

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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# Memoirs of an Egotist

Stendahl

## Introduction

The present 40,000 word memoir was written by Stendahl (1783-1842) during a period of thirteen days, in June-July 1832. Though left unpublished until late in the nineteenth century, it came to public attention along with *The Life of Henri Brulard*, Stendahl's huge and ambitious autobiography. We have much to learn about the author from the brief memoir.

The setting of the Memoir      The Memoir of an Egotist is Stendahl's account of a considerable period, nine and a half years, in which he returned to Paris from an administrative post in Italy, establishing himself as member of a salon culture, of a type peculiar to the Napoleonic period, and to the culture of the restored Bourbon monarchy. (The Italian authorities had forced Stendahl's removal from Italy, with their suspicion of him as a carabinieri spy, while other factions viewed him as dangerously liberal.)

The personal background of the writing.      More background than that is needed, to understand the emotional ballast Stendahl was bringing back from Italy to Paris with him. For several years, while serving the French government in Milan, he had been in love with a beautiful (to him) woman, who had loved him in return, but who would not 'give herself to him.' It was partly in order to loosen the remorseless hold of this woman, that he made his return for a decade in Paris. Though the city seemed to him intolerably ugly, he embraced it as a life-changer, though he could not, even at that, free himself from one lasting anxiety: that his Parisian friends would mock him, for having failed to score in a multi-year job of Italian courting.

## Chapter One

WRITING:      What is 'writing' itself?      This question often concerns Stendahl, who writes in 'real time,' with a sense of the 'reality' of the historical act. Stendahl is always interested in what writing is. That concern is formative in the present memoir. But not only there. In his longer autobiography, *The Life of Henri Brulard*--not published until the 1890's, like the present Memoir-- Stendahl opens by declaring he has reached his fiftieth year, and can evaluate that fact by measuring his personal memories against the historical age, in the thousands of years, that has elapsed since the construction of the greatest historical monuments of Rome. He sees those monuments around him, he experiences the finitude and concreteness of the writing act he is performing. He is concerned with writing as an act in history, just as, from the start of the present Memoir, he is concerned with his writing as a way of dealing with a personal-historical context in which he finds himself. The notion of writing as 'work against resistance,' which Stendahl nails down as the pressure of the writing act, has to seem contemporary to (for instance) the reader of the work of Jacques Derrida in our time, with his stress on *écriture*. Stendahl opens his work on thoughtful issues. He wonders what kind of readership he will have for this memoir. He imagines that if any readership it will be of the age group ten to twelve, at the time of his writing. Can what he writes out of his personal preoccupations today, he asks, concern youngsters twenty plus years his junior? Do we write for ourselves? Our peers?

ROMANCE: Separation from Platonic love      Stendahl has been in love for several years with a young woman from Milan. Being an egotist, he naturally wants his desires fulfilled by a sexual consummation. However Metilde will not satisfy that desire, whether out of doubts about Stendahl, or pressures in herself or her family. The result is that Stendahl is tortured by desire and unfulfillment. He sees no way to break through the knot of his emotions, and returns to Paris to find some freedom from his obsession with this woman. That freedom is not so easily obtained, even in Paris, for Stendahl dreads being mocked, and

fears that his Parisian friends will mock him, for having run out of an affair which he could not bring to a consummation.

**CITY: Paris** Stendahl was born in Grenoble, was French, but was not very familiar with the capitol of his country. At the time of writing the present memoir he was in his late thirties, already somewhat known for writings on Italian art and music, and was ready to enlarge his social sphere. (Little did the friends, who were to form this sphere in Paris, know what treasures of fictional power—*The Red and the Black* (1832), *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839)-- were building inside their friend's mind. In any case Stendahl plunged—like Jean-Jacques Rousseau a half century earlier-- into that same Paris which for two centuries had been mothering salons, intellectual 'reunions,' and world shaping ideologies. He was up for the cultural richness and attention of his nation's capitol.

## **Chapter Two**

**FRIENDSHIP.** M. le baron de Lussinge becomes Stendahl's closest friend, during the author's period of residence in Paris. At thirty six, when Stendahl arrives in Paris, this aristocratic gentleman, who has the intelligence and smarts of someone twenty years older than him, lodges in the same quarters as Stendahl, and the two friends spend quality time, every week, talking together and sharing opinions. Slowly the divergence in their values grows harsher—the baron, money hungry, becomes preoccupied with his family inheritance, and with the growth of his estate. Finally but gradually Stendahl drifts away from the café where he and the baron had habitually met, and with that break the relationship gradually dissolves.

**FRIENDSHIP LOST.** Few details are offered, to explain the nonetheless common experience of a fading friendship. Even in this memoir, written over a period of only three days, Stendahl knows how to go to the heart of the matter. He shows how Lussinge's competitive bantering turns from good natured guy stuff to money-bragging, and accordingly to the lack of solidarity Stendahl feels, with his formerly close friend. The last stage of friendship-dissolution occurs when Stendahl changes cafes, leaves the habitual spot where he and Lussinge would meet; Lussinge reciprocates.

**PSYCHOLOGY: Stendahl's mood** Especially during these first years of return to Paris, Stendahl hangs out with a few coeval buddies, who inevitably consider him a bit crazy for the tenacity with which he remains faithful to the memory of Metilde. While in fact this author, whose imagination is restless, is at all times active and creative, he is in fact putting on the antic as a screen over his depression. His acquaintances, as he says, considered him "fou", nuts, and he spends considerable time alone, contemplating lost love, and his low finances. For him the worst days are Sundays, when he sits in the park and reflects on the wonderful week-ends he used to enjoy with Metilde.

## **Chapter Three**

**ROMANCE** 'Love gave me a comical virtue; chastity,' remarks Stendahl, summing up the painful consequences of his long lasting Italian love affair. Earlier in the decade, however, he had at least been induced to recognize his erotic feelings. Although he said no to the sexual in a bachelor party for the divine debutante, Alexandrine, and once again to the case of the lovely princess Kassera—a rejection he later bitterly regretted-- he was aware again that there was in fact something to say no to. His erotic antennae were aroused. It would not be until 1824, several years after returning to Paris, that Stendahl would again take a mistress, and even then the affair would be nostalgic, tend, and tintured by the memory of Metilde.

**SEXUALITY: Alexandrine** Stendahl has an opportunity to have sex with a beautiful French girl, Alexandrine. But he does not have any desire or sexual activity with her, a semi-failed affair. He is still attached to Matilde in his mind.

## **Chapter Four**

**FRIENDS** Before the concern for the world of power politics, which absorbs Stendahl in his nine year return to Paris, lay his long term involvement with the Napoleonic adventure. Stendahl had worked and fought with Napoleon's armies, in various administrative and military enterprises, having in fact participated with the Napoleonic effort in Russia, as well as throughout western Europe. (He had been present at the burning of Moscow, had played important roles as a logistics administrator—overseeing supplies distribution—and indeed attracted attention for his knowledge of power politics.) Upon returning to Paris, consequently, he was able to fall back into old acquaintances, from war days, and to make his way into familiarity with many of the intellectual and governing figures of the city. Among his acquaintances were Destutt de Tracy, an eminent and influential psychologist and man of letters, and Philippe de Segurs, an aristocrat and political bigwig, whom Stendahl alternately hates and, as the man ages, reveres. It is Stendahl's view of himself, in fact, that he is too ready to admire, and in admiring too undiscerning.

**PARIS AGAIN** Stendahl, as remarked earlier, had a certain awe for Paris—its intellectual milieu, its international quality-- as do and did most non-Parisian French people. However, Stendahl's admiration, even emulation, of 'great individuals' and great places, yielded to a variety of more provincial biases, which he was never to extirpate. During the years we consider, Stendahl came to despise Paris for its lack of mountains, for its cults of national heroism, which were fueled, too often, by the shallow exploits of farm boys, interested only in their hair styles and the cut of their moustaches. Courage is admirable, says Stendahl—like good food or wit—but it has something comical about it, if it is put on for show.

## **Chapter Five**

**WRITING: COLLOQUIAL STYLE** Wit, good food, and courage make a typical colloquial Stendahlian salad. We are already familiar with the familiar tone in Stendahl, his readiness to joke at others in his text—think of how he mocks such bigwigs as Phillipe Segur—his comment on a comment of his own 'that it was so badly written,' or, at the end of the previous chapter, the authorial apology for excessive digressions. These small personal turns are steps toward a colloquialism which was rare in French literature, and which heralded a much broader set of developments, the live presence of the author's voice, judging, mocking, or evaluating his writing procedure, as he goes along.

**ACQUAINTANCES:** The present chapter opens for Stendahl a field of social observation, as he reviews, from ten years posterior to his arrival in Paris, the cast of characters who formed his tableau of daily acquaintances. Stendahl's previous life—before Italy, before the return to France—had introduced him to many of the aristocratic-political-military bigwigs who made up the tableau of his Memoir. He does not hesitate to praise or mock, as he goes along. (In an earlier chapter he has referred to this *au jour le jour* life style, that is 'everything in its turn,' 'taking on life as it comes,' doing it, we might say, as it presents itself, just as Stendahl's favorite General Lafayette took on life one thing at a time, though from the stately old age of seventy five.

Those mocked by our author, in the present chapter, are hardly pilloried—the punishment is lighter than that: Mr. Thurot, the Professor of Greek, is so eager to be invited as a member of the Academy, that although he is an ultra-liberal he guards his every statement or movement; Mme. de Tracy is so concerned for the advancement of her son, the psychologist Destutt, that she does research in contemporary epistemology, in order to prompt him with fresh ideas; General Lafayette, a grand homme with a charming style and a fabulous past, can't keep his hand off the young girls' butts.

Stendahl introduces a pair of comments on himself, that tell us a lot about how he sees himself, in his relation to society. 'I am satisfied with an inferior position' is one of these comments; the other is that 'everyday I feel less involved' in this Parisian high society. The second remark reminds us of the gradual dissolution of Stendahl's relationship with the Baron de Lussinge, Stendahl's first real relationship in Paris, in 1821. Has Stendahl a penchant for gradually waning relationships? Is the side of him which is pre eminently a novelist, an inclination to portray individuals as part of a larger scenario, into which gradually they fade, and the author with them?

**PSYCHOLOGY: TIMIDITY** Stendahl emphasizes his dislike of meeting people—in, that is, a conventional setting, where people in society who don't know one another are introduced to each other. Nor does he appreciate it if someone approaches him on the street and starts speaking with him. What he enjoys, however, is precisely the opposite of these fake gestures toward establishing community. He enjoys the milieu of his favorite salons, mainly masculine—and particularly the salon Delecluze, to which he goes weekly, and where he encounters a regular set of the city's public intellectuals, gathered for a continuing discussion of issues topical in the city. It says even more, about this author's turn of mind, that his greatest pleasure is arriving in a strange city, where he knows no one, and walking anonymously through it, greeting people who are to him purely human beings.

## **Chapter Six**

**HOBBIES: CONVERSATION** In the event-snapshot described above, Stendahl tells us the kind of issues he likes to converse about; it being understood that 'what one likes to converse about' is the truly important and interesting. (The subtext, here, is a culture which is increasingly boulevardier, unfolded on the boulevards and in the cafes of Paris, especially during the nineteenth century, and which is strongly centered around conversation and discourse). On the occasion in question Stendahl meets his fellow lodger, and early on his best Parisian friend, le baron Lussinge, and a cousin of Lussinge at a café: 10;30 A.M. After taking their breakfast, they return to Lussinge's office, leaving Stendahl to reflect on the sterility of the trio's conversation. What was wrong? These two other men had had no interest at all in the one thing Stendahl found engaging, the 'theory of human personality,' and the depiction of the human heart, 'le coeur humain,' in literature and music. They were pragmatists and had little of interest to say to the person of aesthetic temper.

**HOBBIES: WALKING** Stendahl lets us inside his moods, as did Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Reveries of a Savoyard Vicar*, or more generally in his accounts of his feelings in the presence of the natural scenes he walks through. Stendahl is subject to city reveries. He meets an old friend on the street, and notes that the man, who could have gone to the top in Paris, as an eminent thinker and writer, has aged and grown dull, after having chosen a career path that took him to marriage and provincial life, the two killers. Stendahl revolves this reflection as he walks through the streets of Paris, this city he both hates and, clearly, loves. We are in the midst of that inimitable private condition, reveries, in which each of us finds him or herself uniquely alone—and true to himself.

**HOBBIES: THINKING / PREOCCUPATION WITH THE PAST** As he reviews the mind he was ten years previously—and by this time Stendahl is far past his infatuation with Metilde—Stendahl is swamped by traces of the preoccupation he felt in the past, for this love that 'seemingly would not go away.' Another snapshot is given us, to illustrate this kind of preoccupation. Stendahl is left alone with nothing to entertain him—just where Metilde belonged—and hours of idle walking through Paris ahead of him. Metilde is gone but he will spend the day preoccupied by her presence. Even though he is no longer preoccupied by her absent presence, in 1832, he can in that year still reconstruct what it was like to be preoccupied by her absence.

## **Chapter Seven**

**WORLDVIEW: ANTI PATRIOTISM** Stendahl continues his reflections on France, his homeland, by stressing his extreme contempt for the French. He feels scorn for contemporary literature in France—on the stage and in writing the first decades of the nineteenth century were not a classic moment for France—and Stendahl himself was not yet a visible figure on the French literary horizon. We can think, in this context, of Stendahl's lifelong admiration for the genuine passion of the Italian people, as opposed to the artificial in French culture. It was this perception that led Stendahl to undertake his trip to England in 1821, to rinse the French spleen out of himself, and to bring himself closer to Shakespeare.

**PSYCHOLOGY: THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE** In 1816, thus before the return to Paris in 1821, Stendahl had discussed suicide with the British Lord Brougham, who had expressed the idea that the act was disgusting, for it opened your life and all its belongings to public inspection. Stendahl, on the other hand, fancied a smoother form of suicide, death by disappearance into the ocean. These were the literary

thoughts of a sophisticated young aesthete in his early thirties. Quite naturally, such thoughts aligned with related reflections on the kind of tombstone the writer preferred.

**PSYCHOLOGY: TOMBSTONE MEMORIAL** Cimarosa, Mozart, Shakespeare...18. was to serve as the tomb text for Stendahl, with a simple BEYLE at the top. Thus Stendahl, contemplating mortality at what would, at his moment, have been an early anticipation of midlife, thus of mortality, aligns himself with two musicians of classical clarity and deeply high culture provenience, and with the widely recognized master of classical theater. The tombstone he sketched was to be readied for the Cemetery of Andilly, in France—no celebrated last resting place-- but was to be free of any element of the vaudevillesque, Stendahl's portmanteau term for the French touch in culture. What was this pervasive French trait that Stendahl so hated, and for the opposite of which he strove in his own writing? It seems to have been an absence, first of all, of that life and death interest in the passions which Stendahl sees as characteristically Italian. (No Frenchman, Stendahl insisted, would ever have considered dying for love, whereas love-killings and love-suicides were routine in Italy.) In place of true and deep feelings, the Frenchman, Stendahl maintained, was satisfied with rhetoric, simulated passions, and shibboleths of communal respect, which were hollow inside.

## Chapter Eight

**SOCIAL LIFE IN ENGLAND** Stendahl is infectiously good humored, after his interlude in England, and he conveys this new mood from the start. His encounters with the three British girls, in the house of Miss Appleby, had been uplifting and charming for Stendahl—and the artistic pleasures of Paris, which he so often claimed to dislike, were fresh again to him. He recreates his young personality, boldly explaining himself as a character of moods.

**FRIENDSHIP** He recaptures some of this self-aware personal insight, so typical of his writerly movement, in the lengthy tale he tells of the young Italian, Miniorini. Stendahl bonds with this formal and aristocratic youngster, who will end up one day as Stendahl's co lodger, in the house of the singer Mme. Pasta, a major musical performer of Stendahl's own moment. Stendahl typically assesses his own personal style in terms of the very different nature he finds in the younger Italian. Miniorini is not simply formal and mannered, but he is closed in on himself. Stendahl, as he realizes in reflecting onto himself, finds that his own most important trait is 'd'etre expressif,' 'to be expressive.' In coming clearly into that realization, he understands why, as a lover—and indeed after being a writer he is above all a lover—he remains passionate for as long as the situation supports it, then falls rapidly off into a cliff of frigidity from which he never returns—with the same person. Stendahl lays out clearly, for his own case, the kind of personal style profile each of us, everywhere, sketches inwardly for his or herself.

**HOBBIES: MUSIC AND MATH** Steandahl's father was an arch traditionalist, strongly opposed to his son's study of music and the arts, and Stendahl, who was far from a daddy's boy, had to stage his own inward rebellion, in order to follow his teen age passions. Starting at age 16, Stendahl commenced studying the violin, the art of singing—which so consistently fascinated Jean-Jacques Rousseau, throughout his mature life—and the clarinette; loveable training which would ready him for a social life in which the arts of performance would be developed to high levels in the Paris of the day. For a time Stendahl's passion for math rivalled his concern with music practice, but as with many artists only a short period was devoted to the Pythagorean unity of the twin harmonies of number and chord. To cite an exception, the French poet Paul Valery was, in the twentieth century (1871-1945), not only a strictly classical art-constructor, but a serious mathematician.

**HOBBIES: THEATER** For Stendahl, but purely as a spectator, the theater was the highest social pleasure. Like an equally great French novelist a century later—Andre Gide—Stendahl offers us the profile of a daily life in which writing work, meetings with co-artists, and evening at the theater were the way daily life looked. Stendahl lodged in the home of a great friend and theatrical star, the Italian Madame Pasta, and through her secured passageway into the acquaintance of many of the major French performers of the period in question, in the present memoir. In London, Stendahl had at last enjoyed the inspiration of seeing Edmund Kean perform in Othello and Richard II, powerful experiences for Stendahl,

in which the actor's greatness appeared to consist in his not acting out lines at all, but coming upon those lines unexpectedly, from within himself.

## **Chapters Nine and Ten**

**HOBBIES: OBSERVATION** Stendahl raises the question, in the present chapters, of 'what kind of man am I,' and reaches toward a reply, in his response that he is the type of person who 'gets involved with whatever meets him on his path,' in other words he is a forerunner of that French type, the boulevardier or flaneur, who (in the coming era of Baudelaire (1821-1867), picks up on the profusions of daily life, draws inspiration, pleasure, and news from the café-lined streets of Paris. The present memoir, so brief and so quickly written, offers us a profusion of encounters, salons, snapshots of 'what is transpiring in the cultural/political background,' and personal evaluations. On looking back onto this era we, Like Stendahl himself, may ask of ourselves, 'what kind of man or woman am I'? In responding to this question, as a global human in the twenty first century, we may well respond that we too are boulevardiers, pick up what we meet along the avenue; but we might want to substitute, for some of Stendahl's world references, the contemporary vocabularies of the electronic and digital revolutions. We wander through haphazard mazes of messages, codes, references, and streamed additions to our factoid stockpile, not to mention the always aleatory of the smart phone shopping place.

**THOUGHTS ABOUT PAST** Every person and every age has its own distinctive sense of historical placing—whether in terms of family genealogy, geopolitical learning, or one's own aging and time-marking way of being present in the world. Stendahl is acutely conscious of his personal history—having lived the Napoleonic times, watched Moscow burn in 1812, settled to work and love in Italy, then returned to Paris for the nine year period which is the framework of the present memoir. As citizens of the twenty third century we read with fascination, in the present chapters, of Stendahl's anticipation of living eighty or ninety years, but at the same time presuming that already, in the generation following him, his own writings will probably have lost all living currency. Stendahl dwells with special textural sureness, on the stages of temporal thawing, which gradually separate him from the departure from Metilde. (He measures this thaw in time terms, noting in chapter Ten that he can now pass five or six hours without thinking of the lady, though sometimes he will be crushed, on waking, by the memory of her presence, and will remain all day glued to his bed.)

**HOBBIES: SOLITARY THOUGHTS** As a citizen of the Parisian boulevards, Stendahl has his corners of peace and apartness, as we must all have in order to let down. (The American poet, Robert Frost, went out after breakfast to a certain hill outside his house in Vermont, where he read the previous day's obituaries in the New York Times.) Stendahl observes, in Chapter Eleven, that his let-down pose was a walk through the Tuileries Gardens, under its giant chestnut trees, in the early evening. But he had a variety of recourses. When it was hot, he liked to read English language newspapers in the Gagliani Garden. (For longer periods of ease and separation, in those same gardens, he read several Sir Walter Scott novels.) Born in 1783, Stendahl was in his later thirties indulging the kinds of private retreat he signals in his boulevardier chapters. He is not writing for eternity, even to the limited degree he aspired to in his novels—and there too he is dubious and cynical—but is simply letting his observational pen live his life for him, intersecting more than he knows with the universals of the human experience.

## **Major characters**

**Stendahl** The single major character is Stendahl himself, or more precisely there is the flesh and blood Stendahl, and then there is the Stendahl conscious of every act carried out by the flesh and blood Stendahl. This complexity derives from the fact that Stendahl is writing a memoir, consciously reflecting on what kind of person he was during a certain period in his life. Rousseau, in his Confessions, depicts a tablaeau of his robust and often painful passage through his time. Stendahl does that also, but with a vigilant and ironic eye on what kind of person is undergoing the present experiences.

Stendahl's traits are consistent, because he stage manages them with a convincing sense of self. He is ironic—comes from a secular world view, finds the human being a droll and self-centered bit of the creation—and fascinated by the peculiar behaviors of individuals—le lempement humain is the object of

supreme interest for him. He is a womanizer by instinct, who would not otherwise have built adult behavior on the fear that others would mock an incomplete affair of his; the tale of his nine years in Paris is an effort to drown a semi-failed affair, which haunts him, and which he is trying to forget. Ironic womanizer, for sure, but also a politikos zoon, Aristotle's political animal, drawn to the affairs of the polis itself, whether in ancient Athens or nineteenth century France.

**Metilde** Stendahl's darling during several years he was in Milan. He was deeply hurt that, though they loved each other, she refused to go to bed with him. This rejection haunted him long after his return to Paris, in 1821, and generated in him a keen fear that his Parisian peers would hear the story of the uncompleted romance, and mock him.

**Baron de Lussinge** Stendahl's co-lodger and in fact closest friend, upon his return to Paris, was the baron de Lussinge, a youngish intellectual with whom Stendahl exchanged discussions of everything possible, usually in the course of lengthy walks around Paris. With the passage of time, as the baron came into his inheritance, and adopted a snooty attitude toward Stendahl, the friendship between the two of them faded.

**Alexandrine** Seductive debutante, whose coming out party coincides with a guys' night out, involving more than a few of Stendahl's new Parisian friends. Significant to Stendahl because he was not a player in the night's festivities, afflicted as he still was by the post Metilde blues, and underconfident of his sexuality.

**Destutt de Tracy** French psychologist. of great intellectual prestige and social prominence during Stendahl's period in Paris. Both he and his wife carried on cordial and helpful relations with Stendahl.

**General Lafayette** Distinguished military and social presence,, a relic of the greatness of the Napoleonic Wars, whom Stendahl admired. A dashing but senior figure, who though in his seventies competed with Stendahl for the affections of a teen age Portuguese beauty.

**Edmund Kean** A storied British actor, known especially for his performances of Shakespeare. Stendahl admired his work, and thought his attendance at Kean's Othello the high point of his trip to England in 1821.

**Miss Appleby** One of three British girls whose welcoming friendliness, in Britain, was a source of great joy, to Stendahl and his friends.

## Themes

**Romantic love** Stendahl himself is plagued with quick-take romances, cannot see a good looking or even interesting woman without paying her special attention, and studying her reactions to him. When he is countered, as by Metilde who will not sleep with him, he takes it as an affront to his entire person, and must struggle to restore the balance of his ego.

**Spleen Attitude** Spleen is the laid back tedium of the flaneur or boulevardier, in nineteenth century Paris. Stendahl suffers from that widespread French disease, especially when he is hanging around, reading the papers in a park, and waiting for dinner with Lussinge—he is absorbed, one little thing after another, with the memory of his habitual pleasures with Metilde.

**Friendship** Stendahl's text is studded with evidence of friendship. Baron de Lussinge is doubtless the central figure of a friend, and for Stendahl, on his return to Paris, the daily presence of this intelligent, but avaricious, young man, is reassuring and stimulating.

**Scorn** Stendahl is generous with his scorn for various political figures—in general he is starchily anti-monarchy—and adroit at political caricature—of people he admires, like General Lafayette, or of people he dislikes, like Philippe Segur. It is not for nothing that these pages are those of an egotist, ready on many occasions to scorn those who fail his fussy standards.

**Nostalgia.** Stendahl passes many a day, in Paris, moodily thinking of Metilde, and generally 'feeling sorry for himself.' He is nostalgic for his years in Milan, when he and Metilde were inseparable,

**Self-image** Stendahl is a master of the self-image. While writing his observations, he is busy thinking about what kind of person he is. When he is evaluating the durability of his writings he measures his own life against that of the great millennial institutions of ancient Rome.

**Egotism** Like many who have written their own lives, Stendahl is strongly egotistical: more than most, Stendahl has made no bones about aspect of his nature. He writes his memoir because he is mourning for his lost pleasures, and sulking because he knows those pleasures are irretrievable.