecteur ou le paradigme de la lecture dans la rhétorique de la vocation littéraire. *La Lecture Littéraire* 5–6 (April): 177–208.
- . 2011. *Les Médiations de l'écrivain: Les conditions de la création littéraire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- . 2013. *La littérature à quel(s) prix?* Paris: La Découverte.
- Heinich, Nathalie. 2000. *Etre écrivain: création et identité*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Hugo, Victor. [1830] 1985. *Hernani. Œuvres complètes, Théâtre*, vol. I. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- Kavlan, Eva. 2018. *Ecrire et faire écrire: Manuel pratique d'écriture*. Paris: De Boeck-Duculot.
- Korthals Altes, Liesbeth. 2014. *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Maingueneau, Dominique. 2004. *Le Discours littéraire: Paratopie et scène d'énonciation*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Meizoz, Jérôme. 2007. *Postures littéraires: Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*. Genève: Slatkine.
- . 2008. Posture et biographie: Semmelweis de L.-F. Céline', *CONTEXTES*. <http://contextes.revues.org/2633>; <https://doi.org/10.4000/contextes.2633>. Accessed 21 November 2019.
- . 2009. Ce que l'on fait dire au silence: posture, ethos, image d'auteur. *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours*. <http://aad.revues.org/667>. Accessed 21 November 2019.
- . 2014. Cendrars, Houellebecq: Portrait photographique et présentation de soi. *CONTEXTES*. <http://contextes.revues.org/5908>. Accessed 21 November 2019.
- Stachak, Faly. 2006. *Ecrire: 350 techniques d'écriture*. Paris: Eyrolles.
- Timbal-Duclaux, Louis. 2009. *J'écris mon premier roman*. Paris: Editions Ecrire aujourd'hui.
- Valéry, Paul. [1894–1945] 2007. *Cahiers*, vol. 2, ed. Judith Robinson. Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.
- Valéry, Paul. [1961–1987] 2000. *Cahiers/Notebooks*, vol. 2, trans. Rachel Killick, Robert Pickering, Norma Rinsler, Stephen Roma, and Brian Stimpson. Frankfurt, Berlin, and New York: Peter Lang.
- Viala, Alain, and Georges Molinié. 1993. *Approches de la réception: Sémiostylistique et sociopoétique de Le Clézio*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.