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METAPHOR OF NEGATION: THE CASTRATION MOTIF

(A Study of the Structural Unity in the Novels and Tales of Gustave Flaubert)

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis Director's Signature:

Patrick Brady

Houston, Texas
May, 1978
DEDICATION

To my incomparable husband and sons,
   Jack, Chris, and Scott

To my mother and grandmother
for years of unfailing encouragement

and

To the memory of a very
great teacher,
Father Edward G. Lee, CSB
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INTRODUCTION

Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to whir. . . . Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the last man.¹

Nietzsche's apocalyptic terminus to the energetic prophecies of evolution which pervaded the late nineteenth century finds expression also in the works of Gustave Flaubert. Although the great novelist asserted no formal nihilistic philosophy, the stifling atmosphere of lethargy and aborted passion permeating his works reflects a vision of a futureless world. Flaubert's concern—apart from the obvious metaphysical implications—is not so much with the death of God or the ethics of rebellion (two of the more flamboyant attractions of nihilism) as with the "simplistic" problem of merely continuing after man has come to the end of the road. At this juncture, the struggle for survival of the spirit begets neither the ruthless opportunist outwitting society nor the tragic artist escaping its
philistine embrace, neither the Dandy nor the Revolutionary, but the misbegotten and the misguided for whom there is no possibility of personal or social salvation, now or in eternity. Flaubert's world is a burnt-out case.

Yet, the embers of his cosmos still flicker faintly since he has not espoused the methodical negation of value in all that exists—a position which nonetheless logically follows the disappearance of God and the divine Will. But he demonstrates again and again the increasing pointlessness and confusion of a race dying slowly of exhaustion. From his original primitive energy to the artificial activity of his prophetic rational convulsions, the Flaubertian man drags himself through Time, the doors of a chronological trap closing on his heels. He arrives at the Age of Fulfillment only to ascertain vaguely that he is hopelessly unfit. And who is fit? Again, Flaubert's nihilistic indictment of his society coincides with Zarathustra's vision:

The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. . . .

No shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a mad house.  

Flaubert's characters move through civilizations peopled by these new petty barbarians, and every effort to escape—whether through passion, imagination, sentiment, or
intellectual experiment—casts them deeper into the mad-house of their own peculiar authenticity.

Twentieth century writers have provided ample opportunity to study the extreme symptoms of this Romantic malaise, and in general they seem to offer contemporary man some means of survival in his nauseating universe. For Malraux and Sartre, salvation appears as revolt and artistic creation; for Simon, in the imposition of pure form on the chaos of sensation; for Butor, in the return to the cyclical tempo of the myth and even in the work of Albert Camus, as the acceptance of, and service to, the Other.

Flaubert's distinguishing mark, however, is the painful absence of any explicit or implicit solution. Furthermore, he constructs his works so as to repeat and emphasize structurally, metaphorically, psychologically and philosophically his negation of solutions, of hope, of Future. This denial of Future in so many different areas of human experience seems to be the point at which Romantic pessimism degenerates into genuine metaphysical nihilism, "the desire to despair and to negate."³ Although this desire may eventually be transformed by some into a passionate quest for transcendence—even transcendence which lifts one into an eternal void—Flaubert's novels and tales deliberately and repeatedly refuse the flight into any sort of anticipated other-world, other-time. He remains rooted to this diminishing earth, stifled by the stench of
present decay. His "historical" works, far from representing the Romantic escape into the past, are held up as an ironic reflection of the cyclic futility of human existence. Flaubert's "frisson historique" is constantly quieted by his more pervasive tendency toward annihilation. This negation of possibility, of aspiration, of future, as it is metaphorically expressed, is the key determinant and common bond uniting his great works.

THE PROFANATION OF THE SACRED

If I could penetrate matter, grasp idea, follow life through its metamorphoses, understand being in its modes, and thus from one to the other, reascending the ladder of causes like a series of steps, reunite in myself those scattered phenomena and put them back into motion in the synthesis from which my scalpel detached them.  

Flaubert's ability to channel his Romantic sensitivity to Time into a conception which reorganizes Past into Present and which then functions as the backbone of his works has been observed and analyzed in numerous critiques. These commentaries, however, have considered mainly the two poles of his thought—psychology and history—without exploring their implications as manifestations of his ironic nihilism. Along philosophical-psychological lines, major critics seem to agree on at least two aspects of his manipulation of Time. J.-P. Duquette with Jean Rousset,
observes the dilation of space and time as it corresponds to the dilation of the Soul, wherein the hero spends his life waiting for something which never happens, gazing out on a horizon which recedes endlessly. Time here is considered as a corrosive "comme la pluie qui efface avec les siècles, les figures des monuments. . ." or as a kalidescopic technique to render the impermanence of a pulverized time and space. The first description agrees with Victor Brombert's noted analysis of Flaubertian time as an elongation, an elasticity which extends or expands without interruption, while the hero survives in a state of infinite expectation.

The sequential condition of time--which must be dealt with in any work which accepts external phenomena as valid--is analyzed by Georges Poulet as the repetitive moment, a "dédoublement." Time thus becomes not a continuity but a fixation on the present instant which brings to the character's consciousness, via memory images, all the insupportable details of the past which collide with future dreams.

Moving aside somewhat from the "psychology of chronology" into a more mechanical, formal interpretation, Alan Spiegel considers Flaubert's temporal viewpoint to be essentially that of the dramatist whereby he tends to present events in existential (temporal and spatial)
situations. In this way "the meaning of the seen object itself [is] inseparable from the seer's position in time and space,"\textsuperscript{8} and time appears more as a corollary to the narrative, as "setting," than as a structural catalyst.

These observations concur with the general tendency of Flaubertian critics to conclude that he has reformed an essentially Romantic concept of Time into a Faulknerian technique. Conscious of the subjective ambiguity of man's easy chronological divisions of past, present, and future, he admits time's power to corrupt and diminish and generally refuses its rejuvenating qualities. Moreover, he skillfully organizes into his narrative technique (as well as into his psychology) an anticipation of the Bergsonian notion that time is an equal determinant, along with space, of man's perception of phenomena. Since Flaubert's view of time influences the psychology of his characters, the chronological structure of his novels and tales, even his narrative descriptions, any study of motifs must touch upon this aspect of the works.

The other major area of Time criticism focuses on the validity of Flaubert's historical works. Here he has been both berated and praised for his skill in minute documentation, yet several recent studies\textsuperscript{9} have revealed this mass of scholarly detail to be a smokescreen, serving not a typical nineteenth century sense of history and
scientific exactitude, but rather representing a system of ironic humor and style.

In order to negate life as definitively as Flaubert does, one must negate time as well. The past must appear at every turn informing and frustrating the present; the present must become all interiority, defiling action and resisting the change of Nature; the future, especially spiritual future, must be categorically—if subtly—denied. This is perhaps the most complicated and elusive aspect of Flaubert's work since it involves theme, character development, structural patterns, organization, plot structure and stylistic technique. The great amount of attention which has been given to these various areas within the novels and tales has nonetheless considered each point as a totality without attempting to explore their relationship as interconnecting and progressive manifestations of Flaubert's ironic nihilism.¹⁰

Flaubert develops his novels and tales along two levels: a deep, mythic/cyclical level and a surface, historical/chronological level. These levels are so closely integrated and interdependent that it could be somewhat misleading to speak of them as superimposed one on the other. Also, they represent more than the general structural divisions of theme and plot, for the two levels are related through the essentially Bergsonian philosophy
of Time whose framework encompasses the entire structural operation of Flaubert's works. This concept, which informs the novels and tales considers time as a material element of the world which the mind grasps intuitively and primarily through the flow, duration and change of life. Moreover, this

. . .consciousness is forward-reaching in its nature: though it grows out of the past, yet it penetrates the future and links past and future into a system which functions as a whole. . . the expression of dynamic imagination as well as dynamic memory.11

This metapsychology, incorporated into an historical cadre, determines the patterns of mental and temporal life of the Flaubertian personages. To introduce an analogy which will be developed later, the novels and tales pose the following parallel sequence:

\[
\text{surface structure} : : \text{chronological}
\]
\[
\text{deep structure} : : \text{cyclical}
\]
\[
\text{profane} : : \text{historical}
\]
\[
\text{sacred} : : \text{mythic}
\]

No one has expounded the theme of cyclical time more thoroughly or more clearly than Mircea Eliade in his analysis of the myth of the Eternal Return.12 According to this conception of time— one proper to the primitive mind but which has since decreased in importance until its definitive replacement in the twentieth century with Marxist historicity— man tends to disregard the sequential, chronological (historical) or profane events of his life in order to participate— through ritual observances— in
these extraordinary and extratemporal actions rendered
sacred by their divine or heroic origins. By extension,
then, the importance of change and movement as such are re-
jected in favor of the stability of the cyclical, repetitive
aspect of nature and human existence. To paraphrase
Richard Glasser, this cyclical mentality considers that,
although time as an inner experience is irrecoverable and
irreversible, chronological time is a grandiose external
process recurring in an eternal periodicity. "Days, years
and centuries turn about in a circle, run their course and
return so that the music of the spheres turning is heard."13
This archaic view which attempts to devaluate time is at
odds with Bergson's insistence on the validity of concrete
time and the value of memory as a constituent of concrete
duration. However, the continual recreation of the past in
rejuvenative ritual seems to parallel on a social, if not
an individual, level the repetitive continuity of memory
so essential to the Bergsonian process.

In literature, the great poignant recreations of
mythic (and therefore cyclical) themes in the works of
twentieth century writers are somehow reassuring to those
modern men who long for a brief liberation from the anguish
of historicity. Flaubert, however, viewing his world of flux
'and "progress," developed an opposite use for the cyclical
structure. The music of his spheres is decidedly dissonant.
Far from creating a "poignant reconciliation" with the cosmos, he uses the cycle ironically—to destroy it in the present moment, or, if he allows an implicit continuation into the future, the diminished orbit of the spheres' turning leads even more rapidly to despair and the negation of potential. Nevertheless, we see in Flaubert's perception of cyclical time the root of his major theme of repetition and dissolution. At the same time, the true extent of the disillusionment of his heroes appears through his parallel use of the archetypal "sacred" actions upon which his plots are based, or, rather, to which they adhere. The "eternal return" of a profound and vital idea or action is allowed to suffer with each revolution the corrosive progress of Bergsonian time. The mythic grandeur of the original is degraded into the banality of the "historical" present.

We see in the structure of his works that, although there are indeed changes, there are few things which undergo essential and radical change—a perception which corresponds closely to Wildon Carr's analysis of Bergson's philosophy. In this light, it is necessary to take Peter Cortland a step farther when he says that

L'Education sentimentale is by anticipation a Bergsonian book simply because of its great concern with the change and the permanence of character across quantities of Time, yet it is a disproval of Bergson's belief in the persistence of essences and ideas in time.
On the contrary, when we consider Flaubert's works as an entity, it seems to be precisely the endurance of the essence and the ideas, accidental characteristics transformed, which create the irony of Flaubert's contemporary vision. According to Bergson, being is primarily motion and not stasis as many philosophers since Plato have claimed. While this existential quality is grasped immediately by intuition, man's active nature demands a solid platform, as it were, from which to function in the flux of reality. Therefore, the intellect has evolved a means whereby action is made possible under "stable circumstances." This means is the perception that being is motionless and that all change derives from that which is primarily changeless. This idea is the illusion--eternally at odds with the nature of reality--which disturbs and misguides the intellect. For, in actuality, it is the process of duration, with its quality of movement, which gives form to life and life to form. At the same time, duration is also the condition for continuity: that is, the uninterrupted becoming of a being from past to present into future. Accordingly, Flaubert's aim has not been so much to reveal man's nature through a group of individuals passing through the centuries—or the days of their lives—and gradually undergoing the transformations which growth and evolution demand, but rather to observe the fading of an original, indestructible essence as the waves of time break up uselessly
on the tightly closed portal of his interior world. In other words, the focus is not on personal evolution and growth, but on fixity and stasis: on the protagonists' misconception of the world rather than the reality of the world. Consequently, plots which seem to be concerned with authentically recreating history or examining minutely the multitude of day-to-day transforming experiences which make up an ordinary life are, in effect, drawing the past --of an age or of an individual--from the deep structure into the surface structure, describing between the past and the present only the illusion of essential change.

Flaubert might well agree with Croce that

. . . the reality of History is not recorded dead past event, but present living action. History is not something we have, it is something we are. . . . Present reality is not in external union with past reality, the present holds the past in itself, it is one with the past and it is big with the future. 16

Except with Flaubert, whose characters' spiritual lives do not support their chronological lives, the future ends now.

Since the passage of historical/chronological/profane time is monotonous and deceptive to those who misunderstand the value and purpose of the continuum of change and fix their gaze toward a mythical stability, the Flaubertian man must retreat to his subjective world and try to create a sensation of fulfilled existence through
the "durée" of psychological time. Although his efforts are a testimony to the Bergsonian pattern of self-awareness, he fails to reap the benefits of the system, for he never attains the intuitive understanding of self and the world which would free him from his static prison. In brief, he attempts to lead an Eliade existence in a Bergsonian world. Flaubert's characters unconsciously try to recreate the heroic action of the archetype and achieve only the repetitive banality of their own inescapable permanence. Again, there are parallels between the characters' efforts to contain past, present and future in their imagination and their discordant, déjà-vu relationship to the external temporal order. In this memory world the universe seems to petrify, and they are dizzyingly aware of a "recommencement perpétuel de la même action." \(^7\) At this point, memory, present experience, violated hopes merge, and the symbolic significance of the double-layered plot structure, chronological/historical, cyclical/mythical, becomes a terrible nihilism.

L'existence se dédouble. La vie actuelle semble n'être plus qu'un reflet affaibli d'une autre déjà vécue, et qui aurait été la seule vraie. . . . Alors l'on se tourne vers ce passé avec une nostalgie ambiguë. L'on croit à demi avoir vécu en quelque époque lointaine de l'histoire. L'on éprouve ce que Flaubert appelle 'le frisson historique'. Cela devient une tristesse démesurée à l'idée que ces âges ont passé sans retour. . . . L'on se met à pour-suivre sans trêve des mythes retrospectifs; l'on 'remâche' un passé d'existences rêvées. Mais, dans la mesure même où l'on y ensevelit sa pensée, le
présent apparaît de plus en plus comme une illusion.

C'est alors que le moment où l'on vit revèle son étroitesse et sa pauvreté...

Dépourvue d'avenir, devorée par le passé, accablée par le poids du présent, la pensée ne peut plus concevoir la durée que comme un mouvement qui traine, comme un temps au ralenti.\textsuperscript{18}

Similarly, the surface action of Flaubert's plots often seems to resemble a series of hesitations rather than dynamic movement.

Despite the psychological reality that the "human heart beats to another rhythm than that of the clock,"\textsuperscript{19} man does not exist outside of time. On the contrary, the person is a totally enduring essence whose temporal existence is subject to the flow of time. But this temporal passage debilitates and destroys the individual who seeks to escape it or whose intellectual or volitional capability malfunctions. Flaubert's concern with all time leads again to a dead-end, the no-time of the present. The future, ironically, for his hope-filled, anticipating, non-participating dreamers, is annihilated.

Flaubert's eight major works represent a sequence of historical and contemporary settings which re-introduce an action or an archetypal "statement" of a past time, showing the ideas herein contained to be hopelessly inferior in their latter existence. Flaubert's novelistic present is the temporal inheritance of characters who vaguely seek
the infinite through a release into nothingness or a pantheistic union with all matter. For an Eliadian, this amounts to regeneration.

The death of the individual and the death of humanity are alike necessary for their regeneration. Any form whatever, by the mere fact that it exists as such and endures, necessarily loses vigor and becomes worn; to recover vigor, it must be reabsorbed into the formless if only for an instant; it must be restored to the primordial unity from which it issued; in other words, it must return to "chaos" (on the cosmic plane), to "orgy" (on the social plane), to darkness (for seed), to "water" (baptism on the human plane, . . . and soon).^{20}

For a Bergsonian, however, there is no going back--no pause in the evolution toward perfection. Despite the dis-integration which occurs in each work, the "return" is not of a strengthened, but a weakened, form. And although . . . to seek the infinite is to wish to live outside time, [the characters] are granted [their] wish, not by living in all-time, but by being condemned to no-time.^{21}

Apparently in order to reduce the temporal and spiritual disorder he was creating, Flaubert contemplated a novel to be entitled La Spirale (the very image of which suggests . . . a liberation from the self and an ascent toward infinity. . . which would (he hoped) 'prove that happiness could be attained only in the realm of imagination or through a superior madness'),^{22}

but the work was never written. Flaubert unfailingly
weights the scales on the side of denial. The artistic conception which views escape from the limitations of time and matter as the proper end of the soul is an ancient Platonic, and Flaubert's intuition, while certainly Platonic in its tendencies toward idealism, nevertheless omits an essential point which makes Platonism most palatable. The Flaubertian soul--freed--has nowhere to go. Further, it has lost its vital "soaring" quality and consequently demands nothingness as a pseudo-salvation. A Platonic impulse does not entail, for Flaubert, a transcendent conclusion. The artist's consistency need not follow the philosopher's logic.

Since the Flaubertian heroes are essentially contemplatives condemned to fruitless, misdirected activity, their principal method of "fulfillment" lies in the durée of self-conscious yet counter-productive, reflection. The frequent triggering of memory images allows them repeated illusionary escapes into their past, or anticipatory projections into the future, giving the reader the impression of what Benjamin Bart observes as a continuous psychic "displacement" either forward or backward. Their nostalgia reaffirms the echo of sacred time--désacralisé. Such a desire for temporal totality is doomed to failure for it neglects the now, and as Saint Augustine has pointed out: All is now. 24
STRUCTURE: THE VIOLATION OF EXPECTATION

The terms "deep structure," "surface structure" have been used several times in the preceding pages. They are useful terms, as they have very important parallels in formal literary analysis, in psychology, and in the structure of myth. As Mark Lester explains the terms—based on Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures—

The sentences we normally produce and understand (. . . surface sentences) can be derived from a number of underlying sentences of elemental simplicity. . . . We actually understand surface sentences in terms of our intuitive grasp of the 25 elementary sentences that make them up.

The meaning of a sentence (the relationship of words to their abstract classes) contains the "deep structure"; the "surface structure" contains the form of the sentence.

The transformational rules apply to the deep structure and produce as their output the 'surface structure' of the sentence. . . .[yet] ambiguity and paraphrase demonstrate that there is not a simple one-to-one connection between the meaning and the form of sentences.

These surface structures are produced in a way which is similar to the operation of the latent and manifest content of dreams explained in Freudian psychology. That is, through a series of substitutions and deletions (condensations).

Now if these terms are applied to the formal
analysis of literature, there is an obvious analogy on the one hand between "deep structure" and the archetypal or mythic patterns contained in the thematic meaning of a work and, on the other hand, between "surface structure" and the plot structure or action. The discovery of the transformational rules which apply to unite the two "levels" not only could reveal a great deal about the mechanics of artistic creation, but would also underscore the intrinsic, formal unity in each work.

Although it is not the purpose of this study to attempt a detailed transformational analysis of Flaubert's works, the basic concepts described by the terms deep and surface structures are germane to any search for their metaphorical unity. These terms will be used also as the determinant by which the novels and tales will be grouped into sequential pairs.

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Deep Structures

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The intimate and significant relationship established between time and worldview in each work is mirrored in the pattern of the ensemble. The novels, taken as a group, reveal not only a chronological progression, but a psychological-metaphysical one as well, yet this progression, as we shall see, is ultimately negated. The short stories imitate the longer works, and, although they have been considered Flaubert's "positive" statements, in fact, they express a similar denial. Thus the novels attack, one by one, man's hopes of saving himself by natural means, while the tales deliberately blockade every supernatural escape route from the human condition. The two groups, if paired, repeat—in different keys, as it were—the same melody: each continues to violate, through Flaubert's irony, the expectations of hero or of reader. It is this quality of ironic ambiguity and reversal from within and without the novels which prevents the motif-life repetitions of the works—their "transformational rules"—from becoming banal and establishes them as the work of genius.
As Leonard Bernstein pointed out in his brilliant lectures on Charles Ives' "The Unanswered Question: Whither Music," the deep structure-surface structure process operates in literature through the "linguistic misdemeanor" of the metaphor. A brief survey of the possible deep structures acting in each of Flaubert's works as the generative source of their common transformational metaphor is perhaps pertinent at this point.

To begin with, the "primitive" works, the Salammbô-Hérodiase plots derive from the archetypal struggle of man against God. This theme has already formed the deep structure of each of the scriptural accounts (The Book of Judith and the Matt:14 1-12, Mark:6 17-29 verses on John the Baptist) which serve as the actual "words" of the original "sentence." This deep structure is transformed into the action of the plots encased in their "authentic" Biblical-historical settings.

The same procedure can be applied to each set. The deep structure of L'Education sentimentale--La Legende de Saint-Julien may be expressed as the ambiguous phrase, the destruction of the Hero. Again an identical struggle is the form of both Flaubert's sources: the legend of the medieval saint (although Flaubert's irony reverses the original's religious transcendence into its opposite in his re-telling) and the dramatic Froissart chronicle from
which he evolves L'Education sentimentale. These surface structures—deriving as they do from the ambiguous deep structure—take the forms of the two vastly divergent plots.

With Madame Bovary and Un Coeur simple, we see the gradual unveiling of truth, the unmasking of illusion—through a series of substitutions—as though the incoherent babblings of an old Sibyl were becoming progressively clearer. Many of the illusions described in the preceding set are magnified here, and the truth revealed is that of the supremacy of nothingness: a blackly-ironic restatement of the platitude that truth liberates. Although the works' deep structures might express a partnership with L'Education sentimentale—La Legende de Saint Julien, in "the destruction of the heroine," they more specifically trace the loss of individual soul in the nineteenth century bourgeois society. The similarity of sources noted in the other sets becomes here the resemblance between the two works' surface chronology and archetypal pattern. The perfectly complementary personalities of the heroines and the progressive mechanization of their desire further the parallel. The core of Emma's torment, boredom, sustains Félicité, yet each woman escapes reality only in a world of fantasy, and for each the final presence of truth accompanies the same event—death. Flaubert handles the surface structure of Un Coeur simple—which may be an ironic paraphrase of Madame Bovary—in a deceptively
humanistic manner. His nihilism has, however, only intensified, since here he is denying man, not merely human solace, but divine as well.

Finally, the unfinished *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* derive from a cataclysmic explosion which, while leaving the universe convulsed with movement, announces from the void the end of all mind and spirit. The archetypal Faustian desire to experience all things, to contain all of nature within oneself (the consumption of the world) stands as the deep structure to the encyclopaedic expression of the surface structures of the two plots. As with *Madame Bovary*—*Un Coeur simple*, the transformations have taken the form of a paraphrase wherein we see the convulsions of the intellect reflected in those of the soul, carefully disguised as the hallucinations of an obsessed intellect.

As each "set" moves from the historical past forward in time, man, as an entity, appears less able to control his destiny until he suffers the final disintegration of hallucination (a Faustian irony which completes the sequence begun by the religious ambiguity of *Hérodiad*) and the abdication of Reason to the *Dictionnaire des Idées Regués*. Within each work the nihilistic theme of termination, of the futility of human endeavor, is delivered with increasing clarity. In brief, Flaubert has developed
through the overall pattern-sequence of his works the same philosophy and literary structure which he presents in each work and in each central character's psychic conflicts. In viewing his works as an ensemble, we see from afar the significance of the relationship between past and present as well as the extreme conclusion which awaits man's struggle to replace reality with illusion.

How has Flaubert achieved this enormous structural consistency? Through a profoundly vast metaphor—since, as Chomsky tells us, all transformations (from deep to surface structures) are metaphorical—which extends and resumes his artistic intention without disguising the original metaphysical problem of alienation from God, world, man, and self. The metaphor which, in its various aspects, represents a primordial human conflict, a fundamental psychic experience, an ubiquitous mythic function, and is the perfect symbol of nihilism: the metaphor of castration. In each work the device is carried through thematically; in the overall pattern of the sets it appears in a progressively ambiguous and multi-leveled manner. It reflects Flaubert's continuous design to terminate the future in the present—which is really the past brought forward—and it satisfies the artistic logic which demands justification for the pervasive Flaubertian lethargy of the novels.

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If nihilism is the metaphysician's death wish, castration is everyman's symbolic dread. In the literature of Flaubert, it becomes a great tensile metaphor, full of ambiguity and the ironic opposition of original form and ultimate void. This same opposition, cast in primordial terms, is the foundation for the theories of animism and magic described by Röheim in his *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*. According to Röheim, animism, the primitive concept of soul, explains much psychology and serves as the origin of religion, magic and ultimately science. Animism, therefore, is the essence of our mental past. This mental past derives, in turn, from the physical origins of life itself.

In the original cells that contained life there must have been a tendency to repeat the primal catastrophe to which life owes its existence. There was a tendency for fission and there was a resistance against the repetition of fission. . . . In animals with more specialized functions and organs we have the ejection of gametic cells as a substitute for fission. Probably there was a phase of transition represented by a segregation of the genital organ from the body, and Ferenczi describes the genital act as an attempted self-castration which finally results in separating not the penis but the seminal fluid as its symbol or substitute from the body.

Out of this ancient dialectic between fission and resistance to fission evolved the impulse to couple, to procreate, which was closely followed by the terror of loss--not of the Other, but of part of oneself--and especially that part
of oneself which contained the soul. At last, however, the act of procreation was seen to represent a compensation for the sense of loss it entailed; the seminal fluid entered the womb and new life was introjected: the penetrating soul was doubled. By analogy, "this is the origin of the world beyond the grave: the soul enters Heaven as the sperm enters the ovum, and for the same reason."  

Death, on the other hand (generally represented by the departure of a serpent or a bird from the body), was the finalization of that which man had feared most deeply: the departure of the life-giving source from the self. Consequently, to castrate was to deny forever the compensating transmission of new life as well as to bring death's essential consequence prematurely to the self.

In these terms, the castration dread takes on a deeper and more metaphysical coloring. And as such it lends itself as the unifying motif which enables Flaubert to express his nihilism through his surface structures' quasi-Romantic application of time as well as in his thematic deep structures.

The theory developed through Röheim's anthropological-psychological studies is of course far more complicated than the above introductory statements. Many specific details, symbols, and relationships must be left for inclusion in the following chapters on the individual works.
It would be appropriate, however, at this point to explain briefly some of the major areas of his thought, especially those which are symbolically significant for the work of Flaubert.

The Medicine Man: "The calling of the medicine-man is simply disease made permanent and sublimated into a vocation." This primitive magician-healer has controlled his fear of castration by using his unreleased sexual energies to "castrate others." He projects his phallic dominance onto his wand or staff and holds it ever ready to heal or punish those who need or fear him the most. "He prefers the fore-pleasure of tension to orgasm" (p. 383); he prefers power to women. The precious semen is not sacrificed but transmuted into the presence of mana—that magic dynamism which puts one "in touch with reality (makes him one), whose words come true " (p. 382). By retaining the seminal fluid, he conquers death for himself, but in his role as destroyer of evil spirits as well as that of healer, he is the castrator (substitute death) of others.

The snake is the standard symbol of the medicine-man's craft, just as the medicine-man himself is "from the patient's point of view a personification of the penis," (p. 188) and as such is able to gratify every libidinal demand of his patient. Although the medicine-man typically plays the role of the father in coitus in his cures, he is
also a condensation of both father and mother roles.

In his professional activity, in shooting the anal quartz-crystal into his enemies or in withdrawing it from his patients, he is full of obsessions, taboos, spells; . . . As a shaman possessed by a demon or god, the medicine-man is producing a hysterical fit, and since Freud there can be no doubt about the fact that a hysterical fit reproduces coitus and that the hysterical plays the part of both the male and the female partner. (p. 168)

Yet . . . all his phallic activity is merely a brilliant mask, a veil used by the life-impulse to cover what no man can see without horror. . . . Life hides death by genitalization, resists the attack by simulating the great life-giving act. Compared to death itself, the idea of death as a coitus, even of castration, is merely a substitute, a consolation offered by the unconscious. (p. 189)

By genitalizing his own death-impulse as well as his healing powers, the libido counteracts his exceptionally strong tendency to die.

**Disease**: Röheim considers disease metaphysically as the penetration of death into life. Psychologically, however,

. . . there are two animistic theories of disease found in mankind: possession, that is a foreign demon or substance in the body, and ecstasy, the idea that the soul has left the body and must be brought back accordingly. (p. 184)

By extension, the loss of soul is the loss of seminal fluid, the virtual castration of the victim. In the male, "disease [is] always closely connected with the tendency
towards, and dread of, castration." (pp. 383-384) In women, disease is counteracted by the female desire to have the missing soul (Seminal Fluid) replaced by the phallic medicine-man, although the woman presents the greatest threat to the medicine-man's sustained emotion. Disease is also, but less frequently, associated with immorality or the breaking of a taboo.

Cures are effected by a reversal of the two aspects of disease: by projecting a substance (the medicine-man's wand or pointed stick or the quartz crystal) into the patient's body or the drawing out (sucking cure) of the evil tenant by the medicine-man. His necessary identification with the father imago is obvious here; in fact, he is often considered the inheritor of the dead father's mana—the father becomes then, literally, a holy ghost.

The possibilities for specific ritual and taboo as expressions of these basic positions are endless, yet whatever external form is taken, the psychological origins and explanations remain rooted in the dread of castration as paradoxically concomitant with the renewal of life. The associations noted by Freud and others between this same dread and the tendency to homosexuality, as well as many forms of female repression, are, of course, well known.

Expulsion of the Scapegoat: Röheim draws on modern European folk custom as well as on ancient Greek, Hindu,
and Hebrew religious and tribal myth to explain the connection between fertility ritual and the expulsion (castration) of the purgative victim. It would seem perhaps illogical to associate with birth and fertility the Bacchic frenzies wherein children and adult males are torn to pieces. However, again we see the paradoxical nature of the life-death, coitus-castration analogy. Röheim considers dismemberment as a substitute for castration. The dismembered child appears dually as the castrated organ or as a representation of the birth shock: the separation of the child from the mother.

As, moreover, the sexual act is the portal of life, and as the act of giving birth is the female equivalent of the fission that takes place in the male in the act of coitus, death becomes obscured under the guise of birth and appears as the first step into a new life. (p. 56)

In the Dionysiac rite, the child-god, Dionysus, descended from a line of castrated gods, is not castrated by Zeus, but cut into pieces which are then resurrected intact in a type of new birth. The scapegoat rituals, based on variants and hero-equivalents of Dionysus (e.g., Lycurgus), invariably conclude with the driving into the sea of the priest-celebrant. Since ritual serves to alleviate anxiety,

... the audience of the drama sees the god of fertility rushing headlong into the... uterine environment and this allays their dread of castration. It is possible to return to the uterus as a
whole, castration is evaded, immortality is gained. (p. 379)

Thus we see the

. . . whole fertility cult with the women raving round the phallus as an over-compensation of the dread of castration. We have a whole series with decreasing intensity; first castration, then dis-memberment, then birth, and finally driving a scapegoat into the sea. (p. 379)

Or back into the womb where death is walled out.

In ritual, as in dreams, death may be represented by castration, or the fear of death replaced by the lesser (though all-consuming) dread of castration. Although castration is a type of death, since it is also related unconsciously to coitus, it is inseparable from the idea of new life and immortality.

The first consolation offered to mortal man is the same as the temptation of coitus; the valuable part of his personality is not lost but given into the custody of a being with whom he has successfully identified himself in the sexual act. There is another world for the soul after this one and this other world is simply a posthumous projection of the womb. . . . While at a lower level the castration aspect of this passage (from this world to the next) is emphasized, the grim features of this last journey gradually becomes obscured by the brilliant vision of everlasting love-life. (p. 56)

In European folk custom, the scapegoat is more precisely associated with the expelling of death, and here also the "sinner" or the source of evil, the victim, is also the principle of life. This union of opposites is exactly what
actually happens in every repetition of the sexual act, pain and anxiety-producing substances are expelled from the body and the result is fertility. As Rayner Heppenstall has observed, this psychic phenomenon is not new:

The human scapegoats of the ancient world, although frequently the representatives of God, were invariably chosen for some physical peculiarity, deformity or condition of sickness. Moreover, to give them a positive, fertilizing function in addition to their primary task in the expulsion of evil, they were in some communities chastised upon the genital organs 'with squills and branches of the wild fig'.

All of the significance of the above—as in most sexual-psychological theories—rests in the male point of view. To study the equivalent in women of the castration neurosis, we must turn to Karen Horney. She too posits the physiological differences between the sexes as the foundation for most psychological orientation in the mature person; however, the process through which the male's dread of castration is evoked arises and proceeds somewhat differently for the female. The girl, after making the usual genital discovery-comparisons with a male, undergoes typical penis-envy, and since she is too young to understand the compensating biological role nature has in store (motherhood), she translates this envy into the fear that she has somehow been wounded (castrated)—probably by the father—and proceeds to displace this "wound" to other organs, a displacement which may, in abnormal psychic development, be manifested in hypochondria as well as in a
vengeful attitude toward men.

Inhibited Femininity: Dr. Horney attributes a neurotic woman's character difficulties as well as her failures in planning her life to the inhibition of the sexually non-functioning personality commonly known as frigidity. The frigid woman's attitude toward motherhood may cause physical problems as well as a remote attitude toward the child, causing the mother to send the baby to be cared for elsewhere or otherwise to neglect it. Her attitude toward her household finds expression in fanatic cleanliness or in such reluctance that any household chore exhausts her. Her attitude toward her husband (or any male) is a chameleon one, alternating from indifference to morbid jealousy to distrust to irritability to feelings of inferiority or to the need for lovers, or very intimate friendships with women. Again, this frigid attitude may become one of longing to be a man (the masculinity complex, itself a manifestation of the castration complex) which, unhappily, establishes an incapacity for a full love relationship with a heterosexual love-object. While there is unconscious rejection of the feminine role, the conscious attitude may be quite feminine (frigidity does not equal rejection of sex): "frigid women can be even erotically responsive and sexually demanding."

This animosity towards the male erupts in a sort of guerilla warfare wherein the woman engages to weaken or
defeat the male. Since she feels basically damaged or discriminated against by fate, her personality becomes stunted or unbalanced by her unconscious claims against life for compensation.

**Dread of Women:** Horney, contrary to Röheim, considers man's role in coitus as a longing for extinction, a return to the womb and *nothingness* rather than a desire for immortality via the womb. Thus the idea of death becomes more associated with the mother than with the father, and longing for death suggests also the longing for **reunion** with the mother. The one who gives life may also take it away. Consequently, his will to live reacts with anxiety to the presence of the female, whether she be wife or mother. He dreads or wishes to flee from her or seeks to deny her existence; this produces the tendency toward homosexuality. At the other extreme of the male reaction to the presence of the female is the unconscious desire to become a woman, and Horney believes the castration anxiety is in many instances the ego's response to this wish. When this occurs, the male must reprove his manhood in various ways: the Don Juan must conquer, must possess, but only those women who are sensible enough not to take him too seriously or demand that he give more than he is willing to offer. The Snob reinforces his ego by taking a love-object who is socially or mentally inferior:
. . . the ever-precarious self-respect of the 'average man' causes him over and over again to choose a feminine type that is infantile, non-maternal and hysterical, and by so doing to expose each new generation to the influence of such women. 35

Finally, the Chauvinist builds himself up by diminishing the self-respect of women.

Whether or not one accepts the absoluteness of the sexual theories of Freud, Ferenczi, Röheim and Horney, it is difficult to dispute the universal human experience of the closeness of the life and death impulses. The sexual drive is fraught with narcissism and the desire for dominance over the Other, strong parallels with the quite universal impulse to subdue, conquer, and destroy one's partner in war, marriage, love, or politics. To explain these impulses in terms of their relationship to castration which, as the epitome of a living death, is the final violation of expectation, leads, of course, to the question of man's ultimate ends, the destiny of the individual psyche and of the human race. The question asked by Ives' last work, "Whither music," might well be applied to Flaubert's conception of the world: Whither Man?
THE IRONICALLY-ANSWERED QUESTION

When arranged into the sequential sets outlined above, Flaubert's works present several parallel progressions—or regressions since the works do not lead to any fulfillment. Rather, the structural irony of the ensemble reveals a constant tendency to tantalize the reader with a promise, a solid answer to the question, as it were, yet to reveal upon close examination a dreadful parody of the desired transcendence. His novels and tales leave his creative atelier disguised beneath a surface veneer of Baudelarian maquillage, yet the energies generated in the endlessly frustrated minds of the characters dissolve the paint quickly enough. Each work's final, deceptively tranquil lines reveal a death mask for humanity—the true vision of the Last Man.

Whereas the essential form which makes each work what it is and which generates the structural matrix to which they all adhere is the representation of nihilism through the castration motif, the substance of the works is repeated in a great variety of themes and motifs. Among the many critics who have studied Flaubert's writings, Robert Dénommé has traced disintegration in L'Education Sentimentale, Georges Poulet the circumscribed and hopeless "circular" existence of Emma Bovary, Jean-Pierre Duquette the flight away from the "vide" of the present into memory and
hallucination, Jean Rousset the "descending repetition" of monotonous lives whose very substance slowly erodes, and Eugene Hollohan the fatal conflict between sleep and freedom. Victor Brombert's great study examines the intellectual failures of Flaubert's heroes, and Veronica Forrest-Thomson's "Arachne" interpretation of Madame Bovary explores Flaubert's overriding sense of fatality. Peter Cortland has, like Brombert, pointed out many extremely suggestive and interesting areas of rapport between the tales and the novels, although Cortland gives much less emphasis to the irony of the tales, accepting them for the most part as valid expressions of man's search for purity.

The individual lines of interpretation in all of these studies are distinct yet fundamentally parallel. None, however, while pointing out similarities, parallels and recurring themes, has established a link which not only connects but determines the structure of both tales and novels. The premise necessary to support these unanimously "negative" interpretations must be sought in the deepest circle of destructive pessimism, with death itself. Yet dream interpretation tells us that the unconscious has no "death image" as such but must represent it by a lesser evil, a penultimate finality, as it were. The symbol so chosen is frequently that of castration. And so it is in the work of Flaubert. This is particularly appropriate since ambiguity is the pulse of great art, and man's primary
psychological "ambiguity"--as seen in the paradox of the life-death relationship--is his ancient fear of castration. The parallel series of progressions into zero established by the overall pattern of the works are further reflected in multi-levels operating within each theme, each of which has to do with the metaphysical implications of castration. Furthermore, the characters themselves behave psychologically according to the basically Freudian theories of castration anxiety-motivation. In all of this, castration must be considered as referential, valuable as a metaphor of nihilism. It remains to be seen, then, precisely how this metaphor operates.

SALAMMBÔ-HÉRODIAS: Beginning at the earliest point in chronological time, we observe, arising from the structure of the "historical" setting, a primordial conflict between man and God. At this moment also, the hero/heroine function on the most primitive psychological level; that is, they are, by and large, propelled by passionate instinct of which they are but vaguely conscious. Reflection, the Flaubertian plague, has not yet become a major determinant in the destructive process. In Salammbô, the victory falls to the gods, but since they symbolize the instinctive forces in man, this is only a temporary and superficial victory. The destruction of Mâtho and Salammbô themselves indicates clearly that the human individual is sacrificed. The manner of Mâtho's death, of course,
represents explicitly the substitute-castration of the Scapegoat ritual, dismemberment. With Hérodis, the terms are less clear. What appears to be the indication of spiritual transcendence (the symbolic castration of John the Baptist which allows the true appearance of new life, Christ) is handled so ambiguously as to make its "positive" statement uncertain at best.

**L'ÉDUCATION SENTIMENTALE—LA LÉGENDE DE SAINT JULIEN:**

We pass from Antiquity to a Medieval framework in which the conflict has been reduced to the purely human plane, where it will remain. The hero, as representative of Race and Nation, appears in L'Eduction Sentimentale and La Légende de Saint Julien. He is no longer the primitive instinctive being of the preceding set; now the era of conflict rests in the will. The will is paralyzed, rendered impotent—castrated—and the "hero" is destroyed essentially as he can neither perpetuate himself nor define his nation. Frédéric's and Deslauriers' laughing memory of their youthful bordello failure as "the best time" of their lives is an irony of some magnitude. Again, the tale which parallels the novel offers an apparent reversal of this nihilism. However, it is merely apparent. The sexual imagery—ending in the homosexuality of the final scene—is too consistent and too dominant to indicate a true spiritual "apotheosis." Rather, the good actions on earth of Saint Julien are negated in a terrible parody as
he indicates his total desire--his will to action--is a self-castration: a deliberate embrace of his own re-
flection and not the outward movement of the Christian hero-saint.

**MADAME BOVARY—UN COEUR SIMPLE:** With this pair, Flaubert engages not the will but the imagination. He seems to offer a particularly final sort of despair in these two stories which concern not the primitive child or the eternal adolescent, but human maturity. The novel is marked by an appropriately tawdry "realization" of man's political illusions in bourgeois society and the ironic fulfillment of the dreams of the individual who does not know what to do with her mind and must function according to the whim of imagination and memory. Everyone, in brief, gets what he deserves. The dislodging of Charles Bovary's hat which opens the novel heralds the civic anointing of M. Homais which closes it: the triumph of the mental castrati. **Un Coeur simple**, following the same, perhaps unconscious, device of reversed affirmation, employs the active imagination, sister to Emma's passivity, which stubbornly refuses all demands of reality. The tale, while superficially presenting saintly--if melancholy--contentment, in actuality describes the void which follows the negation of the gods. Félicité's parrot-divinity, in silently projecting the death of God, mocks the absurdity of man's sanctification of Another and the eternal sterility of the
illusion of saintly, human felicity.

BOUVARD ET PECUCHET-LA TENTATION DE SAINT ANTOINE:

The final expression of nothingness appears in the intellectual convulsions of the puppet-like Bouvard and Pécuchet, whose chopping away at science effectively terminates the possibility of intellectual progeny. Flaubert throws down a last challenge to the absurd through man's reason and his Faustian thirst for knowledge. But it is the Old Faust who appears to perform the last act in Flaubert's black comedy. There is no redeeming Marguerite or sanctifying Béatrice, and Mephistopheles' conjuring book has become the Dictionnaire des Idées Regues in which one must write—like Hamlet—so as not to forget what it was that was so important. With the return to zero of these two old shadows, the total failure of reason itself is proclaimed—and the future, like so many Flaubertian vistas, disappears. Nor is the spirituality of Saint Antoine offered as a mystic compensation for the loss of the world. The torment of the "saint" serves only to emphasize the hopelessness of attainment. Scientific experiment or spiritual hallucination: each born in the primeval darkness of man's nature, each leading in its own manner to the realization of inadequacy, of the impotence of the soul—of an ancient spiritual castration and the search for a compensation which has been the history of the human race.
Flaubert leads, then, through a sort of Ages of
Man--psychologically and intellectually, spiritually and
physically--dragging pitiessly through the erosions of
time the same ever-weakening, ever more sophisticated hero,
scion of a dying breed. Sundered from nature, he turns
inward and discovers nothing. Instinct is refined into
will, will softens to sentiment, sentiment dissolves in
the theater of the imagination, and when at last man is
left alone with his intellect, it is too late.

Instinct, will, imagination and intellect--all are
introduced into the contest with the movement of time,
through past into present with its crooked reflection of
the future. The enemy, the act of existence itself, des-
stries absolutely by revealing to this weary wayfarer the
face of his most terrible dread of loss--all the
Brughelesque faces of Saint Antoine's hallucinations:
hiself. He is alone and there will be no other. He is the
last man.
FOOTNOTES -- INTRODUCTION


2 Ibid., p. 130.


10 Victor Brombert's The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) appears to be the most inclusive and far-reaching of the works on Flaubert, but, although he has
dealt with the frequent references to time in the Correspondance as well as with its structural role in each work, he has not explored its function as the link between all the works.


16Carr, p. 348.

17Poulet, Etudes, p. 319.

18Ibid., pp. 320-321.

19Glasser, p. 138.

20Eliade, p. 88.

21Cortland, p. 146.

22Brombert, p. 10.

24 "What happens, happens now... it is always an experience, idea, or thing which is 'present'... ['Past' then becomes] the present memory experience of a thing past; 'future' the present expectation or anticipation of a future thing." Hans Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), p. 8.


26 Lester, p. 29.

27 The justification for placing *L'Education sentimentale* with the medieval group will become clear when the terms of its deep structure (as well as the pattern of the surface structure) are discussed.

28 *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* will be considered as part of the short story group although it is clearly a prose poem. Its subject matter and length seem to justify this liberty.


30 Róheim, p. 381.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 175.


35 Horney, p. 146.

36 Róheim, p. 189.
CHAPTER I

SALAMMBÔ - HERODIAS

Sainte-Beuve anticipated one of the major continuing criticisms of Salammbô when he complained that the heroine was decidedly understated. According to his oppressively logical analysis of the work, Salammbô should have been "the motive force of the book and of the action," yet she is far too "made-up," too picturesque and vapid to produce the havoc of the plot or even, for that matter, to engage the reader's interest. Flaubert himself agreed that he had indeed made "the pedestal too large for the statue," but limitations of space and time made this disproportion necessary. Salammbô and Mâtho do both seem extraordinarily passive individuals to stand as true hero and heroine in the most dynamic of Flaubert's novels. However, the poet is not justified by plot alone, and this apparent dissonance between character and action can be resolved within the framework of a metapsychological interpretation.

The Salammbô-Hérodiase works concern a primary contest in man's psychological development—the rebellion of son against father—which, extended into archetypal and metaphorical terms, is also the first step in mankind's emancipation from the tyranny of his gods. This is a radical and dangerous revolt, however, for the punishment
meted out against the threat to the established source of life is the denial of new life and continuity to the son: the father defends his prerogative through the castration of the child. The fact that this punishment may never have been carried out in a literal sense on a systematic basis has not diminished its psychological importance as a potential danger to the young mind. Thus, now, as in prehistoric myth, the father plays a dominant role in the development of the child's castration fears.

In Flaubert's novel, it is evident from the manner in which they behave—vaguely and instinctively, selfishly, and, in general, rather mindlessly—that Salammbo and Mâtho are the children, the primitives, of the work. It is unjust to accuse them of being weak royalty when they are merely pawns to forces they make no effort to control. It is the Great Father imago and not the ingénue couple who propels the theme and the action of the novel. The true hero of Salammbo is Hamilcar.

The castration motif first appears as a symbolic reenactment of its actual primitive origin: in the frenzy of the Primal Feast wherein, as Röheim describes it, the ultimate attack on the father's authority is mounted. The father, as sole possessor of the females of the group, must defend his rights against the sexual demands of his sons. Separately, they are no match for his strength, but, banded together, the brothers are able to overcome and displace the
father. Their triumph is celebrated in the Primal Feast where the father is castrated and devoured, and, as their sacrificial victim, transformed from the enemy into a rejuvenating god, source of their future prowess and authority. The outcome of the contest, however, is far from certain, and the father may retain his position despite the sons' attacks, in which case their punishment follows the law of retaliation: the child is castrated and destroyed in the father's place.

As we shall see, this is the tragic pattern of Salammbo. Yet its greatest irony lies not in the destructive power of the father but in his eternal vulnerability. Flaubert's otherwise rather arbitrary inclusion of the child Hannibal is revealed as an enduring threat to order and authority—the spiritual consequences of which are even more devastatingly described in Hérodias.

The setting for the Primal celebration is, appropriately, the gardens of Hamilcar, a sophisticated version of Eden. Displayed before the Barbarians, creatures of instinct but very little understanding, are endless marvels of nature intricately combined with the most astonishing achievements of human artifice. Flaubert's powers of condensation are truly remarkable in this opening chapter, for not only does he indicate the direction of the entire novel, capsulize the psychological and metaphysical problems to be expanded throughout the work, but his choice of
descriptive detail unfolding before the Barbarians' eyes contains the ominous design of their fate as well. The ebony staircase whose every step repeats the sea victories of Hamilcar, the blood-red doors of the inaccessible palace, slashed by their black crosses, the restless elephants and the sleeping lions foreshadow the defeat of the Mercenaries. Yet none of these eminently threatening images are understood since, for Flaubert, the signs inherent in matter are beyond man's reach.

The Primal Horde itself is a vast collection of race and tongue, strangers to one another in culture and language but brothers united in elemental lusts and sensations. They incorporate the tremendous energies of man's sexual nature—a nature whose demands are often greater than its capacity for fulfillment. Temporary satiety is purchased by an exhaustion of soul from which he never fully recovers. Like a second-rate Sisyphus, he pushes his burden of desire and death into oblivion, just as the cycle of the Barbarians' victory and defeat leads, after all, to the belly of the jackal. Momentarily, however, their strength is prodigious.

Hamilcar, their former commander and appointed host, is not only spiritual father to this band of violent sons, but he must act also as husband to the symbolic female represented by the city. And Carthage is a dangerous bride, demanding the virility of the presiding male principle as
her due and her sustenance. In effect, then, Hamilcar
wages a double war full of contradiction and ambiguity.
From the Barbarians he must defend his treasure, his bride
Carthage and her extension in his daughter Salammbô; from
the debilitating woman he must defend what is even more
precious--his power in the world and his sexual manhood--
the proof of which lives in his chosen heir, Hannibal. It
is no wonder that he sacrifices Salammbô with relative in-
difference and then weeps with such passionate joy at the
escape of Hannibal--his triumph and his immortality--from
the jaws of Moloch.

Significantly, Hamilcar is absent from the feast,
and his kitchens are insufficient to satisfy the needs of
the warriors. They seem content enough, however, until
their drunkenness triggers simultaneously the release of
their primitive instincts and the liberation of Hamilcar's
slaves from the Ergastulum. One of the slaves is Spendius,
and it is he who expresses the exact nature of their
deprivation: they have not been served from the golden
cups of the Sacred Legion.

The cups,² a universal female symbol, are a sign of
superiority and prestige to the men. The father has not
provided the sons with that which they desire above all
his possessions even though "some of them had been known to
risk their lives for the inconceivable pleasure of drinking
out of these cups."³ It is a fitting aspect of the mythic
dimension of this work that the cups' value is not in their material worth but in their symbolic nature. It is in this respect that they act as the catalyst which ultimately brings about the destruction of the Barbarians and much of Carthage. As the image of the woman withheld through the father's power, the enraged reaction their denial exacts from the men is perfectly justified.

The arrival of Gisco—a father surrogate—serves to dampen temporarily the men's anger, repressing it into sullen hesitation before the threat implied by the general's presence. The fears he awakens are expressed in interestingly Freudian imagery: they are unnerved by the sight of Carthage with its piles of staircases and lofty black houses; they tremble at the awful thought of being crushed against its walls by a vengeful Gisco. So great is the power of the father's intimidation that they project the presumed poisoning of a slave onto themselves—reinforcing their role as slaves to their instinctual behavior—and transfer their fears and hatred to Hamilcar.

Salammbô's entrance is delayed until after the annihilation of her sacred jeweled fish. This violation of the primordial womb of Divinity anticipates Mâtho's sacrilegious theft; both acts summon the fatally seductive female; both acts destroy the virility which inspired them. Salammbô's position as an extension of Hamilcar's retaliatory power is clear as she reminds the men that they are not
conquering victors but servants in the house of a master. She, like the fish and the cups, are off limits, forbidden, taboo. To touch—as the Balearic slingers quickly learn—is to die. Her sexually symbolic invitation to Mâtho results immediately in the javelin wound inflicted by Narr'Havas, another arm, as it were, of Hamilcar's far-reaching authority.

The Primal Feast ends at last in carnage. The father has been challenged, but the sons assume a false victory; Mâtho has been inflicted literally, with the fatal wound of pure passion, and Salammbô cannot escape the indecision of her desire. And Spendius, the old Artificer, has been set free.

Much critical attention has been directed to Spendius. F. C. Green describes him as Flaubert's greatest character:

Spendius is the Figaro of this sombre comedy, the fertile source of all its action. In the gardens of Hamilcar it is he who incites the Mercenaries to revolt. But for Spendius the superstitious, brooding Mâtho had never stolen the zaimph. It is he who arouses the Barbarians against Hanno, snatches victory from defeat by the ruse of the blazing swine, cuts the aqueduct, saves Mâtho from the dagger of Narr'Havas. He is unique in that all the characters his intelligence is unclouded by passion.  

While his intellectual faculties may be capable of surmounting his instinct, he is, nevertheless, one of the most passionate figures in all of Flaubert's works. In fact, he
exists in a perpetual state of tension, alternating between the ecstasy of imagination and the exhilaration of action. Within the castration framework itself, Spendius plays the role of the medicine-man to the Barbarian rebels, the same role fulfilled for the Carthaginians by Schahabarim.

Spendius is the son of a Greek rhetorician, manipulator of words, and a Campanian prostitute, servant to unbridled sexual appetites. He combines and fulfills the promise of both. His first words are in praise of Baal-Eschmoun, the deliverer, called in Spendius' country Aesculapius, god of healing. He thus immediately identifies himself with the male principle—not as incorporated in the Dionysiac frenzy but in the sublimated energies of Apollo, god of healing and of truth. Spendius' truth, however, is part of the Flaubertian ontological dilemma: he uses words to disguise what is real rather than to reveal the true substance behind ever-changing appearances.

The maternal side of his character appears in his ability to channel the energies of the Mercenaries by means of his identification with the sexual motivations of mankind. His sly suggestion about the sacred cups, his use of the burning swine—symbol of violent lusts—his entrance into the sacred temple of Tanith, and his destruction of the aqueduct, all his effective actions pertain to the sexual obsessions of the primitive medicine-man. But, like
his tribal counterpart, he is not "whole"; his continual sexual tension stems not from super-maleness but from the extraordinary intensity of his sexual anxieties and his extreme (repressed) desire for death. How else can we explain the cowardice of his entire life when juxtaposed to the quiet courage of his crucifixion?

In death he sees himself as the male principle released at last from servitude to the consuming terror of loss in castration by the father or absorption by the woman. Môtho must take the zaimph not to destroy Carthage but so that Spendiüs might himself control the treasure which, possessed by the female, constantly threatens his sexual energy, even though it offers simultaneously the means to his salvation (immortality). In life he is a natural slave; his nature is not, as some might assume, that of a misplaced master. Although he attaches himself to Môtho as a self-serving Figaro, before the real authority, Hamilcar, Spendiüs bends his knee instinctively. It is a tragic irony that he condemns himself through his cleverness with words and arguments: the medicine-man casts one spell too many, and Apollonic transcendence is nailed to a cross whereon the body returns to nature and the spirit understands at last the meaning of contradiction.

A parallel dimension to Spendiüs' character lies in the domain of archetypes inherent in the deep structure of
the work. As the novel concerns man's challenge to God, Spendiús, whose phallic qualities pervade the work, represents the serpent-tempter. In his role as the Deceiver, Spendiús follows Mâtho up the staircase to Salammbô's chambers, binds his new "patient's" wound, and pleads for acceptance. Like his predecessor in the Garden of Eden, he shows Mâtho the breathtaking beauty of the world unfolding in the scarlet-gold of the rising sun and taunts him with the pitiful humiliation of mankind rendered impotent through submission to a will greater than his own. Like Satan recalling ancient skills, he describes his qualifications as a seducer par excellence:

J'ai vécu dans le palais. Je peux, comme un vipère, me couler-entre les murs. (p. 54)

He offers everything and demands nothing—except the soul of his new Adam, through which he hopes to possess the world. In Spendiús, Apollo and Lucifer are united insofar as he brings healing and light and new promise to the Barbarians. Unfortunately, however, the gods and the angels prove impure. Spendiús' medicine poisons them all, and the revelations of the oracle are found to be the lies of a deceiver.

Compared to creations such as Spendiús and Hamilcar, it is little wonder that Mâtho and Salammbô seem pale beside them. They, too, however, serve their purpose precisely.
Mâtho, the leader of the Barbarians, as gigantic physically as he is insignificant mentally, represents the obsession of human passion. He is a man of action who plays by the rules, a man who fears the gods and wishes to die in his native land. There are no complications in his life until he sees Salammbô, who henceforth fills his existence with dread and frustration. The relationship between them gradually but clearly reveals a portrait of the man who, fearing the loss of his virility, dreads the consequence of union with woman. The immobility which overcomes Mâtho at Sicca is a symptom of the impotence which follows the ecstasy of their first encounter. This debilitation has its parallel in the Barbarians' exhaustion during the great retreat from Carthage to Sicca.

Having sated themselves in Megara, the men are suddenly afraid of "losing themselves" and of reaching the desert, "the country of sands and terrors." To avoid the wasteland, man must seek the heart of the fertile temple, but, paradoxically, there are even greater dangers here. The absence of woman is sterility, nothingness; her presence may bring impotence—a virtual castration. Mâtho's death at Salammbô's feet under the setting sun finalizes the sacrifice of that passion which pays for its satisfaction by abdicating male dominance to the female. Mâtho, last of the rebellious sons, suffers a symbolic castration from the Carthaginian bacchantes—the talion punishment he has
demanded for himself through his possession of the perfidious Salammbô.

Salammbô, while representing the seductive object of every man's desire, is also a very useful tool in the work of politics, that is, in the establishment and retention of power over another in the operations of this world. Hamilcar, who resents and dislikes his daughter, has decided to make the best of a bad situation and use her to further his political ambitions; consequently, he has forbidden her to become totally acquainted with the mysteries of her goddess Tanith. Aroused but unsatisfied, Salammbô exists in a vague sort of erotic vanity which, sustained by her spectacular beauty and infinitesimal mind, makes her lethal. If Hamilcar is to manipulate her sexuality to extend his power in the world, Salammbô must be forever denied the self-understanding which follows the recognition of the nature of the forces within her. An instinct as strong as hers must be turned away from any clear object and sublimated into the orderly world of marriage and civil arrangements. A world infinitely removed from the universe of pure passion from which Mâtho beckons.

The old servant Taanach sees the root of her mistress's malaise and prudently suggests that Salammbô's problems will vanish once she has a husband. This does not offer any relief, however, for Salammbô continues to feel
the suffocating anxiety of unrelieved desire:

'. . . je me sens écrasée comme si un
dieu s'étendait sur moi.'

(p. 76)

The "god," it would seem, is human sexuality, the source
of all life, power, creativity; but, in Flaubert's terms
at least, a god whose weight is too great for mere mortals
to bear.

Salammbô is dangerous not only because of her
eminently combustible emotional state, but also because of
her power as the keeper of the treasure, as the dwelling
place for the "genius of her house," the great python.

As she warns the sacrilegious Mercenaries:

J'emporterai avec moi le génie
de ma maison, mon serpent noir. . .
Je sifflerai, il me suivra; et,
si je monte en galère, il courra
dans le sillage de mon navire
sur l'écume des flots.

(p. 51)

Displeased, the female withdraws from the male the very
mystery of his life, and he is left helpless and alone.
Salammbô's vaguely contemptuous reaction in Mâtho's tent
to his tears of love and joy--

C'est donc là, songeait-elle, cet
homme formidable qui fait trembler
Carthage!

(p. 193)

is followed immediately by the removal of the zaîmph--the
beginning of the end for Mâtho and his forces.

Salammbô, of course, does not act alone. She, like
Mâtho, has her spiritual director. Schahabarim matches Spendius in role-playing and, like the former slave, lives in "passages filled with eternal twilight"; neither truly belongs to darkness or to light. The priest alone in the novel (excepting perhaps Hamilcar) comprehends the nature of reality; he knows the earth is round and falling, yet due to its great speed man is unable to perceive its movement. He understands motion as primary and is aware of an innate vertigo in the decisions of men. Tragically, this knowledge does not help his own existence, for he suffers from a dichotomy in his spiritual loyalties.

. . .d'ailleurs, tout ce qu'il voyait des choses terrestres le forçait à reconnaître pour suprême le principe male exterminateur. Puis il accusait secrètement la Rabbet de l'infortune de sa vie.

(p. 177)

Intellectually, he knows the indomitable potency of Baal, the Father; nevertheless, through experience, he dreads the moon goddess as the actual castrating Mother. He then overcompensates for his fear in his desire to believe in her as the source of fertility: to save his faith he initiates the trip to Mâtho's tent. Salammbô must return with the zaîmph in order that the sacrifice of his virility be "worthwhile." Thus the two medicine-men are directly opposed in the struggle for possession of the female principle. Spendius must take it by force to dominate and subdue the female so that she is unable to threaten his
sustained sexual tension. Schahabarim must keep it hidden so that his lost virility will at least be preserved for him within the chaste secrets of her temple.

To complicate Schahabarim's role further, although he has trained his charge in perfect docility and purity, he wishes that she will fall. He cannot possess her, and she, of course, is incapable of understanding him--yet he cannot forget his original maleness. Consequently, Schahabarim must enjoy vicariously (as Spendius enjoys his master's triumphs) Mātho's possession of Salammbō. The priest's apostasy from the altars of Tanith to those of Baal reflects his final decision to disregard physical realities and serve his intellectual nature--even though he, like Spendius, should be henceforth to all men a sign of contradiction.

The chapters which succeed the feast develop the pattern of challenge and brief victory negated by unmitigated vengeance from the father. The army which arrives at Sicca has seen the horror of the crucified lions and learned that Venus is mistress of the land. Nevertheless, they are unshaken by this preview of things to come--at least until Hanno's arrival. The Barbarians are as confused by his grotesque appearance and incomprehensible language as they were by the sudden vision of Salammbō, gorgeous, but equally incomprehensible.
Hanno, the corrupt personification of the city's decadence, comes before the comparatively unblemished Barbarians like a prostitute offering counterfeit wares. It is Spendius who controls the situation, using his wit and linguistic skill—his magical incantations—to drive out the Carthaginian intruder and sustain the Mercenaries' upward momentum.

The gathering of the armies at the foot of Carthage reveals more of the profusion and variety of forms which ever serve to alienate man from a real intellectual grasp of reality, even while they fascinate his senses. The Barbarians are strangely irritated by the sight of the great city:

Ils l'admiraient, ils l'exécutaient,
ils auraient voulu tout à la fois
l'anéantir et l'habiter.
(p. 82)

Carthage is to the Mercenaries what Salammbô is to Mâtho:

Mais je la veux! Il me la faut!
J'en meurs! À l'idée de l'étreindre
dans mes bras, une fureur de joie
m'emporte, et cependant je la hais,
Spendius! je voudrais la battre!
(p. 65)

The desire to possess and destroy at the same time is a condition common to frustrated sexual appetites, yet the satisfaction such tension demands brings with it a certain sense of death.

The death threatened is the end of movement, of action. Motion is the primary attribute of life itself:
the gods, as the temple sculptures show, are pure movement, and man seeks in action a disguise for his spiritual impotence. Salammbô prays to the ever-changing moon to be released from her confinement, "motionless on earth." Mâtho, caught in the useless motion of ineffective action, turns to frenzied speech for fulfillment. Spendidus alone is daring and perceptive enough to attempt, as remedy, a penetration into the sacred tabernacle where all life's motion tends.

Before their journey begins, however, there must be a definitive renunciation of any intermediate means of salvation. The seduction-castration motif continues during the Carthaginian visit to the Barbarian camp. The gentle courtesy of the soldiers as they lure their important visitors into phallically-oriented and humiliating games foreshadows Salammbô's graceful penetration into the enemy camp. They play with their intended victims like the proverbial cat and mouse until their treacherous murder of the interpreters. The elimination of these parrot-decorated intermediaries (presumably the means of overcoming all barriers to communication and understanding) preliminary to Gisco's capture is one more indication of the eternal and hopeless opposition of Barbarian and Carthaginian, of male and female, of man and the world.

Gisco, the accusing father-surrogate whose efforts to protect his "sons" is repaid with mutilation, is cast
into the Mercenaries' refuse pit. After their second orgy of violence, the Barbarians are again overcome by languor. During their exhausted stillness, Spendiōs leads Mâtho through the aqueduct to recover for his brothers, like some unaware Prometheus, the secret of their vanquished virility.

The passage through the aqueduct is explicitly sexual in its imagery. It is a literal rite of passage, an initiation, into mysteries never before experienced by men like Mâtho confined to superficial ritual and bound to convention. For Spendiōs, the passage is another "frenzy" which he must undergo to sustain the perpetual tension whereby he continues his imitation of authority. The penetration through the aqueduct with its crushing, nearly fatal torments seems rather clearly intended to indicate the sexual act in which man undergoes a death-like experience⁷; yet, since in coitus man's deepest wish, to return to the womb, is fulfilled, the terrifying aqueduct allows access to the sacred temple.

Tanith is presented as Mâtho's enemy; his natural dread of woman is revealed by his extreme discomfort in the female atmosphere of the temple gardens, heavy with fertility symbols. For Spendiōs, however, she is merely a tool, a means to an end. He sees only a reminder of a former lucrative source of income in the lovely bodies of the sleeping guardians at the temple doors. It is in a spirit of excited adventure, almost that of a wager, that Spendiōs
leads the reluctant Mâtho through the corridors to the hidden chamber which hides the sacred zaîmph.

The zaîmph, the veil of Tanith, is "of the nature of gods," the same god under whose weight Salammbô languished. If the goddess represents life itself, or immortality, then her veil, which participates in that sacred nature and which lies-inaccessible to man—in the most secret and hidden chamber of the temple, must be a representation of the womb, the covering within which all life finds its origin and its sustenance. Mâtho's theft is indeed sacrilege, for man may not—despite his deepest longing—either return to its protection or usurp the one unquestioned area of female supremacy.

When Salammbô realizes what Mâtho has done, she is enthralled by this sudden manifestation of her own secret desires. The desire is taboo, however, and Salammbô, who is nothing if not obedient to the letter of the male laws established to ensure her total submissiveness, screams for Mâtho's removal and punishment. He escapes from the city by propelling himself over the closed gates, the sacred zaîmph billowing behind him.

Possessing the treasure, the Barbarians seem invincible. The female city has been unarmed as it were, and yet, so enormous is the debilitating habit of her intimidation, that, despite Hanno's stupidity at Utica,
Spendius must once again show them the way to success. Hanno suffers from the sun, and his premature withdrawal from the battle allows the wily slave to suggest the ruse of the burning swine. Spendius is able, like a good medicine-man, to project the unconscious wishes of his "patient" in order to drive out an undesirable presence. The phallic symbols of the Mercenaries' burning lust does indeed reduce Hanno to even greater impotency and brings Carthage to the brink of disaster.

In Hamilcar Barca, the Red and the Black—war and religion—are united in a formidable combination. He is a natural ruler, a true hero whose role as master is challenged on all sides. The revolt of the Mercenaries touches his authority as father; the sexual defiance of which he suspects Salammbô compromises his ability to control the worldly destinies of Carthage and its inhabitants. His reaction is swift and absolutely confident. As Röheim observes:

Here we find occasion to go back to Freud's hypothetical Primal Horde. The Leader must hold his own absolutely if he is to hold it at all and must punish all encroachment with instant death. A moment of indecision may prove fatal to him, as he may be torn to pieces by his rebellious sons. His influence over the others rests...on a complete self-reliance, believing in himself he can make others believe in him and can serve as a much-needed riveting point for common human beings who are suffering under the compulsion of doubt derived from their own ambivalence. The Hero...gives
them what they stand in greatest need of—self-assurance. This description applies equally well to the chief of the present day as to his ancestor, the Patriarch of the Primal Horde. It is important to remark what this assurance really is, and how in the course of human evolution man has lost this superbly animal quality. 9

Hamilcar, despite the final ambiguity of his position vis-a-vis Hannibal, is perhaps the most dynamic, unhesitating, and effective character in Flaubert's works. He is a true Hero, a Master in Hegelian terms, whose iron will demands and receives the submission of others. Hamilcar is thoroughly ruthless, but, as Röheim again points out,

Ambivalency is the attitude of the mass; the superman who attempts to rule them must be 'beyond good and evil', without the moral feeling of guilt, absolutely narcissistic, without regard for the opinions of others.

(p. 147)

It is appropriate that we find such a character at the earliest stage in Flaubert's story of human disintegration, for in the later works we observe with growing despondence man's gradual but definitive divorce from that "superbly animal quality" as he is drawn into greater and greater intellectualism.

Hamilcar also embodies the "male exterminating principle" which is worshipped in the god Moloch. If his daughter is associated with the fertile Moon goddess Tanith, Hamilcar represents the vitality of the devouring sun.
He appears at sunrise, returning to the beleaguered city (his quarrelsome spouse, as it were), the great phallic horse riding the prow of his ship. With the immediate perception of Eschmoun, he interprets correctly the danger which threatens him on all sides. He notices, significantly, a series of "castrated" carvings on his abandoned warships: the Patoec gods have lost their arms, the Chimeras their wings, the bulls their horns. To counter these signs, his servant Iddibal stresses the willfulness, the virility, and heroic qualities of the child Hannibal as if he were to be the father's ultimate weapon against his enemies. A weapon which, as we have seen, may be turned against its possessor. Hannibal already shows subtle signs of impatience, the beginnings of the desire to supplant his father.

Hamilcar discovers his daughter's betrayal in the temple of Moloch through the accusations of the Ancients. He is the personification of the god on earth, and Salammbô's perfidy in daring (so he thinks) to arrange her own sexual destiny actively subverts the dominant authority of Hamilcar-Moloch. His anger towards her is somewhat neutralized, however, by the far more serious loss of his estates and goods. He hears the seemingly endless accounting of his losses suffered on land and sea, terminating in the horror of the Megara feast and Salammbô's extravagant dissipation of his wealth. To restore his potency, to reinforce his role as father, unique giver of life, Hamilcar
determines to possess all the grain in Carthage; he alone shall distribute—at the proper time—the phallic corn. Hamilcar's descent into his secret, undefiled treasure chambers draws him into a sort of sexual ecstasy. He feels himself to be united with the past, with eternity, with the center of the world in his intense pleasure of possession. But after ecstasy—death.

He tours the ruins of his estate (result of sexual excesses) and offers a sacrifice of part of himself, his good slave, to ward off greater dangers: "C'était un malheur qu'il s'infligeait afin d'en prévenir de plus terribles" (p. 147).

This voluntary separation of a part from the whole, which does not, however, irreparably damage the whole, parallels his later sacrifice of his great war horse in order to close the gates of Carthage against the charging Barbarians. And both gestures are a type of self-mutilation—a ritual imitation of castration—which appeases the threatening deity without destroying the victim. In this manner, and by torturing his delinquent servants, Hamilcar relieves his unbearable tension.

Although the residue of his rage is calmed somewhat by the thought of his son, "prolongation of his might, infinite continuation of his personality," the discovery of the release of his prisoners of war touches him more deeply
than any loss heretofore suffered. These men were the tangible sign of his power in the world, his mastery over the Other; their escape is a challenge to his virility which must be answered—and he decides at last to assume the defense of his unworthy and faithless city. The chapter closes with a clear metaphorical statement of Hamilcar's position. The mutilated trunk of his favorite elephant, extension of himself, rubs across his body, repeating the ferocity of the Primal Horde and its encroaching desire.

It is interesting to note that the Barbarians, like children, have forgotten the Feast altogether and place no importance on its effectiveness in the world of action, yet it is Hamilcar's sole motivation. The Battle of the Macaras continues the sexual symbolism originating in the Primal Feast. The aggressive Barbarians seem to be triumphant until Hamilcar's elephants—trunks painted red and extended before them—attack. Although the Mercenaries retaliate in kind, that is, by "castrating" the threatening male symbol (they blind and hamstring the animals), Hamilcar continues to outdo them. This time, he burns the bridge (the phallic passage man needs to cross into the feminine paradise of the city) and vanishes from their presence.

The defeat is borne with most difficulty by Spendius, for his imitation mana is never more cruelly exposed. The little courage he shows is literally painted on (p. 156).
He is, despite his clever wit, only half a man; a manipulator who works slyly in the dark of others' instinct, who satisfies their unconscious desires but who, being constantly in a state of tension, is most vulnerable to the danger of castration and death.

'Je ne suis pas fait pour les batailles au-grand soleil; l'éclat des épées me trouble la vue; c'est une maladie, j'ai trop longtemps vécu dans l'ergastule. Mais donne-moi des murailles à esclader la nuit, . . . et j'apporterai vivement ton désir devant tes pieds.'

(p. 163)

Without Mâtho's body to "inhabit," Spendius would not exist. Lack of primal sexual energy is indeed a disease (cf. Hanno's leprosy). Thought, as a substitute, developed in the darkness of the ergastulum, increases the ability to contemplate, but man's dependency in the active order is also increased. He forfeits, like a slave, his freedom to act intuitively and instinctively. His idea of how to act aborts his natural momentum and he suffers a sort of castration by the intellect.

Mâtho disciplines and perfects the masculine strength of his army. He drives away the women (his men must not lose their striking power prematurely in the arms of camp followers) and, as possessor of the zaîmph, exercises his stewardship over the female fertility of the land itself.

Quand il ne pouvait les ravager, Mâtho jetait des pierres dans les champs pour
les rendre stériles.

(p. 167)

In a counterpoint pattern, as Mâtho suppresses the female principle, the unstable Carthage refuses her master, Hamilcar. He finds himself impressed into a valley surrounded by mountains and the Barbarian army. His attacks are beaten back and his fallen Legionnaire cannibalized by the Balearic slingers. Their desire to drink from the Legion cups has come full circle as they devour the human co-extensive with the object. This is not the end of the cycle, however, but only a prelude to the unbreakable triumph of eternal becoming represented by the sated lions of the Pass of the Hatchet.

The heat increases as Hamilcar's star reaches its zenith. The sun becomes motionless at mid-day, but its sudden stillness betokens more the distance which separates divine from human—a distance often overlooked in the mirages with which presumptuous man deceives himself—than any weakening of the sun itself. This instant of divine neglect fills man with the sensation of his aloneness and exhausts him. So it was with the Barbarians in the hours before Hamilcar's decision to burn the tents of the Libyans. In Carthage, the great python also was sickening, "dying" so that it might be reborn.

Salammbô, who has erroneously confused Mâtho with Moloch, prepares to present herself—much as Hamilcar will
send his prized stallion—as a sacrificial victim in the arms of the terrifying Barbarian. Schahabarim, the perverse, the inventive, uses the dark chthonic creature to instruct Salammbô in the sexual mysteries with which she has been teased and subjugated all her life. To go to Mâtho unprepared, so to speak, would imperil her mission as the castrating female avenger. To abandon oneself to sexual ecstasy, as does Mâtho, is to be ultimately unmanned and destroyed. Salammbô must become relatively practiced in her new part so that she can indeed command, "at a whistle," obedience from the "genius of her house." Covered with gems, radiant in her artificial splendor, she journeys through the wasteland left by the interminable war. The attack of the son on the father, as it touches the origin of life, must necessarily leave a barren earth in its wake. The countryside is filled with images of violent and uncontrolled sexual energy—although nowhere is there indication of the succession of new life. The sun's heat scorches vipers and eagles; filthy soldiers—all symbols of the destructive or sexually dominant male—appear fleetingly, a dog (male guardian of female virtue, according to Röheim) guards the entrance to deserted camps. When Salammbô's guide cuts off the dog's head, the female becomes even more vulnerable before the aggressive male. However, when Salammbô descends on Mâtho's outpost, it is Tanith and not Moloch who witnesses her arrival. The passionate scene in the tent is the heart
of the novel although the sexual conflict described here is not the one which plagues the hero, Hamilcar. This struggle is for possession of the zaîmph, or the male-female contest to control the life-principle. Salammbô can indeed defeat Mâtho by withdrawing from his reach the vessel of his strength and life, but in so doing she likewise destroys herself. For without his fertilizing presence, all her fecundity is useless. The pinnacle of male-female communication is the union which, in the womb, produces the immortality of each in the generation of new life. Without this fruition, the union is—in terms of future hope—self-destructive for each.

During the night of their encounter, Mâtho is beside himself with passion and delight, even Salammbô loses consciousness of self in her pleasure. Significantly, Mâtho tosses the zaîmph, sign of the essential purpose, justification, and potential of their union, about their feet while the rain falls in the darkness sealing the union of the two principles, Moloch and Tanith. Paradoxically, the zaîmph in itself is treated carelessly by Mâtho and is disappointing to Salammbô. Mâtho sees in it—as he should—an extension of the being he loves (the symbolic object now unimportant in her presence), but to Salammbô, whose life has been spent in unrelieved anticipation, it is not as she expected, and "Elle restait mélancolique devant son rêve accompli" (p. 194). Overcome with the banality of her
expended passion, she is capable of coolly removing the zaîmph from Mâtho's tent, and by so doing simultaneously destroys the prerogatives of the lover against the father. Thus she defeats one of the most fundamental and necessary urges of mankind, and acts, in the deepest sense, as the castrating female to whom man must surrender himself. Ironically, it is Hamilcar's burning of the Libyan tents (a talion punishment paralleling Mâtho's fiery consummation of the netting covering Salammbô's bed) which gives her the opportunity to escape with the sacred veil to her father's camp.

As she departs, Gisco--unseen witness to their love-making--whose broken legs represent the castration of a father-figure, as well as the mutilation of civilization and honorable action, drags himself to accuse not Judith but Jezebel. Not comprehending her purpose, he can only imagine that nothing but the irresistible motivation of sexual passion could move her to turn against the city he loves--that passion which he at this point knows better than the rest is the root of all evil.

The arrival of Salammbô in Hamilcar's tent, displaying the zaîmph amid the deafening cries of the two armies, is a glorious repetition of Judith's triumphant return from Holofernes' camp. Hamilcar, opportunist par excellence, seizes the chance to unite his daughter to the traitor Narr'Havas--at last fulfilling Salammbô's purpose
in his life. In accepting Narr'Havas after her interlude with Mâtho, Salammbô becomes herself a traitor to life, for she and Mâtho have been united under the folds of the sacred veil. And the grain, most fertile of symbols, falls like barren hail on the heads of the betrothed.

The siege of Hippo-Zarytus defines on the land the contest between Hamilcar (with Narr'Havas) and Mâtho for one woman: the one for manipulation and power, the other for ecstasy and death. The towns reject the Carthaginian overtures in favor of a passionate, though futile, alliance with the Barbarians, perhaps in a last effort to draw from outside themselves a revitalizing measure of that instinctive animality refined out of civilized life. The towns are an intermediary between the natural ferocity of the sons and the organized sadism of the father and his cohort, the city. While there is a ray of hope for man in their choice of the lesser of two evils as their master, that hope is soon negated by the ambiguity of the Barbarian emotion.

With Mâtho's defeat at the hands of Salammbô, Spendius snatches the opportunity to direct once again the destiny of the Mercenary forces. He continues to use the word—the lie—this time by way of forged "messages" to excite the soldiers until he himself is carried away by his simulated anger. The frustration of the army is directed to the brutal destruction of their Carthaginian prisoners:
an anticipation of the death of their brother and leader, likewise misled by Spendius.

With the refusal of Hippo-Zarytus, Hamilcar must flee. He escapes across the river, a sign that even in defeat he is the bridge, the supreme phallic power which controls the passage from male to female. His entry into Carthage is another near-disaster, saved only by the sacrifice of his stallion, a phallic boast thrown in the teeth of the pursuing sons. They remain outside the city walls to begin their last claim on the father's possessions—the siege of Carthage.

The primitive hordes mass and wait, not knowing what it is they desire so intensely, as the great war towers are erected. At the height of the pre-attack tension, Spendius effects his greatest strategy. Carthage depends upon the flow of water from outside; it contains no known natural, life-giving spring within. In a perfect reprisal for Salammbô's "castration" of Mâtho and with him of the Barbarian forces, Spendius cuts off the life-giving fluid which sustains the fertility of the city. The medicine-man punishes the city with his most feared weapon, his ability to castrate, to steal the soul from his victim. Again the imagery is suggestive: Spendius is described as a chariot-driver triumphant at the Olympic games—the image of one who controls and paces, according to his whim, the powerful
impulses of man's sexual nature. When, "distraught with pride," he raises his arms aloft, he seems to personify man's misguided hope of transcendence through sexual domination of the other.

The thirst and desolation brought to the city by Spendius' act is paralleled by the lack of activity, the impotence, suffered by the Barbarians. Once committed to the Greek's leadership, they suffer the same debilitating disease common to all of Flaubert's great failures. The use of intellect and invention becomes so refined that man loses sight of the object of his desire, transposing the concrete reality into a flight into abstractions and dreams.

Spendius' war machines become the mechanics of his rise to power. Their endless gadgetry serves merely to make his undoing--trapped by a combination of the simplest elements of nature--all the more humiliating. Anticipating his fatal bravado with Hamilcar later, Spendius is propelling himself and others far beyond his real ability to cope. He is not, as he claims, the true servant of Apollo: his word brings tricks, not truth; his medicine poisons even the healthiest: he is an imposter.

Within Carthage, however, the hero and master retains his position despite the counterforces dragging at his authority. Although his actions are not necessarily honorable, they define the needs of superman. His watery
destruction of the war towers even in the midst of Moloch's drought, his ability to subvert the god's demands from substance to accident (sacrificing an external form, an appearance, of his son, while keeping the child for himself), indicate Hamilcar's success in maintaining himself as the god's chosen. Under his great shadow, even the heroine loses something of her briefly-won identity, for the final lines of the novel describe the death, not of Salammbo, but of "Hamilcar's daughter."

And yet all his conquests are momentary and his supremacy unstable. The child Hannibal is already biting his father's hand—a primitive sign of the transference of vital mana from the leader to his successor. Nevertheless, in all of Flaubert's works, Salammbo offers the only truly orderly and, in its own way, noble continuity of change and endless becoming. Because of the exquisite balance of Hamilcar's intellectual and animal qualities—though touched by ruthless ambiguity—the Flaubertian man emerges from the chaos of creation to impress his mark upon the world and to see his spirit perpetuated, according to his will, through his chosen son.

As for the daughter, it is interesting to note the post-tental comparison of Salammbo and the python. While she, the satisfied female, grows at last peaceful and gently curious about her encounter, the python, the exhausted male, continues to decline while ever-potent desire, the fierce
sun of this "exterminating principle," scorches mankind.

Salammbô's last duties are to protect her half-brother, younger but infinitely more significant, and to entertain her "sister-like" spouse, Narr'Havas. This platonic and sex-less mission is entirely appropriate to her absolute artificiality. When she appears for the great ritual celebration of her marriage, she is fantastically encased in jewels and paint: the real Salammbô, if one exists at all, is repressed into the darkness of the earth. She is hailed as the image of female sensuousness and fertility by a people who, like herself, are unable to distinguish symbol from reality. The serpent, at last renewed, lies at her side curled into the circle of eternity, resplendent under the rays of the sun.

This perfect, contained tableau of male and female virility and fertility, which unites Heaven and Earth in the order of the sacrament and the authority of man, is a parody. The "union" is merely a juxtaposition. The true mingling of natures in the timeless passion of the Barbarian camp has been denied, and the deepest, shattering desire for the other's soul buried in the dungeon of the city.

The instinct, though closed off, still lives, however, and to neutralize once and for all its virulence, it must be marched into the sunlight and renounced in open sacrifice. Mâtho appears, blinking in the glare of afternoon, to
accomplish the ritual of expiation. As the chosen scapegoat, he will preserve the mediocrity of the mob's sexuality through the immolation of the god's finest gifts. He will be destroyed—his bleeding body at once the symbol of the cause and the effect, the weapon and the victim—but, unlike the sacrificed Dionysus, Mâtho will not rise again. The eternal return means nothing but the repetition of error and the soulless evolution of nature. Only those few, like Hamilcar, who possess the ruthless courage to dominate the world, may outwit the disintegration of form. For Mâtho, for whom existence has been like the progress of a large animal wandering through streets "wringing beneath fires like a candelabrum blown about by the wind," there is only dissolution.

His passion ignited by the vision of Salammbô, his will blown this way and that by the promises of Spendius, he personifies the weakness of naive, instinctive desire. When he appears before Salammbô, torn apart by the maddened crowd, the futility of man's passion—which is nonetheless his only salvation—overwhelms them:

...toutes les choses extérieures s'effacant, elle n'avait aperçu que Mâtho. Un silence s'était fait dans son âme, un de ces abîmes où le monde entier disparaît sous la pression d'une pensée unique, d'un souvenir, d'un regard.

(p. 273)

There is, then, no communion save in the abyss, and the
dichotomy between the world and the spirit is final.

It is a fitting irony that Schahabarim, the apostate, denied legitimate access to the gods, to transcendence, and forever isolated from the sexual nature of man, tears out the pulsating heart of all that he has lost. His ecstatic gesture defines not the triumph but the nihilism of Flaubert's world.

And the sacred zaïmph itself for which Salammboô also must die? It remains in place, hidden in the goddess' temple—a further warning that man may not disrupt the principles of his nature or subvert their orderly operation. The theft and recapture of the zaïmph illustrates the ambiguities of man's passion for the one from whom he dreads symbolic castration and loss of soul. He is unable to resolve the conflict by a return to the womb, and his fate remains what it has always been—death. Man's efforts to defeat his mortality through the generation of new life is full of subtle risk, for the son is by nature a challenger, and the father's immortality is compromised if bought at the price of the hero's defeat.

Salammbô ends with the death of the usurper. The usurper is, in this case, all of those primitive instincts which give man his vital energies and which drive him to self-destruction. The manipulation of these energies by the spirit is the triumph of the superman; his failure—or
his abdication—denies man his hope of transcendence. In *Hérodiase*, Hamilcar is replaced by Hérode, the real by the counterfeit, and the decomposition of Salammô's physical world overtakes the spiritual in the unwelcome transcendency of the Word made flesh.

**HERODIAS**

In *Hérodiase*, Flaubert approaches the God-mortal, father-son conflict again through a pattern of destructive family relationships. In *Salammbô*, the pattern is largely metaphorical; in *Hérodiase*, literal. Yet, whereas in the novel each character retains his personality intact, as it were, Flaubert has decomposed the protagonists of the tale into their conflicting forces. Hérode, the imitation father, is extended sexually in the person of John the Baptist, Hérodiase in Salomé, and Vitellius in Aulus. The authentic family relationships of Hérode-Hérodiase-Salomé and Vitellius-Aulus are diminished by the overwhelming dominance of their other selves—especially in that of the prisoner Iackanann. Whereas Hamilcar's presence in the world determines the continuity of the spirit and thus of God, the Baptist's absence from the world negates the hope of man and violates the possibility of transcendence.

The opening lines of *Hérodiase* establish a continuation of the technique by which Flaubert presents the material world under the impress of the spiritual concerns paramount
to his work:

La citadelle de Machaerous se dressait
à l'orient de la mer Morte, sur un
pic de basalte ayant la forme d'un
cone.13

The symbol of Hérode's earthly power rises up on the edge of
the Eastern Empire as a great phallus, a constant irritant
to Roman ascendancy and a reminder of the potent danger
lurking under Jewish submission. For Hérode himself, how-
ever--twelve years sterile--it is an empty symbol. It is
the abyss and not the tower which compels his vision.

Beneath him the panorama of fertile valleys and
plains is negated by a memory or a presence which gnaws at
the Tetrarch's crumbling autonomy. The Arabs gather to
avenge the excesses of his lusts, the warring factions
within the temple threaten his expedient idolatry, and the
Emperor's favor is no longer certain. Hérode's position as
the figurehead of Jewish hopes rests precariously on its
hollow pedestal.

For Hérode, the world is still. He, like Salammbô,
is poised in anticipation, numb with desire. The Baptist's
cry from the bowels of the earth fascinates and terrifies
the Tetrarch. It proclaims a cathartic emotion he
recognizes as necessary to him and yet which he senses
demands a sacrifice he cannot offer.

Hérode's insistence that his prisoner remain hidden
indicates his anxiety with regard to the demands of rarified
sexual passion. To achieve his authenticity as Jewish King and Hero-Leader, he must control his political position and establish his continuity through the fruition of his seed. As we have seen in *Salammbô*, both power in the world and the fulfillment of individual existence depend on the effective direction of sexual energies, and Hérode has shown himself on all scores to be inadequate. His inordinate sexual demands, far from increasing his virility, have brought about his virtual castration. Thus, the lingering presence of his desire tortures him—neither Hero nor Father—as a constant proof of his masquerade. When Iaokanann cries out to the world, it is Hérode's frustration and fear of risk which reverberate in the subterranean passages. Should the Tetrarch's antagonists in the world—Rome, or its spiritual counterpart, Pharisee-Sadducee—discover the name of his weakness, his humiliation and disgrace would be final. For all these reasons he attempts to repress beyond recall the lion’s voice.

The view of the temple increases the significance of Hérode's dread. As a super-human phallic image, it establishes the sign of an eternal bondate for those whose weakness of will prevents their ability to meet its challenge. Wearied, Hérode turns from these visual and audible demands on his will to the motionless land which reflects his impotence.

Tous ces monts autour de lui, comme
des étages de grands flots pétrifiés,
les gouffres mois sur le flanc des
falaises, l'immensité du ciel bleu,
l'éclat violent du jour, la profondeur
des abîmes le troublaient; et une
désolation l'envahissait au spectacle
du désert, qui figure, dans le
bouleversement de ses terrains, des
amphithéâtres et des palais abattus.
(p. 257)

Significantly, his companion at the watch is Mannaei, the
executioner: a prophetic presence, since the decapitation
of John will materialize Hérode's alienation from purpose
and hope.

The vigil is interrupted by the appearance of
Hérodiades. Unlike Salammbo, she is not a malleable personifi-
cation of sexuality whose inadvertent castrating role is
partially compensated by the promise of her fertility.
Hérodiades combines the reflection of Hamilcar with the
opportunism of Spendius. Her sensuality, like Hérode's
virility in the person of Iaokanann, is projected into the
figure of her daughter, Salomé. Her hatred of Iaokanann
is all-consuming—as is his for her. In their respective
characters, they oppose not only human mastery over the
world against sublimation of the world, but the urge in
woman to subdue her master through her sexuality against
his most effective defense. That defense is, of course,
the transcendence of male sexual vulnerability through the
spirituality of the Word. Hérode, by imprisoning the
Baptist, has removed him from Hérodiades' threat, but because
Antipas lacks both intelligence and volition, the ruse is
Hérodiad's response to the captivity is a lightly-veiled allusion to its sexual implications for herself as well as for Hérode:

. . .Phanuel. . .cherche à voir Iaokanann puisque tu as l'aveuglement de le conserver.

(p. 257)

Blinding, a Freudian symbol for castration, is the consequence of man's efforts to suppress, or make impotent, that which should be uplifted. For herself,

Iaokanann l'empêchait de vivre. . .les soldats devaient le poignarder s'il résistait; il s'était montré doux. On avait mis des, serpents dans sa prison; ils étaient morts.

(p. 258)

She cannot survive against an adversary who relaxes when she demands tension, and yet who can still dominate and subordinate all phallic challengers. In brief, while John, the figure of Hérode's potential mastery, is hidden, she cannot destroy and rule through her only strength, her sexual power. For Hérodiad, Eros is the only reliable prelude to Thanatos.

Her castrating role vis-à-vis Hérode is implicit in the relationship between the two families as well, and Hérodiad does not hesitate to remind her husband that hisemasculaation began long ago

'Tous mes ancêtres ont battu les tiens!
Le premier des Makkabi vous a chassé d'Hebron, Hircan forcé à vous circoncire!' . . .elle lui reprocha son
indifférence aux outrages, sa mollesse
envers les Pharisiens... (p. 258)

It is at this moment that Hérode's mocked longing discovers its object in the young Salomé. According to Hérodias' plan, it is the object wherein passion and death are joined. Again, the physical image on which Hérode focuses furnish a suggestively-Freudian vista: the flat rooftop, the open baggage, the long-handled parasol.

Phanuel's warning follows almost immediately on this emergence of desire: unless Hérode releases his passion so that it may be sanctified, he is doomed: "Si tu l'opprimes, tu sera châtié (p. 259).

But this, for the Tetrarch, is truly impossible. Since Hérode has recognized the sacrifice demanded of his lusts, the required exertion of his will already circumcribed even into the darkness of ancestral memory, he has attempted to hide, but not destroy, the fierce violence of his sexual nature. With the aging Hérodias at his side, he is neither able to find release in loving passion nor to sublimate that passion into domination of the world's forces, nor to transcend it into spirituality.

This ambivalence has brought him no relief, however; in the hidden chambers of his unconscious, fears have grown and projected themselves into images of animal violence:

'C'est lui qui me persécute!' s'écria Antipas. 'Il a voulu de moi une action impossible. Depuis ce
temps-là, il me déchire. . . on ne
relâche pas les bêtes furieuses!'
(p. 259)

Despite his terror, Hérode cannot release the Baptist for
he knows that his dungeons contain the only element of his
existence which can authenticate his imitation life.

'Sa puissance est forte! . . .
Malgré moi, je l'aime!'
(p. 259)

As Hérodiass' threat to his virility was displaced
by the suggestive appearance of Salomé, Phanuel's challenge
to his will is interrupted by the agitated arrival of
Vitellius. The quiet sensuousness of the young girl con-
trasts symbolically with the flurry of movement aroused by
the Proconsul's presence, for it is action and motion which
determine man's success in the world, while passion leaves
him spent and still.

Vitellius is accompanied by his son Aulus. Here
Flaubert picks up certain implications of the father-son
conflict inherent in the relationship between Hamilcar and
Hannibal. Aulus is an irritant to his father, especially
on the political front, but he is no threat. Vitellius
cannot be supplanted as a virile leader for in Aulus there
is no legitimate sexual impulse. Yet the continued ex-
tension of the father's will in the world depends upon the
future of this ennuch-like son. In a sordid and limited
way, this relationship repeats the dependency of Hamilcar
upon Hannibal.

Again, as in *Salammbô*, the crucible for the various themes, motifs, and conflicts of the work is the great Feast. The Primal Feast is transformed into Hérode's birthday celebration, and Spendius with his mental lusts replaced by Aulus' gluttony. This festival of Hérode's birth, filled with the bounty of a luxuriously fecund nature, in effect heralds the decline of human vitality: it is the setting for that original castration and perversion of the will which marks all of Flaubert's works. The triumph of Hérodiæ confirms man's helpless bondage to his animal nature; the implicit ascendancy of Aulus (political decadence) denies him hope of renewal through the world; the death of John the Baptist signals the unending war to be waged between the spirit and the flesh.

Hérodiæ comprehends the Tetrarch's secret when she observes his interest in her daughter; likewise, Vitellius discovers the "treasure" of Machaerous through the sensuality of his son. Aulus, examining the kitchens, leads his father to the entrance of the dungeons. Their descent into the earth is described in rich sexual imagery: weaponry, distinctly phallic, fills the dark passages which wind downwards to the honeysuckled chambers of the horses. The journey into the self is marked by confusion and lies--Hérode denies the true implications of his arsenal--and
the door to its dearest treasure is locked. The horses, compared to serpents and birds, parallel sexual symbols, astonish Vitellius. This sign of Jewish virility is naturally a threat to Rome, and he warns Hérode that he may lose the animals restrained in their artificial stable.

This warning is barely uttered, however, before the real danger to the "marvellous beasts" is revealed in John the Baptist. His pit is like a view into the womb, potential life vague and alarming in its depth. Here indeed is "Hérode's treasure," the perpetuity and hope of Jewry against the Roman oppressor as well as the individual's seed of transcendence.

The Baptist sighs, a hint of the Word, drawing Hérodias who fears above all else his power to rise above the raw passion which is her potential mastery. Hérode, he threatens with a prophecy of destruction. The nation will fall because its life source has been shut off, repressed, denied and has not been sublimated into the Word. But the Word demands the submission of desire, the total resignation of will to Another. Thus, although this spirituality opens a passage for the soul in captivity through the density of earthly existence, it nonetheless destroys the illusion of human autonomy.

To establish the Kingdom of the Word against the will of man, the Baptist and all he personifies must die.
'Qu'importe? Pour qu'il grans-
disse, il faut que je diminue!'  
(p. 255)

Iaokanann accuses the royal couple of incest, mock-
ing Hérode's sterility with the announcement of a son who  
will not succeed the father, but who will challenge and  
supplant him. Under the hail of insults, Hérode pants and  
Hérodiades stands open-mouthed---their barren partnership  
demonstrated to the world.

The violence of the scene is repeated, diluted, by  
the theological squabbling which attempts to disguise the  
spiritual anemia of the Jewish establishment. The  
political priorities are undisputed, however, and Hérodiades'  
announcement that John is able to subvert Roman power as  
well as the King's finds immediate response. Vitellius  
assumes the authority now entirely abdicated by Hérode.  
His ambivalence resolved (he thinks), Hérode feels a great  
sense of relief. He would rather surrender his command of  
self to another than suffer any longer the demands on his  
will. His "soulagement" derives, in actuality, from an  
accommodation of his own castration wish.

Une réflexion avait consolé le  
Tétrarque. Iaokanann ne dépendait  
plus de lui; les Romains s'en  
chargeaient. Quel soulagement!  
(p. 268)

Since, in the patriarchial Jewish society, he acts  
as their supposed Father-Leader, his abdication to Rome in
this vital matter amounts to a frustration of their hope for eventual independence. But, for the moment, his denial of self brings appeasement.

As in Salammbô, where the sexual opposition of sun and moon reflects the contest between the protagonists, Hérode's cruelest moment has been under the burning rays of noon, as he endures the humiliating accusations of the Baptist and the contempt of Vitellius. The phallic power of the sun defeats him. Although the images he faces on his return to the upper terraces are still phallic, they are now ineffective against the feminine tranquillity of the rising moon. The curious affinity which has existed previously between Hérode and the perverted Aulus becomes more clear at this point. They are truly a spiritual father and son, neither the true possessor of mana, yet each a representative of the corruption of humanity. The father sterile, the son debauched, both rejecting—through fear or indolence—the gift of their virility. Between them man suffers a double castration, of spirit and of flesh. Hérode's flight to the protection of Hérodias' chambers terminates in a brilliant parody of their master-slave relationship. Hérodias presents the new castrati with the image of his mutilation:

Hérodias, avec une indulgence dédaigneuse, tâche de le rassurer. Enfin elle tira d'un petit coffre une médaille bizarre, ornée du profil de Tibère. Cela suffisait à faire
pâlir les licteurs et fondre les accusations.

Antipas, ému de reconnaissance, lui demanda comment elle l'avait.
'On me l'a donnée,' reprit-elle.
(p. 269)

Hérodiás, confident in the universal sexual authority of the woman, reveals to Hérode the essence of her power. The vision—at first projected onto the horizon, now within touch of his hand—which accompanies his sexual defeats appears once again. Salomé touches only the edge of his consciousness, however; for the moment she belongs to a vague and ancient memory.

The confusion of the Feast blends and unites the complications, spiritual and physical, political and religious, of the preceding episodes. Vitellius and Aulus enclose Hérode in the vise of their political—thoroughly corrupt—strength; the angry religious factions, kept apart in the temple, find a common ground in the erotic display of Hérode's banquet. As men they are united; as creatures of race or culture or doctrine, they are permanently cut off from one another.

Their arguments begin with a discussion of the miracles of Jesus, continue through speculation on the reality of Elias' death, and terminate in disagreements over unacceptable meat. At every point, words and images of dissolution and alienation emphasize the apparent uselessness of man's condition. The confusion is
punctuated by Aulus' vomiting in order to satisfy his insatiable appetite for the world's goods.

\[ \ldots \text{cette faculté d'engloutissement dénotant un être prodigieux et d'une race supérieure.} \]

(p. 272)

Despite the irony of tone here, there is a great deal of symbolic truth in the observation. Aulus'--and the Empire's--infinite ability to devour the universe is indeed the sign of material triumph against which the spirit seems, so far, ineffective.

The spectacular entrance of Hérodiás occurs at the climax of disgust and satiety. The Pharisees refuse the wild ass--reflection of the Baptist's life in the wilderness--offered them, Aulus mocks their objection to pork (the boar is associated with castration--particularly that of Adonis), Vitellius contemptuously convinces himself that Moloch, with his thirst for their children--their "immortality" of the flesh--is the true god of the Jews, and the people dream of revolution and glory. As Hérode tremblingly offers the Proconsul a glimpse of his head of Tiberius, the great doors swing open, and Hérodiás, garlanded in anemones, flower of the castrated Adonis, appears from the height of the balustrade dominating Hérode.

These varied symbols of castration are absorbed in the sudden presence of Salomé. In the eyes of Hérode, she is Hérodiás rejuvenated: she is continuity and the promise
of fertility:

Ses bras arrondis appelaient
quelqu'un qui s'envoyait toujours.
(p. 274)

The "someone" is Eros, whom woman must know and possess in order to dominate man. As Hérodias has discovered, the god is difficult to hold and, without him, she is destroyed. Salomé represents the same violence of desire which is confined with Iaokanann, but it cannot be shared; man must choose. As the passion of the flesh, it manifests itself in that wild love which insists on being slaked and spent; as the emotion behind the transcendence of the Word, it is the submission of the individual to the Other's eternal will.

Salomé requests in a childish lisp the head of John in a dish. 14 Hérode manages a rationalization of the first order to quiet his despair, and the order of execution is given. The ennui of the waiting crowd is the first indication of the consequences of man's alienation and his loss of spiritual vitality. Salomé's dance finished, the Baptist sacrificed, the world becomes empty and dull. The virility of its youth is replaced--alas, forever--with the barrenness of the old woman (the other Hérodias) who presents the severed head to Hérode.

The grotesque confrontation of Aulus and John the Baptist emphasizes the world's double loss. By refusing
the demands of the soul to subdue the lusts of the flesh
in exchange for a spiritualization of libido, and with it
the spiritual conquest of the world, man is left face to
face with dissipation and death—and an understanding of the
meaning of castration.

Mannaei. . . la posa devant Aulus. . .
Par l'ouverture de leurs cils, les
prunelles mortes et les prunelles
éteintes semblaient se dire quelque
chose.

(p. 277)

Hérode, of course, weeps, for he understands, too,
the nature of his sin. His loss of self, of his very soul,
is complete.

The final tableau of the work is set at dawn, yet
the rising sun seems more ironic than glorious. Phanuel
and the two Essenes depart, carrying alternately, because
it is so heavy, the head of John the Baptist. The burden
of man's nature, as it shares in the life of his God, is
heavier than he can bear. Salammbo felt the same oppressive
weight from which death was the only release. The coming
of Christ offers a promise to the world, but—in terms of
this work at least—not in the world. Man must renounce his
nature in order to fulfill it; he must choose castration or
death. Hérodiass has indeed intensified the physical
destructiveness of Salammbo into the spiritual negation of
nihilism.
In *Salammbô*, we see the primitive opposition of father and son with the triumph of the father assured but only in the present. *Hérodiade* goes a step further and indicates the way in which the future father will be defeated. With the coming of the Son of David into the world, man is no longer free to rejuvenate himself by returning, through the orgiastic release of his sexual energies, to an original formless state. His virility must be sacrificed on the altar of the Word, intellectual or spiritual.

The archetypal pattern which supports the castration motif of the novel and tale belongs to the archaic challenge mounted by man against God. This passionate—if futile—assertion of human pride is present in the stories of Judith and Herod. In both, *Salammbô* and *Judith*, we see the determination of the outsider to displace the chosen people. Mâtho and Holofernes both fail in their challenge of the father (or his representative) because of the connivance of a beautiful woman. Similarly, but with an opposite result, in the *Herod* and in *Hérodiade*, the beauty of a woman and the power of lust temporarily supports the authority of a false father, but ultimately defeats him in his reconquest by the Son of God. The castration of the challenger is expressed as explicitly in *Judith* and *Herod* as it is implied in the mythos of the challenge itself.

Man’s ability to immortalize himself through the
generation of a new life is, in a symbolic sense at least, the indication that he shares in the Divine Nature. There are repeated references in Salammbô to the sexual nature of the godhead, and in Hêrodiæs the phallic identification of John the Baptist clearly exposes a similar idea. This is a fairly unsophisticated interpretation of the Divine Essence, but the structures we are dealing with at this level represent man at his most primitive stage of psychic and philosophic development. Consequently, this mythic statement is most fitting for the opening movement of Flaubert's work.

As we have seen in Rôheim's Freudian analysis of the primitive mind, this godly gift—human sexuality—is treasured almost more than life. In fact, the two are often equated. Therefore, if there is a contest between human and divine, or between father and son, the stakes are the ultimate ones of life or virility. To lose is to forfeit one's access to divinity; to lose is to suffer castration.

The mythic struggle, then, roots itself as a prime deep structure upon which is built the surface structures of the historical novel and Biblical tale. Their consistency is retained by the repetition of the castration motif. Still, the surface structures are not identical. Hêrodiæs produces an even more metaphysical transformation of the challenge than does Salammbô. Whereas in the latter, the
father figure represents both man and god, in the former he is divided, as it were, and John the Baptist acts as the link between man and God, as the metaphorical portal through which he may pass from despair to hope.

It is a delicate and demanding task to organize the historical detail of the two works so as to retain the mythic quality of the deep structure and allow full expression to the demands of historical accuracy. Flaubert manages to overcome many obstacles by his skillful use of sexual imagery and symbolism. These devices become a powerful but subtle presence within each work, freeing the artist to include or discard whatever necessary from his monumental research material.

The surface action of Salammbô concerns the siege of Carthage by the rebellious Mercenaries. Of itself there is nothing here to relate essentially to the mythic archetype. Flaubert, however, organizes his subject in such a way that the sequence of chapters, the sun–moon imagery which illustrates the basic conflict, and the psychic presentation of the protagonists all coordinate the historical approach with the mythic.

The novel begins with the feast of Megara. It is here in Hamilcar's gardens that the Barbarians, through a figurative recreation of the Primal Feast, initiate their challenge of the father imago. Flaubert is careful consistently to associate the suffete with the male principle, the
sun, as well as with Moloch, so it is clear that Hamilcar represents the godhead on earth. The significance of the garden challenge is, on a spiritual level, an imitation of the Scriptural account of the Fall.

The satiety of the feast is followed by the exodus into the wasteland. Although the incidents at Sicca seem to strengthen the Barbarians' position, its juxtaposition with the chapter "Salammbô" indicates the proximity of the destructive, castrating female, vehicle of the father's vengeance. The Barbarian aggressiveness continues with minor attacks on the city and the surrogate-father, Gisco, and terminates with the coming of age of the leader of the horde, as Mâtho is initiated into the forbidden world of sexual experience. Ultimately, this initiation leads to his death in a manner symbolic of castration, thus justifying man's most ancient anxiety.

The audacity of the challenger revealed in the "Tanith" chapter is capped by the rout of the elephants before the blazing swine. The passage gives a sensation of heaviness; the sun hangs motionless in the sky, the city weakens: the cycle demands the return of the father to restore the dissipated energies of Carthage. And indeed, Hamilcar Barca does appear in the following chapter.

The first half of the novel, then, describes the contest between son and father; the strength of the
challenger, despite many symbolic warnings, increases. The defeat of the secondary defenders of the city, Hanno and Gisco, parallels the successful conquest of the lands of the East by Holofernes and Nebuchadnezzar. The stand made at last against the invader by the Israelites—now reconciled with their God—is the parallel to Hamilcar's acceptance of the challenge and his difficult and triumphant defense of Carthage.

The remaining chapters concern the gradual decline of the Barbarian's momentum, always directly related to a castration image. The soldiers' bodies drawn out to sea after the Battle of Macaras (the womb re-absorbing the fallen male) is answered by Mâtho's efforts to make barren the fields. Salammbô's sexual initiation by the phallic serpent is brought to fulfillment in Mâtho's tent—but only in order to defeat the Libyan.

The resemblance to the story of Judith intensifies in this second half. Holofernes' siege of Bethulia, during which he cuts off the life-sustaining aqueduct, parallels Spendius' act against the Carthaginians. The resulting drought suffered by the Israelites is ended by the intervention of Judith. Her triumphant return bearing the head of Holofernes, wrapped in the precious canopy, is repeated by Salammbô as she returns the zaïmph to Hamilcar. Mâtho's death several chapters later is merely the physical conclusion to the spiritual victory won earlier by Salammbô.
The termination of the Carthaginian drought occurring after Salammbô's return by the sacrifice to Moloch, does, to a certain extent, interrupt the correspondance between the two stories. However, the symbolic value of Moloch, as the male exterminating principle, whose patriarchal powers extend to subdue all challengers, is directly in line with the deep meaning of both Judith and Salammbô.

The relationship between the deep and surface structures of Hérodias is at once more direct and more abstract. The challenge-castration theme is as explicit in Matthew as it is in Judith, but, whereas Flaubert has taken more liberties with Judith in order to assimilate it into the historical disaster at Carthage, with the Herod he merely adds details and shifts the emphasis somewhat. However, the sexual imagery here adds up to a much more devastating conclusion than that of Salammbô. Although the phallic imagery is developed in the person of John the Baptist (who also acts as the representative of God), his role is not to remain apart from the challenger and defeat him, but rather to be that part of man which, repressed and denied, cuts him off eternally from vitality and life.

Flaubert's psychological descriptive technique repeats the castration anxieties inherent in these deep and surface structures. The visual impressions of city-and-landscapes received by his characters materialize and
objectify the desires and anxieties dominating the individual's unconscious.

The Mercenaries, after Gisco's appearance at the Feast, fear isolation (the primal separation from the whole) as well as Gisco's ability to crush them against the walls: the silhouette of the city's dark, massed shape suddenly alarms them; they dread, perhaps, the loss of their virility against female resistance. At Sicca the temple of the Carthaginian Venus, mistress of the land, seems to fill it with her soul, tantalizing them with the promise of their desire fulfilled. The men perceive the fury of the battle at Utica as a widening out and closing in of elastic contractions, another image of their successful virility. As their fortunes reverse, however, they feel the claustrophobic pressure of destiny; their perceptions become uncertain, and they are overwhelmed by mirages and the changing of forms. At last they are returned to the circular enclosure of their fears to be devoured by the lion and the jackal, to be absorbed into the female earth just as Mâtho is consumed by the rage of the Carthaginian women and the beauty of Salammbô.

Mâtho, although part of the Mercenaries, sees the world not in the moment of sexual dominance but, having experienced the emasculating effect of the female, in the motionless servitude of male surrender. Immobile, after the destruction of the Feast, he sees only the large
floating veil of the departing Salammbô. Below Carthage he remains near the pit into which the Ancients have been thrown, staring at these reminders of Salammbô; in the gardens of the temple, he suffocates under the multiplication of female symbols; his flight from Megara is a passage through suddenly empty streets, haunted by eyes which open wide to devour him. After his capture he lies quietly staring at the stars until he is enclosed in darkness.

Salammbô, whose uncertainty brings death to the sons, views the movement of the moon above a still earth; the waves of the sea during her orations are motionless; she looks out upon a sleeping town. Her journey to Mâtho is a passage through a quiet wasteland. Only in Mâtho's embrace does she feel the heat of the sun's burning. She feels strangled and stilled at the sight of her moulting python. In the last moments of her life, drawn to the dying Mâtho, she is plunged into an abyss of silent and unique intensity.

Hamilcar's vision is filled with the sight of his vast possessions. His overwhelming mastery of the world permeates the work: it begins in "Hamilcar's gardens" and concludes with "Hamilcar's daughter." His is the only son saved from Moloch; he possesses all the corn in Carthage; only he knows the site of the secret springs.
He understands the nature of the attack being made on him, but he is prepared to compensate for the loss of his destroyed and ravaged ships, estates, slaves and prisoners with the luxurious wealth of his secret treasures and the sacrifice of his daughter. Despite his losses, he persists, and his consummate self-assurance is justified in his final victory—won by his great, trunkless elephant.

In Hérodiase, the visual world appears in a similar manner, although here the most significant descriptions are limited to Vitellius and Hérode. Vitellius, Rome's threat to Jewish emancipation sees, on the one hand, those images which reinforce his sexual authority. He views Hérode's subjects as cross-currents of men compressed by the enclosure of the walls; he demands access to the treasure through the chambers' closed circular coverings; the rows of plumed helmets appear to him as a battalion of red serpents. Hérode, on the other hand, consumed by fears, is pacified by the dream-like movements of Salomé; he proudly displays to Vitellius and Aulus the copious bounty of his kitchens, a compensation for his inadequacy. He is menaced by the knives of the scribes and valets until the entrance of the overpowering Hérodiase. Finally, Salomé's dance and ensuing request leave him crushed and debilitated.

Thus, in every case, the characters' vision of the world is largely determined by their sexual preoccupations,
preoccupations which repeat the archetypal anxieties and desires inherent in the underlying deep structures of the works—the idea of mortal challenging divine as expressed in *Judith* and *Herod*.

The castration motif not only unifies the double structure of the novel and tale, but also serves as a major justification and support for their complex temporal order. As castration cuts one off from effective sexual action, the past inhibits effective present action. The structural repetition of the archetypal action has its parallel effect in the heroes' consciousness, for at crucial moments they are lifted out of their experiential present into a timeless "instant" of memory, without which the present seems to lack substance. This memory union with the past has its external counterpart in the influence the character's history or ancestry exerts upon his present action, as though the castrating dominating father were permanently inhibiting the son's emancipation, independence, and movement into the future. And finally, the motion and flux of the present is negated by the continual return to a state of pause, of stasis by the castrated victim. The protagonists do not wish to go forward so much as to recapture a moment of lost virility. They wish, at the same time, to free themselves from their motionless prison, but because the flux and change of the world frightens and disorients them, they are doomed to misunderstanding and inaction.
The cycle of becoming, illustrated particularly in nature, turns in counterpoint to the characters' efforts to effect some lasting action. The Barbarians eat and imitate animals at the Feast; the lions and battle-elephants imitate and eat the men. The terrifying and prophetic sight of the crucified lions is not recognized by the soldiers as the figure of their destiny until Spendius himself hangs dying upon a cross. Man's vision rests upon fixed and isolated objects and for him action means his effort to set into motion what is fixed. But since existence is not solid, its ever-changing flux defeats his attempts to know and to do. He cannot keep up; he is outstripped by time.

Mâtho, of all the characters in the two works, suffers most from this condition. His flight up the palace stairs to seek Salammbô is frozen by her absence into an immobility from which he never recovers. The exhilaration of his penetration into her chambers is overwhelmed by the memory of his first sight of her and he loses the experience of the moment except as a recreation of that past. The desolation which he views after the battle of Macaras is intolerable because it reminds him of an earlier disaster on the same spot. The anguish of his defeat increases because he has missed the action of the battle, missed the opportunity to reform the original act. Even the experience of his death, surrounded by hostile
executioners, is absorbed into the memory of a similar moment, his triumphant, frightened flight from Carthage with the zaïmph.

Spendius affects an effort to organize and order the present in a frenzy of action, but to no avail. Every success is counteracted; every defeat must be followed by a fresh start—thus, he, too, is a victim of the endless cycle. Chronological time operates as an arm of chance—or of fate-defeating man through its circumstantiality.

Hamilcar compresses past reversals into the present on his return to his seaside house, and his reentry into Carthage is spoiled by his anguish. His violent reprisals against his slaves are triggered by the memory of past insults; his last victory is achieved by the bringing forth into the moment of action a physical reminder of the original injury.

Even Salammbô becomes most human when, viewing Mâtho's destroyed body, she wishes to have him back as he was and hear again his words of love.

Every character is finally overcome with the realization that the flux of external forms is the essence of life from which there is no escape into stability. The cyclic re-enactment of ancient patterns is a treadmill. There is no point in trying to change existence to fit their will, for life continues with a momentum of which
they are not masters, but merely an insignificant part. The constant drag of the past on them soon wears them out and contradicts their hope of the future. The stillness which this permeation of past into present imposes is contrary to nature and invariably causes terrible anguish.

Similarly, few realize the significance of the continued motion of existence. To the Barbarians, Hanno, Mâtho, Salammbô, even Spendius, it is a source of anxiety and nausea. The babel of tongues, the confusion of bodies in the heat of war, the mirage-like approach of Hamilcar's exterminating armies, the fearful kaleidoscope of grotesque figures on the temple walls, the moulting of the serpent, the disintegration of Hanno's corpse horrify the observer who cannot grasp the reality behind the surface. Only Hamilcar, who manipulates confusion to his advantage, and Schahabarim know the truth of unchanging essences. Hamilcar comprehends that change belongs to outward appearances but that they disguise the immutable spirit, or the essence of things, and thus deny man intellectual union with his desired object. Schahabarim acknowledges theoretically the continuous falling of the earth, but admits that the movement cannot be perceived. Again, the reality conflicts with man's grasp of it: he is cut off from union with the world. Schahabarim wishes the pure Salammbô to "fall" somehow since he cannot possess her and she cannot understand him.
Thus, the two means of fusion with the Other possible to man—the physical and the intellectual—are denied to the Flaubertian hero. His misdirection of sexual energy becomes the barrier to that fullness of will which enables him to direct, in the present, a life-changing action. He is caught by the desire to remove himself from the dizzying flux of the profane into the blessed and heroic archetypal heights of the sacred. But this remove introduces him to a vacuum wherein his lost virility is ever-present in memory and ever-tormenting. He seeks the immortality of the womb and rebirth; he receives only the loss of his manhood.
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER I


2. The Freudian connotation of various objects and forms--based on natural, sexual distinctions--can be found below in Chapter IV, p. 314.

3. Gustave Flaubert, Salammbô (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1971), p. 47. This particular quotation is my translation. All further citations will be from this edition and pagination will be given in the text.

4. The Sacred Fish were descendents of the primordial lotes which had hatched the mystic egg concealing the Goddess, p. 49.

5. F. C. Green, Introduction to Gustave Flaubert, Salammbô, op. cit., p. xi.

6. Her erotic excitement before the Barbarians indicates the vain sexuality which is an essential aspect of her character: "Elle s'enflammait à la lueur des épées nues; elle criait, les lèvres ouvertes...elle resta quelques minutes les paupières closes à savourer l'agitation de tous ces hommes" (p. 53).

7. Brombert alludes to the explicit sexual imagery of the aqueduct and the penetration of the temple (p. 114), as well as to the connection of sex and annihilation in the work (p. 115). The coitus-death association is a basic Freudian premise.

8. In her case, the desire is for forbidden sexual knowledge and understanding, since, as a woman, the "veil" is already hers.

Then too it may happen that a thing will become destined to be lost without its having shed any of its value—that is, when there is an impulse to sacrifice something to fate in order to avert some other dreaded loss. . . . Losing may equally well serve the impulses of spite or of self-punishment." Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Pocket Books, 1953), p. 81. Rőheim considers the circumcision rituals a "minor" sacrifice of the "threatened" part in order to avoid a more serious and total loss.

The phallic symbolism of the bridge is found in Rőheim, pp. 39-55.

A comparison of Judith with Salammbo. . . .tends to confirm the hypothesis that a memory of the former story was present in the mind of Flaubert at the time of his conception of Salammbo. Each of the heroines is urged to save her country and, after consenting to the mission, makes secret preparation for the journey. Salammbo, like Judith, goes through preliminary religious rites and then puts on ceremonial clothing and decks herself with jewels. Special food is prepared for the journey. Judith meets the first watch of the Assyrians and tells them that she, a woman of the race of the Hebrews, has fled from them and wishes to present to Holophernes. Salammbo also is stopped by a sentinel and, as a refugee from Carthage, demands speech with Mātho. Even the setting of the tent is similar: Salammbo sees on a bed the zaimph, bluish and shining; she seizes a dagger from the head of the bed and starts to kill Mātho; in the end, she escapes with the zaimph from the camp of the Barbarians. Judith, in her adventure, kills Holophernes after taking his scimitar from the pillar of the bed and she, too, takes with her from the besieging camp the pavillon which covers the bed of Holophernes and which was woven of purple and gold and emeralds and precious stones. The results of the adventures, again, were similar, for both Judith and Salammbo were greeted in their cities by stunned silence and then by the people's acclamation, while both encampments were thrown by their success into a confusion of shouting and storm" (pp. 75-76). Louise B. Dillingham, "The Story of Judith: Salammbo," *Modern Language Notes*, 40 (1925), 71-76.

Gustave Flaubert, *Trois Contes* (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1972), p. 256. All citations will be from this edition and pagination will be given in the text.
According to Freud, the dish-container is a female symbol. Aulus notices the breastplate-like dishes which in turn bring Vitellius to inspect the caves of the palace. He sees the round brass plates covering the cisterns leading to Iackanann's prison; the head of Tiberius is embossed on a plate-like medal; John's head is carried in a dish. The conflict seems to be resolved in the images of castration by the woman.
CHAPTER II

L'ÉDUCATION SENTIMENTALE

The weakening of man's instinctive, sexual virility is paralleled in the gradual disappearance of the hero from Western literature. His absence may also be interpreted as a manifestation of that decay of the will which so concerned Flaubert. Although by mid-nineteenth century the tendency to replace the descendants of the Rolands, Gawains, and Rodrigues with Renées, Werthers, and Don Juans was, as yet, incomplete, the days of the former were numbered. The transfer of poetic vitality had long since begun to pass from the dynamic control of the Superman to the uncertain hands of the mercenary and the mediocre. In Flaubert's works, reflecting in miniature the direction taken by European art, the primitive passions which propel the protagonists of Salammbô are transformed in L'Éducation sentimentale into the ambivalence of sentimentality, while the son's bold—if futile—challenge of the father is succeeded by the self-defeating frustrations of the disinherited.

Although the anti-hero of today is easily recognized as the product of all the complications of world wars and mechanized civilization, the nineteenth century Romantic represents a more subtle kind of decay. A hundred years ago,
the disintegration of the ideal man marked one of the last stages in an ancient medieval conflict—metaphysical as well as literary. Almost at the dawn of France's literary tradition, two great themes—the knightly, aristocratic code of the hero and the refined fatality of passionate love—swept across the land with mythic force, inspiring through the centuries the greatest of French poetry and drama and all the while reflecting a separation between man's will and his act, between human desire and its object. By the seventeenth century, the antagonism between these two powerful impulses was pronounced. Corneille described it as the tragedy of an aristocracy seeking its feudal, heroic origins in that very temporality which was its inevitable destruction,¹ and Racine immortalized the devastating guilt of illicit passions. The indolent discontent and pouting love of the later Romantic, heir to a depleted treasure, merely emphasized the distance separating him from his chivalrous and passionate ancestor.

Medieval aristocracy, drawing its inspiration from the heroic elan which demanded supremacy of the self and mastery of the Other, depended above all on the survival of the strongest. Obviously, time was the enemy most to be feared by a power based largely upon physical energy; however, the nobility possessed a formidable—though vulnerable—weapon with which to vanquish mortality: it was the law of succession—the son and heir. Much more than the Spirit,
it was the son who gave them hope. Marriage, therefore, became more than a sacrament. It was the road leading to the conquest of the world; it provided insurance against annihilation and consequently formed an essential link between temporality and eternity.

However, the dark side of man's nature, the side which loves death, demanded and found expression in that revival of the Manichean dichotomy of good and evil, the heresy of the Cathars. Requiring absolute chastity in the relationship between men and women, the Catharsian dualism launched a profound attack on that indissoluble union of body and soul necessary to the perpetuation of a vigilant nobility. Their presence in the heartland of French culture and civilization provoked open war between the forces of the angelic (and anti-human) purity of a distinctly Luciferian pride, and those of an egotism no less tenacious because it was terrestrial. The brutality of the Albigensian crusade attested to the fact that the warriors of the North were fighting much more than a theological deviation. They were preserving, against the sweet languor of the Midi, their possession of the earth and their succession into eternity.

Those who chose the outlawed route to Paradise were defeated but not destroyed. Their enormously seductive influence was displaced with an acceptable form of self-denial and absorbed into the social formalities of
courtoisie. When eventually the Catharsian rejection of human sexuality joined the Northern celtic mystery of fatal passion, the aristocratic soul suffered a schism and a rupture, hidden at first but becoming increasingly natural until the affected individual was reduced to the hollow caricature despised by Flaubert.\textsuperscript{2}

The ideal of courtly love—as professed in theory at least—improved the medieval social amenities while it exposed its initiates to its profane and unhappy implications. Profane, because it was detached from the benedictions of the sacrament and, since it was founded upon the satisfaction of the self, of the lover not the beloved, turned the soul away from God. Unhappy, because the desire from which the love developed was nothing less than the soul's thirst for the infinite, yet it was forced to find satisfaction in a finite object. Thus was created a profound chasm between self and God, between satisfaction and desire, which on a superficial level became the formal games of the Courts of Love, but which, carried to the limits of human resistance, could only be resolved in death.

Because of its ambivalent nature, courtly love demanded some obstacle—either external and arbitrary or indigenous to the capricious heart of the beloved—to the physical and emotional fulfillment of the lovers. Everyone is familiar with the conventional duels, tournaments, dangerous voyages, magical quests, and remarkable periods
of abstinence endured by both hero and heroine in proof of "fidelity" (more, it sometimes seems, to the game than to each other). Added to those thought up by the principals themselves were the barriers of unreasonable parents, jealous husbands, prying in-laws and rash promises. Finally, the Cathar contribution--whose Eastern mysticism merged easily with the secular Arab poetry infiltrating the West through Spain and Provence--added the element of resignation and defeat which haunts many of the old romances. The Arab poets--mystical and frequently homosexual--had sung of a love chaste and consuming, adolescent in its simplistic power, mystical in its ultimate direction. The troubadours of the Midi enthusiastically celebrated this poetic effort to breach the barriers established by the human heart and penetrate the obscure domains of forbidden knowledge--even at the expense of love's fulfillment.

Now, when passion which tends toward loss of self and the shadows of the unconscious is joined to the impulse toward the superiority of self over all others, toward the fullness of life and the clear and luminous consciousness of a noble destiny--as was the case when the heroic, knightly tradition appropriated to itself the robes of courtoisie--the inevitable conflict is resolved only by the repression either of the lover or of the knight. When the warrior is the stronger, it is the hero, the perfected self who dominates. When the lover defeats the hero, the active self,
weakens in the narcissism of an irrational love sought precisely because of its impossibility.

Nevertheless, despite their essential antagonism, the hero and the lover possess unifying similarities as well as the contradictions which oppose one to the other. Their rapport exists in the egotism of their need for recognition from the Other—beloved or opponent. It is this recognition which determines the value and level of existence of the self, but it is a recognition demanding either enormous risk or superhuman renunciation.\(^3\) Thus suffering and anguish become essential not only to the lover but to the hero as well.

Why does Western man wish to suffer this passion which lacerates him and which all his common sense rejects? Why does he yearn for this particular kind of love notwithstanding that its indulgence must coincide with his self-destruction? The answer is that he reaches self-awareness and tests himself only by risking his life—in suffering and on the verge of death. . . . The essential disaster of our sadistic genius (is) the repressed longing for death, for self-experience to the utmost, for the revealing shock; a longing which beyond question manifests the most tenacious root of the war instinct we nourish. . . . Suffering and understanding are deeply connected; death and self-awareness are in league.

One suffers in order to understand, and understanding brings its own special anguish—or death. The ultimate comprehension associated with fatal love remained for the Middle Ages an irresistible but muffled siren call luring
the passionate to the heart of its mystery. The hero, however, knew exactly what he must think, feel, and do to achieve his superior destiny. Thus continued the conflict of choice: which path to be followed on man's terrestrial journey—the brilliant and explicit highroad of the active intellect and will or the obscure and silent labyrinth of irrational passion.

By the nineteenth century the erosion of both ideals and the appearance of romanticism had compounded the problem. Love's suffering, formerly only a means, became more and more the unique end of every "sensitive" life. The quest for immortality through love was reduced to a sort of emotional Russian roulette. The ancient kingdom of King Marc was no longer crossed by determined lovers; a scolding father sufficed, now, to awaken despair in the heart of the new Tristan, while Narcissus amused himself with the spectacle of his own misery—fabricated from so little! Fatality vanished in a sigh of resignation—neither stoical nor bitter. The hero also was weakening in a hallucinatory existence wherein he no longer performed spectacular deeds, but merely dreamed of them; he made plans. The mysticism of terrible passion was effaced in the reign of "sentiment."

All the elan of a great aristocracy seemed to have dissipated into a vague irritation with the century in general. The obstacle to passionate love had completely
lost its necessary, magical element; it was now only a simple lack of will, an indecision on the part of the "hero." The courtly knight—if he still existed at all—hid himself among revolutionaries who, significantly, resolved nothing. Ambiguity—more realistic perhaps but certainly less noble—reigned.

Frédéric Moreau, the hero of L'Éducation sentimentale, possesses traces of the noble spirit and passionate soul almost forgotten in the collective unconscious of his race. The effort he makes to bring to fruition these vestiges of ancient instincts creates the profound irony in Flaubert's brilliant transformation of this truly heroic medieval source. Flaubert sustains a constant tension between the vanished reality and its memory, between the noble past and the all-too-mediocre present, between man's hunger for fire and his taste of ashes.

It is Frédéric himself who indicates the origin of the novel's deep structure. In the final pages of the work, he recalls his adolescent intention—thirty years earlier—to write "un grand roman moyen âge sur Nogent dont [il] avait trouvé le sujet dans Froissart: comment messire Brokars de Fenestrange et l'évêque de Troyes assaillèrent messire Eustache d'Ambrecicourt." The chronicle does indeed exist, and the similarities (along general lines if not in specific detail) between it and Flaubert's novel are quite intriguing. The symbolic implications, the major
events, and the ultimate consequences of the medieval action correspond to the novel's castration motif and its three structural divisions, as well as the ultimate truth of the work. The events of Flaubert's nineteenth century historical plot are projected forward from this past reality to form a perfectly appropriate surface structure expressing the single, unifying meaning of the deep structure.

In 1359, according to Froissart, the army of the Duke of Normandy, at war with England and her ally Navarre, besieged the city of Melun wherein were detained three queens: Jane, aunt of the King of Navarre and wife of Charles of France; Blanche, sister of Navarre and wife of Philippe of France; and the Queen of Navarre who was also the sister of the Duke of Normandy. However, despite the siege, the city was not attacked—nor was the siege lifted from within. Before a decisive action could be carried out, a treaty was arranged, principally on behalf of the compromised queens. A little reading between the lines indicates that the women, intermingled with France and Navarre through blood and sacrament, represented not only a sign of contradiction for the opposing forces but also acted as a bond of unity between them.

The treaty, although easing the hostilities between Normandy and Navarre, did not end the war. England and France continued their marathon struggle: the former
liegemen to Navarre merely attached themselves to the English standard, and the fighting continued as usual.
At this point--having eliminated the threat from Navarre--the Duke was able to turn his attention to his lands in Champagne and the pro-English usurper, Eustace d'Ambrecicourt. Normandy--unable or unwilling to attend to the matter personally--hired Braquart de Fenestranges and the Bishop of Troyes (among others) to chase the noble knight from his territories. Now the Lord d'Ambrecicourt was a perfect feudal gentleman. Young, passionate, charming, well-loved by his men, faithful to his lord, the king, he had no intention of abandoning his lands to the French.

The battle took place at Nogent. The armies of the Duke, having destroyed the chateau of Hans and refreshed themselves that night at Troyes, were strategically placed before Nogent the following morning. Meanwhile, Eustache, armed, riding at the head of his men, departed Pons and approached Nogent. He informed himself of the enemy's position, but--like Roland--did not call reinforcements to his aid. Instead, placing his archers among the thick vines which covered the hillside overlooking the chateau, he took to the heights and waited.

The French were divided into three battalions: the first led by Braquart de Fenestranges and the Bishop. It was they who opened the attack. Eustache fought valiantly, but the English forces were decimated. When at last
Braquart struck him down, d'Ambrecicourt was taken, and the day was finished. Those few who somehow escaped fled to the fortress of Nogent to mourn the loss of their valiant and noble commander.

Obviously, the resemblance between the two histories— that of Eustache d'Ambrecicourt and the Hundred Years' War and that of Frédéric Moreau and the revolution of 1848—is one of symbols and outlines rather than events reproduced. Frédéric is Eustache despoiled, after five centuries, of his ancient nobility of heart and his heroic will; Frédéric is Eustache recalled vaguely as in a dream. Flaubert, through his extraordinary manipulation of time, has again constructed a bridge between the past and the present, between the conscious and the unconscious, between the intention and the act. This necessarily ephemeral union seems to wear at one moment the mask of a terrifying or erotic hallucination; at another that of a magical potency which enables the hero and his antagonists to overcome temporal and even spatial limitations. Thus the ironic banality of the first sentence, "Le 15 septembre, 1840 vers six heures du matin," does not strike us until the end of the novel when we realize that the "present" of the beginning was already the past and the future in Frédéric Moreau's story, and that this precision of time, of the hour and the day, merely emphasizes the total lack of
importance of any date in a man's life, caught as he is in the eternal continuity of repetition, of human revolution.

The conflict which destroys Frédéric through the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave is a continuation of the medieval contest between hero and lover, between life and death. As the historical setting clearly demonstrates, the problem is not confined to the individual but permeates an entire society with the same debilitating effect. It is man's loss of will to action which separates him from any kind of noble destiny and which represents the castration of modern man. In *L'Education sentimentale*, Flaubert treats a more complex and subtle refinement of the fundamental psychic anguish explored in *Salammbô*.

And, as in *Salammbô*, the surface structure of this novel unfolds in a historically and structurally representative pattern. The Primal Feast of the former is replaced here with the intricate movements of a chess game, complete with knights, queens, kings, bishops, jesters, and pawns. The opposing sides appear as follows:
THE WHITE

KING: Arnoux--the Father, possessor of the females who are the motivation of the chaste lover and the salvation of the virile aristocratic hero.

QUEEN: Marie-Mme Moreau-Louise--all three, manifestations of the ideal, Mother-figure (either actually or potentially)

BISHOP-JESTER: Dussardier--by comparison with the others, practically a Christ-figure; the gentle fool, the unselfish, the just man.

KNIGHT: Frédéric Moreau

ROOK: Nogent--source of strength and final retreat for a landed, warrior race


THE BLACK

KING: Dambreuse--the Master, possessor of the new vitality, the seminal fluid of the nineteenth century: money.

QUEEN: Rosanette-Mme Dambreuse-Marthe--these women possess the characteristics of the black, or wicked and dangerous, female, the witch, and as
such unite to form a single role, just as
the White Queens form the ideal.

BISHOP-JESTER: Sénécal--the ascetic, humorless parody of
all fanatics who believe in their own
propaganda as in an oracle.

KNIGHT: Deslauriers

ROOK: Paris--the haven and citadel for those with wealth
and power; the prison for those without.

PAWNS: Martinon, Cisy, Cecile, Roque--parasites of the
House.

The appropriateness of chess to express the medieval
stage of Flaubert's temporal sequence is as perfect as the
Primal Feast is to the primitive, ancient stage. The en-
dangered authority of the King as well as the controlling
dominance of the Queen is not only vital to the game itself,
but is the link between the warring factions of the medieval
deep structure and the ineffective revolutionaries of the
surface structure as well. This unique relationship of
King and Queen to the other pieces establishes chess as a
natural vehicle for the continuation of the castration motif.
Whereas in Salammbo, it is the father who overpowers the
son, in L'Éducation sentimentale, the Queen emasculates the
hero, and the King is forever checked.
I. The Three Queens

The opening chapter of *L'Éducation sentimentale* is an intriguing mixture of terms and themes proper to both the surface and the deep structures of the novel. Flaubert states with precision the chronological moment of departure of Frédéric's steamer, yet the voyage itself—from the city of stone to the countryside of Nogent—is a step backward into time. The impressions he receives from the visual images of the river passage, the characters he encounters on board, even the landmarks he chooses to notice as they pull away from the wharf—Isle Saint-Louis, la Cité, Notre-Dame—all bear a distinct imprint of the Middle Ages. The repetition of landscapes, constantly recalling a previous experience or conjuring up an imaginary one, and the dreamy vagueness of Frédéric's ennui which induces in him a state of indecision or immobility, establishes the mood of the surface plot. Until his arrival at Nogent, the sensation of reversed time dominates: deserted countrysides, motionless clouds, faceless travellers, folk who appear and disappear magically. Existence seems to be arrested, poised somewhere between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries—the one almost forgotten and the other not yet defined.

Out of the initial confusion of the departure, it is Jacques Arnoux who arrests Frédéric's attention. He appears,
flirting with a young peasant girl, toying with a gold cross she wears on her breast—an introduction which points to the virility of his characterization. His phallic significance increases as he hands round cigars and chats with Frédéric "like a father." Arnoux does in fact play a paternal role in both the chess pattern and the castration motif: as the supreme father, the King, to Frédéric's Knight, he exacts not only devotion but a measure of protective service; as the paradoxically beloved and castrating father in the incestuous Arnoux-Marie-Frédéric triangle, he simultaneously supports and debilitates his son-rival.

The vision-like appearance of Marie—who will be his Queen as well as an idealized Mother-figure—sets the tone, both medieval and romantic, of their future relationship. As her name indicates (and we are told later that her name is "Angélique" as well), she represents for Frédéric the purity of an infinite and spiritual love, the heretical Agape of the Cathars, the sensual, forbidden love of the troubadours, the incestuous love of a son longing for a return to the oblivion of the womb. For Frédéric, transfixed with admiration,

. . . le désir de la possession physique disparaissait sous une envie plus profond dans une curiosité douloureuse qui n'avait pas de limites.

(p. 50)

Marie's appeal to others, however, has very noticeable limits. In fact, such ambiguity is associated with
her character that the reader periodically finds himself wondering if there could be two women here instead of one. The other passengers in the salon do not seem to notice the Marie who totally absorbs Frédéric's attention, Hussonnet knows her as Angélique, Deslauriers cannot comprehend the extraordinary effect on his friend exerted by such indifferent features, to Cisy she is the notorious "Sophie," "her" broken parasol belongs to another, and no one lives behind the lighted windows Frédéric worships. Marie herself is consistently vague—her conversation possibly representing either the understated reserve of a deep soul or the banalities of a vapid bourgeoisie. All of this serves the development of the deep structure, for she appears to be a dream remembered from some past age as well as a perfectly disappointing recreation of an original treasure.

The voyage continues and Frédéric, by this time drawn into the Arnoux family circle, is suspiciously elated by Marie's gentle scolding of Marthe. He already assumes the position of sibling rival to the little girl for the mother's (and father's) affections; as such his rapport with the Arnoux children is artificial at best and quite hostile in reality. Children--bourgeois heirs--are a reaffirmation of the new race of masters and the enemy par excellence of a sterile aristocracy.

The child's place is taken by the strolling harpist who plays to the motley assembly exactly as the troubadour
with his lute amused the folk gathered into some chateau of centuries ago. Marie hears the song and seems to awaken as from a long sleep. The proximity of the past—as it is represented by the deep structure—consistently induces a state of drowsiness or immobility in both Frédéric and those around him. The action taken to break the bonds of this soporific condition is generally an unfortunate one.

Frédéric pays the musician generously—on a religious impulse—and thereby impoverishes himself for the rest of his journey. He is thus only able to enter the salon with Arnoux in the same way he is able to penetrate the opposing King's drawing room: not because he possesses the vital equipment—money—but because as sole heir to an aristocratic memory, he has the right.

His "rights" are, nevertheless, a rather artificial stimulant at this point; Frédéric receives more comfort from the landscapes which sweep by as the boat "cuts the waves like a ribbon." Again, Flaubert displays his technique of summing up the novel in a visual image, for Frédéric is aware principally of things moving past him and vanishing: the story of his life.7

During his coach ride home, after his abrupt and mentally melodramatic parting with the Arnoux's, the landscapes seem to be repeated and he re-lives the moments he has just spent in Marie's presence. His brief walk through the twilight countryside takes on a projection of the timid
guilt he experiences in the combination adultery-incest of his desire. The hugh corn ricks, with their phallic significance, cast giant shadows; a dog barks, and he is seized with a nameless anxiety: the timeless and universal "nameless anxiety" of all men who presume to rival the jealous father. Finally, Frédéric drives his horses to such speed that his coachman fears he will spoil their wind. Typically, Frédéric expends his passion--sexual and mental--en passant, on a dream, reserving nothing for the moment of reality and action which will demand his whole strength.

Frédéric's return to Nogent brings him close to the heart of the deep structure and its medieval pulse. His mother's house faces on the Place d'Armes and it is from here that he must venture out to struggle with forces even more destructive than those opposing Eustace d'Ambrecicourt. Unlike his predecessor, however, Frédéric is not entirely adequate. Although Mme Moreau is noble--the last of an extinct, aristocratic family--his father was merely bourgeois. Furthermore, he died of a sword wound leaving his wife pregnant with a son. Not only does this seem to be the phallic consequence of generating new life (the loss of the male self to the jealous priorities of the female), but in the Hegelian context, we see the pseudo-hero (engaged in the duel) attempting to master another--and his inevitable failure. Frédéric, therefore, has inherited not only the responsibility for his dying race but a serious disability
as well.

It is interesting (especially in the light of the chess symbolism of the all-powerful Queen) that the first historical reference follows directly upon the mention of the father's (coitus-castration) death: the Lafarge affair—a scandalous incident of husband-poisoning.

This first all-important chapter ends with Frédéric's reunion with his childhood friend, Deslauriers. This despite his mother's objections, for Mme Moreau instinctively disapproves of and fears the atheistic, ill-mannered young man. And with good reason, for Deslauriers is the Black Knight to Frédéric's White. He represents the hired Braquart and, as his name implies—also like Braquart—he wins the day.

Thus the homosexual tendencies of Frédéric's personality are introduced; his arrested adolescence (even regression into childhood) with the accompanying attachment to the Mother established; the provocative glimpses of another time presented; and the various chess pieces arranged in place.

The second chapter is devoted largely to an exploration of the boyhood friendship of Frédéric and Deslauriers. Although the latter plays an extremely complex role vis-à-vis Frédéric, it is in every respect consistent with his general function as the insidious destroyer. As the reflection of Braquart de Fenestranges, he launches an
attack on two fronts: against the self-perfection of the lover by interfering with Frédéric's ideal love and urging him toward infidelity; and against the hero by acting as the leader of a parasitic multitude who diminish Frédéric's hopes along with his goods. The irony lies in the contrast between the original (and noble) struggle waged by force of arms and the latter defeat accomplished through default without a single instance of effective action. When as chess Knight he takes Frédéric's Queen (Louise), he also destroys the hero's hope of marriage and self-preservation. In terms of the surface structure, he plays the male dominant role in their latent homosexuality. From this position he contributes to the suppression of Frédéric's masculinity and represents a type of castrator. His final theft of Louise completes this particular function since the removal of the necessary female is in itself a virtual castration. Deslauriers' victory is total and devastating.

To make Frédéric's humiliation more profound, a defeat by Deslauriers is equivalent to a defeat by the dead for he too has suffered a mortal injury. Deslauriers must survive the abuses of a castrating father who, having habitually beaten the child and deformed the adolescent, continues to withhold from the adult the essential virility normally passed from father to son. In this case, that virility is money. From the point of view of the deep structure, it is intriguing to note that M. Deslauriers
eventually becomes a dealer in men—military substitutes—at Troyes. (We recall that Braquart was a hired fighter, not part of the integral aristocratic system). The old man further restricts Deslauriers' function as chess Knight by cutting off his allowance and keeping him at Troyes, unable to move toward Frédéric.

The father, however, is unable to restrict the progress of the young men's friendship. Their sensual attraction for each other falls easily into male-female roles: Deslauriers, aggressive, protective, devoted to Platonic metaphysics (the Idea which invariably defeats the flesh); Frédéric, soft, lazy, absorbed in recreating Christ's family tree (the aristocratic interest in royal ancestry). Their adolescent dreams are filled with the contrasting images of the nineteenth century "decomposed" female—angel or sorceress, virgin or prostitute. They will tenderly love the chaste princess and enjoy sensual orgies with the courtesan. Their relationship is illustrated in phallic imagery: corn fields, the sensation of suffocation as they climb flights of stairs, and their schoolmaster's observation: ". . . qu'ils s'exaltaient mutuellement" (p. 57). Both deep and surface structures of the novel are united in their ever-changing plans for the future: Frédéric abandons his projected historical memoirs to embrace "romantic passion." He replaces his effort to remember the past with the pseudo-emotions of theory and observation rather than experience.
Deslauriers begins with metaphysics and ends up engrossed in the French Revolution. Although he commences with a study of the abstract, he progresses to the espousal of the violence which sounded the death-knell of a dying aristocracy.

The failure of any of these dreams to materialize is attributed by Frédéric, significantly, to the lack of a woman to love him.

'Quant à chercher celle qu'il me faudrait, j'y renonce! D'ailleurs, si jamais je la trouve, elle me repoussera. Je suis de la race des déshérités, et je m'éteindrai avec un trésor qui était de strass ou de diament, je n'en sais rien.' (p. 59)

Such passivity emphasizes his vulnerability to the destructive, castrating power of the female.

When the shadow of M. Roque falls across their path, Deslauriers receives the arms with which he will attempt to defeat his opponent. He urges Frédéric to use Roque in order to approach M. Dambreuse--suggesting that his friend wear white gloves, the colors of the chess Knight.

The Dambreuse mansion, like the master and mistress, is a symbol of all the superficial artificiality of a civilization grown away from its roots. Dambreuse, the renounced aristocrat, reigns as the Black King--as false as all the royalty in the game or in the French court. His home is filled with the metallic textures and sounds which pervade the brittle fausse-monarchie. Brass, silver,
polished marble, gleaming mirrors, and the constantly ticking clock. Chronological time is ominously present everywhere Frédéric goes during his Paris sojourn: an endless repetition of identical divisions marking cadence into oblivion.

Dambreuse himself is one of those deceptive appearances which add to man's confusion and consequent inability to act effectively in the world. He seems quite young from a distance, yet upon closer inspection he is found to be like everything else in the novel—really quite ancient and decrepit, bloodless.

Frédéric's indecisive first encounter with Dambreuse sends him into the streets in search of lodgings. He finds them in Rue Saint-Hyacinth. Street names are even more significant in *L'Education sentimentale* than the names of the characters. The original Hyacinth, we remember, was the beloved of Apollo—god of the laurel—accidentally killed by him in a "friendly" discus-throwing contest. Thus ensconced, Frédéric begins his law studies, and unsuccessfully attempts to re-establish his relationship with the Arnoux's.

However, the past now begins to diminish the present: Frédéric cannot bear to attend classes for they remind him of so many other classrooms, lectures, duties. This devaluation of the present, with its accompanying loneliness, induces the familiar state of lethargy. All of Paris seems
in fact to be hostile territory, a foreign land, a remote world in which he wanders as an outsider and a stranger.

When he returns from his second trip home to Nogent, however, Frédéric is inspired to renounce both Arnoux and Dambreuse. He will neither serve his King and Queen nor attack his opponents. Thus it is ironic that he chooses, this time, a room on the Quai Napoleon—symbol of political and—at least in popular anecdote—sexual domination.

By the fourth chapter, Flaubert begins to develop the surface structure struggle which reflects the great war of the deep structure. Although every bit as vicious, this new contest, like its setting, Paris, exhibits the effects of a certain anemia. All the ideas, all the political talk produce little; when action finally comes, it is a desperate and futile movement, lacking the direction necessary to success. The conflicts among the protagonists are repeated in the political drama of the approaching revolution. The new electoral reforms which proposed to remove property qualifications would further emasculate the exclusive traditions of the aristocracy, whereas the 1841 census—by increasing the number of taxpayers—aimed a counterblow at the people. The latter displays its greater energy by the violence of its response. Yet, although the mob reacts to the authority of the Crown as to a castrating father (referring to the Establishment as "the Butchers"), there is little real strength or authority anywhere. As Hussonnet
sarcastically observes: "Je croyde, messire, que nous avons dégénéré!" (p. 69).

As a foretaste of the madness soon to explode on both sides, the confusion of workers and students brings out the police who, in a show of false severity, attack a young boy in the crowd. This injustice draws the single good man of the novel into the action. Dussardier, described as a sort of Hercules (Apollo's child-enemy), throws himself passionately into the melee, beating and throttling the officers until he is finally dragged off to the jail on Rue Descartes. Ironically, he will end his rôle as he begins it: seeking justice in a Paris street--struck down by Sénécal, the mathematician.

Dussardier asks nothing from anyone and faithfully serves those he loves; he is (as Flaubert describes him) one of those men whose sole function is to bring others together; having done so, he is no longer needed. In this sense, and because of his humility (he is ashamed later, when Frédéric and Hussonnet attempt to "rescue" him, to be "elevated" to the rank of a student with white hands), he personifies the worker-bishop--or the holy Fool--of the chess game. He opposes Sénécal's cold asceticism with his touching chastity, and he counters the other's cruel propaganda with his generous naiveté.

Dussardier, however, is illegitimate just as the
organized Church in the nineteenth century seemed to be a bastardized version of the original. Covered with finery, it served the elegant and the comfortable and thereby withheld from its needy sons its healing and life-giving vitality. Similarly, Dussardier, employee of the dealers in laces and fancy goods, discovers in jail that his important cardboard box has disappeared and his treasured pipe has been irreparably smashed. Despite his original misdirection, however, he is by nature a peace-maker, a good shepherd to the downtrodden—and, in the end, he leaves the fine world of laces and fancy goods and becomes a carrier. Dussardier, honest, gentle, and doomed, carries the burden of man's injustice to man until, arms outstretched, he dies in the Paris mud.

The confrontation between authority and people introduces Hussonnet into Frédéric's life; the fickle Pawn serves as the link to Arnoux which Frédéric needs. With his newfound escort, Frédéric is at last able to approach the citadel. Again he encounters those deceptive appearances which cover an incongruous reality. None of the "important" artistic figures chez Arnoux is as Frédéric imagined; Pellerin, the impotent artist and avid theater-goer, lost in the imitation of life, understanding every theory and technique, able to execute none; Regimbart, the aging citizen, unable to effect any revolutionary action except to complain—until even his words and thoughts are refined into silence.
and immobility. Each man a symbol of the decay—the one of the will, the other of the intellect—of the bourgeois world.

The dinner party which highlights the chapter—and balances with its banality and obscenities the cheap violence and phallic threats of the street scene—refers again to the deep structure. Marie, dressed in black,12 and Arnoux—bountiful providers—serve their guests an enormous feast in a dining room made to appear like a medieval parlour. The obscenities and the platitudes (each a parody of his own physical and mental inadequacies) of the conversation surprise and impress Frédéric. To emphasize his eagerness to abandon his heroic and masculine responsibilities, he wishes himself to be old, deaf, and infirm in order to gain the access to Marie enjoyed by the antiquated Meinsius. Sexual inadequacy is the prerequisite for approach to the mother-figure if the son fears (or loves) the father and desires to avoid the threat of his retribution.

Frédéric walks home through a timeless atmosphere of mists, shadows, weightlessness. His proximity to the ideal—de-sexualized—love of the lady-mother, the Cathar love, lifts him out of his present existence into a passive dream-like state, prelude to the perfect passivity of death. He is startled, however, by the first striking of a clock: one A.M. The clock, striking the hours in sequence, will continue
to interrupt his dreams of another timeless (sacred) existence until it finally chimes six P.M., the hour of his son's death.

Brought back to present reality, Frédéric determines to be a painter, and, at home, he gazes for a long time at his own face in the mirror. Just as the novel itself is a lifeless reflection of a once-vital spirit, Frédéric decides to use himself as the model for his art. Later, the homosexual vision of Saint-Julien will mark the ultimate consequences of such an inward-turning.

Frédéric's career as a painter comes to nothing, of course. His trips to his "patron" Pellerin's studio find the artist "out" on his usual pilgrimage to any holy place likely to bring him publicity. Frédéric's days are far from empty, however, for now he has Deslauriers with him once again.

His relationship with Deslauriers is that of wife with husband. Frédéric's "adulterous" attachment to Marie is doubly upsetting for Deslauriers because it interferes with their "love," and it prevents the White Knight from moving into enemy territory. In retaliation, Deslauriers introduces Sénécal into their Thursday evening gatherings. The affairs are marked by the bickerings of the guests as they deplete Frédéric's mediocre allowance—another parallel to the swarming bourgeois parasites gradually destroying the real and ancient source of their strength,
the land and the people.

Sénécal preaches his poverty and his abhorrence of women; Cisy, admired by Frédéric for his wealth, reveals his effeminate dread of women; Regimbert annoys Deslauriers by his support for Arnoux; only Dussardier gives more than he takes. He returns Frédéric's cigar case—untouched and full of cigars: an indication of his restored ability to pass on the virility man most requires for survival and salvation, as well as of his protective role vis-à-vis his Knight.

Frédéric and Deslauriers attempt to plan their futures—as much of a wasted effort as that of the Barbarians in Salammbo. Deslauriers, still in the position of dominant male, attempts to mold and control Frédéric, but Frédéric is too passive to hold any shape for long. Deslauriers' attempt to approach Marie (the Knight threatens the Queen) is defeated by Frédéric's false pride, and Deslauriers' efforts to move Frédéric closer to Dambreuse fall on deaf ears.

Frédéric, at the moment, can think only of Marie. Yet his failure to achieve a private encounter is met not with despair but with relief. Arnoux is presently guiding and protecting Frédéric in a fatherly manner, and Frédéric's essentially incestuous love of Marie raises more guilt than pleasure in his soul.

Frédéric's lack of virile aggressiveness seems to
account, symbolically, for his failure at his law exam as well: his fatigue after a night of study combined with the brilliant sunlight temporarily blinding him (a castration image) indirectly causes his humiliating failure. Martinon, however, a Pawn for the Dambreuse house, passes.

To console himself, he wheedles his mother until she finances his continued stay in Paris; he cannot bear to return to Nogent, where his failure will be infinitely more noticeable. Paris, however, is a dead city. Deserted, oppressive, it is filled with the monotonous, repetitive sounds of caged birds, whirring lathes, cobblers' hammers, and glimpses of untouched glasses, unread newspapers, unneeded barmaids. Marie is "gone"; Arnoux entertains a mysterious and invisible guest—whose parasol Frédéric sig-
nificantly breaks, and, in the sudden, brilliant sunlight and confusion of the boulevards, Frédéric is overcome with a sense of nausea. His attempt to regain a plateau of stability and confidence by entertaining Arnoux at dinner is defeated by the older man's criticism and refusal to eat the prepared food. The castrating father crushes the son's efforts to become a provider, a symbol of fertility like the father.

When Marie returns to Paris, Frédéric goes with her into the fog and mist; the dreamlike atmosphere of the damp pavement and the shadowy forms all indicate a return to the mysteries of the womb—it is the bright glaring lights of
the movement-filled boulevards which startle Frédéric from his blissful immobility. Although he does not dare pursue any physical relationship, he continues to devaluate the concrete reality around him and to transpose every object into an extension of Marie.

The stultifying effect of this infatuation on his personality is expressed by Deslauriers who echoes a voice from the past: the Braquart who must defeat his opponent by destroying his perfection as lover if he cannot engage him, as hero, on the field of battle:

'Tu me gâtes mon Frédéric! Je redemande l'ancien. ... Ah! vieux troubadour, he sais bien ce qui t'afflige!' (p. 103) [Italics mine]

And Deslauriers brings him to the soirée at the Alhambra—a nightmare of sensuality played out before a gothic "cloister." In this great masquerade—itself a cutting parody of the exquisite Arab poetry and medieval richness of the deep structure—while the orchestra plays mechanically, the automatons of the shabby present swirl about Frédéric in ever-changing relationships and appearances. The past again intrudes to overwhelm his consciousness: when Delmar begins his song, Frédéric is reminded of the harpist on the Villes-de-Montereau, a reminder which triggers in him a series of memory images and induces the stasis which is a mark of lost reality. Again the action taken to reenter the present (Frédéric's proposal
to find a girl for themselves) is counter-productive. When Deslauriers is successful in picking up a young woman—winning the friend's wager—Frédéric is left alone in the fog. This time he experiences not exhilaration but despair. He considers suicide, but the slightest movement is too much for him, his weariness is so great; and he drags himself home through the early light of morning.

Marie's birthday celebration—for Frédéric, one of the few successful parties of Part One, its success was probably due to the fact that it takes place away from Paris, at Saint-Cloud—marks a reaffirmation of the medieval deep structure and serves as a contrast to the wretched Alhambra ball. As the happy day progresses toward nightfall, however, the relationship between Frédéric and Marie approaches closer and closer the forbidden frontiers of illicit passion. In the morning when he arrives, Marie is singing all alone in her room (tower); in the afternoon, at the moment of departure, she pricks her finger on the roses (symbol of physical, sensual love, enemy of the ideal), given to her by Arnoux; and during the evening journey to Paris, the child Marthe—whom Frédéric pretends to love—stretched across their laps, finally seems to unite them. In reality, however, Marthe is a rival of Frédéric for the mother's attentions; later, she is a threat to the unity of the family for she acts as the mother's rival for the father's affections. She is a manifestation of the rival
Queen whose presence within the opposing territory is a constant threat to both Knight and Queen. The child also acts as the shrewd observer whose cold eyes and cat-like appearances and disappearances resemble a sort of evil spirit ever ready to cast a fatal spell on her victims.

Despite its potential threat, however, Marthe's power is not as yet effective, and Frédéric, inspired with love, passes his exam—only to learn the terrible and apparently definitive reversal of his life's plan. He is penniless—due to the mismanagement of Roque (Dambreuse's Pawn) and the bankruptcy of a Melun banker. Héro or lover: each ruined, shaken on the wheel of Fortune; the apparent success of one bringing on the defeat of the other. Resigned, he returns to Nogent, and forgets his love for Marie. Absence is no longer, for the modern lover, a stimulant to greater passion. Frédéric's first glimpse of Louise Roque, whose red hair and tattered white dress seem to indicate a union of vague passion and some vestige of the ideal, stirs a flickering interest. In her, the hero could find a restoration of his virility, and the lover a channel for his fatal passion.

However, once again, the wheel turns. Frédéric's uncle dies; he inherits and sets off triumphantly to conquer Paris. But it is too late. His destiny is already decided. As in the time of Eustace d'Ambrecicourt when the liberation of the three queens allowed the Duke of Normandy the
necessary freedom to defeat the English in Champagne, the entrance of the Black and White Queens into Frédéric's life will be the instrument and the occasion of his fall.

II. The Battle

Part II of L'Education sentimentale opens with a subtle mockery of the hero-knight. Frédéric returns to Paris in a diligence—a modern version of the "cart" which any self-respecting chevalier would shun as the ultimate disgrace. Yet by the nineteenth century, the knight no longer travelled in open air; he was careful to avoid becoming mud-splashed or disarranging his cravat. The tidy propriety of the bourgeoisie replaced that certain disregard for personal care which characterized those generous, wasteful, cruel souls of the feudal nobility. However, Frédéric was filled with the romantic spirit:

...comme un architecte qui fait le
plan d'un palais, il arrangea,
d'avance, sa vie.

(p. 131)

That is to say, he does not live at all, he anticipates. Such an existence is the antithesis of the active ethic of a knightly aristocracy. But at this moment, speeding back to Paris, Frédéric is fully a part of the nineteenth century—until night envelops him and he returns to the past, mingling his hopes and his memories.
Frédéric's dreams of the future destroy the present moment and carry him miles ahead in his imaginary world. The five horses plunge forward in an infinite phallic promise, which—like all the promises in the novel—remains unfulfilled: the distance covered, despite the flights of Frédéric's imagination, is only three miles. The images imposed on his consciousness as he races toward his grand conquest are, nevertheless, predominantly sexual: the horses' manes flowing like waves, the thickening mist, the rattling of iron chains, and the enormous baker's oven whose fiery glow reveals the monstrous shadows of the horses. As he approaches the plain outside Paris, he receives a sudden brief shock: Paris seems to be a city in ruins, changed beyond recognition. However, the deceptive appearance soon gives way to the familiar landmarks and signposts: great branchless trees, tall gateways with half-opened doors, pools of dirty water, crossed billiard cues in a wreath of flowers (funeral wreath?), a huge tin cigar, and midwives' advertisements—all the sexual implications of the imagery overwhelmed by the two eyes more important than the sun (the mother replaces the father) shining behind the mist.

As though he had been gone for centuries, Frédéric crosses quai Saint-Bernard, quai de la Tournelle, quai Montevello, quai Napoleon, in a rapid ascent through time. He resists the temptation to go directly chez Arnoux, preferring to enjoy the anticipation, the absent love. When
he does arrive before the house, he is thrown into one of the most suggestive and extraordinary experiences of the novel. Everything has disappeared. L'Art Industriel, Arnoux, Marie, and everyone attached to them—gone. Did they ever exist? Pellerin is not at home, Hussonnet has no known address, Regimbart has "just left" his cafe. Frédéric attempts to follow a familiar figure, and a hearse crosses his path. He has lost his niche in time; he has misplaced his century. This momentary disappearance of the objective, concrete world is the talion punishment for those who prefer an imaginary life of fantasy and daydream to the action of reality.

Frédéric's desperate and determined attempt to find Regimbart leads into a humiliating trap as the Knight is held captive by the cunning bourgeois proprietors. As he waits for the citizen in the wrong café, Frédéric is aware of a cat (Marthe's image), a noisy brat of four (both ironic projections of his mortal enemies within his beloved's house), and the monotonous ticking of a clock. Chronological time corrodes and terrifies unless it can be transcended through a "sacred" action. Frédéric can only imitate the archetypal pattern through a perfect unconsummated love of Marie or through marriage to Louise. Because of Rosanette and Mme Dambreuse, both exits to freedom of the spirit are closed.
When at last Frédéric finds Mme Arnoux, he is disappointed. During an unusual (for him) sensation of "animal health," he resolves to forget her and lead an exciting life. The ideal apparently is an anemic creation and cannot co-exist with passion. To this end he immediately substitutes the Dambreuse clique for the Arnoux and takes up again with Deslauriers. The latter still wishes to manipulate Frédéric—and Frédéric's money—for Deslauriers has long ago understood that coin, not honor or courage or even virility, is the power, the seminal fluid, of the time; and, like Spendius, he desires power above all things. Despite their growing antagonism, however, Frédéric enjoys the warm, moist female atmosphere he enjoys in Deslauriers' presence—his female "role" is intensified when he is near Deslauriers, the male—and he continues to frequent the other's company.

This strange chapter concludes with another masquerade, this time at Rosanette's. Arnoux introduces Frédéric into the demi-monde where the former continues his role as a sort of part-time fertility god. Entering with a basket of estables on his head, inadvertently satirizing his own "intellectual" soirees, Arnoux sets the tone of parody and mockery which will prevail throughout the evening. The ball acts as a sort of micro-structure of the novel: it represents the sensual madness of the surface structure (seen in the sexual implications of the dancing), the confusion of
forms (illustrated by the little fluttering birds which seem to be flowers in the women's hair: the violent lusts of the dance reduced to harmless palpitations), the deceptiveness of appearances (each character acts in a way which contradicts the demands of his costume: his "role" in life, artificial and unsuited to the authentic soul within), and finally the castrating dominance of the female (Rosanette, stroking her sword, invites Frédéric to dance, then strikes him with the tip of her spurs).

The revelry is interrupted by the clock striking two, the cry of the cuckoo a mechanical mockery of the absurdity of this sterile use of time.

Frédéric's nightmare further illustrates the servitude into which man binds himself when he succumbs to passion and lust. Frédéric sees himself, with Arnoux, harnessed to the Maréchal's cab, straining to keep pace while she tears open his belly with her spurs. The role of Rosanette as the dangerous, castrating female is unmistakable; and although the White Queens are as dangerous, they wear a more subtle, gentle disguise—that of the ideal woman, the loving mother, drawing the son slowly backward into immobility and darkness.

Rosanette's orgy is balanced by Frédéric's gentlemanly gathering; both evenings produce, for him, the same result, however. His friends—except Dussardier—close in on his extravagant display of wealth and nibble it to tatters.
Sénécal rants against the feudalism of money, Deslauriers complains of government controls, breaks his (Frédéric's) wine glass in defiance and calls Frédéric's library a "little girl's collection." Pellerin prefers Grecian decor to Frédéric's Louis Seize; Cisy disapproves of the lack of "tone." Left alone afterwards, Frédéric feels as if a great gulf separates him from the others— an emotional castration which leaves the hero as destroyed as the threat of overwhelming passion did the lover.

Frédéric's loss of self is apparent when he arrives again at the Arnoux fireside— this time interrupting a domestic quarrel. Frédéric, alone with Marie in the motionless apartment, begins a feeble, filial defense of Arnoux, insisting with "an obedient smile" that the errant husband "loves his children." From Fédéric's point of view, this is a far greater quality than marital fidelity. He is still the incestuous son in Marie's presence. Even less than that, he begins to regress to the status of object; he wishes to become her handkerchief!

Nevertheless, despite Frédéric's inability to challenge the father, a strange role-reversal begins to take place between him and Arnoux. When the latter informs Marie that Rosanette is Frédéric's mistress, he answers the young man's indignant protests with a suggestive taunt.

'Où est le deshonneur de passer pour son amant? Je le suis bien moi! Ne seriez-vous pas flatté de l'être?

(pp. 191-192)
When Frédéric supplies Arnoux's failing economy with fifteen thousand francs, the elder begins to describe Marie's physical charms to him (Frédéric's money, presumably, bringing him the rights of possession—vicarious, naturally—his mere person could not hope to attain).

Money, of course, is the modern hero's weapon and armour. Consequently, when Frédéric furnishes Arnoux with the financial support he requires (just as the Knight provided his lord his service of arms), he draws closer to his Queen, and at the same time, strikes a blow against Deslauriers. Frédéric reneges on his offer of financial backing for Deslauriers' journalistic venture, and the latter sees his disappointed hopes as a fallen obelisk. To forfeit such a sum is to lose virility and manhood: the image of the defeated phallus is a perfect illustration of the problem.

Money gives Frédéric access to the Dambreuse household where he must conquer absolutely or be finally destroyed. Compared to the warmth of the Arnoux hearth and the soft earth colors surrounding Marie, the Dambreuse drawing room is cold, gleaming and metallic. It is filled with old men, bored and weary, while the women—young women—seem to be fruit or flowers filling a great basket, offerings for the highest bidder. Here, manhood is purchased—or, like Jacob's birthright—sold in return for a counterfeit feast. Frédéric does indeed make the exchange, and appropriately
at a dinner party, but for the moment he continues under the illusion of virility and control.

Frédéric's "generosity" with his money indicates a possible rejuvenation of the hero. In fact, Frédéric has surrounded himself with his gens; they depend on him; he supports a complete little world. But with what variations on the old theme! He gives, but not willingly; his "friends" are parasites and rogues, and the world he sustains is false and shabby. When he attends the tournament—transformed into the horse race—he wears the colors of the Black Queen, Rosanette, thus rejecting his White Lady. Yet even with this inferior love, he fails, supplanted at the moment of his meager triumph—by Cisy. The tragic parody becomes a farce.

To emphasize the extent of Frédéric's decline, Cisy is able to parlay his first success into even bigger winnings. He not only touches Frédéric himself but attempts to strike his Queen as well. He maligns Marie's ("Sophie's") good name and accuses Frédéric of being just like everyone else. Unfortunately, the remark is perfectly true—that is precisely the tragedy of the novel. But Frédéric, with his extraordinary self-portrait and his dim memory of what could have been, cannot accept the fact.

The proposed duel provides Frédéric with the opportunity to recapture his honor, but (confirming Cisy's
judgment of his abilities) he fails the occasion. His lack of success is a profound humiliation, for Cisy is hardly a formidable opponent. He is more terrified of maleness than Frédéric. He is overcome by the morning sun; he sees the swords as vipers; he faints and cuts his own thumb.

The episode, from Cisy's standpoint, evolves as a parody of self-castration, an appropriate fate for an effeminate aristocracy determined to refuse its former greatness and responsibility.

From Frédéric's point of view, it is Arnoux who prevents his completion of a heroic act, and—as the Oedipal father—suppresses his son's phallic conquest as the victor in the duel. The White King's unexpected presence also interrupts the normal completion of a Pawn-Knight confrontation, leaving the pieces in jeopardy but unable to exercise a definitive move—a device which illustrates the depth of Flaubert's vision of the world's ambiguity.

After this humiliation, life goes from bad to worse for Frédéric, and he returns to Nogent to find rest and to replenish his strength. At home his mother pressures him to marry Louise, not to ensure the perpetuity of his race, but in order to possess her many farms. Even Mme Moreau is tainted by the mercenary and the practical. M. Roque, the wily old peasant, encourages Frédéric to restore his forgotten title—and make Louise noble. The energy, the desire, the direction lies at the roots of the system with the Roques,
while the de Fouvens gradually become only an exclusive memory.

Meanwhile, Deslauriers, unable to take his money, is intensifying his attack on Frédéric. The lawyer's next move is to approach his rival's Queen. However, if the Knight approaches obliquely (Deslauriers' attack is definitely a sneaky one), it is he, not the Queen, who is in danger. So it is with Deslauriers and Marie. He leaves in humiliation but manages to weaken Frédéric's position before he goes, informing Mme Arnoux of Frédéric's engagement to Louise Roque. The news does indeed devastate Marie. The world suddenly becomes motionless, and she experiences a sensation of falling, interrupted by the chiming of a clock as it strikes three.

Her despair is premature, however, for Frédéric, torn between his desire to "re-design" Louise and his distaste for mingling his blood with that of the Roques, returns to Paris—hoping to avoid a decision in Nogent. The Platonic affair (long overdue) between Frédéric and Marie begins. Carried on at Auteuil, punctuated with immortal banalities and veiled in neo-medieval mists and shadows, Frédéric's initial success of Saint-Cloud develops almost to the point of physical union.

The troubadour of the Cathars seems to whisper Frédéric's only wholly sincere expression of love:
Together, alone, sheltered in a lovely autumn countryside, the lovers seem to find each other in the only age which could have perfected them.

We are led into an enchanted land, ancient, where souls mingle in the dust of time, and the essence of the person exists--complete--in the least part of the body. . . . Soon the body will no longer be required at all in the metaphysical paradise wherein each contemplates his own essence as the object of his desire.

However, the lover is not satisfied. He demands the proof of love, just as the hero demands the revolution to create the movement and active passion he is incapable of originating. The proof will take place in the streets of Paris. For Frédéric the proof is physical possession--the breaking of the incest taboo and the destruction of his
ideal love—and consequently, of himself.

The rendezvous is set for two in the afternoon, and Frédéric waits, the ticking of a clock again determining his destiny. Again he is too late. The clock has already struck three—for Marie at least (at the announcement of his "engagement" to Louise)—and Frédéric cannot turn back its implacable hands, either to take his love or to rediscover the hero whose faded memory mocks him. The Queen-Mother is stronger than the Knight-Son, and, like the sword separating Tristan and Iseult, Marie's young son—sign of an eternal bourgeoisie, perpetual menace to a fading aristocracy—separates the lovers and conquers the hero. It is an irony befitting the motif of maternal castration that Frédéric's most profound defeat is administered inadvertently by his own Queen.

In a desperate effort to heal his mortal wound, Frédéric replaces the White with the Black, and his passion explodes in tears of despair while, at last, the revolution of '48 flames beneath his windows.

The change in government heralded by the revolution is an ironic parallel to Frédéric's change in mistresses: neither is at all definitive. Yet the ending of the second part of the novel with this particular manifestation of one of its central problems is beautifully appropriate.

This interior section of L'Education sentimentale focuses on
the disequilibrium of Frédéric's life resulting from the ambiguous nature of the world. Here Flaubert becomes almost Kantian in his brilliant recreation of the polymorphic barriers which drug man's senses and destroy his hope of a valid intellectual possession of reality. In Salammbô this constant flux of form and substance is a source of terror or intoxication. The man of L'Education sentimentale, having progressed from his naivete and primitive ecstasies into a sophomoric ennui, finds ambiguity--tiring. The only magical qualities (qualities in former times associated with the animism of change) are those artificially introjected by the new Game-players.

Thus, Rosanette's masquerade ball, her incredible portrait with its changing theme and multiple ownership, the fluctuations in Arnoux's fortunes, and Frédéric's repeated substitutions in his love affairs can be seen as man's imitation of a nonsensical world. On the other hand, the surprised reactions to the startling vision of a changed Paris, and to the subtle erosion of friendship during Frédéric's party, appear to be tragically necessary errors of the mind which expects changelessness, stasis, as the essence of all things.

The greatest and most pathetic change, of course, is that of the heroic action of the archetype. As Bergson insists, the essence endures, stubbornly, yet imperfectly. In this case, it is an omnipresent rebuke throughout the
novel. Frédéric's inability to return to the original form, to transcend the flux of "history" to achieve a heroic and enduring mastery of self, in union with the other masters of his race, ensnares him in the web of time's tiny picayune divisions—each second passing laterally across his spirit like so many strands of iron, prohibiting him from soaring upward. His tearful reply to Rosanette the morning of the revolution is an ironic admission of his defeat both as hero and as lover; of his resignation to the corrosion of history and to the implicit denial of man's desire for perfection.

'Qu'as-tu donc, cher amour?'
'C'est excès de bonheur,' dit Frédéric. 'Il y avait trop long-temps que je te désirais!'
(p. 282)

III. Retreat to Nogent

With Frédéric's transition from Marie to Rosanette, the archetypal pattern of hero-lover is virtually destroyed. The hero has succumbed to the will and desire of the other in the wasted passion which brings him neither conquest of the earth nor union with it through his heir. The lover has forfeited the infinite purity of his ideal and with it his longing for death and paradise. Nothing remains for either but an interminable durée in the enemy tower.

This capitulation brings the White Knight into
proximity with the Black Queen, deep in her own territory. As long as he faces her squarely, he avoids being taken, but the moment he attempts to evade her influence, she defeats him once and for all. As long as Frédéric remains chez Rosanette and continues his masquerade of formal fidelity to Mme Dambreuse, neither lady moves overtly against him. His violent renunciation of each as he acts in the service of Marie and Arnoux, however, brings on their open fury and forces his penultimate move towards the trap.

The Kings, meanwhile, are performing a curious set of moves into, and withdrawals from, jeopardy. Dambreuse, in his earlier agreement with Frédéric not to foreclose Arnoux's note, restrains his Rook from checkmating the White King and thus prematurely ending the game—a move which heightens the contrast between the original medieval seriousness of the contest and the nineteenth century sophistication of the dilettante game-player. In a curious parallel, Arnoux carries Dambreuse away from the violence of the Paris revolutionaries, thereby *ostensibly* saving the Black King, but in reality saving himself. As long as the Black King remains, the game can continue—without him and his magnetic force, the White King's existence ends. Since there has never been any question (because of the cyclic repetitions of the novel's structure) as to the game's outcome (the "game" has been played before, in 1356, and the winner already fixed), the White King is not played to win, but simply so
that the ironic game may continue. Frédéric is later asked to "repay" his share of Dambreuse's favor to Arnoux when Dambreuse asks him to "look after" his vulnerable territories in Champagne. The White Rook is thus restrained by his own Knight from threatening the opposing King.

The revolution represents the simultaneous disintegration of the surface structure's symbol of authority. Louis-Philippe, destroyed largely by his own ambivalence, forfeits the right of the authentic leader-hero to control and punish. This abdication of authority opens a void which is filled—as in Salammbô—with the unleashed sexual energies of the unrestricted mob which attempts to usurp the place of the absent master. The presumption of the slaves leads of course not to freedom and eternal movement but to the immobility of spent passion. The sexual imagery of the sack of the Palais Royal is stated in explicit rape-castration terms. Revolted by the excesses and from "fear of being suffocated," Frédéric and Hussonnet leave the rampage only to encounter a prostitute posing as the statue of liberty, standing motionless, eyes staring blindly ahead. The revolution will be no refreshing redirection of man's way but rather one perfectly complete cycle back to zero. And the beginning again will be a repetition of all the past commencements—only with infinitely less vitality, less will, less mind than ever before.
Frédéric's self-destructive insistence on a mother-father image to idolize is reflected in society's absolute need for an overlord, a leader.

La France, ne sentant plus de maître, se mit à crier d'effarement, comme un aveugle sans bâton, comme un marmot qui a perdu sa bonne. (pp. 293-294)

Indeed, the workers, like the Barbarians in Salammbô cannot rise in effective revolt because they do not really know what they want; they "wait for a signal" to force their will, just as Frédéric attempts to create artificial boundaries of time and space as corridors through which his ephemeral actions will be forced, lending them immutable form and direction.

The Black King is ever ready to help in channeling the White Knight toward his ultimate humiliation. Dambreuse, with his attendant Pawn, Martinon, suggests that Frédéric stand for election. Since this idea allows free reign to his vain imagination, Frédéric agrees and discovers, in the course of his political club debut into the world of the common man, the intellectual parallel to the physical castration of the revolution.

The clubs are a sophisticated refinement of the primitive confusions of Salammbô and the theological divisions in Hérodiase. At the Club de l'Intelligence, the only intellectual monument erected is a Tower of Babel, wherein the most lucid (and exquisitely ironic) suggestion is for the adoption of a common language for the European
democracy.

On pourrait se servir d'une langue morte, comme, par exemple, du latin perfectionné.

(p. 299)

Con mortuis in lingua mortua. Frédéric leaves the Club as the last pale representative of life and intelligence, disgraced by the incomprehensible words of the Spaniard and the malice of Sénécal.

Frédéric's political defeat sends him back to Arnoux where the role-reversals begun in Part II continue to develop. Rosanette is forced to move to Rue Poissonnière (in contrast with Marie who lives on Rue du Paradis), but this time it is Frédéric who pays and Arnoux who "visits."

M. Dambreuse, the King, has become a fanatical Republican, changed beyond recognition. But the new government requirement for service to the state (young men must enlist or work on farms), reveals the most tragic of the transformations from deep to surface structure.

L'existence loin de la capitale les affligeait comme un exil; ils se voyaient mourants par les fièvres, dans les régions farouches. Pour beaucoup, d'ailleurs, accoutumés à des travaux délicats, l'agriculture semblait un avilissement; c'était un leurre enfin, une dérision, le déni formel de toutes les promesses.

(pp. 311-312)

In the hearts of these modern men, the city has supplanted the land as the source of vitality and strength, just as the bourgeoisie has supplanted the aristocracy. The
sterility of metal coin has replaced the earth's fertile softness, just as Mme Dambreuse is soon to replace both Marie and Rosanette, the sensual as well as the ideal giving way to the artificial.

Perhaps an ancient memory stirs in Frédéric for he makes one last effort to recapture the vitality which should be his birthright. Unable to remain any longer in Paris, faced with the ugly image it holds before him, he returns to the peace of the land, the past revisited.

The Fontainebleau episode has been thoroughly analyzed by Cortland for its sexual imagery and its representation of a typically romantic dream world. It is also the supreme manifestation of those echoes from a past existence which were so often present in Flaubert's mind, and which he projected to form the soul of L'Education sentimentale.

In the forest of Fontainebleau, as at Auteuil with Marie, Frédéric's heritage whispers to him. His senses hear; his intellect does not, and the invitation to an intuitive understanding of the world is received as a sentimental adage.

Rosanette's and Frédéric's hotel is different from the others. Resembling a monastery courtyard, it is pervaded by an unexpected tranquillity. The palace itself appears ancient and "rust-colored like an old suit of armour." The forest intensifies the medieval-sexual imagery:
Le chemin fait des zigzags entre les pins trapus sous des rochers à profil anguleux. ... on pense aux ermites, compagnons des grands cerfs portant une croix de feu entre leurs cornes, et qui recevaient avec de paternels sourires les bons rois de France, agenouillés devant leur grotte.

... Quand la voiture s'arrêtait, il se faisait un silence universel; seulement on entendait le souffle du cheval dans les brancards, avec un cri d'oiseau très faible, répété. ... Au milieu du jour, le soleil, tombant d'aplomb sur les larges verdure, les éclaboussait, suspendait des gouttes argentines à la pointe des branches, rayait le gazon de trainées d'émeraudes. ... Quelques arbres d'une altitude démesurée, avaient des airs de patriarches et d'empereurs, où, se touchant par le bout, formaient avec leurs longs fûts comme des arcs de triomphe; d'autres, poussés dès le bas oblique-ment, semblaient des colonnes près de tomber. ... Debout. ... sur quelque éminence du terrain, ils sentaient, tout en humant le vent, leur entrer dans l'âme comme l'orgueil d'une vie plus libre, avec une surabon-dance de forces, une joie sans cause. ... (pp. 315-316)

Forest, hunter-kings, stags, grottoes, winded horse, far-off birdcalls, druidic trees, joy of a world still young and strong: we are again lost in an age of beauty and mystery. The medieval enchantment extends itself more and more around Frédéric and Rosanette:

Le sérieux de la forêt les gagnait. ... sous les arbres, une biche marchait tranquillement, d'un air noble et doux, avec son faon côte à côte. Rosanette aurait voulu courir après, pour l'embrasser. (p. 317)
The tranquil dream cannot endure, however; the bloody struggle which continues in Paris casts its shadow even into the enchanted forest—and another face of the Middle Ages reveals itself.

[Rosanette] eut bien peur une fois quand un homme, se présentant tout à coup, lui montra dans une boîte trois vipères... Frédéric fut heureux de ce qu'elle était faible et de se sentir assez fort pour la défendre.

(pp. 317-318)

The rumblings of war and the ferocity of the hero penetrate the silence.

Près de l'auberge, une fille en chapéau de paille tirait des seaux d'un puits... Frédéric écoutait avec une joie inexplicable le grinçement de la chaîne.

(p. 318)

The metallic sound of weapons (of the warrior's armour?) touches ancient memories.

Exalted by the consciousness of a new virility, Frédéric determines to compensate for his "mean and bourgeois" indifference to his country's plight and return to Paris. However, as usual when he leaves his natural homeland for the "foreign" city, he encounters difficulty. He is treated like a stranger or an alien when he tries to hire a coach, and his entry into the city is marred by the guardsmen who mistake him for an enemy. He escapes this danger only by repeating over and over mechanically his intention of aiding a wounded comrade, and his "conscientious objections" to violence.
Paris is a ruined city. Everywhere Frédéric observes scenes which resemble images of rape and castration: the ruin of authority and fertility, caved-in staircases, doors opened on to space. Significantly, since we are concerned with the imitation of a hero, Frédéric notices in a destroyed house some prints, a parrot's perch, a clock: the imitation of the world, the imitation of communication, the imitation--the denial--of eternity. The chapter terminates as Roque, the Pawn who wishes to be King--in an imitation of authority--fires in at the prisoners who demand, from their unspeakable father, a crust of bread.

By contrast with the starving revolutionaries, the Establishment continues to dine well. M. Dambreuse's dinner party, at which Frédéric is such a devastating success, indicates how deeply into enemy territory the Knight has penetrated, or rather has been lured, and how totally the hero has compromised himself. The White Queens feel the effect of the move: Marie suffers the bitterness of her abandonment, and Louise, pursuing Frédéric to his empty apartment, feels the ominous finality of separation as "le petit carreau de la loge retomba nettement comme une guillotine" (p. 338).

Frédéric has indeed deserted his own Queen to serve the other. He is rewarded appropriately. In denying his true identity--either as lover or hero--he forfeits both spiritual transcendence and immortality of the flesh. While
taking a proprietary attitude (illusionary, of course)
toward Mme Dambreuse and the Dambreuse mansion, he is be-
coming the property of Rosanette as they settle into a
tawdry domesticity. The extent of her control is revealed
in the dreadful confrontation between herself, Marie, and
Frédéric. Literally dragging him from Mme Arnoux's
presence, Rosanette destroys the White Knight's power ever
to protect his Queen again. Her final function as the
castrating female derives, ironically, from her role as
mother of his child. The idea of paternity strikes Frédéric
as grotesque. He imagines, momentarily, becoming the father
of Marie's daughter, but has no desire to perpetuate himself
through a son. The aristocratic ethic is already dead in
his heart: his own superiority and that of his race no
longer have any importance whatsoever. Yet he has "surren-
dered" his essence, his virility, his soul to another; the
baby's death confirms that primary, ancient dread of coitus
as the end not only of male dominance but of life itself as
well.

Frédéric's affair with Mme Dambreuse likewise wears
the pallor of death. Her boudoir is quiet as a tomb, warm
as an alcove (the treacherous womb); Frédéric's preliminary
overtures are punctuated by moments of motionless silence
wherein he suffers the paralysis of past memories.
Possession of the lady herself does nothing to revitalize
Frédéric; on the contrary, his artificial passion
"disillusions his senses and atrophies his heart." The death of M. Dambreuse confirms Frédéric's impotence. As he sits by the corpse, in a scene closely paralleling the confrontation of Aulus and the head of John the Baptist in Hérodias, the gaze of the dead meets that of the impotent, and Frédéric is forced to close the staring eyes of M. Dambreuse for he cannot support their gaze.

The funeral cortège is a remarkable repetition of Frédéric's first "triumphant" return to Paris. The procession is watched by women with babies and men with billiard cues in hand as the hearse approaches the grotesque mixture of luxurious and sensual images of the tombs. Frédéric's entry into Paris past the symbols of male games and midwives' signs may now be understood as the ironic passage from life to death, from the womb to the grave. The double image of life and death, of infant and old man are united here into a brilliant and nihilistic condensation of effort and reward, of intention and act, of desire and destiny. All the King's wealth and phallic authority is as false as the dreams spun out years ago by Frédéric and Deslauriers.

Although the King is dead, his presence is still felt, and thus the game continues. But with the coming of autumn, Frédéric's allotted time draws to an end. This seasonal reference is significant for it is part of the chronology which defeats the hero. Frédéric's and Rosanette's child becomes ill, its disease appearing like "patches of mildew"
--a musty dampness which belongs to objects long hidden away in dark places and forgotten. The baby's actual death is a mere formalization of the reality which had existed long before its conception. With the death of Frédéric's heir, a great torpor and silence falls over the room, and, for the last time, the clock strikes six. Time is finished, ended for Frédéric. Imprisoned in the world of hours and seconds, of monotonous banality, he no longer has any possibility of escape or of transcendence. Eustace d'Ambrecicourt is captured and cast into the interminable darkness of his enemy's tower; the White Knight is taken.

The final sequence merely makes explicit the full implications of Frédéric's fall. The vengeance of Rosanette and Mme Dambreuse on the perfidious Knight is expressed by their destruction of his Queen. Since Arnoux has become a dealer in ecclesiastical objects, it is doubly appropriate that the despoiling should occur in religious terms. That is, Frédéric is scandalized and shocked at the auction's desecration of Marie's possessions. As her mystical lover, he views the handling of his lady's clothes and furniture by the second-hand dealers as the profanation of sacred relics. His rage is, of course, impotent, and, as Mme Dambreuse buries Marie's little silver casket—with all its sexual and metaphysical significance—securely away in her muff, the White Queen falls to the Black. And Arnoux, stripped of both Queen and Knight, vanishes into oblivion.
Deslauriers, meanwhile, as directed by M. Dambreuse, completes the closing maneuvers of the Black. After so long and cunning a game, the kill is executed with breathtaking rapidity. Frédéric, disconsolate, finished, makes a final effort to recoup. Returning to Nogent, to his safe harbour, he discovers too late that Paris—in the person of Deslauriers—has captured his Rook, and, as the bells chime out ironic mockery, he watches his last Queen disappear, taken by the Black Knight. The apocalyptic final scene, wherein Dussardier, the holy fool, falls to Sénécal, bitter Jester, cruel seneschal of a degenerate House, is played out in the silent, graceful, slow motion of a cosmos where time has ended.

The archetypal pattern of a heroic and sacred past has not achieved its translation into the present, and history continues, but shackled to the mediocre repetition of the banal. Chronology holds no promise for the future, and, like the epilogue of L’Education sentimentale, its specific content is meaningless and devoid of value. Man’s dream of attaining the heart of pure movement ends abruptly in the stillness between those revolutions over which he has no control. His hope of understanding his condition is defeated by his insistence on the testimony of the senses—doomed to confusion before the endless flux of appearances. Without the intellect’s clarity of direction, the will is
impotent, and without will, man is no longer master. In *L'Education sentimentale*, the survivors who emerge, finally, in the last pages, are a race of slaves, heirs to a depleted fortune: the subservient castrati of a mechanical god.

In terms of the chess pattern as well as the castration motif, it is the Queen who destroys—or who drives others to destroy—both King and Knight. From mutilation through the primal violence and retribution of the father to emasculation through the cunning entrapments of the mother is a fitting descent for Flaubert's latter-day man. As a final, devastating comment on the new masters and the quality of their world, Flaubert describes the unexpected success of Martinon, Hussonnet, Cisy, Pellerin. The board is left not to the royal pieces but to the Pawns. The Kings are dead, and the Pawns, promoted to their place, shall possess the earth henceforth.

Finally, Flaubert has brilliantly executed the conflict between the hero, who desires to submit all to his will and who cherishes his son as a guarantee of his own racial and individual strength, and the lover, who seeks the infinite in a finite, earthly object, desiring a solitude without heirs. Not, assuredly, as the conflict existed in its original state, but as it was reenacted, diminished, in the age of romanticism. We must view from very far away these pathetic remains of a once glorious
quest; yet we see the same egotistical and ambitious figures dividing up the spoils of a bleeding country. We descend, with Frédéric, into the underworld of a present which no longer corresponds to the noble past and which is but vaguely recalled until the moment when we realize that the story we have yet to tell is the one we have just read.

The hero is indeed dead in Frédéric, but the lover—that victim of the myth of fatal passion—lives on still. Only, passionate love no longer kills; it paralyzes. The purity of voluntary renunciation has become the abstinence of ennui; the obstacle raised expressly in order to avoid the disillusionment of the finite is now only a banal indolence. And that mystical contemplation which is the "promise never kept" but which attracts like moths to a flame those bold ones who would throw themselves into the mystery of nothingness—that ultimate and forbidden knowledge is nothing more than a sentimental education.

**LA LEGENDE DE SAINT-JULIEN**

The loss of will and mastery described by *L'Eduction sentimentale* is repeated and intensified in *La Légend de Saint Julien*. In the former, the quest is in terms of man's domination over the other and his conquest of the world; in the latter, the struggle is for command of one's self and the soul's union with God. In each case, the hero's efforts
are defeated, but—as in Hérodiase—the loss represented in La Légende de Saint Julien is infinite in its consequences. The castration motif now becomes a device to manifest not the frustrations encountered in the exterior world, but the repression and perversion of an interior life. The two histories, taken together, definitively express the content of the deep structure: the hero and his seed, for all time and without redemption, is extinguished.

The setting of La Legende de Saint Julien, again like Hérodiase, is described in a series of sexually symbolic images.

Le père et la mère de Julien habitaient un château, au milieu des bois, sur la pente d'une colline. 17

By introducing the parents as a primary focal point, Flaubert indicates that the source of man's disabilities lies in his nature, to be passed on from father to son, from generation to generation. Thus, Julien's perversions, directed against the parents, are simultaneously observed as deriving from them. Flaubert's trap-like psychological circles are illustrated by the structure of the physical domain as well as by the events of the story.

Around the outer circle of green pasture land stretches a border of thorn hedges whose sharp spikes enclose a vast empty area—the buffer zone, as it were, which Julien must cross in order to perform his dark acts in the
surrounding forest. Green and life-sustaining, it is the last circle of man's consciousness, the link between sensation and thought, the confines of intuitive knowledge. In Julien's life, it is an area virtually ignored.

Next, surrounded by strong pikes, circles, the orchard of fruit trees, the flower gardens, playground, bakery, stables, all the provisions for man's daily life are contained within its noisy, active quarters. This richness and variety represent the stimulants and direction necessary to man's psychic development, the area wherein his emotions are regulated and adjusted. When Julien renounces and perverts the skills he learns here, his psychic life (in the sense of growth and normality) ends.

Finally, the great house itself rises like a bastion of confidence and authority. As a symbol of the perfected self, the illuminating center of man's consciousness, the integrated personality, it boasts the strength of its stone and the immaculacy of its chambers. Yet this sparkling wholesomeness carries its own structural ambiguity. Beside the flowers and airy passages hang dragons and strange beasts spitting back the rains which fertilize the land. Thought and orthodoxy reign within the tower; lessons are learned here; great weapons are proudly displayed, and God is properly and devoutly worshipped. All the organized extensions of an intellectual creature--trained to kill and to love--are collected within. Yet it is the house--the
enclosure—which Julien finds unbearable and in which he commits his first crime.

The mother and father are a conventional and apparently compatible union of opposites, comprising the perfect whole so desirable to man. He, the active, intellectual male principle, surrounded by the phallic symbols of war and the hunt. She, the passive, silent contemplative, providing both sweet luxuries and simple necessities. Her role manifests a somewhat different aspect of the castrating mother than any seen previously. She proceeds passively, in an infinitely more subtle manner than the egotistical women of *L'Education sentimentale* and *Hérodiade*, or the inadvertent seductress of *Salammbô*. Her role is to un-sex, as it were, her son, to inhibit and repress, ever so gently, his masculinity until he is incapable of achieving any wholeness of self. His outbursts of sexuality become, therefore, manifestations of his violent, guilty desire to be what he was intended to be, to fulfill and complete the search for self.

Indeed, the mother's own lack of normal sexuality is indicated in several unmistakable passages. She runs her household like a monastery; she produces her son not out of conjugal love, but "à force de prier Dieu." Finally, as the emblem and trophy of her victory, she sleeps with a single martyr's bone above her pillow.

Since the female appears as an imminent threat rather than as a release from anxiety, man must find some other
outlet for his sexual drives and desires. A reflection of the substitute Julien will resort to is already present in his christening celebration. When the bowls and cups from which the men drink are used up, they drink from their helmets and hunting horns. The male symbol and the phallic object replace the conventional female container at Julien's birth just as the last act of his life is to offer himself to the male leper. Needless to say, the mother is not present at these festivities.

At the same moment, however, she is occupied in satisfying her own desires through the visitation of the hermit. Arriving through the mother's window, surrounded by moonbeams (the female satellite), the sexless prophet announces his tidings of joy:

"Rejois-toi, 0 mère! ton fils sera un saint!"
(p. 230)

The "prophecy" is as ironic as the hermit is ambiguous. Although his clothing and accoutrements give him all the appearance of a hermit, he is merely the latest manifestation in that continuous procession of mirages which act either as a self-induced projection of desire or a cruel masquerade of forms, mocking man's understanding. As a parallel on the intellectual level, his words continue one of Flaubert's most tragic themes: the impossibility of communication, of truth issuing from sealed lips. The deliberate rejection of the Word made flesh in Hérodias is reversed
here in the inability of the word to unite men in common understanding.

The mother's "vision" is matched by the father's. Appropriately, his comes at the break of day and is objectified in a male image: that of the mysterious, virile gypsy. His words seem more accurate, but they too do not withstand close examination.

"Ah! ah! ton fils! . . . beaucoup de sang! . . . beaucoup de gloire! . . . toujours heureux! la famille d'un empereur."

(p. 231)

The words are valid; their sequence is incomplete. By refusing to announce the sequel to Julien's "happiness" with the emperor's daughter, the beggar denies the ultimate meaning of his life and thereby mocks man's naive presumption of attaining conscious self-realization. To underline this lack of true communication between men, husband and wife keep their secret revelations to themselves. Saint or hero -- man's enormous vitality seems to be destined for one extreme or the other. Retreat or conquest, contemplation or action, death or life; there is no possibility of union, each choice is incompatible with its counterpart.

Julien's childhood illustrates the disastrous effects of offering the ambivalent personality too much too soon. Julien is taught religion and music by his mother, theology, mathematics, art and botany by the monk-tutor, while his father initiates him into the rituals of courage and to the
warrior skills of the hunter. Although he accepts his mother's guidance and his tutor's direction, Julien responds instinctively and with cries of joy only to his father's instruction. The most impressionable moments of his early development are those exotic and stimulating ones when he listens to the tales of adventure offered by the wandering merchants and pilgrims. Thus, far from assimilating his emotional, intellectual, sensible and physical experiences into a well-integrated whole personality, he obviously tends toward the active, unrestricted, violent areas presented to him through the male role-models he encounters. His great pleasure is not praying in the chapel but riding the great horse in the courtyard.

Although his reactions may seem to be the perfectly normal ones of any little boy, they obviously cannot be. His docility is deceptive—the surface appearance disguising a great deal of repression. Far from being unbelievable, Flaubert's portrayal of Julien's childhood is deadly accurate—as is evidenced by the endless descriptions of psychopathic killers as having been perfectly obedient and charming children. The overall structure of the tale as well as the consistent Freudian significance of the actions of the plot seem to indicate that the cause and origin of Julien's psychosis lie in the suppression of his tendency to action. In terms of the surface structure, this "action" is related to his primary sexual inclinations; in metaphorical terms, it
is the same pattern of movement-stasis which interferes with the successful existence of all of Flaubert's characters. Unfortunately, since his mother represents the passive immobility in his life, Julien's perversions must be associated with her rather than with the father. He, however, acts as the manifestation of Julien's guilt, the continuing judgment which follows him even into death. To refer again to Freud, Julien, apparently at the normal Oedipal stage of sexual organization and psychological development, encounters a rejection, from the mother, of his inclination towards her. This "rejection" is expressed through her imposition of long hours of inactivity--immobility even--on the boy whose instincts now are most particularly directed to the active expression of self. The repression of these impulses awakens in the individual a feeling of guilt and a fear of the associated punishment: castration. Thus, for Julien, the long periods of prayer during which he is restrained into immobility--foreign to his nature--seem to be the psychological "justification" for the inordinately cruel means he uses to escape into the action necessary to him.

As modern psychology explains over and over again, the individual often escapes his anxieties by forcing on himself the very thing he most dreads. So it is with Julien. What can be seen as castration dread is extended into dread of death, and these consuming fears are reversed and acted
out compulsively throughout Julien's life as he attempts to
destroy not only himself but all nature, not only the
present and the future as it is contained in himself and his
generative potential, but as it is contained in the past in
his living parents and in the honor of his dead ancestors.

The killing of the mouse—in church—is described in
sexual-castration imagery at least as explicit as that used
in the python-Salammbô passage in Salammbô. The sight of
the small pink and white mouse emerging from its hole in
the chapel wall triggers in the child an instinctive delight
which is immediately repressed (as his budding sexuality has
been repressed by his mother) and then punished as he removes
(castrates) the offending creature from its premature and
inappropriate appearance. This initial act—achieving
nothing definitive psychologically of course—becomes the
first in a series of ritual violence. The repetition of the
impotent action offers Julien his only hope for salvation:
one day the act, like a magic incantation, will work. But,
like any journey through the darkness of the unconscious,
the orgiastic hunts occur in dream-like conditions, never
able to break through the barriers of the psyche to define
themselves in time and space. Julien, like most of Flaubert's
characters, is doomed merely to parody the archetypal
patterns of sacred and heroic time.

As his hunts increase—he goes in all weater, scorning
the artificial refinements enumerated in his father's
manuscript—Julien begins to resemble the beasts he stalks. He refuses the monk's call and rebuffs his mother's kisses; he has chosen his path, but it leads to a pseudo-masculinity. In reality, beneath the facade, he is as much the mother's son (victim) as ever. This paradoxical situation, wherein the will seems to be totally outgoing and aggressive but in actuality is unable to move at all, is reflected in the first danger he encounters. Intent on the killing of two goats, high on a mountain peak, Julien loses his balance, nearly tumbling into the abyss with them. The goat, symbol of Evil, of Satan, is a fitting creature to tempt Julien beyond his limits and to indicate the loss of spiritual independence.

The animals are a bestiary representing Julien's moral and psychological conflicts. Their gentleness and vulnerability should portray Julien's instinctive nature, source of emotional differentiation and strength. Because of his perversion, however, they serve instead to emphasize, ironically, the distance between the normal and the abnormal.

Elles tournaient autour de lui, tremblantes, avec un regard plein de douceur et de supplication. Mais Julien... ne pensait à rien, n'avait souvenir de quoi que ce fût.
(p. 235)

Julien does not recognize his own image in the animals because he—like the Barbarians at Megara—cannot read the signs of nature. The intellect and the memory which cooperate in a flash of perception, adjusting past experience
to the demands of the present, no longer function for him.
For Flaubert, as for Bergson, memory is a vital psychic
function, without which there can be no durée and without
that ability to participate in the experience of time, man
is cast into the outer darkness of motionless non-time. He
replaces the spiritual potential of all conscious experience
with the automatic reactions of purely physical existence.
Thus the hypnotic repetitions of the slaughter increase
Julien's bestiality while at the same time, they diminish
his ability either to understand his animal condition or to
free himself from its bondage.

The sight of the great herd of deer enclosed in the
arena-shaped valley is not only sexually significant but
represents the irresistible lure of the mandala--the con-
tained, total self. Since Julien's initial killing of the
mouse with its castration implications, his actions have
exposed more and more of the act's metaphysical consequences:
death to the self. His orgiastic attack on the trapped
animals is an attack on himself--the intense guilt-ridden
death wish which co-exists paradoxically with an hysterical
dread of death. In his warped and misdirected quest for
self-realization, Julien denies the spiritual potentiality
of his sexuality, abandoning the sun-filled orchards for the
heart of darkness where he can neither renew his body
through love nor restore his soul through charity.
His final attack on the great mystical stag extends the dimension of his crime from himself to all his earthly and heavenly kin and crosses the frontiers of time. By projecting his search for annihilation to include the mother and father, Julien evades the prison of eternal present—wherein he acts out his violent dreams—and destroys both past and future. His earthly continuum is interrupted—even to its origins—just as his soul's hope of transcendence is denied by his attack on the stag-Christ figure. For Christ is the Word made Flesh and Julien's violation of the flesh leads as directly to spiritual death as the Catharsian renunciation of the body led to their un-Christian and fatal mysticism.

Significantly, his blow is directed to the fawn contentedly attached to its mother. Exasperated by the doe's agonized cries, he quickly silences her, then strikes the enraged stag in the forehead with his arrow. Julien's destructive impulse is directed primarily at himself, then at the source of his love-hate ambivalence, and finally at the supreme authority, the avenging father who retains in full perfection all those qualities of life and virility potentially present—but latent and unfulfilled—in the son. The son's guilty dread is realized as he stands face to face with his crimes: the great stag seems to race toward Julien ready to crush and disembowel him. Instead, the voice of Judgment expresses the nature of Julien's perversion and the
ultimate consequence of his desire:

"Maudit! maudit! maudit! Un jour
coeur féroce, tu assassineras ton
père et ta mère!"

(p. 236)

Julien's horror is not so much of the deed itself—although that is terrible enough—as of the realization of his unconscious desire to murder his parents.²⁰ Julien's will to death is the active companion to Frédéric Moreau's deadly lack of will to life.

The psychic blow which is dealt Julien by the stag's prophecy wounds the body as well, and he enters a period of retreat manifested by his long and grave illness. His recovery is, however, physical and not psychic, for soon afterwards he accidentally strikes his father with his Saracen sword, and with his javelin pins the fluttering winglike tips of his mother's headdress to the garden wall. The phallic significance of the instruments and the unconscious intent of the "accidents" are unmistakable—even to Julien. Again overcome with horror at the potential for evil within his soul, he departs from the enclosed security of the chateau for the unlimited dangers of the world.

Paradoxically, it is this movement away from security into danger which is temporarily Julien's salvation. His natural inclination is for action: he is potentially the great medieval hero—the hunter, the warrior, the organized and ethical killer required by his race and age.
Unfortunately, he first experiences his sexually-oriented taste of death in the tragic Flaubertian context of obstructed movement, stasis. Then, lost in contemplation of the durée of existence, he begins to resemble other Flaubertian characters in whom the definitive outlines of present action are blurred as past and future merge into one. Frozen, as it were, into this primal moment of experience, Julien loses the ability to order and to limit the vast energies of his nature. Instead of projecting outward his normal libidinal impulses, he represses them within the self and constricts them into a compulsive—but totally non-progressive—repetition of the original, poisonous act. Once freed from the cause, however, the effect is also (at least temporarily) removed, and Julien's decision to leave the castle is the best thing he could do to regain his psychic health.

To truly find and fulfill the self, man must turn outward, exchanging the contemplation of his own reflection for the discovery of the objective world. The will must be given freedom to seek, to find, to possess the Other, a conquest which bestows growth and strength and fulfillment. Julien, as a legitimate huntsman—that is, a hunter of men, a warrior—becomes strong, valiant, temperate, and wary. He scales the walls of citadels, unseats horsemen by the dozens, men follow his uplifted sword and bridges collapse beneath him. Not only is he a virile conqueror but he portrays the
tender son as well: protecting the old, the widows, and the orphans, seeing in the helpless the image of his parents. Thus in the outward movement of this active life, Julien seems to have achieved a whole personality—the balanced composite of both mother and father.

Nevertheless, the destructive bent of his nature is repressed but not eradicated. In a continuation of the human paradox which demands both death and life, Julien's new role as hero is countered by the non-heroic army he collects. His choice of runaway slaves, peasants in revolt, fortuneless bastards, while superficially a romantic collection of nonconformists also seeking fulfillment of self, present a threat to the organized, heroic society of which Julien, by birth, is a part.

To further illustrate the continued presence of both Eros and Thanatos—and their unresolved ambivalence—in Julien's desire, Flaubert describes him as living and fighting not only in lands of the burning sun, but in ice-covered, frozen domains, and in indistinct and mist-shrouded ghostly regions as well.

However, control and suppression of sexual excess seems to be the predominant mark of Julien's new existence—the exact reversal of the former one. He slays dragons and vipers and releases queens from their towers. Finally, there is his tour de force of phallic devaluation of the Other; he
cuts off the head of the wicked caliph of Cordova, frees
the emperor of Occitania and marries his seductively beauti-
ful daughter.

With his marriage he returns to proximity with the
woman who served him so ill before. In the silent, darkened,
womb-like enclosure of the palace, he returns to the fatal
inactivity of a dream world, horribly punctuated by visions
of exotic animals as vulnerable to his will as to his
javelin. He now begins consciously to associate the fate of
his parents with his slaughter of the animals. The thematic
relationship between the parents and the beasts has been
noted, although not developed, by Brombert.\textsuperscript{21} A Freudian
interpretation must consider that Julien, simultaneously
obsessed and repelled by human sexuality, and emotionally
unable to sublimate or transcend his sexual energies, is
forced to consider them as \textit{essentially} degrading as is his
unique expression of them. Thus, he sees himself as the
child of bestiality who can only free himself through the
destruction of the beasts (parents).\textsuperscript{22}

His second great hunt is as ineffective as the first
was devastating. Julien's orgiastic violence has become the
humiliation of impotence—the two extremes of sexual
maladjustment.

But it is not so much the animals who
are endowed with invulnerability, as
it is Julien's own weapons which prove
to be inoffensive. His arrows, aimed
at the wild animals, land like gentle
white butterflies. His lance, as it reaches the bull, bursts into fragments, Freudian exegetes... could hardly hope to find a more rewarding document. 23

Again, Julien has retreated into the darkness of unconscious self and found spiritual death. This time the imagery of the passive female predominates, indicating that the original threat of castration from the charging stag has become at least a symbolic reality. Julien walks like a blind man (ancient symbol of castration) while the animals mock his impotence. The rotten partridges he discover can only be the image of his own soul—already decaying in the path of evil. 24

His spiritual dishonor and frustration are increased by his inability to grasp and hold secure any acceptable part of the world. Again the Flaubertian polymorphic cosmos acts upon man to madden him at the futility of the conflict between the senses and the intellect. The animals are not what they seem; Julien's parents and the beasts are identical; the three living partridges are but one, rotten; the wife becomes the mother. How can man's will seek the good when his intellect is so alienated from truth?

Raging, he makes his own metaphysical substitution, determining to kill men instead of animals. Significantly, it is his suspicion of sexual impropriety and infidelity which triggers the violent murder. Once more Flaubert "signs" the death scene with the visual encounter of the dead
and the impotent:

. . . et il (Julien) apercut, entre ses paupières mal fermées, une prunelle éteinte qui le brûla comme du feu.
(p. 244)

The cathartic outburst brings Julien at least the relief of exhaustion from his sexual obsessions, and he makes his second departure from the enclosure. His return to the world is as a dead man. Cloaked and anonymous in the robes of a monk, he assumes the form of tranquillity and sexual transcendence, but his nature—his essence—remains unchanged.

He wanders through the world in an aimless journey which parallels the fruitless mockery of his second hunt just as his heroic triumph as soldier reflects the sadism of the first hunt. Now, however, he appears more like the hunted than the hunter. Living on roots and berries, shunned by men, he seems to have broken the last link with humanity. Although his vision is filled with images of union and propagation (amorous horses in meadows, birds in their nests, insects in flowers)—the incessant rhythms of nature—his own unnaturalness causes the creature to flee before him. Despite his acts of kindness to the aged or of valor to the helpless, he is the enemy par excellence of the family, and men cannot bear his presence. Finally, he seeks solitude, but finds no peace for each night the parricide recommences in his dreams. His terrible act was neither definitive nor a purgation of violent instincts. To burn away the excesses
of passion, he wears a spike-covered hairshirt and climbs every chapel hill—but still he finds no relief. Even his desperate intention to die is defeated by the sudden appearance of his father's face. His guilt is too heavy to carry into eternity—for Julien, time does not corrode or dissolve, but contains and immobilizes. By contrast with his psychic state during the "timeless" amnestic hunts which left no memory of their horror, he now lives consumed by the memory of his murder.

The absolution he seeks, however, is in a violent and slimy river; his craft repaired from pieces of wreckage and his passengers overburdened with baggage. Inside his hut, he is tormented by heat and cold, by vile odors and swarms of mosquitoes. He has obviously, it seems, taken the vague form of the scapegoat, and yet nothing is expiated. He continues to try to recapture the past in his memory, but his dreams of youth always evolve into visions of corpses.

From here to the end, Flaubert follows a pattern of symbolic relationships which seem to indicate expiation and salvation. The penitent, carrying a great burden, makes a difficult crossing of a large body of water; he accepts, for the sake of charity, the repulsive conditions laid down by a mysterious visitor and is rewarded with the miraculous metamorphosis of his ascent into paradise in the arms of Christ. Yet too many rather significant points remain
unresolved if the passage is accepted on face value. On the contrary, it would seem that, as Brombert and Sartre have observed, the grand profession of faith should more accurately be considered a crisis of faith. And in this case, a crisis resolved ambiguously at best.

Finally, this very theme of sainthood is an important key to the understanding of Flaubert's work. . . . the central figure remains that of a human being tormented by his own inherence, dreaming of an impossible escape and an unattainable absolute. . . . There is little doubt that his obsession with the theme of sainthood marks, in its various disguises and avatars, a definite crisis of faith. Sartre makes Flaubert's father directly responsible for this crisis: . . . 'this crushing father who did not cease, even once dead to destroy God.' Sartre's blunt emphasis on the nefarious influence of one of the parents. . . . fails to take into account the role of the mother. But if indeed. . . . to use Sartre's image, he (the father) partly succeeded in killing "God" in him—then the theme of parricide, related to the theme of sainthood, takes on a renewed meaning.25

Even within the context of medieval allegory, miraculous transformations of forms must be suspect, given Flaubert's consistent use of natural polymorphism not to redeem man, but to condemn him to a hell of uncertainty. It would seem that instead of a legitimate figure of Christ, the leper is actually a manifestation of Julien's own corruption. From the beginning, Julien has associated the animals he slaughters with the parents he murders, thereby extending the beast image to himself. He hunts the animals;
he is the animal sought. He is the human momentarily superior to the beasts who weds the princess superior to ordinary women. He is the soul, corrupt, which embraces its own image in the ugliness of the leper. His parents, in fact, identify their son (and themselves) to his wife by describing a certain mark on his skin. Julien, child of bestiality, is indeed the leper among us—and the contagion is universal.

Does the marvellously beautiful transformation of the leper then imply that Julien, and all of mankind, has likewise been spiritually transformed? Not necessarily, for not only has the fiery splendor of the Christ-figure already been described (and in strikingly similar terms) in Julien: the leper's hair stretches out like rays of the sun just as Julien's hair, during battle, seemed to burst into flame like burning torches—but beauty is as deceptive as any other accident. And we have seen repeated over and over the denial of essential change in Flaubert's characters. Furthermore, as Poulet observes, this sudden confrontation with an unrecognizable self—the self which represents all the corruption of the past—is characteristic of those Flaubertian personalities caught in the void of meaningless existence: "In a flash our past self is carried to the other side of an abyss [river?] to a side that is directly opposite to us. We see it from afar, and it appears to us as a stranger."26
Finally, unless every saint is to be considered nothing more than a psychotic, the theme of legitimate sainthood must represent a soul's turning out of itself, surrendering its will to God in complete and all-consuming love. It must not represent a mass of repressions devoid of will, moving through a directionless existence in the attitude of a sleepwalker. Because Flaubert so brilliantly superimposes the external action of the original legend (and thus the appearance of saintliness) on the internal Freudian conflicts of his Julien, the final "transcendence" of the story is as ambiguous as the "promising" departure of the Essenes from Machaerus in Hérodies.

Julien's only movement away from self is into the socially sanctioned bloodshed of war—a heroic, but hardly a saintly, career. This forms an essential part of Flaubert's nihilistic message, however; for man, whose bestial instincts are inborn and treacherously close to the surface of his personality, seems able to survive their downward pull only by sublimating these instincts into "civilized" and structured barbarism.

Julien's compulsive repetitions are a further sign of man's decadence: he cannot even will a new evil, but must simply imitate his own old perversity. The "holy" acts of Julien's later life are performed as unthinkingly and as ritualistically as his early sadistic ones, indicating a distinct lack of that confirmation of spirit which is the
hallmark of the saint. Julien's fortitude is as much masochistic pleasure as his charity is homosexual perversion. Like so many Flaubertian forms, he only appears to transcend his old condition; in reality, he accepts and glorifies it, his will forever turned inward in a self-seeking embrace. Flaubert's sardonic postscript to the story reveals the enormity of the distance separating the saint of the legend from his latter day counterpart:

   Et voilà l'histoire de saint Julien l'Hospitalier, telle à peu près qu'on la trouve, sur un vitrail d'église, dans mon pays.

   (p. 249)

The "à peu près" covers an infinite distance—and states a laconic chronological irony perfectly matched with that of L'Éducation sentimentale.
Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), discusses this essentially Hegelian conflict in great depth.

For a thorough discussion of this thesis, see Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, trans. Montgomery Belgium (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957).

As described by Doubrovsky, this renunciation belongs to the dialectic of Master and Slave wherein the love-object (the object which, ironically, inspires the desire to perfection of the Self) sought by a potential Master must be given up in order to arrive at the perfection of Mastery.

de Rougemont, pp. 41-42.

Gustave Flaubert, L'Education sentimentale (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1971), p. 398. All further citations are from this edition, and pagination will be given in the text.


Those images which succeed in holding his attention are both vaguely medieval and explicitly Freudian: a hillside covered with vineyards, a pointed-roofed, turreted chateau, a garden cut by avenues stretching like tunnels through tall trees, a young man and woman strolling. "Puis tout disparut," (p. 52). A similar terrain in La Legende de Saint Julien is noted by Cortland to be a Freudian landscape, and this passage in L'Education sentimentale he considers a goldmine of Freudian imagery. Peter Cortland, A Reader's Guide to Flaubert (New York: Helios Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1968), p. 147 and p. 92.
Although the sexual-fertility implications of the Corn-god belong more to an anthropological interpretation, the imagery is compatible with a Freudian position as well. Røheim has of course, interpreted his anthropological studies in the light of Freudian concepts and Joseph Campbell (The Masks of God: Occidental Myth) likewise combines Freudian and anthropological interpretations.

Street names in this work are as significant as the names of the characters in Madame Bovary, although there has been no study of this aspect of L'Education sentimentale as there has been for Madame Bovary by Lloyd Parks, "Flaubert's Name Game in Mme Bovary," South Central Bulletin, 31, No. 4 (1971), 207-210.

"Peu d'enfants furent plus battus que son fils... Enfin, le Capitaine le placà dans son étude, et tout le long du jour, il le tenait courbé sur son pupitre à copier des actes, ce qui lui rendit l'épaule droite visiblement plus forte que l'autre" (p. 56).

For the sexual implications of the box and the pipe, see citation below: Chapter IV, p. 314 and Røheim, pp. 131-133.

Although black is not the color generally associated with the Lady or with the Mother, Marie's habitual earth-toned colors combine with the black and her frequent position at hearth-side to project her role as the warm, protective Mother though she is also remote, locked in the past: a personified desire originating in the darkness of the unconscious.

"Frédéric, en apercevant Deslauriers, se mit à trembler comme une femme adultère sous le regard de son époux" (p. 81).

The girl carries a box of her sewing: she sews on military braid.

The mob behaves as slaves in the Hegelian sense --seeking animal "life" and pleasures and spiritual submission--as well as in the Freudian connotation of slaves to sexual instinct.

17. Gustave Flaubert, *Trois Contes*, p. 229. All citations will be from this edition, and pagination will be given in the text.

18. Some of the more interesting analogies are as follows: Julien kills the bear, whose head is feeble and whose greatest strength is in his arms and loins (p. 45); he kills the bull, prized for his ability to till the soil (p. 76); he destroys wolves, known for their rapacity and who carry a patch of aphrodisiac hair on their backside (pp. 56-58); he kills the fox, a fraudulent and ingenious hypocrite (p. 53); he destroys the peacock whose flesh is immune to putrefaction (p. 149); and he destroys the beaver, whose testicles are so sought after as a medicinal that he castrates himself in order to thwart the hunters. In the first three examples we see a repeated and consistent effort to destroy all signs of virility, then an attempt to destroy the self: killing the counterfeit-saint; killing the possibility of eternal life; and finally the explicit destruction of sexuality and healing (spiritual as well as physical). T. H. White, *The Bestiary, A Book of Beasts*, trans. and ed. by T. H. White (New York: Capricorn Books: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960).


   The stag has that nature. ... that he goes seeking a whole where there is a serpent lying. ... The stag is angry and kills it with its feet. ... By this stag we rightly understand Jesus Christ."

20. "'Non! non! non! je ne peux pas le tuer!' Puis il songeait: 'Si je voulais, pourtant?. ..' et il avait peur que le Diable ne lui en inspirât l'envie" (p. 236).


22. Here also we see psychological justification for
his later affinity for slaves and rebels.

23 Brombert, p. 229.

24 T. H. White's Bestiary contains some fascinating observations on the partridge: "It is a cunning, disgusting bird. The male sometimes mounts the male, and thus the chief sensual appetite forgets the laws of sex. . . . When partridges notice that they have been spied out, they turn over on their backs, lift clods of earth with their feet, and spread these so skillfully to cover themselves that they lie hidden from detection" (pp. 136-137). Venal, homosexual, counterfeit. Julien's coat-of-arms.


CHAPTER III

MADAME BOVARY

Although Madame Bovary was published before any of his other novels, this work marks a mid-point in the structure of the ensemble. Flaubert's examination of human nature traces a systematic annihilation of instinct, will, imagination, and intellect as faculties for human survival in an ironically unsuitable world of man's own design. Betrayed by his passions in Salammbô and Hérodiade, defeated by a weak and perverted will in L'Éducation sentimentale and La Légende de Saint-Julien, man now, in Madame Bovary and Un Coeur simple, seeks asylum in the illusory world of the imagination. Although, paradoxically, the setting of the search is described in a more severely realistic manner than that of the preceding works, this refuge is as unstable as any other, and he discovers "as though awakening from a dream" that he is an integral part of a cosmos which denies his fancied ideal.

When the works are considered as forming a solid and structurally progressive unit, this indictment of the imagination which is at the center of Madame Bovary is indeed appropriately placed after and not before Salammbô and L'Éducation sentimentale wherein the focal points are the instinct and the will. This Flaubertian system seems to
equate effective action with a dynamic interior life as well as with worldly vitality; if, then, man's will were intact when he begins his life of fancy and pretence, his inevitable (fatal) disillusionment could be countered with the antidote of pure determination. This sort of courageous opportunism, however, disappeared with the Superman—a literary personality virtually extinct by the time Flaubert began his descriptions of human failure.

The Freudian interpretation of the novel, developed through the castration motif, further supports this placement of the work. From this point of view, we have seen the Flaubertian man descend from a primal father-son contest in Salammbô—Hérodiase through the complexities of the Oedipal variations developed in L'Education sentimentale—Saint Julien. Now in Madame Bovary, Flaubert achieves a male-female universality as he balances Emma's male-envy and frigidity against Frédéric's female tendencies and social impotence.

Likewise, metaphorically, Flaubert has used the setting of his surface structures to reflect the metaphysical and psychological motifs of the novels. The human contest is staged first in a more or less equal combat between city and countryside which—although the city carries away the final victory—defines the original strength and vitality proper to the untamed spirit. At the second level, the city—symbol of man's cultivated perversions—becomes the
conquering force which overcomes the original purity of the land and indicates the separation which exists, now, between man's past and his present, between the will and the act. At the third level, the land itself shows signs of corruption: it is the province—not the city—which is at once victim and villain, prey to an encroaching evil greater than itself and oppressor of those who fall within its jurisdiction. The cycle closes when Flaubert returns, in his circular fashion, to the city-countryside synthesis of defeat in Bouvard et Pécuchet and the sophisticated fantasies of Saint Antoine in his desert.

These plot settings have emanated from the individual deep structures which themselves reveal a parallel chronologically sequential pattern. Originating in Antiquity, developing in the Middle Ages, stagnating in the contemporary quagmire of nineteenth century France, the final set will terminate in Flaubert's grim prognosis for the future. Although there is nothing in Madame Bovary—as there is in Salammbo or L'Education sentimentale—to suggest a structural genesis from any point outside the time period of the surface structure, this is not to say that Madame Bovary lacks that inner core present in the other works. Yet the absence of such a design is so pronounced by comparison with the relatively accessible deep structures of the other novels that we may not implausibly consider the lack of chronological "depth" as the essence of Madame Bovary's surface structure.
In this particular work, at least, "the medium is the message."

This message and deep-structural meaning represent an ironic vision of the consequences which follow man's misguided efforts to possess another even as he separates himself from that other by substituting what is unreal or imagined for what is actual. The idea of possession and separation is implicit not only in the general castration motif but in the two preceding deep structures as well. However, in Madame Bovary the implicit becomes explicit as Flaubert studies the multileveled range of effects produced on a historical, social, and human level at this particular chronological moment. Thus we see dramatized in the novel a threefold crisis. On the historical level appear vast and ruinous problems caused by that mechanical and relentless imposition of theory upon matter which characterized the late Industrial Revolution. In the social context we find the destruction of legitimacy—not only regarding rights to the land and access to its fertility but in the socially-necessary professions (religion, law, medicine, finance), as well—as quackery, bombast, and ignorance receive the respect of an undiscriminating people. Finally, the human level functions as a microcosmic view of the whole. Emma's vague and frantic quest for fulfillment of an imaginary self leads her farther and farther away from any possibility of true fulfillment in a real world.
In each case the old conflict between the word and the flesh receives a more literal treatment than Flaubert has used with either Salammbô or L'Education sentimentale. We are bombarded with pseudo-scientific jargon which obscures understanding and leads invariably away from the reality it claims to express. We witness the smug, self-righteous pronouncements of the "progressive" bourgeois who profess to the farmer and the laborer the value of and reason for their labors. Finally, we follow with increasing horror the tragic foolishness of Emma's attempt to live literature instead of life. Her pitiful and artificial efforts to penetrate the meaning of words and force them to take on a fleshly existence in which she can participate is an intensification of the historical-social sacrifice of the naturalness of things in favor of abstraction and coercion. The metallic images which flash ominously throughout L'Education sentimentale become the very fabric of Madame Bovary. Here they are translated into the sort of "mechanical" soul which is found in men spiritually disabled by their world's deliberate dichotomy between true understanding and parrot-like repetition of "theories"; between practical union with nature and the abstract analysis of its chemistry; between intense participation in experience and the mindless imitation of fictional behavior.

The irony of the vision lies in the voracious appetites of these devouring mechanical brides. The Industrial
and Scientific Revolutions, false prophets, proposed to end drudgery and to liberate man from his dependence upon nature's whims, to give him mastery over time. The mutilation of the land, the enslavement of multitudes, and the brutal separation of ancient from "modern" made the promise a bitter parody. The encroachment of the Revolution's scientific method onto the slow and comfortable rhythms of the land and country living distorted the former and destroyed the latter. Emma's private tragedy is a reflection of the social-historical context of her life. Even as the machines attempt to coerce nature to their design, even as Homais' pseudo-scientific theories attempt to exhaust the elements of nature and succeed in overlooking the whole, even as Abbé Bournesiën quotes doctrine and textbook examples and ignores the soul in his care, even as the quack supersedes the physician, Emma's romantic dream world devours the very personalities it was created to illuminate.

Thus, in this third stage of Flaubert's chronological and psychological structure, the terms of the deep structure and the surface structure converge into one at this turning point in man's history. The late Industrial Revolution, perhaps better than any other period in history, epitomizes the paradoxical separation which occurs when theory consumes reality, destroying, in its insistence on mechanical obedience to immutable law, those very elements which support it and which it pretends to fulfill.
But fissure succeeds fusion, and that representative theme—the theme of disintegration—reaches a peak of universality in Madame Bovary as the historical, social, and human levels reveal and irreversible lack of cohesion,

...the world which is falling apart is the traditional world, the world of the liberal professions: the world which is taking its place...in the persons of Homais and Lheureux is the world of "Spivs"... It was the ascent of men like those which brought France to the brink of destruction... We cannot forget that it was the triumph of the free-thinking lower-middle class, which emerged from the Revolution, that later produced the split between Right and Left in France—a split which completed in the moral sphere the damage done by speculation in the material sphere.²

This split in the outer world is repeated in the character of Emma herself. She undergoes a type of "Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde emotional struggle,"³ which prevents her from ever completing those periodic overtures she makes toward a reconciliation with her environment and her fate. This psychic split or dissociation has its counterpart in the primitive animistic belief in the "bush soul"—that identification with another kindred spirit (not necessarily human) whose loss or separation causes severe psychological and emotional conflicts in the subject.⁴ Emma's inability to live an "authentic" existence and her hopeless quest for a soul-mate who will resolve the ambiguities in her personality and unite the conflicting forces which cause her always to act against her best interests indicate that she
suffers profoundly from this destructive disease which is the symbol and malaise of the time.

For if any malady could describe the mechanization of the Industrial Revolution, it is loss of soul—a loss which was made manifest both in the dehumanization of man and in the over-extension of his expectations. This new and powerful force sent forth across the land a breed of artificial and presumptuous tyrants who promised to ameliorate man's earthly existence even as they systematically destroyed his spirit. The inability of this new class of producer-consumers to sustain their first enthusiastic momentum or to fulfill their promises indicated a void where the source of power and virility should be. The physician who injures, the apothecary who dispenses poison, the priest who abandons the soul to despair all contribute to Emma Bovary's misdirection and misunderstanding of self. Like so many false signposts, they suggest certain possibilities hidden beyond an ever-receding horizon. Thus, the novel's deep structure reveals the essential separation between flesh and spirit, between the concrete and the abstract, more and more clearly as the Industrial Revolution proclaims their unparalleled union; while in the surface structure this fissure is translated in Emma herself and in her futile designs upon the world.

The characteristics of separation and false virility inherent in the new society are represented metaphorically
in a continuation of the castration motif wherein we observe man's inability to consummate, to complete, or to fulfill the act of existence. For Emma, there is no solution or amelioration or escape possible. The indefinite continuation of her psychic dissociation is impossible, yet the uniformation of her personality through a brutal vision of reality is unbearable.

Illustrated through a woman's character, the motif appears both in Emma's resentful and envious attempted emasculation of husband and lover and in her own castration-dread equivalent: frigidity and personality inhibition. Emma's tragedy lies, however, not so much in the tension (opposition/separation) between the active (frenzied) and the passive sides of her nature as in the necessity of this "dialectic" as an essential part of her character. Thus, the sudden cessation of conflict--in that single deathbed flash of comprehension which finally united her to her wretched world--literally destroys her.

The awesome revelation of the ultimate truth of Emma's life is balanced by the deceptive transcendence of Félicité's last ecstasy.

In this life each ecstasy is followed by a little death. The ultimate death is harmoniously consonant with those that have preceded and prefigured it.

Each woman receives a final, ironic benediction which at once symbolizes and fulfills the wreckage of her life. For
Emma, destroyed in the prison of the flesh, truth is as real and hideous as the monstrosity which sings beneath her window. For Félicité, enclosed in her sterile, silent world of absolute non-communication, the ascending parrot is a mockery of communication, of the word, of truth. The nihilism of Flaubert's bitter message extends from Madame Bovary through Un Coeur simple to the very doors of the tabernacle—as empty as the soulless characters that wander across the pages of his works.

MADAME BOVARY: THE EMPTY HOUSE

Since the central problem of Emma's life is her failure to act as a well-integrated personality, it is fitting that the story begin with that other to whom she is bound but not united and whose name absorbs her. The dichotomy in Emma's self is represented, as Dr. Topazio points out, by the passive, conventional Dr. Jekyll side which belongs to Madame Bovary and the violent, restless Mr. Hyde nature of Emma which continuously struggles for dominance. She is introduced to the reader through Charles' vision and she continues to haunt the novel through her influence on him after her death. As her name—reversed—indicates (Emma-Am(m)e, she appears as the dissociated, lost soul searching for identity with the other she believes she is meant to be. That other is assuredly not Charles Bovary any more than it is Rodolphe or Léon, but she is linked to
these men as though she is their mirror image. With Charles, because of the sacramental (pseudo-sacramental) nature of their relationship, the link is more strongly forged: she inhabits his being as one resides within a dwelling. Each man, however, projects onto her psychic formlessness the soul, the essence, the dream he wishes to possess. She represents both the objectification of their desires and the personification of the anima—those feminine characteristics which are present in every male personality. The positive or negative manifestation of the anima is determined by the relationship with the Mother, and Charles at least is almost totally dominated by his mother's will. If we focus on Emma (dominated by the father in the mother's absence), however, we see that the reverse is true: she exhibits the male tendencies which belong to the animus. Consequently, her husband and lovers are frustrated in their demand that she represent certain feminine characteristics in their own nature which demand fulfillment, since Emma herself is desperately seeking emotional freedom through the satisfaction of her male—and not her female—yearnings. The impasse is as total as it is absolute, and seems to be the cause of the Dr. Jekyll—Mr. Hyde conflicts.

Flaubert again condenses the ultimate direction of the novel into a few symbolic images introduced in the first pages. This time, the ironic vision lingers on Charles' absurd hat as the metaphor of his failure. As in the other
works, the son inherits the seeds of his defeat, and
Charles' hat symbolically summarizes the inadequacy of his
father,

...it seems to retrogress in the eye
of the beholder from a soldier's head-
dress to a bourgeois top hat to a farmer's
cap to a nightcap summing up Bovary's
family history, especially that of his
father. ..."'

who passes from surgeon to businessman to farmer to invalid.

Amid the confusion of his entrance into the academic world,
Charles loses his cap: it falls as he rises; he picks it
up and a student knocks it off again. According to Freud,
decapitation is a symbol of castration, and, by extension,
the loss or destruction of headgear likewise can be taken to
symbolize the loss of virility. 8 Charles, of course, is
intellectually and imaginatively (if not physically) the
figure of impotence. Emma's erogenous zone, as it were, is
her mind--her imagination--and it is here that the men in her
life must temporarily sustain--or fail--her. Thus, Charles,
son of a worn-out, indifferent, and dissipated father,
announces his inheritance in his first encounter with the
world of the intellect (such as it is). He is humiliated
as the outsider by his fellow students; he is scorned as a
fool by his wife, and finally defeated in his profession by
his evil genius, Homais. 9

As Flaubert develops his description of Charles'
character, we continue to see evidence of the imbalance in
his male-female tendencies. Mme Bovary senior, faced with
her husband's abdication of leadership, takes over the
direction of her son's life. Charles follows his mother's
every wish although her ambitions are absurdly out of pro-
portion to his capabilities. His will is malleable and he
conforms easily, naturally--like a docile daughter--to any
order of existence into which his mother pushes him. The
fact that he does not fail at the provincial school indi-
cates more the mediocrity of the system than any hidden
potential in Charles. At Rouen, however, he is beyond his
depth entirely,

Le programme des cours, qu'il lut sur
l'affiche, lui fit un effet
d'étourdissement. . . . Il n'y
comprit rien; il avait beau écouter,
il ne saisissait pas.10

The intellectual strain is too much even for Charles'
adaptability, and he seeks the same escape route which will
later be taken by his wife. The window becomes for him, as
for Emma, the sign of freedom and the vision of far-off
happiness.11 However, whereas Emma's dreams are of some
vague future, Charles sees only the images of his past--when
he enjoyed the natural, unimaginative liberty of a young
farm animal. His essential indifference to any particular
future leads him to abandon his resolutions of academic
success and drift into idleness, into the mediocre vice of
dominoes and taverns where he discovers tawdry reflections
of love, music, poetry. It is interesting to observe here
the outward similarity between Charles' idleness and Emma's
passivity, between his "wickedness" and her obsessive extravagance, between his vulgar discovery of art and love and her presumptuous romanticism. Yet how different is their inner response to these stimulants.

Charles lacks Emma's tenacity and allows his mother to interrupt the dangerous drift of his life. He passes his exam, accepts the wife and practice chosen for him and continues to display the feminine side of his nature.

His new wife easily masters him; the suggestion of role-change and emasculation becomes more explicit as we are told that she wears her clothes like a scabbard and that she, with his mother, "scarified him like two knives." Moreover, Charles' first encounter with Emma occurs after a series of images indicating Charles' femininity and male hesitancy before the female. The summons from the injured M. Rouault arrives at night—even so, Charles waits until moonrise (symbol of his affinity for the female principle) to venture out. His horse stops before the entrance openings to the furrows in the farmland; he sees himself—in one of his rare memory-images—simultaneously as a student in the operating theater and as a husband lying in bed with his wife. Although these forms have the appearance of virility, they may be interpreted as the identification of castrator and castratee in one individual—just as the medicine-man is considered to represent both ideas in his being. The horse image—symbol of sexual energy and passion—likewise continues in a
negative pattern: Charles' mount slips on wet grass and stumbles in fear as it enters the Rouault courtyard.

Charles first glimpses Emma standing in a doorway; he last sees her framed in her window. She appears always captive, yet always longing for the way out. She is no happier in her father's house than she will be in Charles', or Rodolphe's, or Léon's hotel room, since she is not the domesticated creature they imagine her to be but a wild thing who competes with their authority to gain an imaginary freedom.

Emma's masculine and competitive characteristics appear almost immediately. She tries to sew bandage pads but cannot find her work basket; when she does, she pricks her fingers and sucks on them to heal them. Not only does her inefficiency parallel Charles' incompetence, but she exhibits the primitive male characteristics of his profession (medicine-man) as well. The periodic sucking of her pricked fingers, the association of self with various bird images, her causative role in the amputation of Hippolyte's leg, her hysteria and sexual obsessions are the trademarks of the ancient shaman or medicine-man. Further, her hands are "too long and hard," and "like a man" she keeps her eyeglasses in her bodice. Her vision falls upon the bean props knocked down by the wind, just as Charles searches for his whip fallen between the flour sacks and the wall. Each sees—albeit for different reasons—the collapse
of the male symbol. Emma's envy of the male authority and prerogative produces a destructive attitude matched in its consequences by Charles' already destroyed masculinity.

Much attention has been given to the mis-matching of Charles and Emma, yet, if she is seen as a manifestation of a certain aspect of his character, they are necessarily similar in many ways, although Charles, of course, is always the paler, weaker version of the two. Like Emma in pursuit of Rodolphe or Léon, he follows his own vague, natural inclinations and journeys back and forth between home and the place which contains his love-object. When his wife dies, his sentimental and deliberately stimulated grief parallels Emma's romantic ritual after her mother's death. His tepid, languorous courtship is matched by Emma's self-centered expressions of boredom. Charles can imagine nothing of Emma's existence outside of that which directly concerns him, just as she—with all her fantasies—never escapes the reality of Charles' dull presence. Moreover, as she destroys them all through her economic irresponsibility, Charles, "thinking that he should lose nothing," wins her because of M. Rouault's financial improvidence. Emma's fate is sealed in the true spirit of the times: that is, the defeat of the spirit by absolute materialism. Finally, Charles' hesitation in asking for her hand is matched by Emma's reluctance to bestow it. We are told that almost an hour elapses before the shutter-signal is thrown
back forcefully. What transpired during this time? Why
the evidence of strong emotion from Rouault? Emma's in-
herent resistance to the idea of marriage, and her helplessness to prevent it, add a certain sympathetic dimension to
her foolishness. Symbolically, this scene continues the
image of the house with the open shutter: the passage outward has been opened up and the soul within set free—or
cast out.

As Emma and Charles are joined together, their oppos-
ing characteristics (he feminine, she masculine) become more
evident. The essential disunion is emphasized by every de-
tail of the wedding: it takes place in broad daylight;
Emma dreamed of a midnight ceremony. The guests in their
dress and their behavior are like the wedding cake itself,
held together temporarily only by a common over-riding
vulgarity. The grasses and cockleburs—like the peasant,
earthly characteristics which are best suited to adapt her
to married life—adhere to Emma's too-long dress, and
Charles, helpless and empty-handed, stands by uselessly as
she picks them off one by one. This seemingly minor detail
of description carries a great burden of meaning, for it
illustrates Emma's over-estimation of herself, her annoyance
with the countrified life she must lead and her persistent
efforts to remove from her life all those degrading particles
which stick and irritate like cockleburs, while Charles,
the superfluous, remains always present and always excluded
from her purpose.

The consummation of the marriage completes the picture of reversal and opposition: Charles becomes the "blushing bride," the ecstatic lover, while Emma withdraws into a significant and aloof silence. The chapter ends as M. Rouault, feeling as dreary as an empty house, watches the new couple disappear down the road, and Emma is greeted by Charles' servant with the invitation to "look over her house." Thus the transfer from one abode to another is completed; the "soul" is taken from its quiet, dreamy slumber of childhood and adolescence into the bright daytime of adulthood and enforced activity--into a condition which it cannot endure and from which it will strive endlessly to escape.

The distance which separates Emma from Charles increases as they begin their life together. He seems himself reflected in miniature in her great eyes (his smallness indicating his inadequacy and the vastness of the gap between them); she stands above him in her window and tosses down bird-like petals from a torn flower while he saddles his horse. Emma is repeatedly associated with bird images which contrast with the plodding work-horses characterizing Charles. She, tensed, ready for flight; he, earthbound--like a horse in blinders and harness-oblivious to everything not directly in his undeviating path.
Emma's selfishness is obvious, yet Charles, in his own way, is certainly her equal. He sees in her his own reflection; she is that fragile part of his nature awakened during his student days in Rouen, then placed in captivity to be admired and enjoyed without risk, at the convenience of his dominant, mechanical, animal-like self. Charles devours Emma in the same way that she consumes her novels--each imagining a reality in the fiction of dreams.

The description of Emma's adolescence gives the probable origin of and justification for her emotional maladjustment. Like the child Julien, she is exposed to a great deal of artificial stimulation which excites her imagination while the circumstances of her worldly existence exclude all outlets for expression. Although she finds some emotional release in the role of grief-stricken daughter after her mother's death and, to a certain extent, in the ritual of the Church, each escape is necessarily limited because of Emma's nature. The former depends on the precision and strength of memory, and Emma "remembers" only in occasional involuntary flashes; whereas the pageantry of the latter quickly becomes monotonous and uncomfortable when extracted from the truth which sustains it. Emma has neither the intellectual capacity nor the spiritual thirst necessary to the possession of such truths. Consequently, she--like so many of Flaubert's doomed characters--is cursed at the beginning of adulthood with a great desire not only
for the unnamed but for the unnamable as well. Thus her innate selfishness, her intoxication with the false promises of second-rate art, her father's harsh betrayal of her interests, and the implied unpleasantness of her wedding night combine to freeze her emotional development and leave her filled with longing but unable to sustain any true love-relationship—legitimate or adulterous. She is also quite aware and resentful of her helpless female position and frequently reveals her envy of the male ability to change his destiny to suit the designs of his imagination (whereas she is linked to the fate of another). "Pourquoi, mon Dieu! me suis-je mariée?" (p. 86) is her weary and oft-repeated complaint.

The other, however, who represents her destiny, is a ludicrous imposter. He falls far short of the divinity of knowledge, mastery, and freedom which she imagines the male to represent.

Un homme, au contraire, ne devait-il pas tout connaître, exceller en des activités multiples, vous initier aux énergies de la passion, aux raffinements de la vie, à tous les mystères? Mais il n'enseignait rien, celui-là, ne savait rien, ne souhaitait rien.  
(p. 84)

Nevertheless, in the beginning Emma's discontent is vague and formless and does not affect her behavior. She keeps the house in good order; she accepts her captivity in Charles' domain and even makes a great effort to imagine
Charles as the man of her fantasies. This brief period of union is a source of dismay to Mme Bovary senior, for she has been definitively replaced by the new mistress of her son's being:

. . . et elle observait le bonheur de son fils avec un silence, triste comme quelqu'un de ruiné qui regarde, à travers les carreaux, des gens attablés dans son ancienne maison.

(p. 85)

Emma's vague malaise takes on form and direction, however, in the second public scene of the novel: the ball. Again the paradox of union which separates is played out to Emma's eternal misfortune, and again Charles is present and superfluous.

The ball is an elegantly erotic experience for Emma. The heat, the suggestive movements of the dance, the tour of the hothouse with its serpent-like plants, and the stables all create a physical counterpart for her idealized fantasies of love and re-awaken in her that faint indication of sensuality which appeared briefly during her courtship—only to be suppressed the night of her marriage.

The ball thus becomes the supreme archetypal moment of Emma's life, a sacred moment which lifts her above the monotony of her calendar existence. She is provided with a specific, concrete event which she can strive to recreate and which will give value to her life. Unfortunately, she cannot retain the memory of it any longer than she could
sustain the grief of her mother's death, and it ceases to exist for her except in the form of a vague regret which distorts her emotions and turns her experience inward, away from action.

Again she turns to artificial stimulants for her dreams: the anonymous cigar box must substitute for the dashing viscount, the ragged stable-boy for the liveried groom, dreary Tostes for the unimaginable excitement of Paris. As her misery increases, Charles, equally égaré in his mire of reality, becomes more content. Absorbed in the physically exhausting routine of his practice, he finds in Emma satisfaction for every demand of his spirit. She, on the contrary, is unable either to expend the physical energy necessary to exhaust her fantasies, or to accept Charles as their object. Her consequent frustration is expressed in the classic manner which, according to Dr. Horney's observations, frequently indicates the inhibited, sexually unfulfilled woman: she neglects her house. The simplest chore is an impossibility for her; she fluctuates between moods of lethargy and almost hysterical excitement, she takes a perverse delight in being deliberately difficult, rude, and spiteful. The appearance of the dirty organ grinder and his mechanical dancers is a fitting climax to this wretched interval and a cruel reminder of the ball—and the fact that she was not invited again.
When the emotional illness affects her body, Charles considers a change of scene, and the move from Tostes to Yonville is planned, making the first circle of Emma's life complete. She pricks her finger, not on her sewing this time but on her wedding bouquet. The fire, which contrasts sharply with the enormous coldness in her heart, changes the dried flowers to fluttering black butterflies of ash. Their bleak promise is repeated in the joyless, terse announcement of Emma's pregnancy.

Thus at the conclusion of the first part of the novel, several interpretative levels have been established and explored. On the psychological level, the work may be seen from two angles. The overall view seeks to explain the first and last emphasis on Charles with Emma as the central focal point. It would appear that she is the personification of those feminine tendencies in Charles (and later in Rodolphe and Léon) which Jung defines as the anima. This approach accounts for the many interesting similarities in their personalities—personalities which have generally been considered as fatally mismatched.

If Emma's character is considered as an entity (the artistically detached and existent anima), we discover the source of opposition which exists between Charles, Rodolphe, Léon, and Emma. She exhibits the classic symptoms of the frigid female whose envy of the male role is expressed in her inability to fulfill adequately her femininity as well as
a masculine tendency to dominate and destroy the male she imagines as a love-object. Thus, while her lovers see in her only those ultra-feminine aspects of their own natures that they—in their consummate selfishness—wish to see, we, through Flaubert's careful revelation of Emma's mind, see her masculine qualities. The apparent opposition becomes an intriguing unity.

On the metaphysical level, we may interpret the novel as the search of a lost and injured soul for its resting place. This desire for final union with another is a constant which runs through all of Flaubert's works, meeting the same refusal in each. In Madame Bovary, the quest becomes central and finds expression in the repeated metaphor of the empty or misappropriated house.

Finally, the metaphorical level allows us to see the interplay of the deep and surface structures wherein the castration motif is explicitly contained in the idea of separation. The paradoxical destructiveness of the industrialization or mechanization of the nineteenth century appears as the universal statement which generates the problems of the plot action. As the economic and scientific theories virtually devour the mind and soul of bourgeois society and absorb the lower classes into a new, sterilized slavery, we see an enactment of social castration: the union which consumes the vital essence, the soul, and leaves in its place a soulless mechanism devoid of natural or
spiritual vitality. In a parallel manner, on the surface of the work, Emma is cast as the romantic imagination through which, on the one hand, she attempts to absorb the material world, while, on the other hand, she is drained of her spirit and transformed into a machine-like consumer of all the resources available to her.

As Part I opens in the schoolroom, the appropriate setting for Charles' greatest flaw--his stunted and banal mind--Part II first introduces the landscape whose monotonous dreariness tempts Emma with her greatest weakness: the suggestion of happiness beyond the horizon. Her first conversation with Léon evokes the possibility of change and movement through story-book vistas and the local "walks." Emma likes "change of place"; she imagines that here in Yonville, the fourth new place in which she has slept, a fresh life will begin for her. Tragically, she believes in radical change, in essential change, whereas--as Flaubert repeats frequently--all change belongs only to the accidents of appearance.

The real and imminent change of her life, her pregnancy, exacts a significant response from both parents. Charles sees in the creation of new life the extension of himself, and he plays delightedly with Emma as one would with a fascinating new machine or toy. His dreams seem to be complete, and he behaves toward the vehicle of their
fulfillment exactly as Emma, later, "plays" rapturously with Rodolphe. As for Emma herself, motherhood is interesting only so long as it serves as the occasion for extravagant stockpiling of goods. Emma's motherliness is as deep as her purse. When the funds dry up, she rejects her child. At this point of feminine role-devaluation, however, her male-envy becomes evident. If there must be a child, she hopes for a boy.

... cette idée d'avoir pour enfant un mâle était comme la revanche en espoir de toutes ses impuissances passées. Un homme, au moins, est libre; il peut parcourir les passions et les pays, traverser les obstacles, mordre aux bonheurs les plus lointains. Mais une femme est empêchée continuellement. Inerte et flexible à la fois, elle a contre elle les mollesses de la chair avec les dépendances de la loi. Sa volonté, comme le voile de son chapeau retenu par un cordon, palpite à tous les vents, il y a toujours quelque désir qui entraîne, quelque convenance qui retient.

(p. 125)

When she is told that her child is a girl, she turns away her head and faints. The rejection of the quintessential female role could not be stated more clearly. The circular dreariness of Flaubert's vision of the oneness of life and death expressed by Emma's reaction is repeated in the womb/tomb-like enclosure of the landscape, in the location of the infant's nurse:

Pour arriver chez la nourrice, il fallait, après la rue, tourner à gauche, comme pour gagner le cimetière... . . .

(p. 127)
Emma's rejection of her daughter is balanced by the presence of Léon. She takes him on walks, buys him presents, shares her book with him, and establishes a relationship wherein he plays a more passive "feminine" role than she. He is timid, hesitant, languorous; he becomes dissatisfied with Yonville and its citizens: his irritation even extends to Emma when she slips from perfect correspondence to his imagined ideal. He is annoyed by her sewing, thinking it roughens her fingers—a parallel to Emma's disgust upon discovering that Charles carries a knife "just like a peasant." When, however, Léon's dissatisfaction becomes intolerable, he—being a male—is able to depart Yonville while Emma, suffering identical agonies, is captive.

Thus, we see the attraction between Léon and Emma as a manifestation of the young man's passivity and femininity. Emma's desires and frustrations are his desires and frustrations; yet Léon escapes Emma's fate because he possesses the vital means to physical, if not spiritual, salvation: freedom of movement.12

As Léon imagines her inaccessible to him, ethereal, "à la manière magnifique d'une apothéose qui s'envole" (p. 144), she becomes in effect the unapproachable, rigidly conformist and flawless wife: she is as she is imagined. But only on the surface. Within, she suffers all the torments of repressed and totally selfish passion. Having observed the possibilities of union with this new Other, she longs to
inhabit his dwelling; her thoughts center upon his house; she bewails her own narrow house.

. . . elle épiait son visage; elle inventa toute une histoire pour trouver prétexte à visiter sa chambre. La femme du pharmacien lui semblait bien heureuse de dormir sous le même toit; et ses pensées continuellement s'abattaient sur cette maison comme les pigeons du Lion d'Or. . . .

Elle s'irritait. . . du bonheur qui lui manquait, de ses rêves trop hauts, de sa maison trop étroite.

(p. 145)

Her bitterness intensifies as she realizes Charles is unaware of, and unimpressed by, her virtuously suppressed passion. Just as he has seen his image in Emma's eyes, she needs the reflected vision of her virtue to sustain her pose. Yet Charles records nothing of her heroism; instead, like a piece of machinery, he encompasses her existence and feeds on the raw material of her presence.

Pour qui donc était-elle sage? N'était-il pas lui, l'obstacle à toute félicité, la cause de toute misère, et comme l'ardillon pointu de cette courroie complexe qui la bouclait de tous côtés.

(p. 146)

Her emotional state corresponds precisely to the violent expressions of guilt and unfulfilled passion which torment the frigid, repressed woman.

Donc, elle réporta sur lui seul la haine nombreuse qui résultait de ses ennuis, et chaque effort pour l'amoindrir ne servait qu'à l'augmenter; car cette peine inutile s'ajoutait
aux autres motifs de désespoir et contribuait encore plus à l'écartement. Sa propre douceur à elle-même lui donnait des rébellions. La médiocrité domestique la poussait à des fantaisies luxueuses, la tendresse matrimoniale en des désirs adultères. Elle aurait voulu que Charles la battit, pour pouvoir plus justement le détester, s'en venger. Elle s'étonnait parfois des conjectures atroces qui lui arrivaient à la pensée; et il fallait continuer à sourire, s'entendre répéter qu'elle était heureuse, faire semblant de l'être, le laisser croire!

(p. 146)

Significantly, she confides to her servant that, unlike the fisherman's daughter whose deathlike depression was cured by marriage, she, Emma, has found marriage to be for her the introduction to suffering and loss.

With the coming of spring, Emma's desire to transcend her terrestrial existence impels her to seek help in the Church, the vague, incense-filled Church of her memories. Having rejected Charles and "nobly" renounced Léon, she is like a homeless creature, the lost soul whose image is that of the helpless bird:

. . . elle se sentit molle et toute abandonnée, comme un duvet d'oiseau qui tournoie dans la tempête.

(p. 147)

The priest, who is not a spiritual leader but merely part of the mechanism of bourgeois society, is powerless either to set Emma free or to show her the way to union with Another. His automatic and off-the-point responses parallel Binet's equally worthless, mechanical solution (get a lathe!)
for Léon's restlessness. Emma's failure to elicit the attention and sympathy she believes she deserves is repeated when she returns to her lonely house where the fire has gone out.

The chill cast over her life by the fruitless visit to the priest is deepened with Léon's departure. The young man, overcome with boredom and repressed passion, feels the same desperate claustrophobia which torments Emma; but he, being male, is free to change, to leave Yonville for the delights of Paris. His leave-taking of Emma is a separation from part of himself:

Léon la sentit [sa main] entre ses doigts, et la substance même de tout son être lui semblait descendre dans cette paume humide.

(p. 156)

The full significance of his absence is illustrated for Emma in the gorgeous sunset which covers the sky above the empty road: a sunset shot through with a curtain of great golden phallic arrows—the male "trophy" forever beyond Emma's control.

This separation from the masculine counterpart she needs in order to be complete reduces Emma to a state of feminine impotence. And again, the image of the empty house is evoked to represent her lost and dissociated soul.

. . . le chagrin s'engouffrait dans son âme avec des hurlements doux, comme fait le vent d'hiver dans les châteaux abandonnés.

(p. 159)
Her inability to love the man who is present or to sustain a passion for one who is absent describes the restless emotional confusion of frigidity:

Cependant les flammes s'apaisèrent, soit que la provision d'elle même s'épuisât, ou que l'entassement fût trop considérable. L'amour, peu à peu, s'éteignit par l'absence, le regret s'étouffa sous l'habitue . . . . Dans l'assouplissement de sa conscience, elle prit même les répugnances du mari pour des aspirations vers l'amant, les brûlures de la haine pour des réchauffements de la tendresse; mais, comme l'ouragan soufflait toujours, et que la passion se consuma jusqu'aux cendres, et qu'aucun secours ne vint, qu'aucun soleil ne parut, il fut de tous côtés nuit complète, et elle demeura perdue dans un froid horrible qui la traversait.

(p. 160)

She begins her compulsive, repetitive actions again in a futile effort to compensate for her loss. As she seems to fade before his eyes, Charles sends for his mother, the formative element in the development of his anima. Her advice is, as could be expected, shrewd and to the point (although many years too late): remove the novels. Emma, despite her languor and vocal despair, immediately resists her mother-in-law's designs on her survival. Madame Bovary's threatening presence, however, is countered by the arrival of Rodolphe, and the former departs as the latter is introduced.

If we consider Emma as the projection of each male
anima, several points become more clear regarding Emma's personality conflicts. With Rodolphe, we see the emergence of a stronger, more inventive Emma, an Emma who matches the new Other in every degree of brutality and narcissistic opportunism. She overcomes her habitual lethargy and "flies" down the stairs to aid Charles; she coolly lies to Homais and Rodolphe, telling them that she "never faints." Fainting and hesitancy suit Léon's image of Emma, but Rodolphe projects a more dynamic and physical desire—a desire whose earthy, sensual orientation is expressed not by music, poetry, and sunsets but by the grossièreté of the comices agricoles.

Rodolphe's plans for Emma, the obstacles he foresees, the manner and setting of her seduction, even the crude analogy he uses to describe her transparent sexual repression ("Ça baille après l'amour, comme une carpe après l'eau sur une table de cuisine" (p. 167), are at the lowest level of romantic passion and mark the beginning of Emma's personality disintegration beyond the point of no return.

The emerging theme of disintegration converges here, in the comices chapter, with Homais' inadvertent expression of the breakdown of the spiritual and material unity of society. In his words, it is not necessary actually to practice agriculture to be an agriculturist; rather, one must be able to analyze, to dissect, to theorize. In short, one does not have to experience but merely contemplate the
matter in order to gain control over it. In a similar way, Emma does not concern herself with the limits of actual circumstances but fantasizes an imaginary life, filled with familiar elements yet rearranged to fit her exotic formula for a complete existence. Homais fittingly introduces these all-important thoughts on the most fundamentally "earthy" and physical of occasions, since it is invariably the obstinate refusal of matter to conform to the spirit's intention which brings Flaubert's heroes to their destruction. In Emma's case, as several critics have noted, it is not so much her psychological confusion as it is her commonplace material (financial) problems brought on by her physical appetites which bring her to ruin.

The similarities between Emma's behavior and that of her current male "dwelling place" have been observed with regard to Charles and Léon. With Rodolphe the same pattern is developed. Rodolphe is introduced in the context of his servant's bleeding; it is during her romance with Rodolphe that Emma urges the disastrous operation upon Hippolyte. During the comices seduction scene, Rodolphe insists upon his terrible reputation; Emma soon begins to lose her good name with the citizens of Yonville. Rodolphe jilts a mistress for Emma; she forgets Léon for him. Rodolphe saves his relics from previous mistresses; Emma conserves his love letters in the cigar box. He subjugates her, she devours him—until, like Léon, he takes the male escape route and
moves, leaves, departs.

Beside Rodolphe she becomes bold and possessive: she pretends to smoke his pipe, admires herself in his shaving glass (the soul reflected), enters his room uninvited. In her treatment of Charles, Berthe, and Hippolyte, she reflects his brutality and selfishness; although she imagines herself madly in love, she is simply once again attempting to define herself through identification with the Other. In fact, both lovers are profoundly bored with one another; and whereas with Léon, Emma's melancholy and frustration are expressed through her minor injury of little Berthe, with Rodolphe—whose nature is far more cruel—she momentarily defuses her ennui and frustration through the mutilation of Hippolyte. In each case an appropriately symbolic separation occurs which emphasizes Emma's role as a castrating figure. With Léon, who at first imagines her as an idealized "pure" spirit, the devaluation and removal of the child is the denial of human generation, of sexual potency, of the continuity of self into the future; with Rodolphe, whose dream is totally sensual, the amputation of Hippolyte's leg (Hippolyte—whose name recalls the legendary son of Theseus and the denigrator of human passion) expresses Emma's violent and fundamental conflict with the male and his liberated virility.

In the ill-fated operation, we see the symbolic effects of Emma's physical destructiveness: the visible sign, as it were, of her inner corruption. The amputation of
the leg represents, in Röheim's Freudian terms, the
castration of the offending victim by the medicine-man.
Emma, acting through Charles, avenges her pent-up frus-
trations and unfulfilled sexuality on this modern parody of
the line of Theseus, the bull-slayer: Hippolytus, the un-
will ing inheritor of the father's passion who stands as
the eternal refusal of feminine desire, the cosmic No carried
down the ages to Emma Bovary.

With Charles' spectacular medical failure, Emma be-
comes completely blatant and aggressive in the service of
her appetites. She recommences her extravagant purchases
(there is always a "replacement" for every loss) and her
frenzied protestations of love for Rodolphe—all excessive
actions which indicate the interior sterility of her desire.
As the psychological distance increases between Emma and
her husband, her femininity is virtually supplanted by mascu-
line characteristics through which she attempts to free her-
self from her emotional prison. She smokes in public, wears
a man's waistcoat, insults her mother-in-law. She suggests
the male solution to her anxieties: movement. She demands
from her lover a change of place as her salvation—and she is
refused.

Rodolphe's cruel letter of rejection is composed
under the stag-head, the ironic (for him) castrated image of
masculinity. Emma reads it in the stifling hot atmosphere
of her attic where the male images of sun and heat beat down
upon her through the window like an eternal mockery of her
impotence (frigidity), her fixed and fated inability to
establish a residence within the desired Other, ever to love
or be loved. The exterior world accessible to Emma is
perfectly still and frozen; the only sign of life, Binet's
humming lathe, is merely the mechanical parody of freedom
and motion. Finally, as if to illustrate Emma's unwilling
participation in her jailer's existence, Charles' insensitive
and self-centered consumption of Rodolphe's apricots (the
female symbol which represents the "fruit" of Rodolphe's
domain, a domain which includes Emma), redefines Emma's de-
feat and justifies her most profound terror. For Charles is
capable, from time to time, of recalling his projected anima
and subduing its dark impulses. He draws Emma back from the
window, away from liberation, and consumes the tiny fruit of
her relationship with Rodolphe. He sends for the dominant
original, Madame Bovary, senior, under whose influence Emma
is compressed back into his drone-like spirit.

Emma's consequent illness provides a period of re-
treat and reorganization. With Léon and Rodophe removed from
her presence and Charles completely displaced in her thoughts,
Emma rests in her own imagination, and, having no model to
adapt herself to, she reverses her former inclinations. She
is dismayed by naive novels and finds her only satisfaction
contemplating the fanciful image of herself as a melancholy
soul. Her feminine impulses are directed to a renewal of
romantic religious "experience" and acts of charity. However, her placid, emotionless condition continues only so long as there is no irritant to arouse the old responses. With the introduction of the curious, romantic adolescent, Justin, her dormant sensuality is awakened through his youthful desires. He is the replacement for the vanished stimulant (Léon and Rodolphe) necessary to the direction of her emotions.

Elle ne se doutait point que l'amour, disparu de sa vie, palpitait là, près d'elle, sous cette chemise de grosse toile, dans ce coeur d'adolescent ouvert aux émanations de sa beauté.

(p. 240)

Justin alone, however, is not enough to clarify and give form to Emma's mobile psyche. She exists in a confused, ambivalent condition, tormented by contradictory and vague intentions.

Du reste, elle enveloppait tout maintenant d'une telle indifférence, elle avait des paroles si affreuses et des regards si hautains, des façons si diverses, que l'on ne distinguait plus l'égoïsme de la charité, ni la corruption de la vertu.

(p. 240)

The decision to attend the opera—made at Homais' suggestion and Charles' insistence—thrusts Emma once again into a situation where her imagination is provided an external substance for its nourishment and direction. Emma is enraptured by the spectacle, but her chief delight lies in the
contemplation of the tenor Lagardy. The associations she makes between her past experience and the romantic drama being reproduced before her lift her into a new emotional ecstasy, and she decides desperately to "wager all for love." In her fantasy, it is Edgar Lagardy with whom she escapes; in actuality, it will be Léon, returned at the psychologically opportune moment. Moreover, her behavior with Léon during their affair—from its theatrical commencement in the Rouen cathedral to the stagey vulgarity of their hotel rendezvous—will be operatically dramatic, even to the detail of counterfeit music lessons. Again, Emma has become what she observes; she absorbs the image—created by one of the various men in her life—upon which she focuses her restless gaze.

Emma's affair with Léon is as artificial as the setting in which they are re-united. He has forgotten her just as she has replaced him, but their imaginations demand satisfaction, and we are told that such creates an ideal to which all the past (and the present as well) must be adapted. The ideal is constantly being formed through the high-flown conversations which are a mark of the Emma-Léon relationships. Unfortunately, "...la parole est un laminoir qui allonge toujours les sentiments..." (p. 258). Words likewise sustain the superficiality of the "lovers'" emotion. The characters in Madame Bovary lack the silences of Flaubert's other creations; they are not as graced with the occasions of intuitive understanding. Although Emma reflects endlessly
upon her emotional condition, her thoughts are the product of imagination rather than true memory (she always changes the past involuntarily to conform to her present needs), and therefore she misses the opportunity to cut through time in order to achieve that flash of vision—-if not comprehension—-granted occasionally in the later works.

The first movement, as it were, of the romance describes Emma once again reflecting the personality of the man who desires her. Léon's timidity produces a "vague fear" in Emma; his "spiritual" conversation is answered by her suggestion of the cathedral rendezvous; and Léon buys violets, feeling "comme si cet hommage qu'il destinait à une autre se fut retourné vers lui" (p. 262).

This last stage in Emma's search for union and respite is pervaded with the odor of death. From Léon's initial fantasy about his burial in Emma's rug to the overwhelming association of the cathedral with the tomb (the workman on the great bell died of joy; the prominence of the numerous important tombs within the chapels; the guide's insistence on the viewing of the Last Judgement) to the lovers' final enclosure within the coffin-like carriage—-from which the white fluttering bits of paper seem to represent Emma's soul's final release—death is everywhere.

The psychological terror of death—-or the loss of one's vital energy (the metaphorical castration)—-as the result of the act of love becomes explicit and intense in
this last part of the novel. This separation of the soul from the body, feared consciously by primitives as well as unconsciously by sophisticates, is expressed by Flaubert in Emma's frantic, bird-like flights back and forth in the Hirondelle between her original "body" (Charles) and the new vessel (Léon) which will serve as the denial of her last hope. It is both fitting and ironic that the physical aspect of her final encounter be emphasized, since it is the overwhelming presence of matter, of the body, which prohibits transcendence, just as it is the dark, instinctive impulses toward physical possession of the Other which lead the soul in to its greatest danger.

The images of death are equally dominant in Yonville, thereby compressing Emma's journeys into a death-rounded ritual without end or fulfillment. She is summoned immediately to the Homais kitchen where she is informed of her father-in-law's demise at the same time that Justin, the unwitting agent of Emma's suicide, is discovered not only to have almost introduced a lethal substance into the Homais jam, but to have exposed the Homais children to thoughts and visions of conjugal love. As arsenic is to jam, so true union is to the sterility of the hypocritically wholesome bourgeois family. Just as Homais himself successfully separates thought and meaning from words, so his structural purpose in the novel is to be the efficient cause of Emma's separation from Charles and then from life itself.
The idea of union must be abhorrent to him. For Emma, the juxtaposition of love and death is particularly significant. When she returns home, Hippolyte (a reminder of Charles' failure and Rodolphe's desertion) is there, dragging his stump in the Flaubertian circle of futility. With this second symbol of separation (and castration-death) appearing in the background, a balance is created for Justin's presence in the foreground of the previous scene, continuing the image of Emma's entrapment, of her enclosure between two fatal oppositions.

Mme Bovary, senior arrives for a period of mourning, and in the other woman's presence, Emma finds that she is unable to recall the moments spent with Léon. The overpowering approach of the mother herself diminishes the independent activity of the anima—although later, as the tension between conscious and unconscious increases, the latter defeats the former in their ultimate confrontation.

The move toward spiritual via material dominance is suggested by Lheureux, and Emma cleverly obtains Charles' power of attorney. The transference of his financial autonomy, of his economic virility (such as it is) to his wife's keeping is equivalent to a surrender of his sexual power, to a virtual castration. As metaphorical castration leads to spiritual death, so Charles' financial emasculation leads directly to bankruptcy. To celebrate her successful destruction of her first "prison," Emma flees to Léon to
enjoy possession of her new dwelling place.

Her three-day "honeymoon" corresponds to the conventional (three day) symbolism of death, descent to the underworld, return. Indeed, the lovers are ferried across a river to spend an idyllic, timeless interval in the tranquil meadows surrounding their restaurant. As though in anticipation of her final escape in real death, she enjoys a temporary freedom in the "other world" of Léon's making. The lovers enclose themselves by day in their darkened chamber, only venturing out for their night passage; Emma dresses in black; her voice is like the flapping of wings; she appears in the moonlight like a vision, an ethereal, fantasy creature. Reality and life are reintroduced only as she departs Rouen: Léon wonders, with typical male scepticism and an instinctive sense of self-preservation, why Emma is so insistent on assuming Charles' power of attorney.

Emma's excesses are all closely related, one stimulating another. Thus, as she becomes more and more active sexually—though less and less satisfied—she likewise becomes obsessively extravagant. The guilt resulting from her enormous debts then pushes her to greater frenzies of passion with Léon.

From the young man's point of view, however, Emma is true wish fulfillment. A "real" dream mistress, she personifies, once again, all his desires and longings.
Par la diversité de son humeur, tour
toujours mystique ou joyeuse, babillarde,
taciturne, emportée, nonchalante,
elle allait rappelant en lui mille
désirs, évoquant des instincts ou des
reminiscences.

(p. 285)

She exists for him as the soul which will transcend his
pedestrian existence:

Souvent, en la regardant, il lui
semblait que son âme, s'échappant vers
telle, se répandait comme une onde sur
le contour de sa tête, et descendait
traînée dans la blancheur de sa
poitrine.

(p. 285)

Although Emma does indeed represent the soul, its
essence is reflected not in the "angel" of Léon's dreams but
in the horribly decayed flesh of the Blindman who appears at
her carriage window. Emma's spiritual corruption is
fittingly manifested in the death's-head features of the
beggar. His audacity increases as her lust becomes more
intense, until he demands and receives her last material
possession.

Paradoxically, as Emma grows more deeply involved with
Léon's body and with Charles' money, her fundamental hatred
and fear of men is expressed with greater clarity. She fore-
sees the moment of Léon's desertion, accusing him of sharing
in the evil common to the male sex. She creates a fantasy
lover from her past to increase his jealousy, and, signifi-
cantly, she imagines a forceful, dynamic man--unlike any in
her experience. She can only exist for those weak males
whose maniless is less developed than their femininity,\textsuperscript{15} yet her ideal, of course, is the reverse.

Charles continues to imagine her as the domestic perfection of his banal desires—and she portrays for him what he wishes to possess.

Elle était pour son mari plus charmante que jamais, lui faisait des crèmes à la pistache et jouait des valses après diner.

(p. 290)

Yet his desire "to understand things" is a threat to the continued freedom of the unconscious anima, and he questions Emma about the legitimacy of her music lessons. The heretofore subdued warfare between the conscious and unconscious becomes open and declared: from this moment, Emma's life is a tissue of obsessive lies. Finally, the confrontation between Mme Bovary, senior and Mme Bovary, junior over Charles' power of attorney pushes Emma into the last stages of self-destruction. For Charles, surprisingly, the choice is at last clear: he will allow Emma the dominant role.

Given this "freedom," she begins to completely monopolize, virtually to devour Léon.

\ldots il devenait sa maîtresse plutôt qu'elle n'était la sienne.

(p. 297)

Their temporary separation and quarrel, caused by Homais' visit to Léon, is rectified by the use of artificial supports
and stimulants (moonlight, love poems) in a last effort to keep their passion alive. Her attempt to possess him totally is thwarted by his innate resistance, bolstered by his mother's support, at the same time that her destruction of Charles reaches a climax.

Rebuffed by all other "outlets," she turns all her strength on her husband: if she is to be free, he must be destroyed. Emma's last journey to Yonville after her desperate request for money is marked by images of death and castration. She recognizes the Viscount driving his black-horse-drawn tilbury before the cathedral: we see the dark passion which leads to death of the soul; M. Homais brings loaves shaped like Saracen heads to satisfy his wife's appetite: we observe the devouring female whose appetites emasculate the male; the Blindman takes Emma's last coins, the symbol of material existence and of virility, and we remember the Flaubertian price demanded for man's desire.

Her frantic attempts to receive support from all the men she can possibly approach are, of course, rebuffed, eliciting from Emma her most violent expression of male envy and hatred:

Quelque chose de belliqueux la transportait. Elle aurait voulu battre les hommes, leur cracher au visage, les broyer tous; elle continuait à marcher rapidement devant elle, pâle, frémissant, enragée, furieuse d'un œil en pleurs l'horizon vide, et comme se délectant à la
The sight of her house, however, defeats her more than her cruel treatment by the men of Yonville. She realizes that she has found no proper resting place during her brief quest and that her own "house" is ruined. After her death the building is gradually, literally, emptied until nothing is left. Charles' unexplained, sudden death is merely the belated correspondence of reality to symbol.

Emma's death marks the triumph of the flesh, of reality over all man's efforts at transcendence. Neither the passions nor the imagination can create the safe harbor the soul needs for fulfillment. As Emma departs from Charles' body, he assumes, in a final spasm, her old hatreds: "I hate your god!"; he only survives physically as long as her presence continues to be felt, as long as she dominates him from the grave. Mme Bovary's visit is cut short, for Charles has already rejected the conscious domination of the mother, having replaced her with the unconscious "child" of her own creation. His lack of jealousy when he discovers the love letters, his expression of delight (in Emma's name) at Léon's marriage, and his astounding, sympathetic acceptance of Rodolphe all seem to indicate the complete transference of his personality from its conscious, masculine direction to that of the unconscious, Emma-controlled darkness. When the image of his chosen mistress finally fades and the withdrawal of his dissociated
spirituality is complete, Charles ceases to exist.

Thus we see the ravages of the mind—of the imagination—upon matter. Emma exhausts and destroys the body which possesses and sustains her in her determination to project her fantasies upon the world. Her desire to crush, to castrate the animal, instinctual side of man’s nature is fatally and ironically thwarted, for it is by this that she herself is consumed. Her dreams and visions of transcendence are lost in the madness of physical desire; and her death does not lift her into heavenly flight but lowers her forever into le petit boudoir of the gravedigger’s domain.

Society suffers the same paradoxical anguish. Homais, the false medicine-man, the quack, the word-machine, symbolizes the disintegration of unity, the ultimate separation of the whole into tiny, meaningless components which satisfy the exercises of abstraction but which reverse and defeat their purpose. He, like the scientific, mechanized society he represents, rises triumphant at the end of the novel, yet the material world which he claims to understand and to benefit has been annihilated and absorbed like the meals which he continuously consumes—from his introduction into the novel until the final repast shared over Emma’s corpse.

The presence of Homais and Abbé Bournesien—another false prophet of the Word—at Emma’s wake makes the standard Flaubertian statement on the death of the spirit and the
impotence of the world. Their absurd ritual of sterilization—the sprinkling of holy water and chlorine water—signifies the universality of man's hypocrisy. The priest washes away evil and the chemist washes away germs from the now-indifferent body of one whose sins they ignored and whose illness they left unattended.

This ironic and ambiguous presentation of the life-symbol, water, is a fitting conclusion to the novel whose heroine looks to the changing of forms for her salvation. Emma, who believes in motion as the actual grace of transcendence, nevertheless escapes from her wretched existence only through periods of stasis, as in her fainting, her languorous daydreams, her illnesses. Her experience of physical movement—back and forth between Rouen and Yonville—is a mechanical repetition which is no more liberating than her many imaginary "changes" from one emotional attachment to another. Her father's astonishment that the countryside is just as usual at the hour of Emma's death repeats his daughter's false and romantic assumption that man can make his mark upon the world and revise the order of nature.

Her only real success in bringing forth a new form from an old substance is in her memory-images. She experiences periodic flashes from her past life, but they are reconstructed to fit her self-indulgence of the present moment. The value of memory—in the Flaubertian-Bergsonian system—is to bring forward and unite in the continuity of the now all that
seems discontiguous in one's life. In so doing, one comprehends intuitively the truth so difficult to grasp as it exists "piecemeal" in the flux of human experience. But Emma never sees the unchanging essence, herself, for she has become hypnotized, as it were, before the promise of new forms, of change, of movement—the same promise held out to the world of the nineteenth century, the world of constant revolution, the perpetual motion of the Machine Age.

The only exit from this frantic, soulless existence may have seemed for Flaubert to be through the power of the imagination, through the dark passages of the artistic unconscious. To personify the dangers of the solution and show the paradox of the human condition whose flights away from matter bind it ever more closely to the tyranny of the flesh seem to be a goodly part of the intention behind the creation of this great work and of the truth of the revelation: Madame Bovary, c'est moi.
UN COEUR SIMPLE

The "house" vacated by Emma Bovary is filled by Félicité in the companion work to the novel. This brilliant short story seems to be a parody of each one of its structural elements: a parody of the blessed felicity of the soul, of the heroism of sainthood—particularly that of the original Saint Felicity,16 of salvation through the Word, and finally, of the bourgeois personality grown to adulthood. Like each of the other tales, it forms the final turn of the screw on the nihilistic structure erected in the novel.

Although much credit has been given to Flaubert's announced tenderness and "sincerity" towards his heroine, we must verify his intention by an examination of its actual execution. When this is done, we find that quite a number of questions remain unanswered if we believe the artist's word rather than his work. While it is quite possible that Flaubert admired a simple and uncomplicated heart, it is inconceivable that this haughty and uncompromising genius fancied a simple mind. If Emma's mere foolishness and superficiality exacted the devastating treatment she received from her creator, then Félicité, whose intellectual capacity is barely human, can scarcely have demanded her author's respect. Nor is it a matter of preferring brainless devotion to duty to the selfish egotism of Emma's mentality. On the contrary, it was precisely the simple Félicité's cow-like, blind
acceptance of "fate" (too strong a term, actually) which produced the foundation and support for the hypocritical society Flaubert detested.

Furthermore, the most elementary psychological analysis of her personality reveals not a saint but a pathetically sick woman. And she is not even given the grace of sensitivity to promote her illness to the interesting condition of the tortured soul. She absorbs punishment in a rather dull masochistic fashion; never does she resist or struggle or rebel. Is it possible, then, that Flaubert, the genuinely tormented antithesis of conventionality, raised up Félicité as his one empathetic heroine? If she and Catherine Leroux have any positive structural qualities at all, they must surely be to act as foils to the atrocious, conscious banality of the bourgeoisie and to emphasize by their numbness of mind and emotional dwarfism the spiritual viciousness of the society which transformed them into the likeness of animals they resemble.

About Catherine, of course, we do not know very much, but Félicité is revealed literally and symbolically as the figure of spiritual violation. Lacking the childish viciousness of Hérodias--Salomé and the adolescent passion of Saint Julien, she represents--in the psychological order of progression of the tales--the intellectual emptiness of the adult. As Emma's successor, as the "saint" of ignorance and drudgery who accepts the monotony Emma so passionately rejects,
she represents the absurdity of effort and the parody of transcendent hope.

Each of the three tales begins with a very significant description of the landscape and the edifice which dominates it; in every instance, the description reflects the psychological portrait of the protagonist. *Un Coeur simple* reveals, from the first paragraph, a diagram of the excessively restricted female whose psychological problem (frigidity) seems unmistakable.

The predominantly female images (the pyramid of boxes, the over-stuffed chairs, the Temple of Vesta clock) inside the parlour of Mme Aubain's house, coupled with the fixed, no-growth atmosphere of the drawing room (no strangers nor anything new is allowed within) illustrate the Freudian correspondence of the setting and the personages. Félicité herself seems merely to be an extension of her dwelling. Her obsessive cleanliness, her solitude, her dress (that of a nun or a nurse), all represent the frigid, locked-in personality, while her appearance (her thin face, sharp voice) indicates a "woman made of wood," the automaton devoid of all interiority.

Félicité's stolidity and lack of spirituality are indicated by the solid spatial dimensions of Mme Aubain's house and the precise accuracy of the given chronology. We observe the characteristics of a poorly integrated personality
(the uneven floors) with unused potential (covered-up drawing room) and stinginess of heart (no mattresses in the children's rooms). The house is filled with a musty odor, since it is lower than the garden; the personality, like the dwelling, rising up out of the soil of the unconscious, remains dominated by it--the lower instincts retain the atmosphere of their chthonic origins.

Mme Aubain's domain is as cluttered as Félicité's is bare. The mistress guards her many memories and her experience; the servant--like a non-participating observer--only refracts the light from the image--her view of the world--as it passes before her automatically recording vision. At the end of her life, the room has become as cluttered as Mme Aubain's, but, like the imagination it represents, only the disparate elements of Félicité's life are gathered there, disorganized and disunified, awaiting the abstraction into a higher order which never comes.

It is significant that Félicité lives at the top of the house, at the farthest point from its foundations, for, although she draws her experience of life from the most elemental aspects of nature, her responses are twisted and isolated, creating in her earthy character a dichotomy which separates her from fruitful participation in that nature. Her separation from lustiness and basic sexuality leads to psychic repressions and light-weight fantasies as she lives through vicarious participation in another's growth, just as
she dwells in another's house.

Consequently, we may see Mme Aubain and Félicité—like Charles and Emma Bovary—as elements of one personality. Mme Aubain appears as the bourgeois mildew which has covered over the original natural vitality of the land, corrupting the grandeur of its aristocracy and exhausting the peasantry. Félicité functions as the peasant soul absorbed into the bourgeois nature, repressed into a direction which is at odds with its inclination, and thwarted in its efforts at natural fulfillment. Because Félicité's original injury comes from one of her own, and from nature itself, a cosmic element of defeat appears which enables the problem of the work to transcend the level of mere class-struggle.

The surface structure of the story, however, develops in terms of the social conflicts, as they represent the deeper metaphysical realities. Thus, spiritual development remains on the level of mere imitation and ritual: the "soul" follows orders like a servant instead of, like a master, leading to greatness. The intellect takes second place to the imagination, which, like a machine, records images but is incapable of organizing them into the continuity of thought. With Emma, this fixation on man's fantasy life destroys his hope of self-realization; with Félicité, the negation goes a step farther and denies his hope of God.
Félicité's initial trauma finds its source in her brutal loss of the desired Other, the male, then in the equally debilitating loss of the child Virginie, the male-substitute. Both losses repeat symbolically man's original spiritual trauma—the separation of God from man. The separation is unnatural, at odds with the original Divine Intention; the psychic scars remain in man's continuing, fundamental dread of loss expressed in the fear of castration. Yet union entails its burden as well, and human pride equally fears loss of self, even in man's most perfect moment of reidentification with the Other and with eternity. Nevertheless, the desire for the sacred return to the heart of transcendence endures stronger than all man's fears—giving him at once his heroic grandeur and his tragic limits.

Félicité, however, is capable only of desiring a poor fantasy-substitute, a decrepit imitation of the ancient reality: the bourgeois soul is a subservient beast of burden, the bourgeois god is a parrot. As man himself has fallen to a simple-minded shadow of his original brilliance, so his God is reduced to the form of a decaying bird, and his dream of a liberated eternity is realized in his imprisonment in a dimensionless present.

The pattern of Félicité's life follows the archetypal rhythms of the seasons. Her introduction to the myriad
colors and movement of the Fair brings her in the heat of August into proximity with the disturbing demands of passion. The summer celebration brings her the dubious gift from the gods, Théodore, who, as the season indicates, insinuates marriage to the dazzled dairy-maid. Their passion is instinctive but sluggish, however, and Théodore's promises are false.

He reveals the necessary purchase of an army substitute and his fear of serving, a revelation which stimulates a counterfeit love in Félicité's imagination, indicating her future inclination for "substitutes" as well as her "female-dominance" tendencies. His jilting of her is carried out by another substitute; Félicité's response this time, however, is quite genuine, and she undergoes a traumatic change in the direction of her life.

Ce fut un chagrin désordonné. Elle se jeta par terre, poussa des cris, appela le bon Dieu, et gémit toute seule dans la campagne jusqu'au soleil levant.

(p. 203)

The consequences of this crucial moment in Félicité's experience are explained by Karen Horney as the cause of radical character change.

There are cases of women who become neurotic or show character changes after their first sexual experience, be it merely finding out about sex or after actual physical experience . . . these are the cases in which the road to the specific feminine role is
barred through unconscious feelings of guilt or anxiety.\textsuperscript{19}

Now the occasion of Félicité's trauma was neither "finding out" about sex (she had her biological instruction from the barnyard animals) nor the actual experience; nevertheless, the brutal rejection of her commitment to the Other--identified as he is with her only sexual pleasure--is assuredly more than enough to create the burden of anxiety and self-rejection of which Horney speaks.

Moreover, Félicité immediately replaces the forfeited male with the Aubain children, and, as Horney explains, this is precisely the substitute chosen to relieve the repressed sexuality in such a woman. She will also attempt to reduce every new male to the status of child--all of which is a manifestation of the female's unconscious desire to avenge her wrongs through a reduction of male potency, a sort of motherly castration.

Félicité certainly values Paul and Virginie Aubain somewhat disproportionately, as though they were indeed the replacement for her normal sexual desires.\textsuperscript{20} The expression of her love takes on revealing physical and symbolic characteristics: the children ride her like a horse; Mme Aubain must restrain her from kissing them all the time. She virtually smothers them with her physically-oriented affection; in effect, she has no other--mental or emotional--offering to make to her love-object except that of her poor
body. This intense attachment to love's physical sign in the absence of the spiritual reality is repeated in the talisman-like virtue she attributes to the stuffed LouLou who later reigns over the indiscriminate clutter of mementoes in her attic.

The sexual nature of Félicité's relationship with the children dominates their "intellectual" rapport as well. She studies Paul's geography book wherein the whole world appears as a series of Freudian images suggestive of rape and castration: jungle cannibals, a monkey abducting a girl, Bedouins in the desert, the harpooning of a whale. This tendency to see the world as a projected image of one's psychic content is a familiar characteristic of the Flaubertian protagonist, and Félicité reinforces this visual illustration of her interior life through her attitude toward the adult males she comes in contact with. The scars of her initial rejection are revealed as she is easily intimidated and impressed by those male figures she believes represent dominance and authority. On the one hand, she, with her mistress, preserves the memory of "monsieur," and she seems to take a vicarious pleasure in the private interviews between her mistress and the pompous cheat, Bourais. On the other hand, to those over whom she has the authority, she behaves with shrewd sharpness—casting out from the sacred enclosure the drunk, lecherous old Marquis (who is relatively harmless beside Bourais) and keeping the local
farmers--nature's peddlers--"in their place."

It is in autumn, season of death and tragedy, when the next great crisis of Félicité's life occurs. The "death" in this case is her symbolic castration of the great bull: a profession of faith, as it were, to the god of impotence and servility. The episode occurs at nightfall; the moon is in its first quarter, raising its narrow horns through the mist which hides the bull below. The cows grazing in the meadow are soothed by Félicité's crooning (a mother's lullabye to her child), but the bull is not disposed of so easily. It is interesting that while Mme Aubain and the children sensibly run away immediately at first sight of the bull, Félicité hangs back: "Non! Non! moins vite!" (p. 205). The beast's imminent attack is forestalled when she throws clods of dirt into his eyes, temporarily blinding (castrating) him. The earth received her first anguish; the earth saves her from a second violent attack of passion. She slips through the rails of the fence to safety, and the bull stops short in astonishment. Why should this familiar cow-like creature resist him?

The confrontation is absorbed and forgotten by Félicité (who possesses the awe and sensitivity of a contented cow) just as she represses the terrible betrayal of Théodore. But for the unformed and psychically fragile Virginie, the untimely appearance of wild passion terrifies --and ultimately kills--her. The cure, of course, for her
exposure to the animal instincts is purification by water, and she is sent to the seashore for rest and recuperation.

Life at home continues its drift, and the female presence becomes increasingly dominant. The ancient farm at Toucques is filled with symbols of a matriarchal, castrating social organization: apple trees, bowls, sheep-shears, empty jugs, wolf-traps—all the offerings of a cult ranged before the great phallic syringe as before a totem. Paul, as to be expected, grows restless in the stifling atmosphere and is sent off to school. Félicité reveals the color and the depth of her emotional attachment when she acknowledges that she misses only the noise her professed darling used to make.

Moreover, Paul is replaced by the presence of Félicité's long-lost sister and her family (the husband, significantly, never appears). Félicité dotes upon the new group, which never fails "to get something out of her." Félicité also has a new intellectual diversion at this point, for she is required to attend Virginie's catechism lessons.

Her anxiety with regard to the male authority-figure is increased with the priest's lessons in Sacred History. She finds God difficult to imagine as the changing symbolic forms of His manifestations (bird, flame, breath, light) are presented to her, and religion continues for her as a ritual observance, an imitation spirituality. She receives, of course, far more vicarious pleasure from her observation of
Virginie's First Communion than she gains from her own. Félicité is no more a genuine saint, deliberately seeking union with God for His sake, than LouLou is the Holy Ghost.

As though Virginie had transferred allegiance to another order, her communion marks the separation of Félicité from her little charge. Virginie is sent to school and, until Victor replaces her in his aunt's affections, the latter is tormented by the sleeplessness and inattention characteristic of repressed desires which have no outlet.

Her metaphorical hunger for fulfillment is manifested by her self-denial of food so that she can feed and "baby" her new love-object, Victor. He, in turn, brings her gifts of a matching Freudian significance: the shell box, the coffee cup, and finally the gingerbread man. The rather ghastly irony of this last offering is followed by his announcement of his departure to sea.

The date, July 14, 1819, is established with precision, as are other more or less important moments in the work: fifty years; August, 1801; between 11:30 and midnight; the punctual arrival of visitors. Only after Virginie's death does the cyclical repetition of feast days begin to replace chronological exactitude. Flaubert's deliberate effort to specify banal time indicates the lack of interior life, of durée, wherein all calendar and clock precision is lost. As Félicité retreats deeper and deeper into the life
of the imagination, dates become less important, although the seasons' turning continues to represent her role as a creature of nature.

With Victor's departure, Félicité's new anxieties take on the form of desire, impotence, and castration—her paradoxical and unconscious confusion of hope and despair, of love and hate demanding revenge for this second desertion.

Les jours de soleil, elle se tourmentait de la soif; quand il faisait de l'orage, craignait pour lui la foudre. En écoutant le vent qui grondait dans la cheminée et emportait les ardoises, elle le voyait battu par cette même tempête, au sommet d'un mât fracassé, tout le corps en arrière, sous une nappe d'écume; ou bien,—souvenir de la géographie en estampes—il était mangé par les sauvages, pris dans un bois par des singes, se mourait le long d'une plage déserte.

(p. 212)

Victor's danger is real: he dies from over-bleeding (the loss of the vital fluid is interpreted as a parallel to the similar loss representing castration); Virginie, whom Félicité associates with Victor, dies shortly thereafter of pneumonia—congestion of the lungs. The male suffers castration after an excess of passion; the female, repression after passion has been restricted and denied. Félicité's anguish is released only when triggered by an image of reeds viewed in the river as the vision of corpses: the eternal changing of forms radically affects even the most
bornee of Flaubert's characters. She is denied this final release with Virginie, however, until the emotional moment when the child's clothes are taken as her substitute, a sort of sterile possession which is prefigured when Felicite misses the child's last moments. Halfway to the little girl's convent deathbed, she returns home to lock the house. The enclosure is sealed to all life and growth; Felicite has upheld her greatest responsibility.

Felicite celebrates the death of her children-lovers by her ritualistic visits to the cemetery, highlighted by the emotional kiss exchanged between herself and her mistress. The sharing-up of Virginie's clothing resembles the reversal of the primal feast: here, the parent is revitalized through the sacrificed child. The result of the frigid inability to communicate and enjoy union with another is of course the death of the future, of the child of man. Mme Aubain's participation in the ritual indicates the nineteenth century's bourgeois violation of the hope of spiritual and creative progeny--just as Emma's daughter is fed to the great machine which sustains the new consumer society.

The unusual emotion aroused in Felicite by the embrace of her mistress stimulates a flurry of activity from Felicite--although she remains unable to cross the barriers of class and habit and truly establish a communion with the other woman. Nevertheless, she "emerges" to the extent of
nursing soldiers and cholera victims, and she even allows herself to be "courted" by one of her patients until he eats—uninvited—in her kitchen. (The Freudian implications of this hardly require much analysis!) She then attaches herself in total service to the repulsive illnesses of père Colmiche until she begins to resemble those medieval nuns who delighted in the nastiness of their chores.

After Colmiche's passing Félicité is graced with that masterpiece of creative imagination, LouLou. This marvelously masochistic parrot (he vents his fury at his confinement by tearing out his own feathers) is the perfect symbol of Félicité's pathetic condition. Having spent her life establishing a series of substitutions and replacements for her original desire, it is intensely appropriate that she finalize her existence with the imitation of communication, the antithesis of sexuality, the ennuch (he is chained, padlocked, helpless and bears a female name) parrot. When LouLou manages to escape temporarily, Félicité enters the valley of death. She becomes deaf, almost completely closed off from reality.

Le petit cercle de ses idées se retrécit encore, et le carillon des cloches, le mugisement des bœufs n'existaient plus. Tous les êtres fonctionnaient avec le silence des fantômes. Un seul bruit arrivait maintenant à ses oreilles, la voix du perroquet.

(p. 219)
Finally, she has lost track even of the church-bells and the lowing of the cows. Both have sustained Félicité's life and endurance, but neither has led to fulfillment of an interior life. Nature has not permitted union with another nor has the Church realized her communion with God. Her transcendence is a fantasy; her companions are ghosts; her love, her "son and lover," LouLou, succumbs to the chill. His death occurs in winter, the season of disintegration and chaos—a satiric indication of the absurdity of existence.

Félicité perseveres into the winter with her pointless desire, until she takes the vacant LouLou to the taxidermist who will give him his artificial soul and prepare him for eternal life. The terrible scene of her brutal lashing by the mail coachman sums up Flaubert's dark vision. The whip—a symbol of sexual passion—represents her enemy, the efficient cause of the neurotic, pitiful direction of her life. The wielder of the whip, the mail coachman, signifies the ironic cruelty which results from this sort of repression and inhibition. She is punished by the innate need for physical and spiritual communication while she clings—even beyond death—to the false communicator, to the imitation Word. It was this falseness, limiting understanding, which Flaubert attacked so often. The confrontation with this painful vision of truth brings to Félicité the one realization of the misery of her life. Even this instant of
interior illumination, however, is visual and non-reflective—merely a reminder that the sickening image of our past is with us forever, watching. 21

Félicité's last years, alone, high up in the attic of her deserted house—for which there are no buyers—and surrounded by the merging confusion of forms of once solid essences, illustrate the total disintegration of the personality and the distortions of man alone with his imagination, cut off from reality.

Félicité's death occurs in summer: the circle is complete. Spring, symbol of hope and joy is the only season not needed in Félicité's story. With summer, the celebration of fertility and nature's richness returns to recall its creature back into the elements. The religious procession under her window mingles incense with the odors of the garden as the songs and chants become one with the buzzing of insects. In this great pantheistic moment, the change which dizzies and terrifies others transforms Félicité's last instants into her grandest illusion. The fertility of the exterior world stimulates the fertility of her imagination but separates her definitively from the power of truth. Emma, at least, is given the courage to face the image of her existence in its most cruel form; Félicité, clinging to her imitation truth, dies unredeemed and cast out into a deeper darkness than that of Emma's final vision.
The Dionysiac-Apollonic celebration of the world's truth becomes an ironic setting for the interior lies of the imagined supernatural joys of saintly transcendence.

True sainthood, however, rests on heroic virtue. Virtue is a power, a strength, and where there is no resistance, there is no need for strength. Félicité suffers no temptation and has no need to resist; her actions are the spontaneous and naturalistic ones of a milk-cow whose only suffering occurs when her body is unrelieved of its burden. Thus, the giving of her slave-labor to others is for Félicité like the giving of milk by a cow: an instinct of nature, sustained beyond its physical impetus by the operation of the imagination. As B. F. Bart states:

...religion cannot preserve man from having to face his own nature, nor can it save him from his sins. ... The meaning of the Blindman, the final mocking message of Satan [Saint-Antoine] and Emma's bitter reflections on life as she sat outside the convent all express Flaubert's view of man's ultimate fate. If Saint-Antoine found solace in prayer, it was only because the rising sun was driving away the darkness; with its setting, night and Satan would return. For Emma, no more suns could rise; she faced man's eternal meaning and found there eternal darkness, malediction.  

Félicité does not, then, merit the heroic appellation of saint; rather, like Emma, Saint-Antoine, Saint-Julien, her name must be added to Flaubert's ironic litany of the damned.
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER III

1 As Poulet defines it, the Flaubertian memory of the later works, in its tendency toward the fusion of past and present, repeats this same pattern: "Thus, the first movement of the Flaubertian reconstruction is the ascending movement by which thought climbs, in a series of inferences, the stairway of causes, and so progressively withdraws from the domain of sensation or of actual images, in order to pass into that of the order of things, into the domain of law." Georges Poulet, "Flaubert." From Studies in Human Time, p. 34.


5 Jean Rousset, "Madame Bovary or the Book about Nothing," Forme et signification, Jose Corti, 1962, rpt. in Giraud, p. 128.

6 "The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature and...his relation to the unconscious." Carl Jung, p. 177.


and interference through which Homais virtually controls all the key decisions and actions of the novel.

10 Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1972), pp. 56-57. All further citations will be from this edition, and pagination will be given in the text.

11 The use of the window as a device to indicate Emma's longing for freedom has been analyzed by Eugene Hollohan in "Irruption of Nothingness: Sleep and Freedom in Madame Bovary," Studies in Philology, 70 (1973), 92-107.

12 In L'Education sentimentale this escape is denied as Flaubert's pessimism focuses on the hero rather than on a secondary character, like Léon. "Il voyagea" is the language of despair not liberation.

13 Again in this image Emma and Léon are associated in an ironic symbolism: the pigeons--bird-image of the soul--representing Emma, the Lion d'Or a parodied Léon (hardly lion-like). The birds are part of the inn just as Emma is a manifestation of the young man.

14 Insofar as she represents the Romantic imagination combined with rebelliousness, she is consistently described in terms indicating the role of female Dandy.

15 Thus the castrated stag image used earlier in the letter writing scene. Even for Rodolphe the image is appropriate since his brutal sensuality does not equal true masculinity any more than Emma's sexual activity can prevent her psychological frigidity.

16 William Beck, "Félicité and the Bull in Flaubert's Un Coeur simple," Xavier University Studies, 10, No. 1 (1971), 16-26. Beck gives a thorough account of the history of Saints Perpetua and Felicity and indicates several possibilities for the ironic change of the maddened heifer into a grazing bull. Although he suggests it may be a "...somewhat covert expression of Flaubert's mental appetite for superhuman sexual ecstasies," he does not consider the transformation to be a reversal of the sainthood theme.

18 "... les quatre chevaux, en trainant leurs pas, soulevaient de la poussière. Puis, sans commandement, ils tournèrent à droite" (p. 203). Gustave Flaubert, Trois Contes. All citations will be from this edition, and pagination will be given in the text.

19 Karen Horney, Feminine Psychology, p. 81.

20 The Bernadin de Saint Pierre novel, Paul et Virginie, which Flaubert may have been alluding to by his choice of names for the Aubain children, is likewise pervaded with repressed sexuality and incestuous love. Here, too, the dominant male father-figure is absent.

21 Cunningham quotes Bergson's Creative Evolution: "In reality, the past is preserved by itself, automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought and willed from our earliest infancy is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside... . Even though we have no distinct idea of it, we feel vaguely that our past remains present to us." Gustavius Cunningham, A Study in the Philosophy of Bergson, p. 117.

CHAPTER IV

BOUVAARD ET PECUCHET

With Bouvard et Pécuchet and La Tentation de Saint Antoine, we arrive at the final stage in Flaubert's panoramic history of the human spirit. Having led his heroes through the three preceding chronological and psychological ages, Flaubert concludes their tragic misadventure with a final stage which, although represented by relative old age, reveals what is to come: the spiritual Armageddon of the future. The prognosis implicit in these works is not optimistic. For, although Flaubert often appears to be the Bergson of the novel, the philosopher and the novelist differ radically in their determination of man's direction. Where Bergson saw becoming as a dynamic, creative evolution of the spirit, Flaubert finds the eternal process of change as the image of the painful dé-volution of the soul.

Curiously, Will Durant paraphrases Bergson's splendidly hopeful vision with those very analogies by which Flaubert shows the desperation of man's plight.

At the outset life is almost as inert as matter; it takes a stationary form as if the vital impulse were too weak to risk the adventure of motion. And in one great avenue of development this motionless stability has been the goal of life: . . . [honoring] the god Security. But [life's] advances have been away from security towards freedom;
away from carapaces, scales and hides, and other burdensome protections, to the ease and perilous liberty of the bird.\(^1\)

From the confinement of Salammbô's carapace-like wedding garment and the hidden stores of protective ornaments deep within Machaerous to the hopeless bird imagery taunting Emma and Félicité, Flaubert leads his characters in an ironic reversal of Bergson's evolution.

So the heavy hoplite was supplanted by the legionary; the knight, clad in armor, had to give place to the light free-moving infantryman; and in a general way, to the evolution of life, just as in the evolution of human societies and of individual destinies, the greatest successes have been for those who accepted the heaviest risks.\(^2\)

But in Flaubert's works, although the "hoplite" of Carthage is ultimately supplanted by the light free-moving "infantryman" of the French barricades, there are no successes where all "risks" are balanced by the inauthenticity of self-delusion. He sustains the constant tension between this imagery and its underlying contradiction through the dynamics of his deep structure-surface structure technique, wherein the delusion and the de-evolution of each "present" situation is made intensely and tragically evident by the constant--suppressed--image of an original lost spontaneity. Thus, at the moment when the hero seems to have but recently emerged from the potential of unformed matter, we find him (for a Flaubertian character, at any rate) curiously daring and
courageous; as he nears his evolutionary (that is, chronological) "perfection," he suffers a progressively greater loss of spiritual form and active participation in the world, until at last we leave him motionless in a wasteland of abandoned ideas: of sterile intellectual forms which are unable to bear the fruit they promise.

The physical wasteland which is the introductory setting of the last two works is an all-inclusive, symbolically rounded locale in which Flaubert finalizes a Weltanschauung which negates both man's achievements and his prospects. Bouvard and Pécuchet, having discovered only frustration and disillusionment in their search for nature's secrets during their sojourn in the country, return to the barren life of the city where they terminate any hope for new discovery by their decision to dedicate their future to copying the faint thoughts of the past. For Saint Antoine, Flaubert uses the desert, traditional symbol of desolation and absence, in which to parade the voluptuous presence of total human experience. Yet the enormity of the vision merely serves to deny it fruitful validity: the diet is too rich to be digested. The great Eastern deserts have another connotation as well: it is from these hot lands that the human creature first emerged—and it is here that Flaubert ironically abandons him, prostrate before the formless, ever-forming matter which returns him ceaselessly to his starting point, zero.
This novel and prose poem describe, more directly than any of Flaubert's other works, the adventures of the intellect. It is fitting that his masterful treatment of the whole man—instinct, will, imagination, and mind, body and spirit—should end with that attribute which makes man most godlike. And if all gods are false—as Flaubert would seem to have us believe—then man's divine designs upon the world are condemned to the hell of inadequacy. Only his desire—unfulfilled—is allowed the boast, "I am omnipotent."  

This paradox of the human condition could scarcely be better expressed than through the Faustian legend, which indeed does serve as the deep structural statement for both the novel and the shorter work. The challenge to authority given in Salambô and Hérodias receives now, after the spiritual silences of the four intervening works, a mocking response in the Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues and in Hilarion's unanswerable subtleties.

Despite the antiquity of the Faustian theme, in Flaubert's transformation it takes on the prophetic form of a futuristic nightmare. As usual, the minor key in which the works end points to a redeemed Faust, tranquilly resigned to the infinite distances separating him from his desire. But the closer view reveals not Goethe's but Marlowe's perspective: a Faust betrayed and tricked, abandoned to his own tawdry devices, and ironically pleading for fragmentation and dissolution where once he demanded
unity and cohesion. Thus, the promise of perhaps infinite evolution and progress whispered throughout Flaubert's century—a promise which could indeed be symbolically represented only by a sanctified Faust—is firmly renounced by the recreation of a damned Faustus. Further, the terms of the surface structure give us a remarkable vision of the manner whereby the Faustus of the future will repeat the archetypal act of self-destruction.

Bouvard and Pécuchet's quest for the "secret" of things is carried out through sequences of "book-learning"—personal experimentation—failure followed by attempts to compensate for their failure by a repetition of the pattern and so on ad infinitum. This inability to contain all the knowledge at their disposal is enacted in a pattern which has become the symbol of contemporary society—and the figure of the modern intellectual dilemma: what to do with all the data. Data which, thanks to computerized science, has become ever more accessible, yet whose coherence—not unlike a Flaubertian horizon—continues to recede in direct proportion to the closeness of one's approach. The two old men—constantly programming themselves only to have the machine refuse to compute—resemble the two digits of a binomial computer, locked in a union which can produce nothing but the rearranged elements programmed into it. Thus their proposed copying of old papers results in the fragmented "print-out" of the Dictionnaire, and symbolizes
the ultimate intellectual sterility of a spiritually castrated society. The redemptive (seminal) role of Bergson's intuition is denied existence; instead, numbers, facts, statistics flow into the machine in a repetitive parody of fruitful union.

What, then, is the reaction of the maker before his creature-machine, whose principal activity—like that of some malicious demon—seems to consist in opening or shutting at random an endless vista of doors through which one but glimpses rarest treasures before the view changes? The frustration endured with this modern manifestation of change and becoming has led to a declaration of war on contingency: predictions, forecasts, projections—nothing is to remain uncoerced or unformulated. Man will no longer be subjected to the dizzying movement of the unexpected. But for Bouvard and Pécuchet, the accidental, the contingent, is the serpent in their garden, and the final negation of their desire.

Thus the figurative sterilization of contemporary society is anticipated by the failure of Bouvard and Pécuchet to cope with all the conflicting bits of haphazardly related data they encounter. Where is the overall rule, the law, by which nature can be harnessed? demands Pécuchet. In search of such a secret—despite their deep suspicion that no such convenience exists—the two old alchemists forcefeed
themselves until their systems reject understanding altogether. Their decision to sit side by side performing the mechanical labors of a machine parallels the presently reigning computer's inability to handle what has not been carefully prepared and planned out in advance, thereby confining, in a sort of intellectual strait-jacket, the souls of those who worship it as their Savior. Such restrictions on man's spirit may surely be regarded as a metaphysical castration of far greater magnitude than any previous Flaubertian attack against human self-betrayal. Indeed, these two old célibataires are the last men, whose meeting occurs at that point in human de-volution wherein history and nature converge. And "future generations yet unborn" wait breathlessly for the wondrous sound of discovery and comprehension—and there is silence. The seed is spent, the earth lies fallow and the string of the bow has forgotten how to whir. Instead, the scratch, scratch, scratch of the placid copy pen and the click, click, click of the contented computer monotonously interrupt those terrible silences of infinite space.

THE CONQUEST OF CONTINGENCY

Comme il faisait une chaleur de 33 degrés, le boulevard Bourdon se trouvait absolument désert. . .et tout semblait engourdi par le désœuvrement du dimanche et la tristesse des jours d'été.
Unlike the preceding novels, Bouvard et Pécuchet opens on a scene of emptiness, of overwhelming heat, and of inaction. The implication that the wasteland image extends beyond the immediate and the local to include both civilization's customs (the convention of Sunday rest) and nature's rhythms (the sluggishness of summer) in a melancholy standstill is strengthened by the sudden appearance of the main characters.

L'un venait de la Bastille, l'autre du Jardin des Plantes. Quand ils furent arrivés au milieu du boulevard, ils s'assirent, à la même minute, sur le même banc.  
(p. 39)

Does their arrival mark the culmination of all their predecessors' strivings: that moment in time for which man has waited and hoped when historical progress shall merge with natural evolution, and when, for once, he will find himself at home on his planet? Alas, Bouvard's meeting with Pécuchet is only accidental; it is not directed by the necessary force of some universal logic, some reassuring, unavoidable and unambiguous law, but represents merely the introduction of the demon contingency (their Mephistopheles), the tempter-counterweight to the magnetism of the god security. The symbolic value of their personalities, as well as the significance of their meeting, indicates the pattern and direction the novel will take.

If we consider the characterization of each of the
two heroes, they appear in the metaphorical roles of matter and form. Flaubert's probing of the tenuous but stubborn union of these two elements seems often to be the basis of the novelist's psychology as well as of his metaphysics. Here, Flaubert rejoins Bergson in theory—although it is the failure of his characters to overcome inertia—the drag of matter—which denies them their fulfillment in the evolutionary process.

Life is that which makes efforts... It is the opposite of inertia, and the opposite of accident. There is a direction in the growth to which it is self-impelled. Against it is the under-tow of matter, the lag and slack of things toward relaxation and rest and death; at every stage life has had to fight with the inertia of its vehicle; and if it conquers death through reproduction, it does so only by yielding every citadel in turn, and abandoning every individual body at last to inertia and decay... And consciousness slips, as soon as it is permitted, into the restful automatism of instinct, habit, and sleep.  

Under Bouvard's mild direction and injection of energy, the two old gentlemen begin a series of minor victories—any momentum at all away from stasis being considered a triumph for life—but the weight of instinct, of habit, of weariness is too great, and they lapse into the equivalent of intellectual sleep. They are simply overburdened and despairing before the rapid unforeseeable changes they encounter in their quest for a complete intellectual grasp of things. The accident of their meeting—like
Faustus' Mephistopheles—promises much more than it can deliver and serves, finally, as the instrument of their damnation (which, in terms of the novel, is their surrender to the mechanical drag of inertia).

Flaubert reveals more of the personalities of Bouvard and Pécuchet than is usual in his first chapters. Bouvard, arriving from the Bastille, brings with him the twofold historical association of man's imprisonment and repression as well as his freedom to revolt. He walks with great long strides, indicating continuity and energy; he enjoys the accumulated graces of civilization: small luxuries, the theater, newspapers. He is anti-clerical and politically liberal—an attribute (if rather superficial) of historical resistance to authority and coercion; his personal life represents experience, sexual and emotional, for he is a widower and his room contains pictures of acquaintances, his worldly associations. The dominating portrait of his uncle-father proclaims the continuation of the past into the present. Finally, the figure of the clock as the image of profane time acts as weight anchoring Bouvard, and with him Pécuchet, into the monotonous repetition of history.

Pécuchet, entering from the Jardin des Plantes, bears all the marks of nature in its lowest form, of that warm and non-energetic matter which awaits the life-giving
spark. He is hesitant; he follows the patterns set by instinct and habit; he must multiply his steps—as matter may be fragmented into molecules—to keep up with Bouvard's energetic strides. He is conservative and prudish—not so much from convention's inhibitions as from a natural disinclination to take any risk or exert any effort superfluous to that demanded by mere existence, and his lack of education (in every sense: worldly, sexual, emotional, mental) and atrophied spirit have developed in him a hermetic irritability. He encases himself in a swaddling of protective coverings and his room is as overheated as a hothouse. His "library" includes the *Manuel du Magnétiseur* (a sort of artificial "life-stimulant") and his Fénélon (the Quietest spokesman). The absence of pictures and portraits is compensated by the two coconuts preserved from his youth. Since we are told that he never knew his mother, their importance is both philosophical (as symbolic of his role as the representative of nature) and sexual (not to mention hilarious when we finally catch Flaubert's little joke). He does nothing on his own initiative but must await the directive and impulses to pass from Bouvard. Their union is indeed fortuitous for each of them; yet, as it repeats the non-necessary (and thus always contingent) union of form with matter, the outcome of their joint venture has no guarantee of success.
Despite the contrasts in their personalities, their relationship works, for each acts on the other as a stimulant-recall for the submerged principle in their nature.

Chacun en écoutant l'autre retrouvait des parties de lui-même oubliées.  
(p. 41)

Like the old Faustus, they recall the days of their youth, a forgotten time when matter and spirit were one. Now, however, despite their mutually changing habits and their budding dilettantism, the mechanical bent of their nature surfaces periodically in their incessant speech, in their strange laughter, and in their insatiable need for repetitive movement (they pace back and forth and dash about Paris in a frenzy).

Then, the inheritance of Bouvard seems to offer the two the opportunity to realize the dream of laboring mankind: the time and the means to attain physical and intellectual freedom. When the moment arrives to leave Paris for good, they each bid a typical farewell to their former lives. Bouvard, filled with nostalgia, remembers in rapid succession the events of his now-romanticized past, while Pécuchet engraves the static mark of his signature on the inert surface of the mantel.

The journey to Chavignolles is awful: each man suffers in his own way the miseries of their rites of
passage. Pécuchet has the worst of it, however, as he bounces through the monotonous, dreary countryside over the road "toujours la même," trailing the rear of an endless procession of hopeful pilgrims wandering in search of some promised land or another. He finally responds to his situation with the adaptability of matter—and temporarily improves his lot—when he ceases his complaints and becomes patient and agreeable with the idiot drivers. Nevertheless, he is ultimately defeated by the breakdown of the machine (the wagon axle cracks). The material world may be malleable, but it is not dependable.

At last, however, he is reunited with Bouvard, and they enter into possession of their heritage.

. . . tout se tenait immobile dans un grand silence, une grande douceur.  
(p. 52)

The silence and immobility, in Flaubertian terms, are, nevertheless, ambiguous. Here, they seem to represent a respite, the sure and certain indication of future success. Yet we must wonder if they are not merely the deceptive and temporary withdrawal of the tempter, and the pastoral counterpart to the city's sterility.

Bouvard and Pécuchet's first experiment in their new life is with life itself: the fertility of the earth. The inevitable problems arise as a result of the diversity which leads not to enrichment but to confusion. Nor is the damage a result simply of too much abstract or theoretical
information; nature herself actively participates in the catastrophes.

The chapter begins slowly as the two companions cautiously inspect their property, compose the plaster-lady joke, and receive a run-down on all the neighborhood notables. Once "primed," however, they increase the speed and force of their activities until only the coming of winter with its imposed rest saves the estate from total decimation under the hoe and spade of Bouvard and Pécuchet.

With the arrival of spring, their imaginations burst into bloom, so to speak, when they observe the impressive operation of the de Faverge farm; and they begin immediately to imitate their neighbor's success. The components are different, however, and their ambitious preparations and investments do not produce the result for which they think they have prepared. The infertility of their Sisyphean labors is ironically emphasized by their farmyard girl becoming pregnant while they carry stones up and down their little knoll.

Their obsession with manure serves a similar devastatingly ironic purpose. Like a pair of medieval alchemists they (Bouvard in particular) are convinced that life energy--gold--can be produced from dung and "dead" matter merely by introducing its magical presence into the ground. But in their hands, even the fertilizer becomes infertile--and, again, it is a case of the negative value
of too much. In fact, the entire second chapter is a parody of potency expressed through a series of images in which we see the male principle defeated: Pécuchet's bell jars smother the rising seedlings, the dahlia props seem inordinately large and proportionately useless, Bouvard bleeds his stock (accidentally) to death, the hay stacks burn and collapse, the arboretum and its props are knocked down in a hailstorm. The sexual symbolism that can be given to the latter incident is unmistakable when the gardeners' distress is expressed in the analogy of lost husbands.

Les femmes de marins, qui, sur la côte, . . . regardaient la mer, n'avaient pas l'œil plus tendu et le coeur plus serré.

(p. 68)

Yet the two blunderers are not idiots; they are simply out of their depth (the Faustian flaw). Just as the clouds Bouvard and Pécuchet attempt to study change their forms with impossible rapidity, the forms of the material world are too vast and complex, too contingent, to be contained in one system; just as Bouvard, atop his ladder, becomes dizzy and can neither descend nor continue his work, so man's intellect attempts to mount upward but quickly hesitates in terror when faced with the immensity of the spaces opening up before him. It is Pécuchet who first realizes the contradictions lurking in science and "manuals" and the need for careful experimentation and individualized care for each type of plant. Yet the dream of one simplified
rule persists, and they do not capitalize on Pécuchet's intuitive flash, but instead reject the entire science of agriculture as a great rip-off. Their true interest is not in penetrating the object of knowledge but in teasing and flattering the borders of the intellect.

The two have another disability, as well, with which they must contend. They are strangers in the land, and the inhabitants—who represent, as in every Flaubertian work, the spiritual enemy of the protagonist—act as the downward pull of materialistic gravity which prevents the soul's flight upward. They pry and peer through the lattice at Bouvard and Pécuchet, encroaching on their privacy and despoiling them of their freedom. They refuse to obey Bouvard's bell (his clock-time) and ignore the call of history; they make merry at the sight of the burning hay-stack and relish the defeat of nature's progress. In short, they resist all the approaches of mind and restraint and retain their constant, ancient rhythms of instinct and sensuality.

Since the earth will not flourish and bear fruit for them, they decide to rearrange it. Their efforts at landscape gardening produce the same sort of monstrosities which any accidental union of haphazard elements might create: the terrifying eclecticism of the "new" garden repeats the "prodigy" melon and foretells the destructive potency of
the Bouvarine. Their sorrowful discovery that their "refinements" have destroyed the charming echo points both backward to the over-refinement which destroyed so many species in nature's evolution and ahead to the present aridity of over-specialization—and continues the symbolic representation of their love of repetition.

The ill-fated dinner party concludes, in a minor crescendo of snickers, Flaubert's initial examination of human opposition to the heroes' efforts at controlling and comprehending their world. Bouvard and Pécuchet, insulted and indignant, retire temporarily from association with the Other and descend into the bowels of the earth. The earth, however, remains as hostile as ever, and their experiments with wine-making in the cellar merely repeat the fiasco of the dinner-party—only this time, neither convention nor self-interest (as in the guests' behavior) subdues the rejection they receive. The chapter ends with the horrendous explosion of their second-hand still, and Pécuchet's wonderful observation: "C'est que, peut-être, nous ne savons pas la chimie!" (p. 79)

The introduction to chemistry which occurs in the second chapter is developed in the following pages, as the two characters find themselves in an immediate confrontation with the problem of substantial change. The explosion of the wine, its fragmentation, as it were, introduces them to the idea of examining the component parts.
of the fragmentation, the organic make-up of matter. However, their own experience is denied by the books of theory which disprove the evidence of the senses. The apprentice scientists learn that the element earth does not exist and that the splendid diamond is only carbon. Of what use will be a knowledge of the parts if the whole is denied in conclusion?

The seeds of scepticism are thus planted early in the adventures of the two friends. After the depressing information that nothing is as it appears, further research merely increases the distance between the intellect and its object. Their discovery that organic life is composed of the same substances found in non-organic matter is both misleading and somewhat humiliating. This is the aspect of materialism which Bergson frequently refuted, and Flaubert, by his continued opposition of conscious, energetic life to the non-reflective, debilitating fixity experienced by all his protagonists, seems equally concerned with the infinite differences in quality between the organic and the non-organic, despite the deceptive similarities among the components of each. It is this deception which Flaubert attempts time and again to penetrate and expose to his heroes, yet invariably they fail to understand the limits of matter or the proper role of form.

Although Bouvard and Pécuchet may appear to differ
from their novelistic brothers in that they do not immediately back off in shock but pursue the inquiry into change and motion, in reality, they continue the direction set for them in the other works. They, too, follow a pattern of contradiction which leads to the inevitable circle of pointlessness. For example, when faced with the inadequacy of man's senses to perceive the constituent elements of organisms, they attempt to penetrate, aided by scientific instruments, an even tinier segment of matter (their investigation of atomic theory), but at this point the demon contingency interferes (the necessary equipment is for one reason or another unavailable), and they are thrown back into the "outer circle" to begin again. From the contraction of matter into the tiny atom, they move to its expanded form in their study of human anatomy, reenacting in the sequence of their research the familiar contraction-dilation rhythms of Flaubertian psychology.

Now their anatomical experiences are no more satisfying than their agricultural-chemical ones. They become indignant at the precision of scientific notation: why is the curved dorsal spine exactly sixteen times stronger than a straight spine? This same deep-seated annoyance emerges in their later religious experiences. Whereas the vague and undefined leaves them overwhelmed with the realization of their vulnerability, of their exposure to unforeseen
change and accident, the counter to this—the elimination of all ambiguity—is equally unacceptable. The only solution is the impossible one: to grasp all of Being at once as it ever was and as it ever shall be. They wish, despite their dilettantish, shallow method, the wish of Faustus—or Lucifer: to be God. Flaubert's accomplishment in treating this theme is not in recreating the essentially romantic legend in modern minor key but in showing the half-tragic, half-absurd desire of all creation to be God—to follow the imprint of life up to its divine origin.

Their meddling with, and inadvertent re-organization of, the parts of their mannikin draw out the horrified and resistant forces of the Other—that curious, ever-watching, never-comprehending chorus of the mindless who sense the movement of a new form struggling for existence, and who instinctively cling to their familiar, if decadent, existence.

Bouvard and Pécuchet's inability to play god and exact essential change (an artificial figure, easily taken apart, is one thing, but, as the doctor scornfully observes, it is certainly not reality!) is emphasized in their dreadful experiments with animals. Their cruelty (any creature is expendable in the name of science) merely reaffirms their ignorance and demonstrates the absurdity of all "authorities," whereas their rather perverted curiosity
expressed in "unnatural union" experiments continues the theme of vague abnormality which seems to color every stage of their actions. The Freudian tone of their adventures merges easily with the metaphor of the Fall, inherent in the structure of Faust. Their "medicine-man" role-playing results in the typical success-failure duality of the other scientific experiments, but here Flaubert deepens the implications of their proto-bacteriological discoveries. Bouvard and Pécuchet learn that all disease is caused by worms. Ironically, they accept the existence of these microscopic serpents which infect matter with its original sin, its weariness, its lack of stability, its death wish, yet they continue blithely demanding to know and to understand ("...je voudrais bien savoir comment l'univers s'est fait," p. 95) as though mind and body functioned in good health and could attain the knowledge they desire. As a miniature phallic symbol of life, the worm is both an ironic vehicle for the decay of matter and a parody of the satanic temptation which infects the inadequate minds of these new Fausts.

Despite all the indications of eventual failure, they continue to believe that more is better and turn to geological research. These investigations do not, however, reveal the nature of the universe; they merely get the two into trouble with the authorities (another mild and subtle parody on the Fall and its consequences). Furthermore,
their pseudo-scientific explanation and analysis of the heavens' exact organization only serves to mar the splendid beauty of the starry night and adds nothing to their understanding. Pécuchet's fear on the heights of the falaise and Bouvard's terror at the imagined spector of cosmic collisions repeat the overpowering actuality of experience, of brief intuition, and even of imagination as opposed to the relative sterility of facts and abstractions. Yet Bouvard and Pécuchet have espoused the latter and are, consequently, doomed to a type of intellectual suffocation. In this sense, they are the figure of over-refinement, of a "progress" which actually regresses. Now, we see the conclusion to their de-volution in the icy pure specialization and abstractions of the de-humanized computer age where "les modifications actuelles expliquent les bouleversements antérieurs" (p. 105).

The chapter ends with the opening of a new door to the two: the introduction of Mélie and the acquisition of the chest. This pretty Marguerite, however, will perform a role which reverses that of her innocent and victimized predecessor, and her "jewel-box" (the chest) is no longer the symbol of her temptation and seduction but rather the wickedly funny image of the ruination of Pécuchet. The motif of impotence and castration appears constantly in the metaphorical sense of intellectual inadequacy; here, Flaubert intensifies his meaning with the explicit sexual
imagery of the passage. The Renaissance (a sly irony already in the word, renaissance) chest with its carvings depicting the sexual downfall of the male at the hands of the triumphant female—Omphale and Hercules, Delilah and Samson, Circe and her swine (male chauvinist pigs?), the daughters of Lot and their poor drunken father, and of course the archetype of the forfeited battle of the sexes, Adam, all surrounding their Queen, Venus—gives us an unmistakable picture of the outcome of a future experiment with the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

After this prefiguration of the loss they are shortly to undergo, Bouvard and Pécuchet enter a temporary stage of acquisition. Their "museum" fills with what must surely be the most amazing literary collection of junk ever assembled. The Saint Peter—who ranks with Loulou as one of the inanimate super-delights in Flaubert's works—is alone worth the price of admission. But he is not alone: he stands (or leans)—an irreverently dissipated image of the Fisherman—surrounded by the flotsam and jetsam of all the worthless trivia of the centuries.

Or, one should say, century, for Bouvard and Pécuchet have not, despite all their efforts and expense, been able to penetrate the time barrier any more than they have achieved intellectual union with the material world. They have merely accumulated more of that part of reality
which is unnecessary, temporary, and—worse—subject to any unscrupulous interpretation. Their Celtic mania testifies both to the impossibility of acquiring any absolutely accurate historical data and to the equally misleading possibility of molding any matter to fit any form. They are instantly convinced, on very little evidence, of the wildest Celtic customs, of the most unlikely origins of the race, and finally of the authentic antiquity of a broken-down baptismal font. Their exchange of this treasure—which at the same time both is and is not a baptismal font: "D'abord, on n'avait pas besoin de ce bénitier, qui n'était pas un bénitier" (p. 123)—for the priest's porcelain soup tureen—which likewise may or may not be authentic Sévres—establishes the shifting mood and pattern of this chapter, whose every detail is a restatement of the radical divorce of mind from matter. 8

Their inability to establish a secure foundation for their research in prime sources, which are held to be more "reliable" than so-called "authorities" (and their vague awareness of the insoluble problem involved), inspires them to drop archeology and porcelain studies and delve into French history. There, they hope, will lie the elusive missing link which will set this frustrating chain of Being (and non-Being) straight. Alas, the data which fills the histories is itself based upon archeology and artifact—and then vice-versa all over again. They are more than ever
doomed to a hopeless circular treadmill of fruitless repetition.

Still, if the matter (the facts) of history is fixed and inaccessible, the spirit is boundless. Bouvard and Pécuchet feel called to conjure up whatever fantasies suit their imaginative recreation of the world. They long for the re-arrangement of the now-unalterable past. In exchange for its contingencies (which they believe are the cause of universal disasters), they construct a "pre-fab" architecture of absolute predictability. Finally, bored with the wishful manipulation of historical anecdotes and gossip, they renounce the attempt to interfere (theoretically) in the evolutionary process of chronology. Why bother with speculation about personal motivation, the strength of a lock, the insomnias of a guard when the illuminating sequence of cause and effect is buried too deep for mankind to grasp?

... qu'importe au développement de la Révolution, dont les origines sont profondes et les résultats incalculables? (p. 127)

In their total rejection of the minutely important in favor of the grand view, they miss the moderating truth that the larger is, materially at least, the sum of its tiniest parts. Unsteadied by the importance of mere accident in the evolution of events, they conclude that stability must rest in quantity: to absorb all the "factual" material of the past, contingent then but fixed now, must give one the
totality necessary to perceive the immutable, elusive law which somehow governs somewhere behind the scenes.

Hopeless. "Ils n'avient plus, sur les hommes et les faits de cette époque, une seule idée d'aplomb" (p. 127). History becomes for them a wall of dates and facts which effectively hides whatever reality existed in the past, just as their absurd mnemonic devices serve only to obliterate the reality they were devised to perpetuate.

Consequently, "...de l'insouciance des dates, ils passèrent au dédain des faits" (p. 129). They attempt to compensate for the intellectual rebuff they have received by creating their own--definitive, of course--history of the duc d'Angoulême. Again, the contraction occurs: from the history of the world they turn to the history of one man. But they discover again, to their chagrin, that the multiplication of phenomena is not confined to the macrocosm. The duc's portrait is as changing and illusory as anything in the material, spatial and chronological order. Furthermore, the contagion has spread! Their own private fortunes have, in fact, been undergoing an evolution under their very noses--and they have missed the action. They who bemoaned the impossibility of following the invisible changes of their own digestive systems have overlooked Gorju's uninhibited consumption of their women, their liquor, and their treasure chest.
\textquote{Nous ne savons pas!} dit Bouvard, \textquote{ce qui se passe dans notre ménage, et nous prétendons découvrir quels étaient les cheveux et les amours du duc d'Angoulême!}

(p. 135)

The material world having somehow gotten totally out of hand, they turn their full attention to Mind. Proposing to plumb the depths of psychology, they take up historical novels. This back door to history slams shut on them also, however, because they have not properly re-programmed themselves. The mental machinery is clogged with their former efforts at fact-gathering and is unprepared to handle the totally different "program" of art and psychology.

Pécuchet—ever at odds with his material—tries to revise Dumas \textquote{au point de vue de la science}, just as he earlier hoped to revise fact \textquote{au point de vue de l'imagination}. This constant shifting and adjustment of viewpoint and method never, of course, moves in the right direction to attain more than a modicum of satisfaction. The tension created is, in essence, a duplication of the downward gravitational pull which the shifting materialism of the world exerts upon the mind and spirit.

Bouvard, the worldly representative of profane time, absorbs Balzac in the hope of understanding social customs, while Pécuchet, true to his character as nature's image, wishes to be exalted by a view of the wretchedness of the human condition. While they are searching in art for the
emotional outlets their dilettantism requires, the miseries of the real world multiply outside their door. This midpoint chapter marks the conjunction of the frivolous and the profound, of theory and experience, of art and "real life." At this point, there is a subtle change of tone, and the undertow which has pulled, so far, against only Bouvard and Pécuchet begins to drag the entire society downward.

All their experience with art and aesthetics brings them no closer to an appreciation of the beauty or to an understanding of the meaning of the individual works than their scientific lessons increased their love of nature. Rather, they are aware of contradiction in theory and modes of expression, of rules which fail to generate masterpieces, of such a variety and diversity in beauty that it becomes impossible to define or even to recognize. Unable to create their own art, they are equally unable to "experience" properly the works of others. They are so over-stuffed with fragmented bits of ideas, they are never able to synthesize the activity of the mind with the sensitivity of the heart. For Bouvard and Pécuchet, there is none of the emotional escapism into art and fantasy indulged in by other Flaubertian protagonists.

Rather, the chapter on art encapsulates the overall structure of sterile frustration and focuses on the conflict
of abstraction versus experience. When Pécuchet proclaims that

\[ \ldots \text{il aurait voulu faire s'accorder} \]
\[ \text{les doctrines avec les œuvres, les critiques et les poètes, saisir} \]
\[ \text{l'essence du Beau.} \ldots \]\n
(p. 149)

he is rephrasing for the hundredth time the motif of the novel and the Faustian error of the deep structure. What he demands is the totality of vision and control which belongs only to God and which, when sought on the human level via logical intellectual processes, leads ironically to the stasis and fixity of the inanimate. Not only is this spiritual standstill the antithesis of creative intuition, but it invites the tragic (or nihilistic) flaw of the mechanistic would-be creator.

Bouvard and Pécuchet's search for "subject matter" together with their arguments over the proper stylistic devices necessary to express the Sublime and the Beautiful obscure the signals of the approaching Revolution and desensitize them to the misery (and beauty) surrounding them. Without that worldly attunement which develops and sustains the artist's virtue, without an understanding of the nature of the reciprocal arrangement between art and the world, the two eliminate any possibility of comprehending either. In an anticipation of the future, Flaubert strikes here the dissonant chord which seems about to deafen contemporary society.
The chapter on politics is effectively placed between those on art and love, forming a material link between the lost spiritual freedoms. The lack of creative, artistic union with the world is matched by the breaking of the social contract, which in turn is parodied by the figurative castrating of Bouvard by Mme Bordin's trickery and the infection of Pécuchet by Mélie. In each case, the commencement is promising, but the conclusion leads, as does each preceding chapter, to a reversal of expectations. The trees of liberty, planted with such optimism, are soon cut down again. Gorju's "career" as a rabble-rouser is nipped short by his arrest, and the once-glamorous minority begins to appear as stupid and self-serving as the majority. The schoolmaster is pitted against the priest; Bouvard quarrels with Pécuchet over a utopian—harmonious—society, and Rousseau is discovered to have been the enemy of the People.

The disillusionment is universal. Where the artistic conflicts of the preceding chapter strike at the inadequacy of the spirit, the political reversals undermine man's hope to transcend himself through the march of history. It seems that the only area remaining in the natural order, wherein he may make his effective mark, is that of sexuality itself. However, Pécuchet is stimulated to satisfy his desires only when he receives a model to imitate in the accidentally observed passion of Mme Castillon for Gorju. Thus, even
nature cannot be relied on to act with the spontaneity of instinct. It, like beauty bound by rules, government restricted by ill-fitting laws, and revolution nullified by counter-revolution, is inhibited and restrained.

Bouvard and Pécuchet are, in effect, acquiring more and more "forms" to which they mold their malleable minds, yet the more structured they become, the less freedom they enjoy. Similarly, the more possessions they accumulate, the more shabby and disreputable becomes their house, just as the world itself succumbs to weariness and pollution as man fills it with his devices and contraptions.

Their defeat by the two women, Mélie and Mme Bordin, is perfectly orchestrated to fit the personality and structural role of each victim. Bouvard, the knowing sly plotter, is thoroughly bested by the hard-headed, earthy tenacity of Mme Bordin—whose constant fingering of her long watch chain hints at her ability to subdue and master the male animal. Pécuchet's disease repeats the original wounding of man's nature and the indelible sign thereof, his innocent—appearing Eve offers him the apple, and he receives an enduring stain to remind him of his fall.

The chapter ends with a renewal of their somewhat strained friendship in a sort of purification rite: each splashing the other in numerous baths, their nakedness a scandal to the ever-encroaching Others who peer through the
lattice.

Their damp joy is short-lived, however, for they undergo, in the remaining chapters, Flaubert's harshest attack. He commences with the body through their discovery of gymnastics. The paraphernalia necessary to a mastery of the skill saddens them, and, lacking equipment, they renounce all effort at physical exercise, just as their former need for specialized instruments thwarted their scientific exercises. When they attempt to make do with the see-saw and the stilts, we see a parody of their alternating hopes and disappointments, terminating in a gargantuan step upward which immediately lands Pécuchet flat on his back surrounded by broken bean props, the collapsed phallic symbol of their impotence.

The chain of accidental cause and effect continues to drag them along like pet monkeys, and they discover "table-turning" while buying wine to heal their ailing bodies. From participating in seances to experimenting with magnetism is a small step, and the two friends take it eagerly. Pécuchet even persuades Bouvard that he is a "born magnetizer," he is the energy source which stimulates motion in matter. Pécuchet, and the material universe, await the signal of life and the energy of the evolution of forms in order to exist, while Bouvard depends upon the quietude and malleability of his object to find his own fulfillment. If either element pulls counterwise, the result is an impasse.
Thus we see that the Revolution makes only the tiniest of difference to the individuals of Chavignolles since, despite their trees and slogans, their spirit belongs entirely to the status quo; the thesis-antithesis contradictions of Bouvard and Pécuchet's intellectual arguments never lead to a synthesis or a step forward because their partnership represents a non-productive tension. Like the medicine-man, they prefer sustained intellectual excitation to any release of self in true union with another. Since this sort of transcendence is followed by a death, they are, in effect, struggling to survive. Flaubert's nihilism appears at this point absolute, since, representing both the union of matter and form as well as nature and history, Bouvard and Pécuchet's inability to make change meaningful denies much hope for the future of the race. As a prophecy of the future, the metaphorical statement is particularly depressing. Bouvard and Pécuchet blame—directly or indirectly—most of their inadequacies on inferior, inaccessible, or impractical machinery. Since they also represent the computer of modern society, they are the malfunctioning machine as well as its deficient operator, and thus we find that we too are pulled into the vortex of the last circle of Flaubert's infernal comedy.

The ironies of the final chapters increase on every level. Bouvard's cure of La Barbée through his verbalization of her repressed sexual fantasies makes use of the "little
worm" imagery—cause of all man's troubles—and reveals the pathos of the blind leading the halt. For despite the descriptive prominence of the phallic tree as the "healers'" magnetic center, Bouvard has clearly not been promoted to metaphorical virility. We are told that Mayor Foureau calmly removes the last of his host's pipe heads, reducing him to zero and increasing the final irony of his accusation as Mélie's seducer. Bouvard's success with psycho-therapy is balanced—or mocked—by his and Pécuchet's "magnetic" effect on the bloated cow. Tension and repression are released everywhere but within the medicine-men themselves. Furthermore, they encounter threats and suspicions from the professional healing establishment—doctor and priest. They, therefore, turn to the alternative to psychology offered by the schoolmaster: spiritualism.

Le spiritisme pose en dogme l'amélioration fatale de notre espèce.

(p. 195)

We are reminded of the Faustian irony, of the distance separating ambition and performance when, during the scholars' inquiry into the relationship of will to matter, the example is cited of the Bavarian who could cause grapes to ripen. This is precisely the cheap trick to which great Faustus is reduced at the end of his career as he descends the hierarchical ladder to hell. Like Faustus, Bouvard and Pécuchet slip from spiritualism into magic and conjuring;
in their case, however, Beelzebub is as absent as Jehovah. Furthermore, the sorcerers frighten away Germaine and are obliged to replace her with an even worse apprentice, Marcel, half-human, half-animal.

Between Marcel's arrival and their philosophical studies, Pécuchet manages to hypnotize himself by staring at his own cap. This bit of absurdity creates a subtle transition between the ludicrous and the profound, however, for the cap hides Pécuchet's syphilitic condition. The manifestation of the disease on his forehead is appropriate for the philosopher, yet it is also the physical mark of failure and debility which makes him part of the Marcehs, the wounded, of the race.

The study of philosophy intensifies their misery. Still demanding, now with frightening urgency, a law, an unchanging Essence, to counter absurdity and remove contingency, their metaphysical thirst materializes in their superstitious belief in the Od, the mysterious universal agent, source of power and the conqueror of time.

Si nous pouvions le tenir, on n'aurait pas besoin de la force, de la durée. Ce qui demande des siècles se développerait en une minute; tout miracle serait praticable et l'univers serait à notre disposition.

(p. 196)

They are like children playing with matches beside a can of gasoline. The inevitable explosion sends them spiralling into the void:
Il leur semblait être en ballon, la nuit, par un froid glacial, emportés d'une course sans fin, vers un abîme, sans fond, et sans rien autour d'eux que l'insaisissable, l'immobile, l'éternel.

(p. 203)

The sustained silence and immobility which they sense underlie the frantic movement of their intellectual odyssey does indeed seem to flow through the novel as part of the understructure. Always at intervals throughout every chapter, Flaubert inserts a brief description of the quiet continuity, the unruffled constant rhythms of beauty or ugliness of the countryside, which, while presenting movement and change in appearances, never fulfills the dream of radical, essential and permanent transformation. All of the implications contained in the changing cloud formations, the windswept heights of the Caen falaise, the birdcalls and dew-wet grass of Bouvard's house, the exploding haystacks, the decaying dog, the pelting, drenching rainstorms, Victorine's innocently sensual delight in the scent of wildflowers under the sun are invariably overlooked by the two questors. In their passion to discover or invent the law of laws, they seem powerless to perceive the most obvious patterns of existence. By expanding aimlessly through the multiplication of data, they hope to contract to a tiny point of cohesion. But totality does not equal unity. They never comprehend this but continue--in their eternity of copying--to preserve for their spiritual heirs all the bits of information which
will never lead anywhere for them either.

Despite their mental obliviousness with respect to the material world, it never ceases to project itself upon them. Their house is a wreck, their money gone, their land diminished, and worst of all, even inanimate objects seem to become deliberately malicious. When Bouvard stubs his toe on the Saint Peter during a philosophic "expedition," they react violently to this symbol of the accumulated overload. As Alvin Toffler observes,

... man has limited capacity..., and overloading the system leads to serious breakdown of performance... [he] is [then] likely to become tense and irritable. He may even take a swat at the machine out of pure frustration. Ultimately, he will give up trying to keep pace. 9

Their "swat" is aimed first at the extension of the machine, its "matériel," when they heave Saint Peter into the former manure ditch; they soon aim at the machine itself with their attempted suicide. Although the act is botched--like every other act--their ultimate decision is, indeed, simply to give up trying to keep pace.

It is interesting to note that Flaubert temporarily redeems his two despairing heroes in a perfect reversal of the Saint Peter episode--as they look from their window, not down upon broken bits of statuary, in a manure pit, but onto the steady lights of the living Church.
Again, there is the momentary exaltation experienced in the emotional satisfaction Bouvard and Pécuchet receive from the Christmas Mass. Unfortunately, their intellectual explorations do not seal their new faith but rather destroy it. At the conclusion of the chapter on religion, they have virtually exhausted the scope of human knowledge without learning anything except the bitter lesson that everyone else is—if possible—more ignorant than they. They have examined their own consciences, and consciousness, and discovered absolute banality; they have searched for the Mind in matter and the essence of God and found carcasses of dead dogs and envisioned the void. Since their own experience has been a failure, they presume a second chance and take over, in the final chapter, the care and education of Victor and Victorine.

As usual, they proclaim one thing and proceed to do another. The two children are to be brought up like fresh, beautiful plants—nature's children. But they soon discover that laissez-faire is unbearable and the search for the proper method or system begins once again. Nothing works. Victor is brutal and stupid with the egotism and natural selfishness of an animal; Victorine is sly, flighty, and eventually promiscuous. The two old men, who have had a hard enough time coping with the inanimate and the abstract, have no chance whatever against these two concrete expressions of the Other. The banishment of the children
to the kitchen, where the great gardening experiment was to have been celebrated, brings to a full circle the adventures of Bouvard and Pécuchet.

Their original intention to settle peacefully and be farmers concludes with the association of these natural products of humanity with the monstrous "prodigies" of the early garden. They are the offspring of the Others against whose encroachment and observation Bouvard and Pécuchet have struggled throughout the novel. Their failure to convert any of their neighbors to a greater freedom of mind and their inability to reform the children illustrates the strength of the mindless—and the unfortunate tenacity and consistency of habit where it is least desirable. Victor and Victorine are the composite figure of the decay of humanity and the reverse of creative evolution. They are part of the fodder whose easy availability makes the mechanization of society possible, and then keeps it functioning. Victor and Victorine—whose ironic names and annihilated potential indicate much more than a nineteenth century "realist's" statement about genetic determinism—is the author's renunciation of the possibility of human regeneration.

Representing Mind, [Flaubert] fought the encroachment of matter and mechanism into the empty places that should have been minds.10

The children, with their supporting cast of Others, represent
as they become slaves to the limited, downward pull of mindless instinct, a loss of natural freedom, of goodness and grace, just as Bouvard and Pécuchet prefigure the opposite type of loss: mental over-productivity and diversity which finally denies them all freedom of thought.

. . . there comes a time when choice, rather than freeing the individual, becomes so complex, difficult and costly, that it turns into its opposite. There comes a time, in short, when choice turns into over-choice and freedom into un-freedom.

(Toffler, p. 283)

Flaubert's notes for the conclusion of the novel indicate a final, mad scene certainly equal in the ferocity of its satire to the dragging down to hell of the tormented Faustus. The folk of Chavignolles seem literally to seep into Bouvard's house like a disembodied spirit—despite his indignant protests. Suddenly, they are all there, demanding the old scholars' dispossession and incarceration. But a literal prison would be too simplistic; besides, Faust damn himself. And so, Bouvard and Pécuchet are rescued by the condescending intercession of the Others: the travelling salesman, Barberou; Marescot, the notary; Vaucorbeil, the doctor; and the Count de Faverges.

Merely a reprieve. A nasty celestial joke. For they are truly dispossessed: "...tout leur a craqué dans les mains. Ils n'ont plus aucun intérêt dans la vie" (p. 275). All that remains is to represent their eternal imprisonment.
Flaubert thus carries out the deep structural statement of man's tragic desire to be God—which dooms him to eternal separation from that which he most desires—through the metaphors of matter and form (their union and their antithesis) and of history and nature (their evolution and their decay). The image which expresses the sterility and impotence of this continuing dialectic bears a frightening resemblance to the repetitive, but not regenerative, mechanism of contemporary society: the computer. If, with all of this, the Freudian interpretation seems to have been given less emphasis than in the other works, it is not because 

___Bouvard et Pécuchet___ offers little support for that exegesis, but rather that the metaphysical implications of the castration motif dominate the sexual meaning as the series of works approaches its conclusion. However, since the physical sexual imagery establishes the framework, as it were, for its more abstract connotations, it is no less important here than in the other works to trace the continuity of the novel's Freudian symbolism.

The general tendency in this work is toward a parody or a devaluation of the male principle, especially as it
appears in opposition to the destructive female. While Bouvard and Pécuchet often seem to be seeking a nurturing Mother, the images which materialize generally smother their dreams. This unhappy antagonism, which ends not in Pécuchet's elopement with Mélie or in the marriage of Bouvard and Mme Bordin, but in the perpetual sterility of their own union, is the sign of the times—theirs and ours.

Their initial encounter combines all the symbolic accoutrements of a wedding: the drunken guest, the officiating priest, the rented honeymoon cab. Indeed, Bouvard and Pécuchet's relationship during the early days of their friendship parallels a sort of ecstatic "just married" partnership. They discover affinities and reflections of the self in each other: the mirror reflection which triggers romantic passion. Each begins to take on the other's character traits; they tour together the mysteries of the city, its strangeness a proper contrast for their new intimacy. Their union is emphasized by their dissociation from the rest of the world: they play at being English foreigners and reject their co-workers. Their first passion is rescued from post-marital disillusionment and its inevitable ennui by Bouvard's inheritance (Pécuchet's dowry goes for a downpayment on the house).

They flee the city (its organization does not represent the type of femininity they are individually seeking)
for the more nourishing comfort of the countryside, and the "marriage" settles in to its structural role of potential productivity. The country idyll is filled with typical male-female object symbols which demonstrate the inability of the two men to supersede the order of tradition or nature and bring new life from an impotent breed.

We see the continual emphasis and over-valuation given to those aspects of their studies which can be seen as symbolizing the male principle: the over-extended garden props, Pécuchet's incessant use of the watering can, Bouvard's continued bleeding of the stock, their repeated attempts to climb or hoist themselves upwards, their violent smashing of snails, the attempt to "distort" the natural inclination of the fruit trees (and thereby to dominate the female prerogative), and their abnormal terror of the dog which interrupts their intellectual conquest of the cosmos, all seem to indicate their efforts to construct a male universe which can subsist independently of the female. Neither has had the childhood male-female relationship which develops the ability to form a normal psychological partnership with the other sex. (Bouvard's brief marriage appears more as a token indication of past experience with the world than as a symbol of male-female union). Consequently, at every step they are defeated—if not by an actively hostile female symbol then by the collapse or inadequacy of the male. The bell jars smother the seedlings, Pécuchet's
stuffed backpack inhibits his climb up the falaise, the
ladders give them vertigo, the stilts collapse, the
snails thrive, the melons are bitter and inordinately large,
the wine vat explodes, their removal of the rocks from their
little knoll ruins it, and their experiments with all types
of machinery are totally frustrated. This is a strikingly
Freudian vision of the world in terms of female dominance
and male castration. Freud writes:

The female genitalia are symbolically
represented by all such objects as share
with them the property of enclosing a
space or are capable of acting as
receptacles: such as pits [--Saint
Peter is tossed into the manure pit--]
hollows and caves, and also jars and
bottles, and boxes of all sorts and
sizes, chests, coffers, pockets, and so
forth. Ships too come into this category.
Many symbols refer to the uterus than
(sic) to the other genital organs: thus
cupboards, stoves and, above all, rooms.
Room symbolism here links up with that
of houses whilst doors and gates represen-
t the genital opening. Moreover,
material of different kinds is a symbol
of woman,--wood, paper, and objects made
of these, such as tables and books.
From the animal world, snails and
mussels at any rate must be cited as
unmistakable female symbols. . .churches
and chapels are symbols of a woman.

The breasts. . .as well as the larger
hemispheres of the female body, are
represented by apples, peaches and fruit
in general. . . . The complicated
topography of the female sexual organs
accounts for their often being repre-
sented by a landscape with rocks, woods,
and water, whilst the imposing mechanism
of the male sexual apparatus lends it to
symbolization by all kinds of complicated
machinery.12 (Italics are Freud's)
The "punishment" meted out for their failure to fertilize the earth or penetrate the hidden chambers of life is the manifestation of their (privately suspected and feared) impotence: the threatening dog. The dog, according to Röheim, guards the portal to the Paradisial enclosure and therefore is seen as a threat of castration to any intruder. It is interesting that their final and most traumatic experience (in that it "freezes" further spiritual development) occurs after they stumble in the fields upon the decayed dog carcass. The gates are no longer protected --but not because the power of the hero has slain the guardian. Rather, he has simply outlived his time and passed on--as ephemeral and meaningless as the paradise he defended--into the common grave of all Flaubertian forms.

From the point of view of the hesitancy and inadequacy of Bouvard and Pécuchet vis-à-vis the female, this sign that she is at their disposal, so to speak, and that they no longer have any excuse for failure to act definitively, is a terrifying moment of truth.

If they cannot achieve mastery over the female principle, Bouvard and Pécuchet desire the comfort of a return to the womb. Their life ultimately points to the death of the spirit, and it is fitting that their symbolic defeat before the Woman-Partner should inspire their embrace of death in a reunion with the Mother.
Birth is regularly expressed by some connection with water; we are plunging into or emerging from water, that is to say, we give birth or are being born. Now let us not forget that this symbol has a twofold reference to the actual facts of evolution. Not only are all land mammals, from which the human race itself has sprung, descended from creatures inhabiting the water... but also every single mammal, every human being, has passed the first phase of existence in water... as an embryo in the amniotic fluid of the mother's womb--and thus, at birth, emerged from water.

(Freud, p. 168)

We can hardly avoid the connection with Bouvard and Pécuchet's many encounters with water. The pouring down (male) of water (watering can, rainstorms) is invariably destructive for them, but their immersion in tubs of water (female) pleases them--although it is also the occasion for the introduction of a hostile element. (The dog first; later, the suspicious villagers' gossip) The combination of male and female water symbols produces an ambiguous result. Pécuchet is aroused by the sight of Mélie pumping water into a tub: pleasant at first but disastrous in the long run. As the expression of a reverse direction in human evolution (this last stage of man reveals not perfection of form but its gradual dissolution: a return to the embryonic level of development), the water/bathing imagery is another instance of Flaubert's sustained irony.

As Bouvard and Pécuchet's intellectual explorations
continue, the castration motif becomes more varied in its expression. The conflicting pictures of the head and hair of the duc d'Angoulême cause them to renounce their historical biography; the porcelain collection is abandoned when they smash the soup tureen--only to suspect (in total frustration) that the bowl was authentic. In the first instance, the symbolic possibility of the castration of the male model disturbs them radically. And worse, when they return home resolved to renounce any connection with the ambiguous duc, they discover that Gorju, the male of males in the novel, has ruined their precious chest (stolen their female) and thereby rendered them impotent. In the second case, the authenticity of the Sévres bowl is a talion punishment of pure frustration for their violation of the female symbol.

They then "act out" parts of Phèdre (an over-demanding female type, to say the least), Tartuffe (the male imposter unmasked by a female), and Hernani (death demanded for association with the female). Their philosophic flights are grounded, at least temporarily, by their terror of drifting through frigid space suspended in a balloon. As Freud states,

... part of the phenomenon of erection leads to symbolic representation by means of balloons, aeroplanes, and, just recently, Zeppelins. (p. 162)
The sexual demands imposed on the virile male are just too much for Bouvard and Pécuchet.

Although Bouvard is able to stimulate or manipulate the erotic fantasies of others (Mme Bordin, La Barbée) as a good medicine-man should, he cannot fulfill his own needs. In fact, the culmination of their sexual frustration and impotence is represented by the violent ejection of Saint Peter, the penultimate Father Figure (even if he is a bit tipsy) and image of male dominance (even if he does only dominate a butter dish) into the (female) grave of the sterile fertilizer.

Their disastrous adoption of Victor and Victorine simply publicizes their humiliation and defeat. Naturally, they, whose impotence has been demonstrated on every level, cannot produce the offspring which humanity so desperately needs. Their mismanagement of the children also adds another touch to Flaubert's backward evolution: the vicious child now rules the incompetent father. The ultimate infantile malice and sexual interference occurs when Victor steals and demolishes Pécuchet's coconuts! Then, as if to hedge their bets, the partners attempt to extend their ineffective influence on the children of the village through their phrenological analyses. The chorus of miniature Esaus swells, and the birthright is passed on to an imposter race.

Finally, Bouvard and Pécuchet abandon their dream of
prosperity and fulfillment, substituting for true union the artificial proximity of their double desk where, in an absurd imitation of the act of love, they will push their quills back and forth eternally.

**LA TENTATION DE SAINT ANTOINE**

The cleverly harmonious ambiguity of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*’s conclusion explodes into a cacophony of nihilistic analogies in this final work. Where the novel parodies the Faustian quest for an infinite accumulation of bits of knowledge, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* illustrates the end result of the effort. Although even the repeated shocks experienced by Saint Antoine subside into a dawn of prayerful silence, here, as in the other works, Flaubert’s tranquility disguises a profound irony. The superficial peace represents the brief, self-deluding pause before the spasms of doubt begin again: a cycle of disintegration which repeats endlessly and yet never brings the miracle of real oblivion. The transformation of the sun into the face of Christ is not a sign of redemption but rather a mirage created for the spiritually exhausted by the tenacity of their desire.

In Saint Antoine’s sufferings, we observe the ultimate negation of the archetypal, sacred and cyclical movement of time. Although the work’s deep structure repeats the angelic temptation to be God, it is the linear encroachment
of accumulated history which overwhelms the saint. Bouvard
and Pécuchet move horizontally across knowledge just as
history draws man in a straight line through time. The
cyclical, in the novel as in La Tentation, is not excluded,
but its role is to indicate the nihilistic paradox of
repetition without regeneration. Antoine's final embrace of
matter, wherein endless forms and combinations of forms may
subsist, announces the later passion of man to go forward
and multiply, to rearrange and fragment an ancient solidity.
Yet in repudiating the sacred rites as futile nostalgia,
Flaubert does not, like Marx, promise the fruition of his
new and profane temporality. Instead, he seems to prophesy
the forward compression of time and history until its
weight, as heavy as the atom, forces man again into the
posture of prayer. Since he then appears to have returned to
his primal obsequies, the pattern of the sacred rhythms is
retained, but it is totally meaningless, and the new celebrant
is only a shadow of the original.

As Bouvard et Pécuchet points the way to the sterile
data fantasies of modern computerized societies, La
Tentation corresponds to its emotional equivalent: a sort of
intellectual future shock. Antoine suffers from the
litéralement nauseating parade of all that man's past spiritual
and intellectual experience has retained. The sudden juxta-
position of these accumulations and his despairing vision of
their future annihilation creates in him the same terror
which contemporary man feels as the effects of thousands of years of history suddenly overtake him. They both undergo the "dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future."\(^{14}\)

The arrival and its consequences—as we see in *La Tentation*—does not promise a plenitude and a fulfillment of expectation, no Golden Age, but the desolation of multiplicity and relativism. The loss of the Absolute renders the Flaubertian man impotent, and he is forced to seek the source of life not in himself but in the image of Another—whether that Other be the object of his instinct, will, imagination, or intellect. With Saint Antoine as with Bouvard and Pécuchet, the means to salvation are sought in the "debaucheries of the mind,"\(^{15}\) but mental lust, like physical lust, is never appeased, only sated. And the rapidly changing forms, the kaleidoscopic display of similarity and contradiction, while imitating bursts of passion, demonstrate once again that desire and union are infinitely separated. Thus, in *La Tentation*, the saint's enormous appetite for mental debauchery does not indicate either a virile imagination or a fertile rapport between the world and the mind, but is rather a continuation of the castration motif. In this case, Antoine's repressed sexual yearnings and anxieties determine the images which appear to him and extend the roots of Flaubert's nihilism into the active principle of life itself.
The setting of La Tentation represents, typically, the sexual preoccupations of the protagonist. Atop the cliffs overlooking ancient Thebes, Antoine's world consists of a crescent-shaped platform surrounded by huge stones; his hut is flat-roofed, and the door has been removed. The landscape is as suggestive of the female presence as are the majority of his possessions: a pitcher, bread loaf, book, basket, mats—and a knife. At the edge of the cliff, a palm tree bends over the abyss toward the lake-like contours of the Nile below. A cross balances the other side of the setting. From almost every angle, then, female images predominate—with the notable exception of the knife, the tree, and the cross.

The knife serves as the first symbol in the castration motif: a violent and fierce manifestation of the theme of impotence developed in Bouvard et Pécuchet. The tree, although a phallic image, does not seem to indicate adequate or fulfilled virility, for it bends downward, seeking perhaps a return to the womb-like waters of the Nile: a desire periodically indicated by Antoine. Only the cross remains rigidly upright and fixed throughout the work. But it rises, not as symbolic of Antoine's transcendence, but as the prohibition to his sexual fantasies. Moreover, it introduces into history the event which henceforth necessitates choice. As the inflexible image of the Absolute, it represents the defeat of the "saint" whose delirium before the relativism
of all being is both his torment and the cause of his spiritual impotence.

Saint Antoine's initial complaint seems to recall an era of lost virility; he remembers, with significant longing, the days when his joy was the repetitive carrying of water up the mountain to his hut. Now, however, he suffers the sensation of aridity, and his thoughts turn to the moment of his separation from the woman: his mother, sister, and, finally, Ammonaria. A sort of ritual death (entombment) follows immediately upon his loss of the female, and he remembers the fearful hallucinations experienced in the tomb of the Pharoahs. He emerges, only to take up residence in the ruined citadel—an indication of his disintegrating psychic state—where he is tormented by scorpions and eagles, the brutal male images which fore-shadow his later masochistic desires. The caravan which "rescues" him merely serves to intensify his misery for it delivers him into the care of the blind (castrated) Didymus. The two, teacher and pupil, then spend each evening staring down upon the fertile sea stretched out below the rooftops of Alexandria.

Antoine is astonished at the multitude of conflicts within the city: Jews who refuse to pay taxes, coalitions which hope to expel the Romans, a bewildering variety of heresies. The confusion drives him into solitude once
more although he is still sought out for his wisdom and his counsel. Nevertheless, it is the city—with its female connotations—which continues to draw him irresistibly. This time he "thirsts" after martyrdom, but the death he desires is inextricably linked to his erotic fantasies of Ammonaria. This unsatisfied passion is sublimated into the unfulfilled dream of paternity as his intense loneliness awakens his longing for Hilarion: "C'était un fils pour moi!" (p. 42) Then, as a great triangular formation of birds passes overhead, he dreams of journeys to "interesting places" and luxuriates in the illusion of other successful lives he might have led. Each image begins in the most humble and orthodox manner but is quickly exaggerated into a dream of luxury, power, and, above all, companionship. His ensuing guilt materializes into the jackals which peer at him through the lattice, a bestial reminder of the leering villagers in Bouvard et Pécuchet.

These mental indulgences are chastised by a reading from the Acts of the Apostles which, unfortunately, seem to justify Antoine's repressed desires of gluttony and violence—all the excesses of the flesh which will become manifest shortly in his vision of the Seven Deadly Sins.

After the epitome of sensual delight, the Queen of Sheba, has appeared to him, however, his temptation mounts swiftly to the metaphysical order: where there is change,
man desires order, but where he feels the presence of law, there is the seduction of rearrangement and manipulation.

Elle est sublime, cette science-là. Car le monde... forme un ensemble dont toutes les parties influent les unes sur les autres, comme les organes d'un seul corps... On pourrait donc modifier ce qui paraît être l'ordre immuable?

(p. 45)

As if in response to his question, the shadows cast by the cross merge into the fearsome shape of horns, emphasizing the essential and inescapable ambiguity of the original crescent-shaped platform on which the saint's house stands. The transformations of which he dreams continue in strongly sexual imagery: the phallic tree becomes a woman; the stool and book change to a swallow-covered bush. Antoine's efforts to interrupt their metamorphoses by extinguishing the flame only releases into the darkness a display of more erotic symbols, until, exhausted, he loses all sense of existence and falls, as it were, into the great silence of the world.

Antoine's first encounter with the darkness of the soul has brought him through a symbolic death-memory into the realm of the unconscious where the messages exchanged, stored, forgotten, refused which have passed between conscious light and this dark land are gathered together to come all at once to a monstrous fruition. It is the moment of Antoine's collision with his own history, and the
"premature" futuristic visions which these accumulations project.

This condensation of "evolution" begins in the material order with the arrival of the Seven Deadly Sins. Each dissolves into the next, forming an undulating chain of temptations, all relating ultimately to an increasingly perverted dream of male dominance. Antoine's thirst returns to torment him with the dryness of repressed passion. Its intensity transforms the mat on which he kneels into a bed which in turn becomes a shallow craft, and he dreams of gliding between banks of the canal, driven by the wind, enveloped in the vastness of giant water lillies. The voluptuousness and security of this erotic lullabye is marred by Antoine's realization that the jackals have stolen his bread. They interject the abrasive reality which tears away the illusion and camouflage from man's thoughts and forces him to rediscover his loss.

The abrupt awakening from his fantasy seems to be a sort of birth shock after the soothing coziness of his brief voyage, which the saint experiences as he enters the world of sin and its disguises. The passage itself, once one is committed to it, is an easy one which lulls resistance.

His first need in this new "existence" is that of nourishment; an incredible banquet table replaces the bed of his initiatory vision. Of particular delight to him is
his anticipation of devouring the wild boar: a "primal feast" to ensure the virility of the participant. The next scene presents Antoine the occasion to test his potency. Here, avarice replaces gluttony, and he imagines in the gold of his vision the power to buy the Emperor's wife; further, he imagines the act itself as he embraces his coins hidden deep within a rocky cave.

. . . je me ferai creuser dans le roc une chambre qui sera couverte à l'intérieur de lames de bronze—et je viendrai là, pour sentir les piles d'or s'enfoncer sous mes talons; j'y plongerai mes bras comme dans des sacs de grain. Je veux m'en frotter le visage, me coucher dessus!

(p. 52)

Here, Antoine is subjected to a sudden recall to consciousness, and his anger at the temptation's strength passes from impotent fury against himself to a projected rage at the world. The sexual overtones of his encounter with gluttony and avarice is repaid by the talion punishment. He attempts a suicide (with its suggestion of castration), but the knife drops and the moment passes. The following Thebaid monks' slaughter of the Arians becomes, for the suicide-mangé, an erotic substitute for his own castration, and he revels in the sensual bloodbath which ensues.

This anger, in turn, becomes sexually-oriented pride, when, as the Emperor's confidante, he attends the Imperial horse races. As Antoine rises in Constantine's and the world's estimation, he stimulates his vanity even further
by observing that the Fathers of the Council of Nicea have become groomsmen to the Emperor's horses. They, the spiritual directors of the world, whose creed had divided and sub-divided the brotherhood of men, caress the legs, comb the manes, and paint the shoes of the image of man's passion.

It is interesting that Nebuchanezzar—farther removed in time from Antoine than are the Fathers—has a more immediate and radical effect on him. The King, whose approach to God was more graphically direct (the ultimate phallic challenge, so to speak) than the logical bondage of the Fathers, transmits his thoughts to Antoine. The mind consumes the man and Antoine becomes Nebuchanezzar. The erotic susceptibility of Antoine's character is illustrated in this acceptance of lust and devaluation of theology.

His realization of his spiritual degradation (he actually begins to imitate the bellowing bull which personifies Nebuchanezzar's corrupt thoughts) leads again to the temptation of self-punishment. This time it is not castration but flogging which seduces his imagination. Again, however, Antoine is returned in Flaubert's vicious circle to the vision's symbolic point of origin, and he dreams of a perverted lovemaking as he and Ammonaria, bound to the same pillar—all that remains of Nebuchanezzar's Tower—share in the voluptuous pleasure of their torture.
Finally, the remnants of his encounter with the King are consumed in the presence of the Queen of Sheba, whose allurements go beyond the world of sexuality and physical delight to encompass all that the parade of sins has implied, all the conceivable artificial and natural treasures of man's desire, "Je ne suis pas une femme, je suis un monde" (p. 62).

With the sign of the cross, Antoine manages to send her off, yet his victory is ambiguous and sets the tone for his later and greatest loss: the response which is uncertain, the reply which is either a sob—or a chuckle. Is it possible, then, that despite the pageantry of all man's effort, his daring, and his denial, that the tempter is as indifferent to his fate as the impassible God? Is man's soul, then, of such insignificant value that the Devil's loss of it elicits not a shriek from hell, but merely a bored yawn? The ennui and the waste which marks the final dissolution of the gods and their creeds—and with them testifies to the futility of the "necessary" choice—anticipates the modern experience of exaggerated relativism and indecision of the victims of future shock.

In fact, the next series of temptations takes a definite turn in this direction, and Antoine's effort to achieve fulfillment is transferred from the sexual to the mental plane. Hilarion, the disciple—a great irony since it
is Antoine who follows and Hilarion who leads--appears first as the child-dwarf: a manifestation of Antoine's earlier memory-image of him. His first words, "Je n'étais pas si loin que tu le supposes" (p. 64), emphasize the ambiguous character of all tempters-temptations. Here we feel the closeness of intellectual frailty to physical weakness: a more sophisticated version of Nebuchanezzar's bull. Despite man's enormous pride in and dependence on the intellect as savior, the message is clear: mind is not really superior to flesh at all.

Hilarion launches his attack, interestingly enough, with a subtle invitation to collectivism. He begins with the debunking of heroes: all models, all figures worthy of imitation are all the same--concealed pits of corruption, hardly any better than Antoine himself. The saint's increasingly smug responses show that he has fallen immediately into Hilarion's trap, a trap which also constitutes an essential part of our modern illness. The constant bombardment of information, which like an acid removes the mystery and the ideal from figures of importance, drives men into herds of indistinguishable individuals. Where modern man chooses the narcotic of "equality" to help him ignore the void left by the departed hero, Saint Antoine justifies his continuation of the solitary life, after having "lost" his hero models, not by heroic fidelity to his own soul, but by a renunciation of action.
L'homme, étant esprit, doit se retirer des choses mortelles. Toute action le dégrade.

(p. 66)

The profound tendency to consider action essentially degrading (not to say impossible) may be the common flaw in all of Flaubert's heroes which causes their unconquerable inability to act decisively or effectively.

Hilarion next casts a net of truth and fallacy, cleverly interwoven, over his victim.

Hypocrite qui s'enfonce dans la solitude pour se livrer mieux au débordement de ses convoitises. Tu te prives de viandes, de vin, d'étuvées, d'esclaves et d'honneurs; mais comme tu laisse ton imagination t'offrir des banquet, des parfums, des femmes nues et des foules applaudissantes! Ta chasteté n'est qu'une corruption plus subtile, et ce mépris du monde l'impuissance de ta haine contre lui.

(p. 66)

This is the pit of temptation. If man's security in his own spiritual honesty can be cracked, there is no saintly act he can ever accomplish which will not—in his own eyes—be suspect. The necessity then for greater and more agonizing soul-searching and conscience-examining never alleviates the uncertainty (which spoils and hinders action), but draws the victim deeper into the obscurities of eventual despair—or madness.

Hilarion never pursues any one path of attack to its end, however; he merely—in the beginning—drops the seeds which he will harvest later. From the probable truth of
his analysis of Antoine's "sainthood," he moves lightly to the annoying fallacies of Jesus' un-anchorite-like "happiness" and "community spirit." Every escape from his reasoning has been cleverly cut off by the doubt cast at first on unconscious motives. If Antoine wisely avoids these arguments damaging to faith, he is giving in to spiritual laziness; if he enters the contest, since Satan has more "facts" and "logic" at his disposal, Antoine must lose. Hilarion wins his victories through the sheer mass and multiplicity of natural forms and ideas which he is allowed to control. Antoine is simply outnumbered.

Nor can he join Hilarion and defeat him on his own terms; indeed, this was the truth of Bouvard et Pécuchet. The computerized mind is not equipped to know intuitively and therefore draws only the most superficial and misleading conclusions from its perception of the world.

Hilarion, consequently, attempts to lure Antoine into a sort of computer-science approach to God: he must try to "comprehend" God—not suffer for Him. He is not to pray for an intuitive (through Charity) knowledge of God, but he must open his mind to every "informational" source available—all having equal value. It is a simple matter to "program" Antoine—as Hilarion immediately does with his contradictory scriptural quotations—so that the final print-out reveals only doubt and confusion. Since Antoine reacts much too
excitedly to the challenge of miraculous authenticity, Hilarion returns to the abstractions of "legitimate" research: Angels, Numbers, germs, and metamorphosis. The four subjects compose a fascinating pattern of man's past history and, symbolically, of his future disasters. From the angelic hierarchy through the multiplication of human individuality to the origin of evil and disease to the final metamorphosis of the fallen man (tempted by the angel become serpent), Antoine will see the stages of the downward voyage. For the projection of the future inherent in this sequence, we see the ultimate potential of the computer, the new machinery of the cosmos, at work: in Angels there is the idea of immateriality and abstraction; in Numbers, that of the mathematical multiplication and genetic equation; these two elements serve as the fuel necessary to the operations of the machine. Germs imply illness and consequently the cure for many—perhaps all—physical and mental disorders. We have seen the ultimate direction this science has taken in the recent experiments with cloning, the rearrangement of human genetic form. What metamorphosis now? Saint Antoine's final ecstatic hallucination pales beside the cool logic of modern science.

The thought of the knowledge offered him gives Antoine a feeling of mid-air suspension; then, as the full impact of his adventure strikes him, he falls suddenly
backward.

The following chapter reintroduces the temporarily suspended sexual imagery of the castration motif. The basilica into which he enters is filled with suggestions of erotica: beds, altars, chainlets surrounded by crowds of martyrs, pilgrims, scholars, worshippers—those pressing multitudes which, in Flaubert's works, act as the harbingers of death or impotence.

Leurs yeux fulgurent extraordinaire-ment. Ils ont l'air de bourreaux ou l'air d'eunuques. (p. 71)

The sexually threatening tone of this series of hallucinations is reinforced by Antoine's intense reaction to the mannish women whose short hair "frightens" him. Their sexual ambiguity becomes ambiguity of form as Manes materializes before him under the outward appearance of an archangel.

Le but de toute créature est la délivrance du rayon céleste enfermé dans la matière. (p. 73)

The implications of this attack on the principle of fertility and real attachment to the world are expressed throughout the passage in a series of variations. First, the obvious attacks against matter and the lusts of the flesh, then Valentin associates the diversity and movement of the world with a case of divine delirium: "Le monde est l'oeuvre d'un Dieu en délire" (p. 75). From the horror of
this cosmic irrationality, the tempter offers to deliver Antoine into the invisible where he can despise everything. The Holy Spirit is feminine: the female principle will absorb Antoine into its ethereal dwelling and through renunciation of his spiritual virility, he will consummate a union which destroys the possibility of continuity. His instinctive rejection of this denial of life introduces the opposite temptation: that of total experience, wherein the male principle will not be renounced but exhausted. It is significant that his impulses to fleshly decadence are cooled by water splashing over him from a deep tub. Once more he withdraws into a feminine atmosphere of great relaxation and laziness (the mother suppresses the sexual partner), and he hears, "Le travail est un péché, toute occupation mauvaise" (p. 78).

Tertullien takes the dismissal of true knowledge a step farther, claiming to "unmask" the false prophets. His evangelical enthusiasm demands the destruction of science: "...après Jésus, la science est inutile!" (p. 79). Any intellectual exclusivity which removes from man the necessary cooperation between flesh and spirit, between sense and intellect can only lead him away from understanding. Antoine hears the call to religious passion as a license to indulge his immoderate fantasies, and his vision immediately presents before him a parade of languid women who tell of their desire for the holy men of the desert.
They lure him with the invitation to a "passion of soul." Montanus, their chosen "lover," acts out Antoine's own dreams of flagellation, testifying once again to the sexually ambiguous nature of any "passion," spiritual or material, decadent or pure.

Antoine's reaction is to choose the ultimate punishment for these fleshly passions: self-mutilation. His excesses are repeated in the terminal sadism which ensues in the actions of the Circoncillions.

Nous, les Saints, pour hâter la fin du monde, nous empoisonnons, brûlons, massacrons!

(p. 83)

They are the perfect representatives of the accelerated course toward self-destruction which we experience today. This morbid haste is perhaps a reappearance of the ancient impulse to anticipate all potential horrors in order to precipitate the release of anxiety—even if only in death. This inclination represents what Mircea Eliade considers man's longing for a renewal, a return to the cyclical cleansing of sacred time. For modern, man, however, there is no opportunity for a purifying metamorphosis after the cataclysm.

The violation of physical order becomes a fragmentation of the intellectual order as "proofs" for every sort of contradiction bombard Antoine. He escapes from the mayhem in a (classically Freudian) imitation of the sexual
act. In complete darkness, he ascends a staircase to a
door. Entering a small chamber, he observes with some
pleasure the moon, appearing through a hole in the wall.
The sexual experience is then "sublimated" into terms of
religious frenzy: the sacred python emerges from its
basket and unwinds, slithering across the supportive bodies
of the faithful until Antoine begins to associate its
writings with the movements of Christ on the cross. The
horror of this implication is countered by his "punishment":
he is to be devoured with other martyrs by wild beasts.
A fate, which, of course, is never executed, and his unful-
filled dream of annihilation is repeated by its intellectual
counterpart.

He first views a virtual cornucopia of exotically
beautiful animals and flowers, strange creatures, and repre-
sentatives of foreign philosophies. Then the Gymnosophist,
weary of his extraordinary intellectual powers, announces
satiety:

J'ai pris en dégoût la forme, en
dégoût la perception, en dégoût
jusqu'à la connaissance elle-même
... je vais enfin dormir au plus
profond de l'Absolu, dans
l'Anéantissement.

(p. 97)

When Antoine equates the Gymnosophist's renunciation of life
with the intrepidity of martyrs, he has espoused the
position of relativism which is fatal to Christian perse-
verance. His easy parallels drawn between the lives of
Apollonius and Damis and that of Christ increase his anguish. If one is like another, why choose one over another? He clings to the cross, somehow still believing (temporarily) "like a brute" in the reality and distinct values of things, while the "rival" gods ascend, hand in hand, to the "World of Ideas, the Eternal, the Absolute."

The next step in this diminution appears in the visions of evolution and metamorphosis. As the older gods decay, become useless or outmoded and give way to more relevant deities, so must Christianity now move along or cede its place to a greater (that is, later) perfection. Evolution, however, only "evolves" in time; before God all forms are immediate and present. When Antoine reaches his final climactic embrace of matter and sees "the origin of Life," he is, in a sense, imitating the divine vision. Yet, the combinations are wrong; Order and Intelligence have been omitted from the scene. He observes it all, but still does not understand. Again, this final moment is a remarkable evocation of the future with its masses of information, its almost unlimited access to the material world, and not one single mind capable of organizing the fragments into a beneficial whole.

Flaubert's Göttterdammerung is probably the most poignant chapter in La Tentation. The seductive power of the Beautiful underlies the mood of the passage. Antoine finds it difficult to comprehend how men can believe in
terrible or abject gods, but man's fascination with the beautiful ones seems good and proper to him. Here we have the implication that truth (which should generate its own beauty) is not the essential element in religion; rather, it is man's aesthetic, emotional inclination which determines his faith—and which remains generally unaffected by metaphysical arguments. In a sense, this companion chapter to the heresies devalues the preceding one; it is indeed true that the nostalgic regret we experience as the Roman gods fade and vanish is not due simply to their familiarity, but because they are so marvellously beautiful.

Hilarion reappears—a colossus. Antoine has weakened in many subtle ways during his temptation, and the tempter has consequently grown in strength. Over and over again the shaken and disoriented saint is bombarded with the call for order and equilibrium through metamorphosis and evolution.

.. la vie s'épuise, les formes s'usent; et il leur faut progresser dans les métamorphoses.
(p. 120)

Time has run its course; the multiplicity of forms is finite; the world awaits its renewal.

(Buddha): En cette dernière existence, ayant prêché la loi, je n'ai plus rien à faire. La grande période est accompli!
(p. 123)

The great, exotic gods vanish and give way to the later
idols. Ormuz speaks:

Je devais un jour, grâce au temps
sans bornes, vaincre définitivement
Ahriman. Mais l'intervalle entre
nous disparaît; la nuit montre!
(p. 127)

The victory of the principle of good over that of evil is
only an interval in the cycle; evil approaches once more.

Diane d'Ephèse, mother of all nature feels the
sudden aridity of the obsolete:

Qu'ai-je donc...moi d'incorruptible, voilà qu'une défaillance
me prend!
(p. 128)

Her impotence gives way to a procession of wounded or im-
poster fertility gods: Cybèle attempts to seduce Atys, who
renounces all hope of their effective union and expresses
female envy--the ruination of the male principle and
ultimately of all future life.

Que ne suis-je toi! Que ne
suis-je femme! --Non, jamais!
Va-t'-en! Ma virilité me fait
horreur!
(p. 130)

This vision terrifies Antoine, and he can scarcely bear to
gaze at the hidden face of a wounded Adonis. His own
sexual fears have determined to some extent most of his
hallucinations and the vision's conclusion in impotence,
castration, and even repudiation of the male principle
brings him to a sense of despair and loss which is next
illustrated in the slow but irrevocable death of the most
familiar (as they are manifestations of man's nature) and
sympathetic gods.

Jupiter speaks one final desperate hope of salvation—not through the Immortals, but through men:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{. . . Tant qu'il y aura, n'importe} \\
\text{ou, une tete enfermant la pensee,} \\
\text{qui laisse le desordre et congoive} \\
\text{la Loi, l'esprit de Jupiter vivra!} \\
\text{(p. 138)}
\end{align*}
\]

Alas, there is no Law, only a multitude of laws which ironically bring disorder and bondage to the world. There is more irony for the contemporary reader as Pluton says to Amphitryonade, son of the manipulator, Amphitryon:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tu avais laissé la porte entr'ouverte. D'autres sont venus. Le} \\
\text{jour des hommes a pénétré le} \\
\text{Tartare.} \\
\text{(p. 140)}
\end{align*}
\]

The mystery of the world, which to another age established its sacramentality, has been banished as a deadly enemy. Modern technology has negated fears of the ancient unknown and drained the swamplands of sickness and death. Yet, as too much light blinds, it seems that some monsters are needed to bear the brunt of private guilts. As Neptune says, the monsters who caused terror have rotted at the bottom of the sea—yet, the gaiety of the sea has vanished with them.

Even Bacchus cannot sustain his joyous excesses; he too is drawn to the summit of pure thought—and he too falls backward into the abyss. Like lemmings, the lesser gods leap downward, and the darkness becomes complete.
Antoine grows weary (Hilarion is enormous). Even a Götterdämmerung can become banal and fill one with ennui. When the guardians of marriage, birth, and human development disappear after their absent bride, the cycle is interrupted definitively. There will be no future union to repeat the ancient and sacred continuity. History prevails.

Hilarion, now an archangel again, offers Antoine the Kingdom of Science:

Mon royaume est de la dimension de l'univers, et mon désir n'a pas de bornes. Je vais toujours, affranchissant l'esprit et pesant les mondes, sans haine, sans peur, sans pitié, sans amour, et sans Dieu. On m'appelle la Science.

(p. 149)

With the intuition of true "future shock," Antoine understands that this is, ultimately, the kingdom of hell.

The penultimate chapter is a literal space flight wherein Antoine is cut loose from all earthly moorings and floats, weightlessly in infinite territories. Having been separated from matter, from the world of the senses, he is easily convinced of his own mental instability. He feels light, floating and thinks the Devil's voice is but "an echo of his thought—a response of his memory." As he penetrates space, the sexual imagery returns.

D'en bas elle paraissait solide comme un mur. Je la pénètre, au contraire, je m'y enfonce!

(p. 152)
At last he feels the power and virility which belong properly to the flesh, and he is—for the moment—in ecstasy. He believes he comprehends at last the Order of the universe; he admires God's immensity. Yet, as this is an emotional, not a logical conclusion, the devil implies, effectively, that God is a product of the imagination.

Then he leads Antoine into a horrible metaphysical tangle involving essence and existence and the evolution of earthly creatures. He terrifies Antoine with multiplicity—in the end convincing him that all existents subsist as part of God. And Antoine asks the question which will logically lead him to renounce the Absolute, "La matière...alors...ferait partie de Dieu?" (p. 154)

If becoming is omnipotent, then change and evolution will be the Law and the Mind Antoine seeks. The futility of the quest is clear; the Devil has only to destroy Antoine's love to complete his despair. He tries to persuade him that if God is One and has no parts, He cannot, therefore, be a Person.

Oh! non! il y a par-dessus tout quelqu'un, une grande âme, un Seigneur, un père, que mon cœur adore et qui doit m'aimer. (p. 155)

Antoine, like Hilarion, has come full circle. He is reduced at the end of his journey to the child desperately searching for the Father—as he began his journey in the uterine security of the Mother.
Not finding this security, he understands that all contradictions and opposites (Life-Death, Pleasure-Pain) are resolved in the concept of relativism. Yet he seeks the Absolute. Thus his satisfaction is his despair; and he cries in anguish: "Ma conscience éclate sous cette dilatation du néant" (p. 156). Even this last passionate negation is devalued by the Devil's contemptuous, "Mais les choses ne t'arrivent que par l'intermédiaire de ton esprit" (p. 156).

From the extravagance of the senses to the ultimate debauchery, Antoine has suffered the consecutive stages of de-volution in man's commerce with Satan. Only the faintest movement of hope from his exhausted body prevents the Devil from absorbing him totally. He abandons Antoine to his loneliness to await the final temptation.

Antoine awakens on the edge of the precipice. He regrets the ecstasy of prayer; he remembers a "phallic" past when his shadow stretched out before him like an obelisk. He thinks of his mother's rotting corpse and imagines Ammonaria voluptuously disrobing in her bath. The radical separation between the hermit and the world has been exaggerated into a dissociation within his own nature. The last conflict sets his longing for release from the body against his impulse to indulge the flesh to its limits. The antagonism is summed up in the urgings of Death and Lust:
Je suis la consolation, le repos,
l'oubli, l'éternelle sérénité!'

'Je suis l'endormeuse, la joie, la vie, le bonheur inépuisable!' (p. 161)

Not even escape through oubli or joie is possible, however, since Antoine recognizes merely another of the devil's forms in the competing women. His conclusion that death is an illusion periodically masking the continuity of life is an acceptance of the evolutionist's position, a negation of individuality, and a dangerous movement away from realism. He wishes to discover, however, the bond between mind and matter, and the appearance of the Chimera and the Sphinx illustrates the impossibility of their union and continuity. This extraordinary meeting of the two creatures—the myths of matter and form—create one of the finest of Flaubert's metaphors. The Chimera, though passionately attracted by the Sphinx's impassibility and its silence, is frustrated by its fixity, its inability to change or choose its direction quickly.

Chimère: 'Mais toi, je te trouve perpétuellement immobile, ou bien du bout de ta griffe dessinant des alphabets sur le sable.'

Sphinx: '—et mon regard que rien ne peut dévier, demeure tendu à travers les choses sur un horizon inaccessible.' (p. 164)

The Sphinx appears in all Flaubert's works as the
inevitability of that instinct which obsesses and destroys
the heroes: it is Emma discontentedly tracing the tip of
her parasol in the dirt; it is Frédéric and his inter-
minable "voyages"; it is Julien and the obsessive repetition
of the hunt. The Sphinx personifies the heaviness of
matter, its stubborn insistence on the repetitive pattern,
which testifies to the finiteness of its potentiality.

The Chimera, however, is no better. Foolish,
fickle, a caprice which carries movement and energy to absurd
extremes, it also appears as the villainous dreams of
forbidden paradises which move and shift too erratically
ever to be fulfilled. It is Spendius in momentary glory
atop the aqueduct; it is Bouvard and Pécuchet tending their
vat of Bouvarine; it is LouLou become the Holy Ghost. All
those irresistible desires of the imagination or the
intellect which drive the heroes beyond their capacity are
contained in the Chimera.

These two creatures are hopelessly drawn to each
other, yet because of their essential difference, their
union is aborted, and they simply shrink away to nothing-
ness, leaving Antoine alone to face a last parade of
monstrosities. Flaubert chooses mythological forms to
represent Antoine's penultimate vision, perhaps because the
experience of the dichotomy between matter and mind does
not, for him, truly correspond to the tidy philosophic
explanation. The antagonism which sets man against himself
is an experience which escapes logical analysis, and thus perhaps also defies amelioration. The Flaubertian hero, in any event, never comprehends himself or others—the message is separation, eternal and irrevocable. The Brughelesque creatures which astonish Antoine are the heirs of the Chimera and the Sphinx, manifestations of their attempted non-union. They are perhaps the creatures which have been throughout time the product of the temporary partnership of body and soul; the disappointing output, as it were, of human endeavor.

The shapes of the monsters, though unnatural, are at least definitive. Antoine's final vision is of the loss of essence, the fading out of individuality and the loose transformations which blur the distinctions between animal and plant, plant and mineral. This is the vision of pure evolution, of "relativism" pushed to its absurd extreme.

Et toutes sortes de plantes s'étendent en rameaux, se tordent en vrilles, s'allongent en pointes, s'arrondissent en éventail. Des courges ont l'air de seins, des lianes s'enlacent comme des serpents.

Des Dédaïms de Babylone, qui sont des arbres, ont pour fruits des têtes humaines; des Mandragores chantent, la racine Barras court dans l'herbe.

Les végétaux maintenant ne se distinguent plus des animaux. Et puis les plantes se confondent avec les pierres... . Des diams brillent comme des yeux, des minéraux palpitent.

(p. 170)
Absorbed in this endless oneness, Antoine sees the beginning and the end of all things: their point of origin has, as it were, overtaken and consumed their final developments. The possibilities for rearrangement are so vast, he can no longer recognize individual distinctions. Matter and the mindless, the negation of essential form, has triumphed.

Again, Antoine's experience is repeated—less exotically, perhaps—in the accelerated confusion of the contemporary "fire storm of change" (Toffler, p. 9).

It breeds odd personalities, too: children who at twelve are no longer childlike; adults who at fifty are children of twelve. There are rich men who playact poverty, computer programmers who turn on with LSD. There are anarchists who, beneath their dirty denim shirts, are outrageous conformists, and conformists who, beneath their button down collars, are outrageous anarchists. There are married priests and atheist ministers and Jewish Zen Buddhists. We have pop...and op...and art cinétiq̧ue.... There are Playboy Clubs and homosexual movie theaters...amphetamines and tranquilizers...anger, affluence, and oblivion. Much oblivion.

(pp. 9-10)

Antoine's last words are an ecstatic hymn of praise to the supremacy of the material world.

O bonheur! bonheur! j'ai vu naître la vie, j'ai vu le mouvement commencer. Le sang de mes veines bat si fort qu'il va les rompre. J'ai envie de voler, de nager, d'aboyer, de
The Absolute is renounced; he adores change and movement.
He has embraced the continuity of time (durée) in a manner heretofore refused the other Flaubertian heroes. Yet the surface structure does not present the ultimate conclusion, for Antoine has voluntarily chained himself to the repetitions demanded by matter. His experience will begin again at nightfall and will leave him, again, exhausted and ecstatic at point zero. The desire to be God—pure form—has been transformed into the desire to be the slave of form: a satanic imitation. The divine perfection of Pure Act has been devalued into pure change—which demands the ultimate exhaustion of all finite creatures.

Flaubert's choice of Antoine, traditionally the founder of monasticism, to represent this irresistible desire for material union is a perfection of irony. For the monk achieves divine union through separation from matter; he is united to his brothers in the Mystical Body through his separation from the individual but not by his denial of him. The sexual overtones which determine the sequence
and the nature of each vision further the analogy. Antoine

desires the physical union which gives fulfillment, yet he
frustrates his sexual passion or perverts it, just as his
original desire for spiritual fulfillment is definitively
frustrated in his final choice.

. . . La Tentation est un Faust fran-
çais: le drame de la pensée humaine
qui aspire sans cesse à dépasser ses
limites et qui, pour sortir du relatif
et saisir l'absolu qui lui échappe
toujours, enfante des mondes d'illusions
qui s'écroulent et se reforment sans
cesse.17

Thus, Flaubert's metaphor expresses perhaps all levels of
human experience: spiritual, intellectual, physical, in a
vision of exquisite irony, for the metaphor is in itself
an act of faith in the essential unity of all things which
at the same time affirms the autonomy of their individual
perfection. Flaubert, in the end, then, even while
announcing the loss of Antoine's soul, affirms his own sal-
vation.
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER IV


2Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, quoted by Durant, p. 460.


4This assumes of course (in agreement with the editors and critics of Flaubert's works) that the Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues was intended as a supplement to Bouvard et Pécuchet, and in all likelihood as part of the final output of the copyists.

5Flaubert, p. 39. All further pagination from this edition will be cited in the text.

6Durant, p. 460.

7It is impossible to determine from the text which man actually arrives from the Bastille and which from the Jardin. However, following the general syntax of the paragraph (the first name mentioned is then described first and so on) and the types of personality traits they are given, there certainly seems to be more evidence than not that Bouvard is the Bastille man, and Pécuchet the Jardin one.

8Psychologically, however, they may be making progress. Their sudden discovery of and interest in phallic symbols seems to indicate a forward transition from the anal (fertilizer obsession) stage to the phallic.


11 Their sleeping postures are particularly significant as an indication of their desire for the mother-figure. Bouvard lies on his back with his mouth open as if awaiting nourishment, while Pécuchet curls up on his side in a fetal position.

12 Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, pp. 163-164. All further citations from this edition, and pagination will be given in the text.

13 Toffler states that "...now we can be said to be feeling the impact of all past events in a new way. For the past is doubling back on us... An event that affected only a handful of people at the time of its occurrence in the past can have large scale consequences today... Whatever happened to some men in the past affects virtually all men today. This was not always true. In short, all history is catching up with us," pp. 16-17.

14 Toffler, p. 11.

15 Victor Brombert, p. 186.

16 The knife can be interpreted as the threat to male virility, or, if considered as a phallic symbol, as an instrument of symbolic castration through the frustration Antoine suffers when constantly exposed to the female fantasies (as the knife is in proximity to the female images in the hut) but never achieves satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Thus we conclude what has been essentially a meta-psychological interpretation of Flaubert's time odyssey, his vast and ingenious journey through the mental and spiritual contours of human existence. A variety of tools have been necessary to expose the neatly disguised structures erected during Flaubert's passage through history. These tools, or approaches, have, it is hoped, been mutually supportive rather than distracting or contradictory. Jungian symbolism has been used to broaden Freud's admittedly narrow interpretation of human psychology, but never to invalidate his fundamental position. Röheim, while essentially Freudian, illustrates the latter's theories with primitive anthropology and folk legend, and therefore increases the scope as well as testifying to the validity of Freud's psychoanalytical insights. The possible conflict between Karen Horney and Röheim as to whether man's desire to return to the womb is a disguised death wish or a desire for security does not appear to be a contradiction in this analysis since, in Flaubertian terms, security and death are equivalent. The addition of Bergson and Eliade to the above group does indeed complicate the exegesis, but, by the same token, increases the significance
of the psychological conclusions.

Few critics have ignored the prominence of morbidly sexual preoccupations in Flaubert's private life (as revealed in the Correspondance) as well as in his works. Beck refers to the "...somewhat covert expression of Flaubert's mental appetite for superhuman sexual ecstasies."¹ J. P. Richard notes that "In Flaubert material fusion is always accompanied by an interior dissolution"²; Jean Rousset observes that "...each ecstasy is followed by a little death..."³ and Poulet states that "...the same thing goes for the moment of union with the past as for the moment of union with the present and with nature. In each case, without any transition, fissure succeeds fusion."

All of this simply repeats the Freudian coitus-death (castration) theory which we have seen metaphorically perfected in Flaubert's works as the (ironically) unifying castration motif.

It is here that Bergson's importance emerges.

He was the first to insist on the insufficiency of the abstract intelligence to grasp the richness of experience, on the urgent and irreducible reality of time, and...on the inner depth of psychic life which cannot be measured by the quantitative methods of the physical sciences. ..."

May we add that he was the first after Flaubert—and that we are fortunate to have the latter's work—once removed from psychology into art—so that these intuitions may
indeed be "measured." The novelist allows us the occasion for comprehending, through the extensions of his heroes' lives, the consequences of a non-Bergsonian perception of reality. The unconscious desperation which drives his protagonists into fatal error is their impassioned and futile desire for union—which always brings death—with a totally resistant aspect of the material world.

What they really demand is dominance and absolute possession—to take by force—whereas a proper (Bergsonian) attitude would enable them to recognize the fulfillment offered by a participation in the gradually unfolding Now. Yet, Bergson opposed a materialistic, deterministic evolution wherein forms are extinguished definitively. Rather, by replacing the repudiation of the Absolute with the continuity of essence through a creative (non-destructive) evolution, he established in the material world a pleasing correspondance with the psychological state of "evolution," of durée. Thus for man to live fully as a spiritual and a material being, he must perceive intuitively the significance of the continuity and "elasticity" of time. If he does so, he will then understand the meaning and value of material change. If he fails to "read the signs" correctly, his durée becomes the stasis of Flaubertian failure. He periodically observes his own changed self with, at best, amazement; he despises the world for vanishing before his fixed gaze, and since he cannot recreate the archetypal pattern proper to some other
time, some other being, he abandons the life-giving
energy of form and spiritual movement and throws himself,
suicidally, into the directionless flux of matter. The
loss of form is the loss of will; in our time we have seen
the desperate and debilitating fluctuations of mental
attitudes as man tries to decide which extreme he shall
choose: conquest of the world through the brutality of an
existentialist I—or the negation of spirit in eunuch-like
submission to the corporate We. Flaubert's comprehensive,
prophetic and polished treatment of the problem surely places
his works among the most "relevant" in Western literature.

The arrangement of the works into what may appear
as an arbitrary sequence (since it does not follow Flaubert's
order of composition) seems, nevertheless, justified,
especially if the arrangement is considered as one of the
analytical tools used in understanding his thought. The
hierarchical structure certainly does not change or, it is
hoped, distort Flaubert's intention, but rather clarifies
what might otherwise be left to the luck of critical in-
tuition. Perhaps we can consider the arrangement as a sort
of "durée" wherein the discontiguous and piecemeal is made
whole in a realm which transcends chronology.

The pairing of the works is further supported by
Harry Levin's observation that

... Flaubert's heroes had shown. ...
an innate disposition to hunt in
couples. The writer...had a Noah-like addiction to pairs and braces.

Even here appears the tendency to union, but, as we see in the statement made by each pair, the union itself reveals death. The tales and prose poem provide a deliberate and final negation in the spiritual order to complete that of the natural order expressed in each novel. Man cannot achieve union with another here on earth, nor can he hope to escape his condition through union with God. God is absence, a leper, a parrot, an hallucination. Flaubert does indeed treat the theme of sainthood, but only in order to negate it.

His creative vision indicates an overwhelmingly stoical nihilism—and accompanying it, the romantic nostalgia for a forgotten and lost vitality. Yet, his accuracy of perception revealed by his diagnostic, as well as his prognostic, abilities transforms his works, for us of the twentieth century at least, not into dreary statements of repetitive despair, but rather into a remarkably fascinating mirror image of that being whose reflection is doubly precious to us. For in Flaubert's heroes we gaze finally not only at ourselves, but at the fading outlines of the last man.
FOOTNOTES -- CONCLUSION

1 Beck, pp. 23-24.


4 Foulet, p. 28.


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