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PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE HISTORICAL NOVEL: CONSOLIDATION AND SUBVERSION OF THE SUBJECT IN "CINQ-MARS" AND "SALAMMBO"

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PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE HISTORICAL NOVEL:
CONSOLIDATION AND SUBVERSION OF THE SUBJECT
IN CINQ-MARS AND SALAMMBÔ

by

PATRICK RAYMOND CRAVEN

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Psychoanalysis and the Historical Novel: Consolidation and Subversion of the Subject in *Cinq-Mars* and *Salammbô*

by

Patrick Craven

These independently-articulated readings of two nineteenth-century historical novels, Vigny's *Cinq-Mars* and Flaubert's *Salammbô*, reiterate the theft and restitution of the elusive signifier in Lacan's well-known metaphor of psychoanalysis (and reading): "The Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'." Such a reading subverts the consolidated subject—the claim to unequivocal meaning in History—of Vigny's Romantic text, and consolidates the disseminated subject—the impossibility of assigning a meaning to History—in Flaubert's Realist novel.

In *Cinq-Mars*, an initial focus on the novel's powerful and central scene of a popular uprising—a movement of revolt and repression which in a sense repeats the act of writing, the ordering of resistant signifiers into a form—leads us to a subsequent analysis of the character of Riche-lieu, who embodies the Lacanian truth of the signifier as Master of the signified. He is the Other Author of the other text, the surface of signifiers, the metonymic chain of writing against which *Cinq-Mars*, as subject or signified of Vigny's counter-text, will provide the metaphoric illu-
sion of depth and the vocal plenitude of Truth. Richelieu represents the alterity and opposition of a language the author of Cinq-Mars must overcome in order to accede to readability and meaning.

In contrast to Cinq-Mars, Salammbô breaks down into a multitude of jewel-like shards which cannot be recomposed to reflect the wholeness of a literary or social architect, or Meaning as embodied in the person of the Author or, more abstractedly, in the coherence of a recognizable ideology. Our reading consolidates the subverted meaning of Flaubert's History by focusing on the philosophically-privileged motif of the veil. In Salammbô, the veil is momentarily "lifted" (in its plurality of meanings) to reveal what the novel's most eminent critics have failed to take into account: the undeniable spiritual evolution of Salammbô and Mâtho, whose ultimate demise can no longer be read as an unequivocal sign of pessimism, but as a celebration of becoming conscious.
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I- Introduction

What is the nature of the relationship between History and Art as it is posited by the historical novelist? For Vigny, History was essentially "UN ROMAN DONT LE PEUPLE EST L'AUTEUR," a rough and unpolished pre-text which, given the collectivity's inexperience in such highly sensitive matters, required the therapeutic services of the Poet's divine plume, plucked from the wings of Transcendence, in order to accede to "la Vérité." Literature, then, is the truth and consciousness of a given historical epoch. Historical reality was merely the raw material which the artist sculpted and refined into spirituality: "un FAIT [historique] est enfoui tout obscur et embarrassé, tout naïf, tout rude, quelquefois mal construit, comme un bloc de marbre non dégrossi." As usual, the metaphors are instructive. The marble statue that has been sculpted out of the coarse and amorphous historical rock is that of the Poet himself. For if History is a novel or a block of marble, the artist's position is decidedly central. As we shall see in our analysis of Cinq-Mars, the "subject" of Vigny's novel is not so much History as it is Art, not so much the vindication of Cinq-Mars as it is of the artist himself. In other words, the "subject" of Cinq-Mars is someone who bears a suspicious resemblance to the author himself.

For Flaubert, History seemed to offer the less lofty
opportunity of a dépaysement. In an oft-quoted letter to Ernest Feydeau, Flaubert formulates the wish that Salammbo's reader "ne pensera pas, j'espère, à l'auteur! Peu de gens devineront combien il a fallu être triste pour entreprendre de ressusciter Carthage! C'est là une Thébaïde où le dégoût de la vie moderne m'a poussé."³ History, then, is an escape. But Flaubert's Carthaginian voyage is not simply a flight from the tawdry vicissitudes of "la vie moderne," as much as it is a flight from oneself ("on ne pensera pas, j'espère, à l'auteur"). This same sentiment is repeated in an earlier letter to a neurasthenic admiratrice, to whom Flaubert recommended the arduous study of Antiquity:

Associez-vous par la pensée à vos frères d'il y a trois mille ans; reprennez tous leurs rêves et vous sentirez s'élargir à la fois votre coeur et votre intelligence; une sympathie profonde et démesurée enveloppera, comme un manteau, tous les fantômes et les êtres. Tâchez donc de ne plus vivre en vous.⁴

The passage from a letter written by the author while he was deep in the study and preparation of Salammbo evokes, interestingly enough, the prominent motif of the novel in the image of the "manteau" which envelops the ghosts of beings like Tanit's sacred zaïmph (alternately designated as a "voile" and a "manteau"). This cosmic covering is equivalent to a poetic recovery, a consolidation and strengthening of the heart and the mind brought about by one's--momentary--extinction: "Tâchez de ne plus vivre en
vous."

In our brief survey of the artists' overlying and underlying motives, we have adumbrated the silhouette of another, an Other, subject: the scene of an inner (psychological) drama is read between the lines of the outer—historical—conflict. It is the inner, universal drama of a personal appearance (Vigny) and a disappearance (Flaubert), of the consolidation and acknowledgement of one's centrality (Vigny) or its subversion (Flaubert). History, then, corrected or mediated by Art, offered the possibility of a personal apotheosis (Vigny) or a magical metamorphosis (Flaubert), of the consolidation of the subject (Vigny) or of one's complete disappearance into the object (Flaubert: "ressusciter Carthage"). The central position of the (authorial) subject is clearly one of the central issues at stake in the Romanticism/Realism controversy of nineteenth-century Literature. **Cinq-Mars**, in the Romantic tradition, is organized around the establishment and vindication of a "moi" (whose?), and **Salammbô** around the removal of that "moi" in order to reconstitute the object (Carthage) in its primal purity.

Both schools, and both authors, lay claim to the "truth," but their respective truths lay in different spheres. For Vigny, the "truth" is the inner truth of the historical figure of Cinq-Mars (in his intentions, not in his actions). For Flaubert, the "truth" resides in the
faithful reconstitution of an outer reality. Two privileged readers, Sainte-Beuve and Lukács, whose often divergent and sometimes convergent trails we shall follow in our journey through these texts, took exception to the "truths" proclaimed by the authors. Sainte-Beuve, as we shall see, contended that Vigny was too acutely profiled in Cinq-Mars, whereas Flaubert was curiously missing from Salammbô. Lukács, the eminent Marxist critic, dismissed Vigny as reactionary and mendacious and, while admiring Flaubert's art, deplored the empty formalism of Salammbô. To synthesize and summarize these various positionings as succinctly as possible, both critics blame the authors for having tampered with the balance of equally weighted objective and subjective forces in history. But the accusation is double-edged: doesn't Sainte-Beuve's obsessive focus on the author prejudice the subjective side? and doesn't Lukács' Marxian overvaluing of History unduly favour the object?

Our reading of these two novels will attempt to recover a "truth" in that dimension Freud designated as the Unconscious, which is neither subject nor object, but the inextricable knotting of the two. Our Freudian reading will itself be mediated by Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," which expounds a Freudian theme that has too often been neglected, namely, that Psychoanalysis is a science concerned with language as much as with the body. In the
next few pages, we shall summarize Lacan's complex analysis, focusing on those themes which will inform our reading of *Cinq-Mars* and *Salammbô*.

"The Purloined Letter" is divided into two main scenes or actions. The first, designated by Lacan as the "primal scene," involves a King, a Queen, a Minister, and the theft of a letter whose contents are never revealed. The Queen, who is perusing the letter in the privacy of her boudoir, is interrupted by the inopportune arrival of the King. Embarrassed, the Queen moves to conceal the letter, turning it face down on the table next to her. Next, the Minister makes his appearance, and upon discovering the source of her discomfiture, stealthily replaces the controversial letter with a similar one. After a perfunctory exchange of pleasantries, the Minister departs with the Queen's letter, without having in the least aroused the King's suspicion.

The second scene involves the Police, delegated by the Queen to reappropriate the letter surreptitiously, the Minister, and the detective, Dupin. The Prefect of Police, unsuccessful in his attempts to recover the stolen letter, receives the letter from Dupin in exchange for an important sum of money. The sly detective, to whom the Prefect had recounted the circumstances of the theft (he is the narrator of the "primal scene"), had made an appointment with the Minister, and in the course of the interview located the
letter dangling torn and unrecognizable from the mantelpiece of a fireplace. Dupin manages to return the next day under some vain pretense, and replacing the crumpled letter with a simulacrum, makes off with the original letter, without having in the least aroused the Minister's suspicion.

Lacan's analysis of the short story basically compresses the two scenes into one: the scene of the letter's restitution is shown to be a repetition of the "primal scene," and the five characters are compressed into three positions:

Le premier est d'un regard qui ne voit rien: c'est le Roi, et c'est la Police.
Le second d'un regard qui voit que le premier ne voit rien et se leurre d'en voir couvert ce qu'il cache: c'est la Reine, puis c'est le Ministre.
Le troisième qui de ces trois regards voit qu'ils laissent ce qui est à cacher à découvert pour qui voudra s'en emparer: c'est le ministre, et c'est Dupin enfin.

Thus staked out, the three positions isolated by Lacan correspond to (1) the subject--the conscious signified--blind to the orientation it receives from the treacherous workings of the (2) unconscious, designated by Lacan as the locus of the signifier, and to the extent that it determines the subject, its master; finally, (3) the analyst, who is trained to recognize that which is meant to remain hidden. Lacan thus further reduces the story's inter-subjective conflict into the classic Freudian intra-subjective conflict.
(since the analyst is involved in the inner conflict by transference).

Although Lacan shows convincingly that the short story retroactively reproduces the analytic setting, the story can be read more generally as an apprenticeship of language. The signifier is initially experienced as the annihilation (or in the terms of "The Purloined Letter") as the betrayal or theft of the reality it signifies: this is the "primal scene," the child's compulsive repetition of the Mother's departure in the tragedy of the Fort/Da. Lacan stresses that the letter (or signifier) is an attribute of the Queen, i.e. the Mother to whom the child is bound in an immediate, organic relationship. The Mother represents "reality" in its organic plenitude, whereas the Father (the King), to whom the letter is eventually restituted via the Police, is abstracted into a symbolic presence--the Name of the Father. What the Queen's initial embarrassment is made to reveal in Lacan's analysis of the "primal scene," are not the contents of the letter, but the nature of the letter: the letter is the theft of the reality it is meant to signify.

The second scene designates the restorative or curative moment of the analysis. The dysfunctioning signifier, the neurotic "symptom," is restored to the grammar of conscious discourse, articulated in the subject's own syntax. More generally, it refers to the engendering of meaning through
repetition. Hence language, which is initially experienced as a castration, as a division of the subject against himself, is also the means by which he achieves the, albeit illusory, unity of his fragmented being.

By articulating Freud and Saussure, Lacan means to save Freud from excessive scientific reductionism, i.e. from biology. Freudian psychoanalysis is not simply the history of organic maturation, but the complication and disruption of that organic development by the interference of language. Thus, castration no longer refers simply to the threat, actualized or impending, of missing a penis; it also refers to the linguistic division between signifier and signified, between the letter and the meaning it conveys. The paradoxical status of the linguistic sign is perhaps most simply and forcefully expressed by Roman Jakobson, who observes that phoneme language (N.B. the phoneme is essentially the acoustic equivalent of the grapheme, or the Lacanian "letter") "is the only system which is composed of elements which are signifiers and yet at the same time signify nothing."^6

Rather than articulated, Lacan has fused the paradoxical status of the Saussurean sign (signifier/signified) with the paradox of castration (the child represses the phallus in order to conserve it). "The Purloined Letter" has no meaning except those which are assigned to it (for the Queen, disgrace; for the Minister, power; for Dupin,
money). The story's internal logic consistently thwarts the assignment of one meaning to the letter: if the letter contains something that the Queen cannot reveal to the King, it seems hardly politic to involve the police and Dupin in its secret. The letter divides the story into non-totalizable sections unified only by the repetition of the effects of castration: each of the letter's holders is feminized. But femininity here does not refer to (a change in) gender; it is understood as a paradigm of servitude: the subject is subject to the signifier.

Lacan consistently rounds off Freudian three into two, the intersubjective Oedipal triangle is evened off into the binary opposition of body and language, the Mother representing the lost moment of organic plentitude, and the Father abstracted into the Name-of-the-Father (or the dead Father)—essentially, language. Likewise, the intrasubjective division of id, ego and superego is rounded off into the binary opposition of Self (subject) and Other; the former replacing the ego, and the latter, the id and superego—both of which are apprehended by the subject as external forces. Reworking Saussure and Jakobson into Freud, Lacan shows that meaning is essentially a quotient of two (or of a multiple of two), which is not to betray Freud who always maintained he was a dualist. Indeed, meaning, in psychoanalysis, is achieved through the fertile conjunction and opposition of two: the commingling of analyst and
analysand.

Two is, as we shall see, the determining numerical value in both Cinq-Mars and Salammô. Cinq-Mars is organized around the binary opposition of Cinq-Mars (who relates to the positive themes of Legitimism, Classicism, verticality, voice and metaphor) and Richelieu (who relates to the negative themes of Revolution, Preciosity, horizontality, writing and metonymy). Salammô, more complicatedly, is organized around the unsuperimposable dualisms of Tanit and Moloch, Salammô and Mâtho, Barbarian and Carthaginian: dualisms which are not quite oppositions, not quite complementary, nor simply a positive/negative polarity, but a problematic commingling which renders "meaning" elusive.

It is our hope that the independently articulated readings of our two novels, Cinq-Mars and Salammô, in which the drama of Self (Vigny) and Other (Flaubert) is inscribed, will produce a meaning in which History and Literature can be reconciled.

In our reading, we shall subvert the consolidated subject of Vigny's text; a liberation of the signifier which will repeat the initial moment of the theft of the letter in "The Purloined Letter." We shall then attempt to consolidate the subverted or annihilated subject of Flaubert's text; a restitution of the signifier which will repeat the return of the letter in Lacan's "Seminar." In other words,
we propose to uncover the Other determining the subject in Vigny's text, and restore the subject to Flaubert's Other text.
NOTES

I- Introduction

1 Alfred de Vigny, "Réflexions sur la vérité dans l'art" in Œuvres Complètes, II (Pléiade, 1965), p. 22.

2 Ibid., p. 23.


4 Ibid., pp. 118-119.


II- Cinq-Mars

A. Defining an Approach

Walter Scott's historical novels dominated the European literary scene in the aftermath of the Napoleonic débâcle much as Victor Hugo would dominate the whole of nineteenth-century French literature. The public's insatiable appetite for his novels inspired more than a few of France's most distinguished writers to domesticate the new sub-genre and, with characteristic arrogance and esprit d'indépendance, "improve" upon it. Alfred de Vigny's Cinq-Mars was the first major attempt at competition and insofar as it marked a radical departure from the canon as fixed by the illustrious Scott, the critic's reaction was not one of unqualified praise.

Sainte-Beuve, the much maligned eminent nineteenth-century critic, though he welcomed Vigny's audacity in placing major seventeenth-century figures at the forefront of the action, did object to his turning them into virtually unrecognizable caricatures. Basically, he writes, "M. de Vigny est resté au point de vue actuel, et n'a écrit qu'avec des souvenirs. Rien d'étonnant donc qu'il ait mis ainsi un masque par trop enluminé à ses personnages, puisqu'il ne les a vus qu'à distance. Il se complaît à nous rappeler cette fausse position, comme si elle n'éclatait pas assez d'ailleurs." ¹
Over a century later, the no less eminent Marxist critic and author of the landmark nomograph, The Historical Novel, Georg Lukács, understandably allergic to the underlying conservatism of French Romanticism, further defined and dismissed Vigny's "point de vue actuel" as Legitimism, and the "distance" as "idealism" (curiously permitting a new reading of Sainte-Beuve's "fausse position"), and quickly passed on to less hostile turf with Mérimée.²

The shock of Sainte-Beuve (and other readers') reservations impelled Vigny to preface the work with his tedious "Réflexions sur la vérité dans l'art" in which he justifies his tampering with the historical reality of his protagonist: "L'ART ne doit jamais être considéré que dans ses rapports avec sa BEAUTE IDEALE. Il faut le dire, ce qu'il y a de vrai n'est que secondaire; c'est seulement une illusion de plus dont il s'embellit, un de nos penchants qu'il caresse. Il pourrait s'en passer, car la VERITE dont il doit se nourrir est la vérité d'observation sur la nature humaine, et non l'authenticité du fait."³ The characters thus clearly inhabit the luminous transcendental realm of Ideas (Art), not the grubby nether-regions of Fact (History); the forewarned reader now knows better than to evaluate the work in terms of its historical (in)accuracy.

Contemporary French criticism has remained strangely aloof from the work. Is it mauvaise conscience? Are Vigny's inelegant class prejudices (frankly outrageous by
today's standards) still trapped beneath the thick Marxist veneer of French social conscience? Although structuralist and post-structuralist criticism seem to stray even further from the primary text—which peeps out occasionally, temptingly, from behind interminable stretches of Lacan and Derrida—one notes a certain predilection for post-Parnassian writers whose texts have flown out of "reality" (Mallarmé, Lautréamont, to an extent Flaubert) into the semiosphere, Zola's social consciousness myths, various neglected works by major authors (Balzac's Sarrasine), plus whatever was mercifully left beyond Lagarde and Michard's punitive reach.

Roland Barthes may shed some light on the cause of this disaffection, having observed among his contemporaries a certain hankering for "un texte (un art, une peinture) sans ombre, coupé de l' 'idéologie dominante'; mais c'est vouloir un texte sans fécondité, sans productivité, un texte stérile (voyez le mythe de la Femme sans Ombre). Le texte a besoin de son ombre: cette ombre, c'est un peu d'idéologie, un peu de représentation, un peu de sujet: fantômes, poches, traînées, nuages nécessaires: la subversion doit produire son propre clair-obscur." It may be that Vigny's strident ideology simply forecloses any possibility of pleasure.

Unhappily, there is not "un peu d'idéologie," nor "un peu de sujet," but a great gloop of Legitimist propaganda, and as Sainte-Beuve shrewdly observed, the characters' most
intimate encounters are not safe from the author's heavy-handed intrusions: "lorsque Cinq-Mars et Marie de Gonzague s'entretiennent, on s'aperçoit trop que M. de Vigny est en tiers avec eux." Even the old and superstitious maréchal de Bassompierre, who is meant to disarm by his simplicity and longing for the good old days of Henri Quatre, is temporarily "inhabited" by the author in the very first chapter to telegraph the message of the novel to the reader.

It should not be surprising that the twentieth-century reading elite, their tastes formed by theories of criticism which have gradually stripped the work of its patent, then of its latent "meaning," focusing instead on its means of production, would show a marked preference for those texts which incarcerate them in the "prisonhouse of language". Although Vigny ranks among the major literary figures of the last century, his works remain largely uncharted and unexplored by contemporary critics.

Our study will attempt to palliate this deficiency (to the very modest extent a dissertation could reverse such a trend) by making Cinq-Mars "readable" for the ideologically blasé modern public. Contemporary criticism has accomplished this with the most sacred nineteenth-century authors through a systematic disarticulation or deconstruction of the text (cf. Barthes' against-the-grain slicing of Balzac's Sarrasine in S/Z). Jeffrey Mehlman, in Repetition and Revolution, proposes to reach the text's most
radical level: the critic's task is to "ally himself with that stratum of the text generative of the greatest intensity," though it is likely there are few fellow-travelers willing to set out on such hallucinogenic intellectual trips. The passage we have just referred to deserves to be quoted in full since it will serve as a point of departure to a discussion of our approach:

A text is less a monument than a battlefield. The interpreter's task, then, is to situate his own efforts strategically at the crux of that struggle and to ally himself with that stratum of the text generative of the greatest intensity. But to the extent that one has been able to work within the node or matrix of the various forces, the pursuit of the "battle" will take the form of a rigorous positing of the line along which and the conditions under which the work may be rewritten.  

Mehlman has tonically shattered a certain spiritual complacency that too often characterizes the reader's relationship to the text, which he returns to the heat of Darwinian existence. The most potent texts also have the capacity to reproduce themselves. They do not simply solicit other writings; they regenerate themselves in these writings. Rather than emit a "judgement," offer an "explanation," or conduct an "analysis," critical activity above all duplicates its object of study.

Our approach will be resolutely modern, certainly not quite as radical a deconstruction as Mehlman's, but nonetheless a systematic dismantling of the text, specifically
a razing of the author's painfully erected Legitimist-inspired differences (of class and sex among others), in order to expose the groundwork of monotonous repetition, the endless desert of sameness upon which the diaphanous structure of the text (or society) can be seen to shimmer in the distance like a mirage.

Our deliberately subversive interpretive moves, then, will retrace the itinerary of Cinq-Mars (and Vigny's) arch-antagonist: the Cardinal de Richelieu in his barrier-breaking and class-leveling mission. We will also repeat the involuntary deferred effect Richelieu's policies have had on the monarchy: its toppling. As Richelieu has subverted the very centrality of Legitimist society, the throne, so shall we attempt to subvert that very centrality of the novel: its subject (Cinq-Mars). A tempting Freudian-Lacanian move in a text in which the subject (Vigny), as Sainte-Beuve remarked, is so acutely profiled.

We have thus clearly set out on the violent path of the "Purloined Letter," as we have allowed ourselves to be possessed (inseminated) by the text, but a text at a subconscious or constitutive level (constitutive of the subject), beneath Vigny's propagandistic manipulation.

In our travels through the text, itself a journey through France, as well as back in time, Cinq-Mars, the standard-bearer of a defunct order, will not be our guide. We will instead follow the oblique wanderings of that
stratum of the text (of society) whose unsolicited and closely watched moves are destined to have literally earth-shattering effects.

Before embarking on this course, we should be wise to consult a writer who knew what he was talking about when it came to historical novels, to point us in the direction of the conflict. Walter Scott, whose canny appraisal of Cinq-Mars was reported, and acidly commented upon, by Vigny in his diary. Though not entirely negative, he nonetheless exposes, and very concretely, the novel's salient weakness; uncovering (for this reader) an area, however diminished and forcibly repressed, most "generative of the greatest intensity," particularly when viewed from the perspective of the intertext, constituted by Cinq-Mars and the other novel, in our dissertation.

Thus, Scott (as reported by Vigny): "Il n'y trouve qu'un défaut; c'est que le peuple ne tient pas assez de place. Il croit que notre peuple est aussi pittoresque que le sien et notre public aussi patient à supporter les conversations populaires; il se trompe. Son Ecosse s'intéresse à chacune de ses montagnes, la France aime-t-elle toutes ses provinces?" Scott intuitively hit the nail on the head, and much more economically than Lukács. If Cinq-Mars is neglected today, it may be because the people are inadequately represented. This drawback is grievous, particularly with respect to the genre, not just the historical novel, but all novels dealing with vast social issues
(diachronically in the case of the historical novel, synchronically as in the "realist" novels of Balzac, Hugo and Zola). The classic roman d'analyse psychologique remains largely unaffected by considerations of class. A sheperdess is as convenient a vehicle as a princess (and often identical, whether it be in L'Astrée or in the garden of the petit Trianon).

Before commenting on Vigny's response, it would behoove us to examine the notion of "peuple" whose meaning we would deliberately keep vague. Although Vigny uses the word and its derivatives (populaire, populace) to refer to the lower socio-economic strata, namely, the urban proletariat and the peasantry; he is Rousseauean enough to manifest an allergic reaction to any human collectivity.

His categoric rejection of Scott's position ("il se trompe"), though appallingly misguided—witness the success of George Sand's rustic idylls—remains pertinent as far as his own talent is concerned, lacking as he did Flaubert's finely modulated sense of irony, the technique and clever use of indirect discourse to convey the finger-wagging clichés governing conventional morality. The implied assimilation of "peuple" and "provinces" ironically located him in a tradition of centuries-long oppression which Richelieu helped perpetrate: the gradual and irreversible subjugation of the provinces and concentration of power in Paris dating back to the thirteenth century. The image
is doubly significant here: as the provinces have gradually been reduced to political impotence, permanently relegated to the "outside" of national activity, Vigny (and we must bear in mind that the novel was conceived as a "suite de leçons" for humanity) would severely restrict the freedom of the lower classes, visiting upon them a threat far worse than feudal serfdom: in Cinq-Mars, they are literally driven underground. The contrast between "montagnes" and "provinces" is equally noteworthy: Cinq-Mars, as we shall see, plays off verticality ("montagnes") against horizontality ("provinces"). The positively-valorized pole of verticality figuring the maintenance of Order, and the negatively-valorized pole of horizontality, those elements contributing to its subversion. How one of the most repressed of those elements undermines the existing hierarchy will be the topic of our next section.

B. Les Damnés de la terre

Cinq-Mars opens on an idyllic description of the Touraine, scene of the protagonist's childhood and significantly "berceau de la langue" and "berceau de la monarchie" (p. 28). A land of origins, then, receding ever further into the past: "ici, c'est Chambord que l'on aperçoit de loin et qui, avec ses dômes bleus et ses petites coupoles, ressemble à une grande ville de l'Orient; là, c'est
Chanteloup, suspendant au milieu de l'air son élégante pagode" (ibid.). The dawn-of-civilization and Biblical configurations of this garden of France are rendered even more striking by the seeming absence of human activity, as this line addressed to Vigny's hypothetical traveler (the reader) would suggest: "vous aurez regretté de ne pouvoir déterminer ... où vous choisiriez votre demeure pour y oublier les hommes auprès d'un être aimé" (p. 27).

This maternal land of felicitous exile has not been emptied of its "habitants industriueux" (ibid.), they've simply been removed to a more discreet location, as our traveler discovers underfoot:

une petite fumée vous avertit tout à coup qu'une cheminée est à vos pieds; c'est que le rocher même est habité, et que des familles de vigneronn respirent dans ses profonds souterrains, abritées dans la nuit par la terre nourricière qu'elles cultivent laborieusement pendant le jour. Les bons Tourangeaux sont simples comme leur vie, doux comme l'air qu'ils respirent, et forts comme le sol puissant qu'ils fertilisent. (P. 28)

Vigny's elemental "good peasants," clustered and ant-like by their industry and subterranean habitat, are made an integral part of Nature, unconversant with higher "human" pursuits, particularly with the psychological subtleties of power and desire. They understand nothing save the plough and the till. Even Cinq-Mars' individualized manservant, the idealized Grandchamp (his very name attests to his chthonic nature), points with pride to his young master,
whom he has raised single-handedly, and exclaims: "Voilà nos vignes" (p. 30).

Meant to contrast with this idealized vision of an earthbound peasantry are the riff-raff of the urban proletariat. At the novel's climatic center, the Royalist and Cardinalist factions are posed for a showdown on the Île St. Louis, when they are interrupted by a "dégoûtante cohue . . . de ses milliers d'individus infernaux" (p. 192). These unsolicited intruders declare themselves partisans of Cinq-Mars, but neither faction wants their assistance: "Rougiissant de la supériorité du nombre et des ignobles troupes qu'ils semblaient commander, entrevoyant peut-être pour la première fois, les funestes conséquences de leurs jeux politiques et voyant quel était le limon qu'ils venaient de remuer, ils se divisèrent pour se retirer" (ibid. my emphasis). The aristocrats, of course, blessed as they are with the author's hindsight, glimpse the horrors of the Revolution on the horizon. What is significant here is the use of the word "limon" (sediment) to designate the inebriated insurgents.

As François Germain points out in what may well be the definitive study of Vigny's imaginary constructs, *Imagination de Vigny*, the text is continually working out the cliché "lie du peuple." But whereas Germain respects the author's edifying conventions in maintaining the difference between the "good peasants" and the "bad lumpen-
proletariat," we would underscore the sameness: the text stamps both peasants and proletariat under ground.

Movement away from the daily grind of fertilizing the fields or plying their trade immediately gives rise to suspicion. In the Loudun episode (chapters II-V) lowly townspeople and peasants from the out-lying farms converge on the public square in order to witness the trumped up trial of the suspected sorcerer, Urbain Grandier. An old and venerable paysan has arrived with a retinue of robust kinsmen bearing staffs. A provincial notable, the count Du Lude, approaches him and almost respectfully (Vigny specifies) asks: "Eh bien! mon père Guillaume Leroux, . . . vous aussi, vous quittez votre ferme . . . quand ce n'est pas jour de marché? C'est comme si vos boeufs se dé telaient pour aller à la chasse aux étourneaux et abandonnaient le labourage pour voir forcer un pauvre lièvre" (p. 51). More suspiciously: "pourquoi n'avez-vous amené que vos enfants mâles avec vous, et pourquoi ces bâtons?" (p. 52). Is the quaint parable of the oxen and the hare merely a folksy redundancy, or would the meaning of the question remain somehow unclear to the benighted peasant, unillustrated by the comparison drawn from the domestic bestiary?

Present also are a number of "good peasants" whose main virtues are "résignation et immobilité" (ibid.) and perhaps a mild form of mental retardation, a certain numb-ness of the spirit, since the author has them decide upon
"leur opinion dans les regards des propriétaires, leurs patrons pour la plupart" (p. 50).

Doglike in their devotion though they may be, the author cannot resist giving way to a feeling of malaise at the sight of people not in their assigned place:

Néanmoins le paysan de France a dans le caractère certaine naïveté moqueuse dont il se sert avec ses égaux souvent, et toujours avec ses supérieurs. Il fait des questions embarrassantes pour le pouvoir, comme la sont celles de l'enfance pour l'âge mûr; il se rapetisse à l'infini pour que celui qu'il interroge se trouve embarrassé dans sa propre élévation; il redouble de gaucherie dans les manières et de grossièreté dans les expressions, pour mieux voiler le but secret de sa pensée; tout prend, malgré lui, cependant, quelque chose d'insidieux et d'effrayant qui le trahit, et son sourire sardonique, et la pesanteur affectée avec laquelle il s'appuie sur son long bâton, indiquent trop à quelles espérances il se livre, et quel est le soutien sur lequel il compte. (Pp. 50-51)

What hopes indeed! Elemental and intellectually unequipped to cope with anything more complex than the tilling of fields and tending their flocks, they are nonetheless advanced in the sophisticated art of dissembling. No matter how the passage is read, nothing seems to justify the narrator's fright, neither the sardonic smile, nor the long crook, nor the shroud of secrecy. The simple, awkward, and coarse exterior is peeled away to reveal—what complex depths of deception? What ominous threat of violence? To quote the quote Vigny placed in epigraph to his novel: "Qui trompe-t-on donc ici?". The vertigo experienced in
this passage may well be due to a perception, however dim, of the precarious equilibrium of all hierarchy. As we shall see, an epidemic of fright—the word "fear" would fail to convey the element of passivity, the transfixion, expressed in the French "effroi"—shall spread to other and higher spheres.

Leaving aside, for the time being, the scheming and double-dealing of Richelieu and Cinq-Mars in their bid to dominate the King, we shall pass on to the climactic heart of the novel, insofar as a novel characterized by a striking paucity of action, although there certainly is no lack of suggestions of action, can be said to have a climactic heart. Chapters XIV through XVI involve a curiously spontaneous uprising of the people after an uneventful hiatus of two years, during which both sovereign and minister, consumed by a mysterious malady, seem to have retired from public affairs: "La France semblait gouvernée par elle-même" (p. 186). But secret burrowings in the heart, a gradual crumbling of the base, a swaying at the top, and the whole fragile social edifice seems on the verge of collapsing: "S'il s'était passé quelques événements et quelques révolutions durant ces deux années, ce devait donc être dans les coeurs; ce devait être quelques-uns de ces changements occultes, d'où naissent, dans les monarchies sans base, des bouleversements effroyables et de longues et sanglantes dissensions" (ibid.).
The passage posits on the one hand a fundamental split between what is inside and what is outside—nothing is what it seems—while on the other hand, what is inside ("révolutions . . . dans les coeurs") invariably works its way to the outside ("bouleversements effroyables"/"longues et sanglantes dissensions"): a différence gives way to a différence. To couch the same dynamic in strictly Freudian terms: "the repressed always returns"—in the least likely places.11

Our next move will reverse the flow of the circuit in this traumatic exchange: something conveyed by the most repressed element in the text will be refracted "inside" through a series of exalted personages, caught as if in flagrante delicto; the slowly readjusted focus becoming clearer at each subtle, successive stroke of the narrative.

Paris 1641: On a cold night in December, the air is heavy with anticipation of "une expédition nocturne d'une nature très grave" (p. 187). Two hundred Frondeurs (Cinq-Mars' faction), cloaked, bundled, and hatted into anonymity, lie ready to ambush a Cardinalist convoy by the Louvre, where the Queen, her maids, and her brother-in-law, Monsieur, have retired for the night. The Cardinalists arrive as predicted and the two factions engage in fighting which a detachment of Swiss guards issuing with geometrical precision from the palace, are unable to prevent. A third
and unexpected force makes a sudden and scandalous appearance:

This unholy, unruly mob sweeps away all differences in its path. Women and children (in all his works Vigny never quite differentiates between the two) drag out their phallic treasures, blood-stained relics of battles past, intoxicated laborers unite in perverting the various tools of their trade for use as weapons. A hilarious procession of young men—resplendent in drag—pretend to throw infants into the Seine, claiming Richelieu's policies have driven them to this desperate act. There is, characteristically, quite a comic discrepancy between this description of what amounts to little more than a rowdy monôme, a good natured free-for-all, and the traumatic effects it has on our prissy
aristocrats.

The effects that interest us here, though, are those of contagion, the most immediate of which is to eradicate, at least momentarily, that which ostensibly constituted the main difference in the novel: the conflict between Cinq-Mars and Richelieu. The Royalists assist the Cardinalists back onto their horses and into their carriages, with appointments to resume the dueling in more congenial and dignified surroundings—"le dégoût fit sur ces gens bien élevés ce que la force n'avait pu faire" (p. 193)—Vigny reminds the reader lest he should forget what the Ancien Régime was all about.

These "effroyables scènes nocturnes" (ibid.) have not escaped the notice of the royal denizens of the Louvre, where scenes of Feydeau-funniness occur in quick succession. The King's brother, Gaston, himself quite a mad-camp of a drag (Vigny must have been thinking of Louis XIV's brother, Philippe, Monsieur a.k.a. Madame), dashes for his "mules carrées, à hauts talons" and his "robe de chambre de soie couverte de dessins d'or brodés en relief," only to pace the galleries up and down, crying for his confessor: "il ne cessait de se promener par les appartements, dans le plus grand désordre, ses longs cheveux noirs épars et ses yeux bleus ouverts et agrandis par l'inquiétude et l'effroi; il était à moitié nu . . . se frappant la poitrine et répétant mille fois: Mea culpa, mea culpa" (p. 194).
Compare the preceding description to that of the Court's femme most fatale, the exquisite Duchess de Chevreuse as she rushes to hide beneath the Queen's ample skirts, believing the havoc to be an attempt by Richelieu to have her incarcerated: "ses pieds délicats étaient nus... elle criait, en pleurant comme un enfant... Elle avait ses cheveux dans un grand désordre et tombant jusqu'à ses pieds" (p. 199). Moreover, she also has her mea culpa's to recite, only this time around, Vigny is a little more precise: "je me confesse hautement: j'ai aimé..., j'ai été aimée de..." (p. 200).

More differences come crashing down inside the Palace, when the Queen, Anne of Austria, who, along with Cinq-Mars' inamorata, the Duchess of Mantoue, manages to retain her steely sang-froid, decides she must be King: "je suis homme dans ce moment, et je dois l'être" (p. 201). The mimetic impact of these nocturnal "scènes révoltantes" (p. 202), however, are of such magnitude, that, having retired to her alcôve, accompanied by Marie de Mantoue, she drags out her phallic treasure: the rusty dagger used to assassinate the Duke of Buckingham; and bleats out her mea culpa: the avowal of her love for the intrepid Duke; a love, she insists, that was never revealed.

Caught up in the sweeping tide of confessions, her young companion confides to the shocked Queen that she too is secretly bound to our hero, Cinq-Mars; a revelation that
will be repeated in a symmetrical scene in Chapter XVIII involving Cinq-Mars and his confidant, de Thou. What is the nature of a secret, whose manifest content the reader already knows, that must be whispered in the shadowy depths of an alcôve, behind locked doors, between two people of the same gender? A secret whose revelation has been precipitated, as we have seen, by the irruption in the narrative of that most deeply buried (subterranean), most repressed element of the text?

Let us turn back to that moment privilégié, a moment suspended in time, where Queen and Author lean outside, outside the double enclosure of palace and text:

Plus elle se penchait hors de la fenêtre pour se montrer, plus elle voyait les scènes révoltantes que le jour naissant n'éclairait que trop: l'effroi rentrait dans son coeur à mesure qu'il lui devenait plus nécessaire de paraître calme et confiante, et son âme s'attirait de l'ennuiement de ses paroles et de son visage. Exposée à tous ces regards, elle se sentait femme et frémissait en voyant ce peuple qu'elle aurait bientôt à gouverner, et qui savait déjà demander la mort de quelqu'un et appeler ses reines.
Elle salua donc. (Pp. 202-203)

Her gesture recalls, as Vigny points out in the following paragraph, a similar gesture of acknowledgement made by Marie-Antoinette at the height of the Revolution, one hundred and fifty years later.

This is a crucial juncture in the text, where story and History, inside and outside, verticality and hor-
izontality, light and shade meet and overlap; a passage generating all the intensity of a rupture and an exchange. The most formal of Queens, at the window, leans out of the palace, the very locus of her intimacy, to greet the ragged populace below, at the break of day ("le jour naissant"). As she witnesses those barely discernible revolting scenes—a reality she will soon be called upon to govern—she herself experiences a shift or break between inside ("son âme s'attiristait") and outside ("calme et confiante"). A passage that can ultimately be described as a movement between—or rather, a beckoning to—life ("appeler ses reines") and death ("demander la mort de quelqu'un").

We are confronted here with quite an Oedipal riddle. Who is revolting? And why? How are we (the readers) to understand "revolting" and what are we to see in, how are we to interpret, those "scènes"? Shall we believe we have solved the enigma if we choose "1789," or "revolution," or "sexuality," "sacrificial crisis," or just plain unorganized "reality"? Why is it each time we peer into those scenes, we end up laughing—at the author himself?

Jean Roudaut's preface to the Livre de Poche edition of Cinq-Mars, a valiant rescue attempt far surpassing in interest the dry erudition of F. Baldensperger's introduction in the Fléiade, is entitled: "Une Tragédie des erreurs." Our study, on the other hand, would almost attempt to recreate a farce out of the same quid pro quo elements.
Indeed, the most successfully executed act in this "action" novel, is the sweeping gesture of an imperious Lady drawing up her heraldic petticoats to preserve herself from filth. Can it be that those critics who have joined the retinue of kings and queens and their courtiers can only inhabit the land of tragedy; whereas we, who have traveled in the wake of the rabble, have found ourselves in a genre situated at the corresponding level in the hierarchy of Literature? By this we mean to illustrate that the novel, or text—a weaving in of a plurality of codes into something new—retains its ascendancy over the reader/critic, who remains nonetheless free in his "alliances" or positioning, against the Author if need be. The Author himself, of course, is not "above" the fray, but in there battling for control. This is especially apparent in a "political" novel like Cinq-Mars, where the author "butts in" quite as obtrusively as his rabble, as Sainte-Beuve, that anchor of critical traditionalism, points out. Reader, critic and writer are thus involved in a perpetual scrap for control over something that eludes them.

This brings us back, circuitously, but we hope usefully, to our initial question: "who is revolting?". If we are to believe Lacan's dictum, that the unconscious is structured like a language; then we would answer that these ragged rebels, originating in and escaping from their subterranean habitat, constitute an army of floating signifi-
ers, or to draw a parallel with "The Seminar on 'The Pur-
loined Letter'", the letter itself:

Un signifiant qui donne prise sur la Reine,
que soumet-il à qui s'en empare? Si la dominer
d'une menace vaut le vol de la lettre que Poe
nous présente en exploit, c'est dire que c'est
à son pouvoir qu'il est passé la bride. À quoi
enfin? A la Féminité en tant qu'elle est toute
puissante, mais seulement d'être à la merci de
celui qu'on appelle, ici pas pour des prunes, le
Roi. 12

The letter makes subjects of us all—even the Queen, and
as absolute Master and King, it makes us all "queens,"
since, as Lacan points out, it feminizes all those whom
it beckons ("Exposé à tous ces regards, elle se sentait
femme et frémissait en voyant ce peuple qu'elle aurait
bientôt à gouverner... "): the Queen (at the very moment
she has decided to be "King"), Gaston, and even the captain
of the Swiss guards, who offers the Queen a hand "où il
manquait deux doigts qui venaient d'être coupés" (p. 202),
although the text has elided any mention of a scuffle
between the guards and the rabble.

If the rabble, then, operates out of the unconscious,
it follows that the Court—that very centrality of novel
and nation in this Ultra-legitimist fable—is the locus
of consciousness. The moment we have focused upon is that
of an exchange between the unconscious and the conscious,
a dream-like moment of particular vulnerability for the
Court: King and minister are absent. The conflation of
Vigny's text and Lacan's writings is indeed fertile and should help explain some of the contradictions referred to earlier, by enabling us to peel away the flimsy outer layer—Legitimism—to reveal something else.

"L'inconscient," according to Lacan, "est cette partie du discours concret en tant que transindividuel qui fait défaut à la disposition du sujet pour rétablir la continuité de son discours conscient." Our reading of the passage involving the peasants encountered at Loudun was hampered by their indeterminate status (elementary or complex?), an unaccountable disproportion between cause ("petitesse . . . gaucherie . . . grossièreté") and effect ("tout prend, malgré lui, cependant, quelque chose d'insidieux et d'effrayant"). The passage is remarkable precisely because it seems to lack content. But whether it stops short of expression, or exceeds it, it cannot be expressed.

We would propose that what is attempted here is a description of the signifier in its most material, irreducible state—a state which both Christian and psychoanalytical myth would designate "original sin" (Freud, after all, was preoccupied with unswaddling the child from its veils of innocence). What is revealed, or rather, unveiled ("pour mieux voiler le but secret de sa pensée") in this passage is the material support of all expression: what underlies the most "civilized" of expressions ("sourire sardonique") is the most "primitive" of supports: "la pesanteur affectée
avec laquelle il s'appuie sur son long bâton, indiquent trop à quelles espérances il se livre, et quel est le soutien sur lequel il compte" (p. 60, emphasis mine).

The venerable old peasant, sitting with "son bâton noueux entre les jambes" (p. 52), reveals the most sophisticated and primitive "truth" about humanity, and whether we express that "truth" as "primacy of the Phallus" or "sacrificial violence," what are we doing but "veiling"? Our peasant would thus be countering Vigny's Legitimism with the Illegitimism of our origins.

What we have described as the origin of expression, Vigny defined as "but secret de sa pensée" (emphasis mine), but what are "beginnings" and "ends" but the most persistent myths of all? Our reading of Cinq-Mars has followed a movement (revolt, desire) from outside the Palace, inside; an inside/outside-subverting movement which in a sense repeats the act of writing: Vigny's ordering of resistant signifiers into a form, the form of his desire: Cinq-Mars. Our reading has collapsed the scope of History—the relating of "beginnings" to "ends"—back to the scene of the novel's inception.

Lacan once again: "L'inconscient n'est pas le pri-
mordial, ni l'instinctuel, et d'élémentaire, il ne conna-
que les éléments du signifiant."14 What Lacan is stressing here is a certain continuity between the unconscious and
the conscious: there is nothing foundational there, but something immediate, albeit preliminary, that hasn't been verbalized, that hasn't yet received an acceptable form. Because the content inside the Palace and outside—and outside the text—is the same: the desire for Cinq-Mars (and Cinq-Mars). The shrews from the Halles intercept Cinq-Mars as he is about to greet his friend and confidant de Thou: "Te voilà donc mon coeur, mon petit ami! Tu arrives donc mon mignon! Voyez comme il est joli, c'est amour avec sa grande colerette! Ça ne vaut-il pas mieux que c'est autre avec sa moustache blanche? Viens, mon fils, apporte-nous du bon vin comme ce matin" (p. 241). Meanwhile in the Louvre, Marie de Gonzague is confiding to the Queen her love for Cinq-Mars, informing her that their love grew out of a mutual grief over the deaths of their respective fathers: "Comme j'avais été la première malheureuse, je me connaissais mieux en tristesse, et j'essayais de le consoler en lui disant ce que j'avais souffert, de sorte qu'en me plaignant il s'oubliait. Ce fut le commencement de notre amour, qui, vous le voyez, naquit presque entre deux tombeaux" (p. 207).

While the mob clamors for Cinq-Mars outside the Palace, Marie de Mantoue is inside whispering about her love for Cinq-Mars. The threat of death is also conveyed: the rabble noisily demands the demise of that national father-figure, Richelieu; Marie de Gonzague peacefully recalls the death
of her father. The difference is purely one of form (in its plurality of meanings). Something unsavoury ("revolting") has worked its way through the text, from outside the Palace, inside, through a series of exalted personages, in a quest for acceptable form.

The terminus is, on the one hand, separation of the sexes (Anne of Austria and Marie de Mantoue, Cinq-Mars and de Thou), and on the other, linear or filial succession: Marie de Gonzague articulates death and desire—an orderly transference of love from father to Cinq-Mars—in what has curiously come to resemble a "talking cure." The passage from disorder to order is effected through the establishment of biological difference, the division between the sexes, creating a space of desire through metonymic displacement onto the phallus. Anne of Austria reveals the phallic object of her desire, metonymically linked through the effects of contagion to the movement of the rabble. Marie de Mantoue articulates the spatial axis of desire onto the temporal axis of metaphorical (filial) substitution: "notre amour . . . naquit presque entre deux tombeaux." Marie de Mantoue bases her love of Cinq-Mars on her love for the ideal—dead—Father. The secret whispered in the confines of the alcove, behind locked doors, is the "truth"—which is always hidden. And the "truth" Marie de Mantoue articulates is genealogical, a paternal "truth": the "truth" of this Ultra-Legitimist novel is simply the "truth" of legit-
imacy: paternity. The foundational word for our reading is "articulate"—in its plurality of meanings. The shrews from the Halles babble, Marie de Mantoue is articulate. It is the perfection of form—the articulation of metaphor and metonymy—which constitutes the illusion of the fond.

If our Lacanian reading of Cinq-Mars seems at times deliberately superficial, even tautological, reëstablishing the "truth" in the metonymic chain of revolting signifiers which conditions the metaphoric truth; it is precisely because psychoanalysis brings depth back up to the surface—of signifiers—as in free association. Freud, after all, attained his "truth" not so much by privileging the significant (depth), as by closely scrutinizing the insignificant (superficial): lapses, dreams, conundrums, children's games. Freudian "truth" emerged from nonsense. The revolting scenes we have just analysed retrace the same scandalous itinerary of unlawful appropriation and intimations of sexual impropriety of "The Purloined Letter." Have not our ragged rebels stolen out of the depths, stolen the plot (the Royalist/Cardinalist conflict); have they not purloined—in the etymological sense of "prolonged" and "deviated" which Lacan plays upon—swords and sabers from battles past and the tools of their trade for use in the insurrection—an insurrection transgressing sexual boundaries. Signifiers body forth the forgotten, repressed accretions of past conflicts, reminiscences of another world order:
there is indeed a resistance to and a subversion of meaning.

Our next section will trace the movement back to its source: a locus where boundaries are transgressed, inside and outside are subverted and depths and heights collapse.

C. From Richelieu and the Scene of Writing to the Voice of Cinq-Mars

1. Unconscious writing. The movement we have followed through the text—from primal cry ("étranges vociférations") through stutter ("j'ai aimé..., j'ai été aimée de...") to final, polished form (the confidences exchanged between Anne of Austria and Marie de Mantoue)—a movement toward verbal formalization that curiously mirrors the activity the author is engaged in, the writing of Cinq-Mars, illustrates in its own way "cette prise du symbolique" that is allegorized in "The Purloined Letter."15 The passage marks the violent entry of the Symbolic Order into the subject.

Like most Lacanian terms, "Symbolic Order" is fraught with complexity, but for the purpose of our study, we will accept Anthony Wilden's attempt to define it as relating "primarily to Language and the family."16 The Symbolic Order is the keystone of culture derived from Freud's foundational Oedipal structure augmented by—or rather, juxtaposed with—Lacan's Saussurean-inspired reflections on
language mediated by Levi-Strauss' anthropological insights. If language and the family can be related, it is because the fundamental law governing the latter, the prohibition of incest, by necessitating the exchange of women, creates a social bond that functions as a type of proto-language. In this respect, the linguistic "signe est bien celui de la femme." 17 Woman is, in fact, the proto-signifier.

The terminal "message" of the movement from the unconscious to the conscious that we have followed through the text, relates "primarily to Language and the family": Marie de Mantoue grafts the love of Cinq-Mars onto the love of her father and "translates" the chaotic utterances of the mob, the spasmodic gestures of Gaston, and the babblings of the Duchess de Chevreuse into language. Vigny's historical tableau, in which the nineteenth century's originating "primal trauma," the French Revolution, is explicitly reinscribed, also resonates with the shattering forces at work within each individual--Freud's "primal trauma."

The unconscious pressures of the Symbolic Order in the psyche constitute a code which Freud was the first to decipher. Lacan names this language of the unconscious the "discourse of the Other," a term laden with religious, literary, and philosophic overtones. In a way, this notion is a boon to exegetes of the written word. Lacan, against the thrust of this century's prevailing intellectual forces, takes a step in the direction of Literature, rather than
neuro-biology, a science to which Psychoanalysis was originally intended to be but a passage. Literary texts, notably those of the Romantic period, abound in characters cleaving into Other(s), in symmetrical and asymmetrical, infernal and divine Doubles. Lacan's personified unconscious as an heuristic tool, can account for binary structures, in the same way as René Girard's notion of "mediated desire." The Girardian "mediator" is, in fact, closely related to the Lacanian Other, although what the individual and society repress in Girard's construct is mimeticism itself.

The "Other" (the capitalized initial indicates transcendence, or as Girard phrases it more aptly: "a purely formal residue of transcendence")\textsuperscript{18} is the Freudian id--the traditional Freudian antique witch's cauldron seething with primeval drives--grown up urbane and sophisticated, yet conserving its elemental strength. It is an "au-delà"--insofar as it is inaccessible to consciousness--"où se noue la reconnaissance du désir au désir de reconnaissance."\textsuperscript{19} In this highly problematic statement, "désir" and "reconnaissance," itself understood as a knot of various and related meanings ("recognition," "acknowledgement," "identification," "knowing again"), carry equal weight as the chiasmus implies. From the unconscious springs forth not just desire, but a knowledge about that desire, as well as a desire for recognition, i.e. a desire to communicate
that knowledge, which is a knowledge defined or limited by personal and collective history ("recognition"). If it seems that Lacan has hypostatized the unconscious, it is not that the unconscious is a person, but a discourse bodying forth the mirage of an "Other"; in other words, something very much like a text.

Thus, "l'inconscient n'est pas le primordial, ni l'instinctuel, et d'élémentaire, il ne connaît que les éléments du signifiant." If the "elements of the signifier" are the content of the unconscious, then a knowledge of language (whether literary or linguistic) can be helpful in recovering that knowledge. But first, we need to determine just what is an "element of the signifier." It is precisely the (elusive) subject of "The Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," which Lacan has seen fit to place in the pre-eminent position of introduction to the Points collection of his writings. The letter is the content of the unconscious. But this again is a highly problematic statement, since, as Barbara Johnson points out, the difficulty in reading Lacan is that, at the end of its circuit, "the word letter no longer has any literality."\textsuperscript{20} Mercifully, Lacan provides a definition of the figurative "letter" in his "Seminar," a definition that proves to be remarkably literal: the letter can be variously interpreted as "l'élément typographique," "l'épître," or "ce qui fait la lettre."\textsuperscript{21} The innumerable enigmas posed by words are
somehow resolvable by interrogating the nature of Language itself. In this case, the difficulty posed by the word "letter" does not arise out of its meaninglessness, but out of an excess of meaning: "Obscurity is an excess, not a deficiency of meaning." If the "letter" can be said to "castrate" each of its successive owners in "The Purloined Letter," not to mention the many puzzled readers of Lacan's "Seminar," it may be partly due to the very complex nature of this intersubjective and intrasubjective link, what, in effect, binds and blinds society and constitutes our being. Words are in themselves problematic bundles of meaning diachronically and synchronically swathed; they are themselves rendered impotent by the very weight of History, buried under geological layers of accumulated sediment. Much time is spent in the "Seminar" dusting them off. In other words, the "letter" gets lost in its own growing figurality. The "letter" like the peasant with the Voltairean grin and the staff, bodies forth the mirage of unequivocal meaning (the phallic "bâton") and its castration: the threat of ambiguity ("sourire sardonique").

In *Cinq-Mars*, the peasant is perceived as a force only in displacement (in Loudun, rather than on the farm). Likewise, in Lacan's reading of "The Purloined Letter," the letter, which is the "content" of the unconscious, "ne se maintient que dans un déplacement." Indeed, a "letter,"
whether it is understood as a unit of the alphabet, or as a missive relating intimate and immediate concerns, attains the power of meaning only in ever-expanding frames of reference: a word, phrase, text, etc...; or as "missive," in a correspondence. Meaning is never here nor there, but a result of the shuttling between here and there. There is no "mot juste," contrary to what armies of literature professors have argued in the past, that can do justice to a passage; the "passage" is the meaning. Like "woman," the signifier (which the "letter" symbolizes) is very much a dependent: dependent on other signifiers; and like "woman," weighted down with the burden of patriarchal history. Finally, like "woman," it can be treacherous and rebel: there is an unconscious residue of accumulating sediment—limon—like a growing resentment on the part of what's been left out, threatening to work its way back in.

The tumultuous revolt of ragged rebels, of marginals obscuring and deflecting the sens ("meaning," "direction") of History (Vigny's history, Cinq-Mars) are described as emitting "des vociférations étranges," "ils chantaient et hurlaient tour à tour, contrefaisant avec des rires atroces les miaulements de chat" and plastering Paris with "de longues histoires satiriques" (pp. 191-192). What is being described here is the very materiality of speech and the subversive movement of writing, the vocal and figurative
(satire) excess of language. What surfaces also are the buried relics, like repressed or forgotten meanings of traumas past: "immenses hallebardes et des piques damasquinées du temps de la Ligue" (ibid.). This textual movement moves, as we have shown, in the direction of increased articulateness. If we were to move in the opposite direction, would we ultimately arrive at the object the signifier replaces, the referent: la chose? Or to another signifier? Would we stay within the system? Or move outside?

According to the Queen, the revolts have been instigated by none other than the Cardinal de Richelieu: "Je le reconnais dans ce qui vient de se passer, je le vois dans ces tumultueuses révoltes" (p. 203). Like the letterless Queen in Poe's story, "elle le [croit] capable de tout."24 Although the indefatigable Minister is in Narbonne, his encroaching, ubiquitous presence looms menacingly deep in the most sacred recesses of the inner sanctum of the Court. "Sois sûre que cet homme est partout et qu'il sait jusqu'à nos pensées" (p. 204) the Queen assures the distraught Marie de Gonzague. Does not Richelieu, in his omnipotence and ubiquity, bring to mind "cet autre à qui je suis plus attaché qu'à moi, puisqu'au sein le plus assenti de mon identité à moi-même, c'est lui qui m'agite?"25

Lacan's "truth" is that there is no acceding to an ultimate signified, but a non-stop movement from signifier
to signifier, along the twin paths of metaphor, "un mot pour un autre," and metonymy, "mot à mot." The twin paths of desire ("mot à mot") and violence (to the extent that "mot pour un autre" can imply an annihilation) we have traveled along in the preceding section leads from Richelieu to Cinq-Mars, the rabble demanding the annihilation of the former, and his replacement by the latter. To the degree he is not implicated, the narrator acknowledges this truth and demystifies the signifier, since the rabble's championing of Cinq-Mars' faction is not motivated by "l'intérêt qu'ils leur supposaient pour le bien-être de leur classe, mais tout simplement parce qu'ils plaisaient ou déplaisaient comme des acteurs" (p. 186, emphasis mine). The signifier is an "actor"; it "pretends to be a signified." The actor's imposture, where Art most flagrantly reveals itself as artifice, has invariably been denounced by the staunchest upholders of Phallogocentric Law, unveiling as it does the castration of meaning, the (Lacanian) truth of being as non-being.

Vigny recognizes this truth, "to a degree," as we indicated, and Cinq-Mars is a (failed) attempt to arrest the irresistible movement of signifier to signifier. The Novel is the ultimate Meaning of History: "l'HUMANITE ENTIERE . . . [sent] bien que la succession des scènes qu'elle joue sur la terre n'est pas une comédie, et que, puisqu'elle avance, elle marche à un but dont il faut chercher l'explication
au-delà de ce qu'il voit."28 Cinq-Mars is, of course, the au-delà of Cinq-Mars, the historical figure. Interestingly enough, our critical gesture repeats this same movement by reaching further back to that Freudian/Lacanian "au-delà où se noue la reconnaissance du désir au désir de reconnais-
sance" in the discourse of the Other, i.e. Richelieu, a character well aware of the elusiveness of meaning: "Sur quatre lignes de l'écriture d'un homme, on peut lui faire un procès criminel" (p. 327). Well aware, thus, of the elusiveness of meaning, as a means to power. Richelieu's formula explains why it does not matter what "The Purloined Letter's" content is: it is whatever the Minister says it is. When you steal a letter, you steal its plurality of messages.

This incessant glissement of the signified under the signifier, or writing as the necessary support and ineluc-
table subversion of meaning, preoccupied the author as this excerpt from his diary attests:

Du Livre--La vue des caractères de l'écriture dérange la pensée.
Un mot du journal frappe l'air et trouble une suite de méditations.
Un écrit ou un imprimé est donc souvent une rencontre dangereuse pour un penseur.
De même là conversation dérange la délibération sérieuse.

The act of reading is somehow unrecognizable in this pas-
sage. Reading is no longer a transparency to meaning, but
a vision obscured by "caractères," that is, no longer sentences, nor words, not even letters, but markings partaking of the enigmatic function of a hieroglyph or pictogram. Writing undermines the integrity of the self: "dérance la pensée," "trouble une suite de méditations." Writing is subversive: "une rencontre dangereuse pour un penseur."

Writing is somehow cacophonous: "De même la conversation dérange . . ." Could it be that writing conveys discordant background noises, like the rabble, and thus it is the Poet's mission to clear the air of the former, as it is to clear the latter out?

Naturally, Vigny believed that a homeopathic cure for writing could be found in more writing, namely belles-lettres. If, as Mehlman wrote, "A text is less a monument, than a battle-field," Cinq-Mars is the name of a (losing) battle to contain meaning. Indeed, the novel stages a confrontation between two series of writings in Chapter XX "La Lecture" (pp. 261-279), thematic strands of which are to be found throughout the novel, and, significantly, as we shall see, at its conclusion. But faithful to our Freudian method of oblique entrances into the text, we will break into the theme, not where it figures centrally, in "La Lecture," but where we would not expect it to be: in the heat of physical battle between the French and Spanish armies, the siege of Perpignan.
2. *Cinq-Mars*’ Other text. Troubled by the King's preoccupation with the fate of his (Richelieu's) arch-enemy, the exiled and redoubtable Queen-Mother, Marie de Médicis, the crafty Minister lures the wavering monarch to Perpignan, where the forces of France and Spain are battling for control over the province of Roussillon. In the hope that the drums of war will drown out the frail but persistent voice of Louis' conscience, Richelieu organizes a little skirmish for him. The King falls for the ploy and plunges into the "nuage immense et mobile" (p. 143) of the conflict. Curiously, Vigny always manages to occlude the most virile passages of the novel in a fog or a cloud (a similar interruption occurred in the ambush discussed in the previous section). Nevertheless, the clouds of smoke dissipate long enough to give the reader a glimpse of Richelieu engaged in his trademark activity: "Un page mit pied à terre et s'avança tenant un crayon et un papier. Le ministre . . . s'assit sur l'affût d'un canon; le page présenta son épaule comme pupître en s'inclinant, et le Cardinal écrivit à la hâte cet ordre . . ." (p. 144). What follows is the text of his message to the maréchal de Schomberg, a text miraculously poised "en équilibre sur deux pensées" (ibid.), limiting the further course of the hostilities and adroitly shifting responsibility for the outcome onto the poor marshal. Richelieu's goal is to give the King enough fighting to take his mind off his meddlesome mother, and
perhaps, circumstances permitting, gain a strategic advantage or two over the enemy.

The Minister's long-term military goal is to defer the taking of Perpignan for another two years: "cette ville ne tombera pas encore, elle ne sera française que dans deux ans; elle viendra dans mes filets seulement au jour marqué dans ma pensée" (p. 139). Curiously, the Minister fails to tell us why the annexation of Roussillon must wait another two years. Given the text's enviable ability to unroll "ce que roulait sous sa tête chauve, le Cardinal-duc" (ibid.), one wonders why the solution to this tantalizing enigma could not have been unwrapped as well. Nevertheless, a point is notched for Richelieu's invincible "pensée," a "pensée" which succeeds in undercutting (castrating) the (phallic) action of King, army and cannons, over which a veil of "flammé" and "fumée" (p. 143) has been modestly thrown. Richelieu indeed partakes of the primary function of the signifier (the discourse of the Other) which is to defer: "le mouvement de la trace est décrit comme un effort de la vie se protégeant elle-même en différant l'investissement dangereux, en constituant une réserve." Richelieu's "pensée" invariably makes it to the heart of the action and defers and replaces that action (the Royalist/Cardinalist conflict, the battle between the French and Spanish). Whether the scene depicted is "scène révoltante" or scène sublime (the siege of Perpignan), Vigny reveals "la scène
de l'écriture. Comme tous ceux qui écrivent."

The purely literary application of Derrida's thought turns every novel into a *nouveau roman*: writing that uncovers and designates its own inner workings. In *Cinq-Mars*, this self-exposure is accompanied by a vehement denial—Richelieu *is* the antagonist—tantamount, in Freudian translation, to a vigorous affirmation. What this text denies and thus affirms so forcefully about writing is the truth of writing as castration. Richelieu's writing on the page at the base of the cannon is multiply-charged castration scene: Richelieu, an invalid incapable of standing erect, robs the cannon and the monarchy of their potency, as he sits writing on *le page*, who turns back into *la page* right before our eyes. What may seem forced in this assertion, may appear less so, given the emasculating epidemic noted in the preceding section, to which even our hero ultimately succumbs (p. 357)—and not just by losing his head.

Our homophonic word-play, besides illustrating the irresistible gravitational attraction between signifiers, also confirms our assimilation of Richelieu with the Lacanian Other. In *Cinq-Mars*, we would propose that Richelieu designates the locus of a break or rupture ("béance") in the fabric of the text, where writing's mirage of reality dissolves back into just writing. Richelieu is undeniably "une rencontre dangereuse pour un penseur."
Significantly, Richelieu first breaks into the text in a chapter entitled "Le Cabinet"—Richelieu's or Vigny's?—while Cinq-Mars, "notre jeune voyageur [est] endormi" (p. 94). The reader is conveyed to the archbishop's palace in Narbonne, via a "rue inégale et obscure" (ibid.) into a spacious and splendid room sheltering Richelieu's emoryonic but nonetheless efficient and industrious bureaucracy. Richelieu's location is thus doubly ex-centric, doubly removed from the centrality of Court and consciousness: in an obscure area of a town itself on the nation's vulnerable southern border. Comfortably ensconced in a vast cushion-laden armchair, while our hero Cinq-Mars is deep in sleep, the Cardinal, the author insists, "ne dormait pas" (p. 95). Alert to the slightest irregularity in the quiet functioning of this nascent administration, Richelieu is busy dictating policy to his high-born pages and secretaries, their quills scratching away at the scrolls. The Cardinal's crimson skullcap ("calotte rouge") is the room's (and the text's) lurid focal point, a stark reminder of his victims' severed necks and contrasting significantly with the plumed and phallic headdresses sported by the noble protagonists.

While his subordinates are silently engaged in the transcribing and filing of a voluminous correspondence, the unsleeping Minister "de son côté, écrivait sur son genou des notes secrètes sur de petits papiers, qu'il glissait
dans presque tous les paquets avant de les fermer de sa propre main" (p. 96). In a mirror facing him, his watchful eye alights upon "le plus jeune de ses pages traçant quelques lignes interrompues sur une feuille d'une taille inférieure à celle du papier ministériel, puis la glissait rapidement sous la grande feuille qu'il était chargé de remplir à grand regret" (ibid.). The page, guilty of committing his own desires to writing—*billets doux* to a cousin—is dismissed on the spot. The discarded page is now free to steal into *Cinq-Mars*: Olivier d'Entraigues will reappear at Cinq-Mars' side at the siege of Perpignan. The mirror is angled to reveal vertiginous and abysmal perspectives when novel and critic are brought into its field.

As the Minister mercilessly represses the mirrored other, so is the novel engaged in the merciless repression of Richelieu: i.e. the scene of its own writing, which our reading brings back into view.

The Minister's *cabinet* is the locus of a text-work as thoroughly transformational and expurgatory as dream-work. A vast network of spies in various disguises supply him with "les rapports détaillés des actions les plus minutieuses et les plus secrètes de tout personnage un peu important . . . On attachait ces rapports secrets aux dépêches du Roi, qui devaient toutes passer par les mains du Cardinal, et être soigneusement repliées, pour arriver au prince épurées, et telles qu'on voulait les lui faire
lire" (p. 107). What the King reads is what the Cardinal wants him to read. Between the King (consciousness) and the nation (reality) is the impenetrable barrier of Richelieu's "caractères."

In **Cinq-Mars**, characters and their texts are interchangeable. Richelieu is not only a forceful writer, he is an avid and lucid reader—of texts and characters. In order to "explain" the personality of the abbé de Gondi, Richelieu advises his confidant, the villainous Père Joseph to read Gondi's *Histoire de Fiesque, vous l'y verrez lui-même* (p. 103). Richelieu first suspects the King of harbouring mutinous sentiments by subjecting his discourse to a sort of textual analysis: "Chrétien! Conscience! Ce ne sont pas ses expressions: c'est le Père Caussin, c'est son confesseur qui me trahit!" (p. 100). Richelieu's immediate and instinctive reaction to the King's velleities of independence is to compose a series of eleven precepts detailing in no uncertain terms the allegiance a monarch owes his minister and relying heavily on the mesmerizing effects of repetition—a seventeenth-century version of this century's media-blitz—to be delivered to the King's newly appointed confessor (pp. 100-101). The King dutifully memorizes the Cardinal's eleven commandments. The scene of Richelieu's writing also parodies *la scène de l'Écriture*, the tablets of the Law "du dieu de la France" (p. 101), eleven commandments (eleven providing the note of diabolical
excess) which the King internalizes more effectively than the original Ten.

Louis XIII's kingly responsibilities having been preempted by the Prime Minister, the monarch sinks into a somnambulistic existence: "ses yeux semblaient . . . voilés par un sommeil perpétuel" (p. 120). Richelieu thus fulfills the twofold purpose attributed by Freud to the unconscious activity of dreams, as guardian of sleep, and the fulfillment of wishes, since he is tireless in anticipating and gratifying the Court's whims: the Queen is provided with madrigals, Gaston with pointless intrigues, the King with a series of mistresses and a catamite (Cinq-Mars! p. 103). From this ex-centric hub, Richelieu's writing den, "des courriers [partaient] dans toutes les directions, comme les rayons d'un soleil qui donnait seul la vie et le mouvement à la France" (p. 98). France is a (dream-) text written with Richelieu's "letters." Much is written to persuade the reader that the Cardinal's (solar) "système" has pulled France off what Lukács would call "the true course of the historical curve"; just as Lacan has shown that Freud's discovery of the unconscious is akin to a second Copernican revolution: "il y allait une fois de plus de la place que l'homme s'assigne au centre de l'univers."33

Richelieu's ascendancy over the nation is founded upon his absolute mastery over the signifier. Indeed, Richelieu's writing, rather, Richelieu as writing illustrates the truth
of writing as castration of meaning ("sourire sardonique") as well as the truth of writing as aggression ("son long bâton"). Richelieu illustrates the truth of the signifier as master of the signified. In order to successfully encode reality (France) in a language totally subordinate to his will, the Cardinal tirelessly pursues those capable of contesting that ascendancy.

Those suspected of successfully disputing that mastery are brutally eliminated. The convicted priest, Urbain Grandier, is guilty, according to Cinq-Mars' mentor, the abbé Quillet, of having written and disseminated a notorious tract against Richelieu: "une satire . . . bassement écrite et conçue, mais [qui] renfermait des choses si injurieuses sur la naissance et la personne du Cardinal, que les ennemis du ministre s'en emparèrent et lui donnèrent une vogue qui l'irrita" (p. 65). Though Richelieu himself admits his decision was based on a tendentious "ouvrage contre le célibat des prêtres" (p. 105) which Grandier had allegedly written, it is the priest's infectious prose that does him in. A prose so powerful, in fact, that at the scene of his trial, it is the reading of a letter addressed to his platonic mistress, Madeleine de Brou, which operates a change of heart in his principle accuser, the abbess Jeanne de Belfield, who is secretly in love with him. Curiously enough, it is his writing and not the sight of his tortured body and contorted and pale visage that brings about this
reversal (pp. 71-72). Curiously and subtly, the text often replaces perceiving and doing by reading and writing.

The letter endowed with the performative power of an act was intended to assuage the troubled conscience of the love-smitten Madeleine de Brou:

O Madeleine, qu'y a-t-il en nous dont le regard du Seigneur s'indigne? Est-ce lorsque nous prions ensemble et que, le front prostré dans la poussière devant ses autels, nous demandons une mort prochaine qui nous vienne saisir devant la jeunesse et l'amour? Est-ce au temps où, rêvant seuls sous les arbres funèbres du cimetière, nous cherchions une double tombe, souriant à notre mort et pleurant sur notre vie?" (p. 72)

Grandier's letter rehearses the theme of Marie de Mantoue's secret. The agitation and turbulence caused by desire is quelled by forceful expressions of submission to the (heavenly) Father, the disorder of the sens ("meaning," "senses") brought to converge on the reposeful image of the "double tombe," a motif which reappears in Marie's evocation of her "armour, qui, ... naquit presque entre deux tombeaux" (p. 207). The desire which subtends all desire is the desire for the death of desire in accordance with the Law of the Father. As we shall see, all desire in Cinq-Mars, and principally the love uniting the protagonist and Marie de Mantoue, is heavily-laden with guilt, as evidenced by the persistent evocation of the ideal--dead--Father.

As acknowledged instigator of the mob's assault on the Louvre and the Queen, a movement of revolt funneled
through sexual channels, the Minister is the prime mover of desire in the novel. As littérateur, Richelieu dabbles in High Preciosity; his preferred genre is "la tragédie pastorale" (p. 360), upon which the novel heaps much Molièresque abuse. At the novel's conclusion, Richelieu attends the premiere of his play, Mirame, eagerly anticipating the homage of the public and a Voltairean apotheosis. However, this Astrée-inspired artifice, replete with love-struck shepherdesses toppling over their high-heels into the arms of their beribboned, epicene "amants parfaits" (ibid.), and subject to recurrent fainting spells, evoke no other reaction than "le balancement perpétuel des têtes noires à longs cheveux" (ibid.), a multitude of heads bobbing in sleep. In one way or another, Richelieu's writings successfully lull France to sleep. The futility and meaninglessness of the Minister's literary enterprise is further underscored by the repetition of "en vain" subordinates (ibid.), by an insistence on the rococo accumulation of futile ornamentation ("houlettes ornées de rubans," "guirlandes de fleurs," "rubans"; ibid.), and by the play's ostensible and appalling lack of a message.

The play seems to be mimed rather than declaimed, since the actors are described as "se mour[ant] d'amour," "se laiss[ant] dépérir de faim," and "déplor[ant] leur mort avec emphase" (ibid.). Richelieu's Mirame is characterized by rhetorical and sexual excess: "longues tirades de deux
cents vers langoureux," "emphase" and the orgasmic swoonings ("se mouraient d'amour," ibid.). The phallic potency of a message is undermined (castrated) by an excess of sexual and rhetorical expenditure.

But the abuse directed at the play, and at the genre it represents, extends far beyond the mere repugnance and contempt a "true" artist naturally feels for inferior and quasi-pornographic prose. If we turn back to the conclusion of "L'Alcôve," we are given a clue as to the deeper significance of Richelieu's dream-text. The heroine, seeking to calm her nerves shattered by the night's revolting scenes, leafs through a volume of L'Astrée, the prototype of the Richelieu-sponsored Précieux literature, and the source and model of the Minister's artistic forays. Like the Minister's captive audience, she responds with initial "répugnance" (p. 210) and quickly falls into a deep sleep. An excerpt from the tome, actually a pastiche is presented in the text, after which, the reader is informed that the principle figure in the excerpt, "le druide Adamas était une ingénieuse allégorie, figurant le lieutenant général de Montbrison, de la famille des Papon" (p. 211). The excessively rhetorical ("ingénieuse allégorie") Astrée and the multitude of texts it spawned (Mirame) present noble figures disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses, wholly engrossed in the pursuit of love. This reduction of the aristocracy to an inferior class and the castration of their
political potency through total involvement in the pursuit of pleasure are well in keeping, in fact, precisely the aim of Richelieu's political reforms as they are presented in the novel (cf. pp. 35-36). Richelieu's policies aim at a *pastoralization of tragedy*, a domestication of the hitherto independent aristocracy (the denizen of tragedy, par excellence); and _Cinq-Mars_ is the *tragedy of a pastoralization*: the degradation of a once proud and powerful feudal class to mooning, epileptic cowherds. Once again our reading has collapsed a difference in the novel: Richelieu's repressed writing and Cinq-Mars' manifest content coincide, and the continuity between unconscious and conscious thought revealed.

Significantly, Richelieu's public, impervious to the sensual swoonings of the Minister's "art," reserve their acclaim for Pierre Corneille, author of _Le Cid_, undiluted classic tragedy in which the noble protagonists are returned to the proud and preeminent position they occupied in feudal times. "Le Cid," as Richelieu's public cries out at the sight of the illustrious author, is a pure tragedy recounting the obstructed and deferred desire of Rodrigue for Chimène, a plot which parallels that of _Cinq-Mars_, in which the protagonist and Marie de Mantoue are wedged further and further apart. Thus _Le Cid_ is to _Mirame_ what (temporary) instinctual renunciation or sublimation is to the total submission to pleasure the unconscious would have
prevail (a deference rather than a difference). Corneille, however, marked by the obsequiousness of the age (as his dedicaces attest) and less heroic than the intrepid Rodrigue, "effrayé, se sauva dans les coulisses, et tout retomba dans le silence" (p. 361). The premiere of Mirame interrupts and parallels the scene of Cinq-Mars' execution in Lyon, and Corneille's abrupt disappearance recalls the protagonist's--on a different moral register, the very different moral register writing apparently is in this novel. The scene of writing again defers and replaces the action; the Royalist/Cardinalist conflict is displaced by the Le Cid/Mirame battle which in turn trails off into the undifferentiated absence of sound: "le silence."

Richelieu is both Other and Author; he is the other author of the other text, the surface of signifiers, the metonymic chain of language against which Cinq-Mars, as subject or signified of Vigny's counter-text, Cinq-Mars, will provide the metaphoric illusion of depth, the illusion of the solid reality of waking life. As Other, he represents that element of the signifier that is preliminary and refractory to meaning, that point in the chain where it is "en équilibre sur deux pensées." As author, he is engaged in a painstaking and unrelenting consignment of reality to writing. As the other author, he represents the alterity and opposition of a language the author of Cinq-Mars must overcome to accede to readability and
meaning.

Richelieu succeeds in thoroughly and completely encoding (writing) reality. When the King finally decides to wrest the power away from him, in order to save Cinq-Mars and learn the truth about his conspiracy, his inability to read forces him to desist:

Le Roi . . . fit le tour de l'immense table et vit autant de portefeuilles que l'on comptait alors d'empires, de royaumes et de cercles dans l'Europe; il en ouvrit un et le trouva divisé en cases, dont le nombre égalait celui des subdivisions de tout le pays auquel il était destiné. Tout était en ordre, mais dans un ordre effrayant pour lui, parce que chaque note ne renfermait que la quintessence de chaque affaire, si l'on peut parler ainsi, et ne touchait que le point juste des relations du moment avec la France. Ce laconisme était à peu près aussi énigmatique pour Louis que les lettres en chiffres qui couvraient la table. (P. 326; emphasis mine)

The passage, lifted out of the chapter entitled, appropriately enough, "Le Travail" (pp. 308-332), is remarkable in the striking resemblance it bears to contemporary discourse on writing and the nature of the relationship between language and reality. In his "Eléments de Sémiologie," Roland Barthes writes: "le language, c'est en quelque sorte ce qui divise le réel." This is, in a nutshell, what can be derived from the century's voluminous contributions to the study of language. Language is an order of divisions ("ordre," "divisé . . . subdivisions") applied to the continuous flow of undifferentiated reality, hence reductive
of that reality ("quintessence," "laconisme"); an order of divisions relating back to the speaker himself, to his position in reality at a certain time and place ("le point juste des relations du moment").

The passage also constitutes a Lacanian lesson, abridged, on the rhetorical functioning of the unconscious. Lacan, applying Roman Jakobson's contribution to the study of linguistics to the field of psychoanalysis, has subsumed the various models of unconscious movement of signifiers under the twin mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. The unconscious operates a condensation, a metaphorical "structure de surimposition" of signifiers, as well as metonymic displacement by contagion or contiguous attraction. Similarly, Richelieu's "lettres en chiffres" are condensations ("quintessence," "laconisme") and displacements ("ne touchait que le point juste des relations du moment"). The King is unable to discover the truth about Cinq-Mars because he is unable to read the Minister's ciphers, just as consciousness is unable to decipher the discourse of the Other outside of analysis.

Richelieu's writing is too metaphorically dense and too metonymically impoverished to be readable. His writing resembles what Sartre terms "le langage commun" as opposed to technical or scientific language in which the signifier least obstructs access to the signified. This common or collective language conveys a maximum of disinformation
because it is "à la fois trop riche (il déborde de loin le concept par son ancienneté traditionnelle, par l'ensemble de violences et de cérémonies qui constitue sa 'mémoire', son 'passé vivant') et trop pauvre (il est défini par rapport à l'ensemble de la langue comme détermination fixe de celle-ci et non comme possibilité d'exprimer le neuf)."  

A writer with an urgent and unequivocal ideological project is thus obliged to write against the deflecting eddies and currents of the common language when writing in it. As we have seen, Richelieu's writings convey either too many meanings, too much noise (the rabble) or too little (Mirame), ultimately tumbling into the non-being of sleep and silence.

In a way, our (psycho-)analysis of Cinq-Mars has come full circle. We have, in the first chapter, adumbrated a movement in the text that grew to resemble a passage from the unconscious to consciousness, a movement that resulted in the "truth" of a parole pleine; in the second, we have confirmed those suspicions by tracing the movement back to the unconscious source of pure rhetoricity: a textual black hole. Richelieu names the moment of a textual dys-functioning, a break or rupture in the fabric of the text through which the meaning or theme escapes, where reading turns back into "La vue des caractères de l'écriture."

If, as the Queen suspected, the movement of the rabble has been instigated by the Cardinal, the effect of that
mass demonstration constitutes a sort of victory for the
Minister over his opponent. Indeed, we noted in the con-
cclusion to our first chapter that Marie de Mantoue's dis-
course strangely resembled a "talking cure." In proclaming
her love for Cinq-Mars, and returning to the origin of that
love in the death of her father, she has been cured of the
symptoms of desire. In a chapter bearing the appropriately
prophylactic title of "La Toilette," a period during which
the inner and outer scabrous revelations and eruptions of
the previous night are allowed to mend, the hero's friend
and confidant, de Thou, scrutinizes the princess to deter-
mine whether she is the as yet unrevealed object of Cinq-
Mars' ambition. Seeing her primp, fuss, and derive obvious
satisfaction from participating in the pomp of Court Life
he concludes: "Dans ce coeur de dix-neuf ans, . . . l'amour
serait seul, et aujourd'hui surtout: donc . . . ce n'est pas
elle" (p. 221). The coincidences exchanged between Anne
d'Autriche and Marie de Mantoue achieve the fullness of
meaning of the culminating moment of analysis: the artic-
ulation of the latter's love brings about its cessation,
and a transference of the Queen's emotional control onto
de Mantoue.

Out of the Queen's "cassette d'or" containing the knife
used to assassinate Buckingham and his love letters
(p. 206), metonymically and metaphorically linked to the
weapons and writings brandished by the populace, the Queen
produced an irresistible story which Marie de Mantoue will repeat, her lover Cinq-Mars being destined to Buckingham's bloody fate. Let us specify that the contents of the Queen's "cassette d'or" are metonymically linked to the weapons and writings outside the Palace in the novel's succession of scenes, but linked metaphorically in the similarity uncovered in our reading. We will return to the problem of metaphor as the enexhaustible source of new meaning (our reading, the Queen's reading) to the metonymy of a given chain of signifiers (Vigny's text, the "cassette d'or") in a later chapter. At this point we wish to express that the textual movement we uncovered in the first chapter is truly the movement of the text: it is the movement from writing as an unconscious surface-play of signifiers to meaning as the fullness of presence of a conscious Voice.

In Cinq-Mars, Richelieu is writing as the locus of a vocal extinction. As the maréchal de Bassompierre notes in the opening chapter: "nous entendons mal la langue que parle la Cour nouvelle, et elle ne sait plus la nôtre. Que dis-je? on n'en parle aucune dans ce triste pays, car tout le monde se tait devant le Cardinal" (p. 32). Richelieu reduces France to muteness, to a fonctionnement à vide of rhetoric and repetition. Richelieu is the locus of castration, not just of meaning, but in the very physical sense of removing one's ability to propagate. At the conclusion of the chapter "Le Travail" we examined earlier, the
defeated King is forced to hand over Cinq-Mars and his children to the victorious Cardinal. The Minister, and not the King, is the spiritual Father of the future France: an interpretation confirmed in the image of the future Louis XIV "jou[ant] avec un petit canon qu'il brisait" (pp. 220-221) a gesture ominously reminiscent of Richelieu.

"[M]a mort est écrite à Narbonne" (p. 233), exclaims Cinq-Mars to his friend de Thou in a moment of despair. Our reading would reverse this chiasmatically into "writing is death": the castration of the Romantic ideal of individuality and difference, leaving nothing but the homogenizing (feminizing) movement of the signifier, this "conquérant qui entre par la brèche" (p. 114) as Richelieu is described in the text. Cinq-Mars is not so much History, that is a pre-history of the French Revolution, as it is a cosmology in the Derridean sense, in the sense that it describes a revolution around the solar centrality of the fully conscious, spoken Logos.

In our next section, we will hearken to the Romantic Voice of this text, and follow its ineluctable dissolution and extinction in writing.

3. Cinq-Mars as Fading Voice of the Text. Writing is a secret business, a trafficking in secrets. In his cabinet, Richelieu is endlessly and ominously engaged in writing "des notes secrètes sur de petits papiers" (p. 96). Olivier
d'Entraigues is expelled from his retinue for engaging in this same activity under the Cardinal's anti-aristocratic nose. The infection spreads to Richelieu's royal pupil, since the King is described as a recluse "lisant and reliant sans cesse des papiers mystérieux, écrivant des choses inconnues, qu'il enfermait dans un coffre en fer dont lui seul avait le secret" (p. 239). To the King's "coffre en fer" corresponds the Queen's "cassette d'or" containing Buckingham's secret letters. The Queen orders Marie to throw the box into the Seine in the event anything should happen to her, so sensitive are its contents.

However, unlike the mysterious "letter" in Poe's short story, whose contents are never revealed, much time is spent in Cinq-Mars opening letters: Richelieu's secret writings are exposed and the contents of the royal couple's strong-boxes emptied out. This process of demystification is hardly surprising in a novel which arrogates a privileged and transcendental position over the historical period it examines (and rectifies). Cinq-Mars, as we have noted, "is . . . the au-delà of Cinq-Mars, the historical figure."

To drive the point home, the narrator opens several chapters from a perspective of vertiginous heights, amidst the mountain peaks and clouds (p. 94, p. 184, p. 301), thereby figuring the superiority of his Olympian vision. Nevertheless, in spite of the Poet's divine ability to reveal the Truth obscured by History, there remains his puzzlement
when faced with the opaqueness "des caractères de l'écriture." Perhaps the very abundance of opened letters in
the novel betrays (through over-compensation) their emptiness, just as Freud conjectured that multiple penises
indicated castration (cf. Argus Panoptes also, and other mythological examples).

In *Cinq-Mars*, Truth is not something that is read; it is heard. Cinq-Mars is confident that he can safely
negotiate the Cardinal's "sentiers tortueux" (p. 155), the labyrinth of writing, and after winning the King's favor,
the latter "entendrait la vérité" (ibid.). Cinq-Mars (both hero and text) aspires to replace Richelieu's writing by
the King's voice—the voice of Legitimism—"Que votre voix s'élève . . ." (p. 248), ideally with the hero in the role
of the prompter.

In the chapter entitled "La Partie de chasse" (pp. 238-261), the King reveals the mysterious writings
contained in the "coffre de fer" mentioned earlier. As the Queen's "cassette d'or" contains Buckingham's love
correspondence, the King's "coffre de fer" is also a register of his—more varied—desires. What the King has
faithfully and painstakingly recorded and locked away in the safe are the daily activities and conversations of his
various mistresses and minions: "j'ai écrit jour par jour toutes nos conversations" (p. 246). The King proceeds to
read aloud from his notes to the bored Cinq-Mars a litany
of complaints, detailing the innumerable infractions the
latter has committed. The favourite remains impassive until
the King stumbles across the following passage: "Le soir,
vous avez dit du Cardinal qu'il avait fait brûler un homme
injustement et par haine personnelle" (p. 247). The note
refers to the fraudulent charges levelled against Urbain
Grandier, whose trial and execution Cinq-Mars had witnessed
on his way to Perpignan. Still burning with outrage over
the Cardinal's misdeed, Cinq-Mars urges the King to reread
"toutes les preuves que je vous en donnai alors" (ibid.).
The King responds to Cinq-Mars' bristling and eloquent
indignation by timidly vowing to "se défaire du ministre"
(p. 249). What the passage makes apparent is the indiffer-
ence of writing (and unmediated reading) to the truth unless
accompanied by, or inscribed with, the persuasive power
and urgency of a voice. Writing may be a "record" of real-
ity, but only a voice can interpret it, that is, invest
it with meaning.

As we noted in the preceding chapter, the Queen's
"cassette d'or" contained the truth of Cinq-Mars. Bucking-
ham's love-letters and the bloody dagger used to assassinate
him were woven into an irresistible story which Marie de
Mantoue, as analysand, would repeat. Like Buckingham,
Cinq-Mars is willing to wage war to win Marie's hand, and
like the Duke, Cinq-Mars will meet the same bloody fate.
Marie, like Anne, is destined to a throne, ultimately
crowned Queen of Poland. Out of her "cassette d'or" the Queen recovers the truth of the novel, but out of his "coffre de fer" the King uncovers nothing but emptiness (reflected in Cinq-Mars' numerous yawns--p. 246). What makes the Queen's chest more precious than the King's safe is not so much the gold, but the phallic dagger, rusty with her lover's blood. Blood and dagger are the guarantee, the organic link, the outside referent, in short the meaning and truth of ink and paper. However, although the King's strongbox does not contain the phallic truth, the phallic truth is standing next to him in the person of Cinq-Mars, Buckingham's heir and phallic center of the novel, busily investing the contents of the box with meaning--"preuves"--through the power of his eloquence, the persuasive potency of his phallic voice. If Lacan's truth is that the letter is "purloined," Cinq-Mars' truth is that it is appropriated by the loudest voice.

One root conflict in Cinq-Mars is the dialectic between letter and voice, the struggle between the unconscious letter (Richelieu), irreducible to meaning, and the voice of conscience (Cinq-Mars) in consciousness (the King as center of the Court and nation). The voice, like the dagger, is the organic link, the truth of writing. In contrast to the letter's opacity, to writing's "sentiers tortueux," Cinq-Mars' ideal mode of communication is "la ligne droite," a total transparency to meaning: "Ma pensée entière, la
pensée de l'homme juste, se dévoilera aux regards du Roi" (p. 155). The letter, in itself, is the locus of treachery, as Richelieu knows best: "Mais, surtout, envoyez-moi des gens sûrs, et tous les jours, pour me rendre compte verbalement; jamais d'écrits à l'avenir" (p. 162), he warns Joseph after a distraught courier with particularly compelling news has been intercepted by the King.

The letter is the origin and necessary support of the voice, which appropriates the letter with a view to sending another letter inscribed with its own voice. The novel Cinq-Mars originated in the appropriation (perceived in certain--August--quarters as something quite akin to an embezzlement) of memoirs and letters, notably those of Richelieu, burnt and sublimated into the ideality of Cinq-Mars' Voice (the only weapon he wields effectively). Only Richelieu, as other author, disrupts this economy of voice and letter by short-circuiting the letter into another letter--the other or repressed text, or History as a succession of disjointed (inarticulate) events.

The Minister is described as possessing a rather meagre organe, "une voix grêle" (p. 95), not meant to be entendu (in its double sense of "heard" and "understood"), not meant to conjure up the other's presence: "une voix grêle qui dictait" (ibid.; emphasis mine). Anne of Austria, Marie de Mantoue, Cinq-Mars and de Thou articulate, but Richelieu dictates. The distinction between these vocal distinctions
is, as the dictionary informs us, speaking as clear and meaningful speech and speaking for writing and repetition; speaking to be understood and speaking to command. The former is other-oriented, the latter, other-annihilating. Richelieu's voice is not meant to evoke the other's presence, but to dissolve that presence in the anonymity of writing.

Richelieu is in the business of intercepting letters, as many letters as possible, in order to transmit to posterity a definitive text or History as the text which can best account for reality, the ultimate goal of all texts. History as text merging most intimately with reality is the most potent text of all, a text with an infinite capacity for regeneration. And if History as class struggle is determined by those who have appropriated the means of (socio-economic) production, as we inhabitants of the Marxian twentieth century are well aware, History as text is determined by those who have appropriated the means of signifying production. The stealing of a letter is an act with ramifications beyond the narrowed field of psychoanalysis: the letter is stolen by a Minister. Stealing a letter is also a political act, since it modifies the textual surface upon which the social edifice is erected. History is the story of purloined signifiers, of letters, crosses, crescents, crowns and swastikas embezzled from their original context--the original organic context of voice and phallus.
Of his audacious Minister, the King exclaims: "Il a empêché toutes les lettres de la Noblesse et de tous les notables d'arriver à moi. Brûler, brûler vivant!" (p. 247). The last exclamation refers to the mode of execution of Urbain Grandier, but it also refers to the ideal mode of consumption of the letter, which as we observed in the preceding section, "represented," in more ways than one, Grandier at his trial. The letter, that is rhetoric and repetition, the empty surface-play of signifiers, is to be burnt and sublimated into the ideality of a conscious voice. As an avid and lucid reader of letters, Richelieu is intent upon using and burning letters, and especially their authors: "il n'était satisfait que lorsqu'il avait fait condamner par le Parlement le livre ennemi à être brûlé en place de Grève . . . et . . . son seul regret était que l'auteur ne fût pas à la place de l'ouvrage" (p. 107). Let us remind the reader that in 1826 an author was responsible for his novel, which was not yet considered "un texte qui signe un nom." It is the author as voice behind the text that Richelieu aims to silence, as Vigny silenced the voice behind the purloined letters of Richelieu.

Significantly, what remains of Urbain Grandier after being burned at the stake is "une main noircie" (p. 85), the very hand that produced a prose as powerful as a voice: "j'ai peint dans un livre une seule pensée de mon âme" (pp. 71-72). A writing that is total transparency to an
ideal and unique thought is, in fact, very much like a voice. This hand, blackened by fire or ink, resistant to the Minister's all-consuming fire, is in a way the very hand that writes *Cinq-Mars*. Urbain Grandier's voice will be echoed by that of Cinq-Mars, linked as they are by the latter's identification with the former, as evidenced by his rage in the presence of the King. They are also linked by the thematic thread of Jeanne de Belfiel, whose feigned possession provided the pretext for Grandier's execution, and who follows the protagonist to Perpignan in a state of true possession (and in possession of the truth), clearly establishing the latter as heir to her lover's misfortune. Urbain Grandier is the proto-Cinq-Mars; his story is also a *mise-en-abyme* of the novel. Curiously enough, the climactic events of the Grandier episode are triggered by the stealing of a letter composed by the notables of Loudun in the priest's defense and destined to the King. However, Laubardemont, the presiding judge and one of Richelieu's more odious creatures, declares officially that the letter has been "*interceptée et brûlée en place publique comme calomniant les bonnes Ursulines et les Révérends Pères et juges*" (p. 56). The four chapters that comprise the Urbain Grandier episode are thus circumscribed by a stolen letter and a blackened hand, restituted. The movement from (stolen) letter to organic link retraces the itinerary of Lacan's analysis of "The Purloined Letter", which implies
that the letter is the mother's missing penis. It is the movement of this novel as the "cassette d'or" suggests, and of all hermeneutic: the dialectic of the succeeding modes of literary exegesis, from Sainte-Beuvian to psychoanalytical to New Criticism and on to Deconstructionism, has converged on the restitution of an organic link (or lack), be it Author, Phallus, the great intertextual corpus, or the textual point of castration. What is a text that it must be restored, literally or figuratively, to the body, whole or fragmented? Does the body fix the meaning of the text, or does the text determine the "truth" of the body?

At any rate, in our reading of *Cinq-Mars*, Richelieu as writing is the textual point of castration (figuratively underscored by the emblematic "calotte rouge"); he illustrates the antithetical moment of the dialectic, burning Authors (Urbain Grandier), castrating Phalli (Cinq-Mars), fragmenting the literary corpus (symbolically represented by the aristocracy). In countering Cinq-Mars' ardent defense of Grandier's integrity, Richelieu suggests to the very suggestible King that the priest was guilty of "crimes dont le nom révolte la pudeur, dont le récit eût révélé à l'innocence de dangereux mystères" (p. 322); in other words something evoking the ultimate horror of sexuality: castration--the foundational "truth" of the Freudian unconscious.

If our reading seems to shift unaccountably from the
scene of a crime to a scene of writing to a scene of sexual (in)differentiation, it is due not so much to a Lacanian as it is to Vigny's text itself. Richelieu's scenario for framing Urbain Grandier, however awkwardly it is executed by his creatures, resembles nothing more than the production of one of his literary conceits: "le couvent des Ursulines ne [semble] plus être qu'un théâtre d'indignes comédies; les religieuses, des actrices déhontées" (p. 65). The word comédie and the vocabulary of theatrical artifice ("spectacle," p. 56 and p. 64; "acteurs," p. 186; "C'est quelque fête populaire ou quelque comédie de Carnaval," p. 213; and the variation on "scènes" noted in the central scene of revolt) are persistently invoked in connection with the Minister's political endeavours and intrusions. Richelieu is more metteur-en-scène than minister, and his national project resembles nothing more than the production of an inferior play. Undoubtedly, the curse traditionally associated with the acting profession may be attributable in part to a dim perception that we are not masters of our own lines, that our words and actions are controlled by someone else.

Ideological warfare in Cinq-Mars is expressed in terms of a high-toned debate between partisans of baroque excess and defenders of classicism, the archetypal Ancients vs. Moderns feud. Cinq-Mars, as leader of the classicist faction, vows to lift the veil from the Minister's mis-
representations. In his aesthetico-political mission to impose the classic and phallic "ligne droite" of "la pensée de l'homme juste" (p. 155), he is faced with the thorny Boileauean issues of pleasing as well as instructing: "il faudra plaire ... Plaire! que ce mot est humiliant! Un soldat s'expose à mourir, et tout est dit. Mais que de souplesse, de sacrifices de son caractère, que de composi-
sions avec sa conscience, que de dégradations de sa pensée dans la destinée d'un courtisan;" (p. 154). The politician and the writer are equally preoccupied with the question of style, which does not always engrave the truth as neatly, sharply, and easily as a soldier's sword, but involves con-
stant fretting over flexibility, composition, and nuance ("dégradations").

In Cinq-Mars, Politics is a sort of Writing, and Writing is indeed political. As the means of implementation of an Ideology or an Ideal Thought, they are both governed by the transformative movement of rhetoric. And if one were to accept the simplest and most general definition of rhetoric provided by Fontanier in his Figures du Discours as "les traits, les formes ou les tours ... par lesquels le discours, dans l'expression des idées, des pensées ou des sentiments, s'éloigne ... de ce qui en eût été l'expression simple et commune," it becomes clear that the movement is precisely one of loss of direction (sens): "s'éloigne." The vertical movement of transcendence and
truth is disoriented by the horizontal movement of reaching out to persuade. How well the beam of Truth can withstand the refractions and deflections of the Richelieu-ruled Court is what we propose to examine in our next section.

D. Rhetorical Rivalry

1. Metaphoric Truth and Metonymic Desire. If the truth of writing is castration, can Cinq-Mars as writing escape its inevitable fate of fragmentation and still remain Literature? Can it attain the fullness of presence and meaning of a Voice, and eschew the equivocality, the "differing from itself," that characterizes the literary text? Jean Roudaut makes the following criticism:

Il est évident que pour Vigny l'aventure humaine a un sens, et celui qu'il exprime, à travers Cinq-Mars, est bien ce qu'il y a littérairement de plus caduc dans l'oeuvre. Cette intention démonstrative est corrigée par un jeu constant sur l'ambiguïté des conduites, des sentiments, des jugements. Et ce n'est pas le moins étrange que Vigny ait cru pouvoir confier un message politique à un livre qui se déroule essentiellement sur le sentiment de peu de vérité.

Roudaut is right when he says that a novel is an odd place to insert a political message (an ideology); the latter being rather an exclusion of, the former a function of, ambiguity. He indulgently attenuates ("étranger") the awkwardness of the endeavour: when the Maréchal de Bassompierre
and the Duc de Bouillon predict with infallible accuracy a century and a half of the least predictable historical events, there is a rather considerable taxing of the reader's credibility (pp. 35-36, p. 224). Even Richelieu, in a unique moment of discouragement and self-doubt, echoes the same fears of impending royal doom in suspiciously similar terms (p. 179). To say, however, that the obsolete blending of these two seemingly immiscible elements, Ideology and Literature, is corrected by a constant play on ambiguity, is to read against the text--to reverse the textual movement, which is away from ambiguity. Cinq-Mars itself attempts to correct the play of historical as well as literary ambiguities. The text corresponds to a desire for an ideology which would provide the sens ("meaning," "direction") of history. However, ideology in Cinq-Mars is something other than a political message.

_Cinq-Mars_ is an historical novel which subverts a certain classic conception of history in the service of an ideology that emerges stillborn as soon as it is conceived. Who, indeed, in 1826, would have considered returning power to a nobility which had been decimated and dispersed during the Revolution anyway? The Ultra-Legitimist ideology the novel espouses is a mere historical reminiscence, the ideal impossibility of a nostalgia, an ideology too roman-esque to be implemented. As if to underscore this impossibility, Cinq-Mars is executed and the
nobles disguised, dispersed, and driven into exile at the novel's conclusion in an early rehearsal of the Revolutionary Diaspora. What is a political message whose message is its own pragmatic impossibility, a message that results in the non-being of death and disappearance, if not something akin to a spiritual message, a poetic message?

The notion of History also is subverted, as well as the classic interpretation of that particular period under consideration. If History is, in Roudaut's words, "un discours; la relation qu'elle instaure entre les faits [étant] une relation syntaxique," that syntax is disrupted in Cinq-Mars. If History is understood as continuity in time, then Cinq-Mars is a-historical, its message being that there is no continuity in time. With the exception of the clumsy insertions noted above, the characters seem, for the most part, marooned in time. No one looks back in Cinq-Mars, except in derision: "Est-il donc vrai . . . que peu d'années puissent frapper du même ridicule un habit et un amour?" (p. 46). Time is fragmented by the superficial dialectic of Fashion: Olivier d'Entraigues is contemptuous of Bassompierre's style and manners (pp. 355-356). Finally, Richelieu's brutal elimination of aristocratic leaders, like Montmorency, and his banishing the Medicean Queen-Mother have further severed the kingdom from its roots. The King's father, Henri-Quatre, is a dim figure, present only in the memory of the doting Bassompierre.
"Fuis-je rien comprendre à ce régime nouveau sous lequel vit la France?" (p. 32), he exclaims, though, curiously enough, he sees in sharp focus the catastrophe the new regime is headed for (pp. 35-36).

The "truth" of Cinq-Mars resides in the superimposition of the Revolution on this forgotten period, a temps faible, a weak link in the historical chain: "règne de faiblesses... comme une éclipse de la couronne entre les splendeurs de Henri IV et de Louis le Grand" (p. 47). The work's "beauty" and "truth" is metaphorical rather than syntactical, poetic rather than historical. If, as Fontanier defines it, a metaphor presents "une idée sous le signe d'une autre idée plus frappante ou plus connue," the relatively obscure Cinq-Mars episode of Louis XIII's reign accedes to readability and meaning by metaphoric assimilation with the Revolution. The weakness of Louis XIII finds meaning in the weakness of Louis XVI. Anne of Austria reflects the doomed beauty of Marie-Antoinette. Cinq-Mars and de Thou prefigure the heroic victims of the guillotine. The awkwardness of Bassompierre's and Bouillon's flawless predictions is attributable not only to their implausibility but also to their subversion of the text's foundational metaphorical structure through its re-establishment of the syntax of History, the repressed metonymic chain of "cause" and "effect." The novel fails as Literature precisely when it lapses into the other discourse of History—"UN ROMAN
DONT LE PEUPLE EST L'AUTEUR"—an empty cliche over which
the author has no power. It is not so much the political
message that upsets the novel, as it is the wrong rhetorical
trope.

If the "truth" of this period of Louis XIII's reign
is the Revolution, it follows that the omnipotent Richelieu,
who is not exactly a character on an equal footing with
other characters, but a "colosse" (p. 155), a "dieu"
(p. 101), and an "esprit infernal" (p. 330), more like an
unavoidable initiatory event, and not so much a conscience—
he does not tell us why he does things—as a force; it fol-
lows that Richelieu is the Revolution incarnate: he is that
culminating lurid point—a blind spot—toward which History
past and present converge. Curiously, though Revolution
is invariably presented as the "truth" of history as non-
meaning in the text, it nonetheless provides the novel's
"meaning"; meaning thus arises out of repetition and non-
meaning.

Richelieu is a pure political force without an ideolog-
ical goal, unable to decide on any ultimate ideal: "mon
esprit veut travailler encore! Pour qui? Est-ce la gloire?
c'est un mot vide; est-ce pour les hommes? je les méprise.
Pour qui donc, puisque je vais mourir avant deux, avant
trois ans peut-être?" (p. 162). Pure means without an end,
Richelieu determines History as a "succession [de] scènes"
without meaning. He represents in fact, and the meaning
of History propounded by Cinq-Mars is, means betraying the end. Vigny's Richelieu is clearly no centralizing force and no royal absolutist; on the contrary, his political program is one of sheer relativism: "ce n'est pas Armand de Richelieu qui fait périr, c'est le premier ministre. Ce n'est pas pour des raisons personnelles, c'est pour suivre un système. Mais un système ... qu'est-ce que ce mot? M'était-il permis de jouer ainsi avec les hommes, et de les regarder comme des nombres pour accomplir une pensée, fausse peut-être?" (p. 163). A hypothetical ("pensée, fausse peut-être") system, with no absolute center, neither nation, King, nor self ("ce n'est pas Armand de Richelieu ...") is precisely that purely rational intellectual artefact of modern thought called a "structure."

Richelieu is both Revolution and writing, inevitable and uncompromising structures that individuals are traversed, determined and alienated by ("nombres pour accomplir une pensée")—something acknowledged in former times as Fate. The novel consistently presents the Minister as, if not absolutely evil, indifferent to truth and goodness, amoral, a "necessary evil." Like the emblematic maps which strew his cabinet (pp. 326-327), he is the locus of the collapse of altitudinal (moral) differences, an irresistible horizontal levelling force: "le Cardinal," exclaims the Maréchal de Bassompierre, "cet orgueilleux petit vassal
nous regarde comme de vieux portraits de famille et, de
temps en temps, il en retranche la tête" (p. 32); Bouillon
refers to him as "le grand niveleur [qui] a passé sur la
France une longue faux" (p. 223); and Cinq-Mars insists
that "tout a été écrasé par lui" (p. 275).

Against this revolutionary force of hierarchical sub-
version the text pits Cinq-Mars as locus of verticality,
moral elevation, and phallic transcendence: even when de
Thou accuses him of having "descendu si bas" (p. 232; empha-
sis mine), his answer is accompanied by a gesture, emblem-
atic of the hero and of the figurative "depth" structure
he provides: "Il élevait les yeux au ciel en parlant, comme
s'il y eut cherché cette divinité" (ibid.). The same ges-
ture is hieratically thrice-repeated by the hero on the
execution block: "il se mit à genoux, levant les yeux au
ciel, adorant Dieu . . . il . . . leva les yeux au
ciel . . . [p]uis . . . il éleva les yeux au ciel" (p. 371).
In Cinq-Mars, the sens ("meaning") is truly a question of
sens ("direction").

The figurative opposition of surface (Richelieu) and
depth (Cinq-Mars) structures is not to be reflected back
onto the "individual" psychology of the principle char-
acters, but construed as one of the text's more insidious
devices for producing meaning, averting the reader that
the conflict in Cinq-Mars is not simply a Court intrigue,
an opposition between two characters, two factions, or two
political ideologies. The conflict is Protean, as much intra- as intersubjective, intra- as well as interfamilial, intra- as well as interclass, domestic as well as international, in short both within and without, in which both inside and outside are subverted.

The path which leads the hero from his native Touraine to the locus of power is strewn with ambiguous advice and ambivalent motives. Cinq-Mars' mentor, the abbé Quillet, initially reacts with terror at the thought of his pupil becoming a protégé of the Cardinal: "il [le Cardinal] vous perdra si vous n'êtes son instrument docile" (p. 59), then seems to accept and even favor the idea: "Mais, n'importe... vous feriez bien de suivre cette veine; c'est ainsi que de grandes fortunes ont commencé, il s'agit seulement de ne point se laisser aveugler et gouverner" (p. 60); an impossible injunction: the Minister is that blind and blinding spot that governs this fictional universe. As Cinq-Mars' resolve to eliminate the Cardinal strengthens in the wake of the traumatizing events witnessed in Loudun, he discovers that taking on Richelieu is not as morally simple as it sounds. His friend and confidant de Thou, whose lofty ideals and purity of heart are unquestioned, advises him against alienating the Cardinal: "N'attaquez pas un colosse tel que Richelieu sans l'avoir mesuré" (p. 155); another impossible task given the Minister's démesure in the text.
Cinq-Mars' resolve to do away with this "génie du mal" (p. 235) is in itself a tangle of ambivalent motives. The Cardinal's fall would insure his accession to a position worthy of his secret inamorata, the Duchess of Mantua, whose blood is too royal to be blended with that of a simple gentilhomme like Cinq-Mars. Furthermore, doing away with Richelieu involves more than the elimination of one man, as de Thou points out: "pour votre bonheur personnel, vous voulez renverser un Etat!" (ibid.). Besides toppling the State, Cinq-Mars' tyrannical mission would invite the armed intervention of a foreign power: "s'il [Louis XIII] m'abandonne, je signe le traité d'Espagne et la guerre" (ibid.). Thus, civil and international war would be unleashed in order to eliminate one man. De Thou, who has been carefully weighing Cinq-Mars' mounting counter-treachery against Richelieu's treachery, advises his friend to desist in the most vehement terms: "laissez-moi vous fléchir et vous empêcher de frapper la France... je vous en conjure à genoux, ne soyons pas ainsi parricides, n'assassinons pas notre patrie!" (p. 236). If eliminating Richelieu is ultimately tantamount to parricide, civil strife, and international war, it is apparent we are dealing, not with a man, but with a structure, or something whose removal entails the collapse of culture.

The conflict between Cinq-Mars and Richelieu is not simply an opposition between individuals; it is also an
opposition within the individual. Just as de Thou, in his minute dissection of Cinq-Mars' motives, has shown the latter to be divided against himself, the King is also prey to an internecine struggle, as the Duc de Bouillon informs the Queen: "Sa langueur est toute morale; il se fait dans son coeur une grande révolution; il voudrait l'accomplir et ne le peut pas: il a senti depuis de longues années s'assembler en lui les germes d'une juste haine contre un homme auquel il croit devoir de la reconnaissance, et c'est ce combat intérieur qui le dévore" (p. 226). The conflict is somehow unlocalizable; it reverberates against and consumes everyone and everything in the novel.

Qualifying Richelieu as an "esprit infernal" or a "génie" is thus not simply a figure of speech but the "truth" of the novel (and the "truth" of this novel is rhetorical): Richelieu is the unlocalizable locus of Evil. But how is the elimination of an evil equivalent to parricide and treason unless it is somehow foundational?

Richelieu is, on the one hand, clearly a father-substitute ("un homme auquel il croit devoir de la reconnaissance"), an assimilation made explicit when the Minister successfully persuades the vacillating King that his policies are well in keeping with the reforms instituted by Henri-Quatre (pp. 325-326). This bond is further tightened when, after Cinq-Mars' unsolicited eruption into the King's entourage and affection, King and Minister are said
to separate like "deux amants brouillés" (p. 158). It would seem, then, that Richelieu, on the other hand, also functions as a mother-substitute. He has banished the Medicean Queen-Mother (p. 99), but decides to recall her when his political fortunes are in jeopardy. He makes the mother disappear, then would have her reappear, a political maneuver bearing an uncanny resemblance to the Fort/Da game analyzed by Freud, in which the child seeks to master the unpleasant reality of a loss through repetition. A mastery, Lacan emphasizes, that is effected through speech. The Fort/Da episode is thus a privileged Lacanian moment when the chain of signifiers is articulated onto the family structure; and significantly, the articulation is experienced initially as a violence, since "le symbole se manifeste d'abord comme meurtre de la chose." 45

In Cinq-Mars, a text which clearly privileges the organic signifier over the disembodied signifier, the reality the Minister has practically succeeded in encoding intrudes most inopportune in the King's premature appraisal of the Queen-Mother's death (p. 126), a contretemps further aggravated by the unsolicited arrival of Cinq-Mars, who gains access to the King by virtue of his valour, and not under the Cardinal's protection. Curiously, the Minister's ploy has been betrayed by the untimely arrival of a "large lettre" bearing the portentous number of "cinq cachets noirs" (p. 126). Some letters are apparently not equal
to others in the very hierarchical universe of Vigny's text, momentarily escaping, as they do, the Minister's eagle-eyed surveillance.

The text stumbles on the initial moment of the signifier as annihilation of the thing, and Cinq-Mars' arrival through the tiny gap thus afforded between signified and signifier virtually insures his rapid rise to power: the loss of the mother is compensated by the arrival of another ambitious upstart, who is not quite the effete "poupée" (p. 103) Richelieu had in mind in his almost fool-proof scenario (Mirame). A "poupée" is that most debilitated of signifiers: a child's inanimate substitute for a baby, itself a phallic substitute: a fetish. Richelieu's plan calls for keeping the King in rein through his total absorption in the amorous pursuit of this self-contained artefact, solely preoccupied with his "fraise et . . . aiguilettes" (ibid.). Richelieu, as unconscious, attempts to foil the King, as center of Court and consciousness, through metonymic displacement onto something insignificant, a fetish. Displacement, which Lacan assimilates to metonymy, is the horizontal movement of desire.

Metonymy, or the contiguous attraction of signifiers ("mot à mot"), is, according to our controversial source, "le moyen de l'inconscient le plus propre à déjouer la censure," the most efficient means of foiling consciousness. Expressed in the complex mathematical terms of the
Lacanian algorithm ($\frac{S}{S}$), there is, in metonymy, no crossing of the bar over to significance (s), no accession to meaning; consciousness remains in the blissfully numb state of sleep and non-meaning. The textual repression of metonymic chains (History, writing, preciosity) simply reflects, in the words of Gérard Genette, a conceptual Ultra-Legitimism, a "centrocentrisme apparentment universel et irrépressible;" 46 which accords far greater importance to metaphor, whose soaring fortunes have practically eclipsed metonymy. Metonymy has been repressed both in Literature and in the discourse on Literature. In its repression of the metonymic chains of History and Writing, Cinq-Mars' "political message" is thus subsumed by a rhetorical positioning.

Our interpretive grounding of the text in the very abstractly formulated terms of Lacan's algorithm, which operate a fusion between psychic and linguistic constructs, is vindicated by the text itself. Cinq-Mars and Richelieu together represent the dichotomous sign, simultaneously phallic ("voice") and castrated ("writing"), i.e. meaning and non-meaning. They also represent the psychic polarity of conscious and unconscious forces, since, as we have shown, their "outer" political struggle is also an "inner" struggle, reflected in the King's "combat intérieur." The bar of the Lacanian algorithm ($\frac{S}{S}$), as important an element as the two it separates, is itself a persistent motif in
the novel: Cinq-Mars complains to de Thou that he is thwarted by "une barrière invisible . . . cette barrière: c'est Richelieu" (p. 234). The text informs us that the King is "l'immuable barrière" (p. 238) against the Minister's all-consuming ambition, and the King himself deplores "cette division" (p. 324) opposing Minister and favourite. Yet, in spite of these seemingly insurmountable divisions, Cinq-Mars finds out that King and Minister are so entangled that to eliminate one would be to strike a fatal blow against the other, or against himself. "Celui qui la touchera peut en mourir" (p. 227) Gaston warns whoever would have the temerity to intervene in the battle raging in the King's heart. The challenge is taken up by Cinq-Mars: but to attempt a decision ("a cutting off") between good and evil, voice and writing, meaning and non-meaning, is to wind up physically divided oneself on the executioner's block.

Cinq-Mars, as we have noted previously, is himself a divided being, as de Thou points out, undecidably "bien coupable" or "bien vertueux" (p. 232). A crippling dichotomy also tears the hero asunder; he is also a sign, that is ultimately a signifier, since the signified is merely an effect of the signifier. But Cinq-Mars, as we have observed, is signified and subject of Cinq-Mars; he is the organic link of Phallus and Voice. Is it possible for Cinq-Mars, the "truth" of the novel, to be both signified and
signifier, to work against the Minister, and yet, on another level, work with him? The Lacanian answer and, more importantly, the text itself answers: yes, he is at once phallic truth and locus of castration, and this, from the very first chapter.

The "truth" of Cinq-Mars, we observed earlier, is metaphorical, and Cinq-Mars is the locus of metaphor. Metaphor, according to Lacan, "se place au point précis où le sens se produit dans le non-sens," the locus of meaning on the metonymic chain of signifiers. Whereas metonymy is a (horizontal) set of contiguous elements, metaphor is the (vertical) set of substitutable elements: "un mot pour un autre." When related back to the family structure, metonymy ("mot à mot") is the desire that unites man and woman, while metaphor "reproduit l'événement mythique où Freud a reconstruit le cheminement dans l'inconscient de tout homme, du mystère paternel."47 Metaphor is the (violent) replacement of the father by the son; it is, according to Lacan, a symptom, and since a symptom implies a pathological condition, metaphor is that privileged relation between signifiers that betrays the pathology of language which is writing. If metonymy is the horizontal movement of truth, metaphor is the vertical movement of truth, but a truth that can only point to the untruth or fiction that governs us.

Cinq-Mars is the text's desired replacement for the
Minister. Since metaphor can only exist on the metonymic chain; since the (thwarted) wish to replace the Father is mediated by the (impossible) desire for reunion with the Mother, Cinq-Mars himself is caught up in the economy of purloined letters and illicit desires. He is the solar, phallic, metaphoric "truth" of the novel and the moonstruck, castrated, metonymic berger of Richelieu's play. In our next subsection, we will show how Richelieu writes Cinq-Mars.

2. Metonymic conditioning and subversion of the Metaphoric "Truth". At the climactic siege of Perpignan, the ailing and listless King, whom the text presents as a mere cipher of a sovereign—-a mere "nom" or paraph authenticating Richelieu's edicts—-experiences a moment of erectile apothecosis, of total transparency to meaning, in the heat of battle:

L'armée battit des mains; le Roi étonné s'arrêta; il regarda autour de lui et vit dans tous les yeux le brûlant désir de l'attaque; toute la valeur de sa race étincela dans les siens; il resta encore une seconde comme en suspens, écoutant avec ivresse le bruit du canon, respirant et savourant l'odeur de la poudre; il semblait reprendre une autre vie et redevenir Bourbon; tous ceux qui le virent alors se crurent commandés par un autre homme, lorsque, élevant son épée et ses yeux vers le soleil éclatant, il s'écria: "Suivez-moi, braves amis! c'est ici que je suis le roi de France!" (P. 143)

However, the life-blood, turgidity and plenitude of meaning
of being a Bourbon monarch are drained and replaced by parchment-pallor as he returns to the Minister's side:

à chaque pas qu'il faisait vers la butte où l'attendait Richelieu, sa physionomie changeait d'aspect et se décomposait visiblement: il perdait cette rougeur du combat, et la noble sueur du triomphe tarissait sur son front. À mesure qu'il s'approchait, sa pâleur accoutumée s'emparait de ses traits, comme ayant droit de sièger seule sur une tête royale; son regard perdait ses flammes passagères, et enfin lorsqu'il l'eût joint, une mélancolie profonde avait entièrement glacé son visage. Il retrouva le Cardinal comme il l'avait laissé. (P. 145).

Meaning, in Cinq-Mars, is irreducibly organic: it gravitates around the all-or-nothing, Life-or-Death metaphors of the soldier and the sword, of Buckingham's bloody dagger in the Queen's "cassette d'or," of restoring the King's phallic voice and sword; in Cinq-Mars, meaning is attained when the word becomes flesh. But the metaphoric signified being a function of a metonymic chain of signifiers, meaning being produced out of and in non-meaning, the King's sunlight apotheosis has been determined by the Minister's moonlight writings: as we noted in the first chapter, the siege of Perpignan is a product of one of Richelieu's textual arrangements. Meaning is produced in and out of Richelieu's writings, and the meaning or metaphor ineluctably dissolves back into the metonymic chain: "Il retrouva le Cardinal comme il l'avait laissé."

If metaphor, to repeat Fontanier's description,
presents "une idée sous le signe d'une autre idée plus frappante ou plus connue," if it is, in other words, the conjoining of a relatively unknown element with a better-known element, then in Cinq-Mars, the locus of metaphor is where writing (the unknown or unconscious element) relates back to the organic truth of the body, where writing turns back into the flesh and blood of its hero, Cinq-Mars. "Un soldat s'expose à mourir, et tout est dit" (p. 154): The shedding of a soldier's blood may be the ultimate moment of truth, but, it ultimately relates back to the fiction of a Fatherland.

Just as the King's metaphoric moment—a moment in which he is returned to the organic truth of his Bourbon lineage—depends on Richelieu's written scenario, so is the hero's textual itinerary conditioned by something quite reminiscent of a ministerial text. Before the hero leaves his native Touraine, he returns clandestinely, under the cover of a "lune . . . cachée," and in his own words, "comme un malfaiteur toucher la maison paternelle" (p. 44), in order to bid Marie an affectionate farewell and secure a pledge of faith. Marie demurs; her quasi-royal birth precludes union to a simple gentilhomme:

Peut-on choisir son berceau? et dit-on: "Je naîtrai bergère"? Vous savez bien quelle est toute l'infortunée d'une princesse; on lui ôte le cœur en naissant, toute la terre est avertie de son âge, un traité la çade comme une ville, et elle ne peut jamais pleurer. Depuis deux ans,
j'ai lutté en vain contre vous, qui me détournerez
de mes devoirs. Vous le savez bien, j'ai désiré
qu'on me crût morte; que dis-je? j'ai souhaité
des révolutions! J'aurais peut-être bénéficié le coup
qui m'eût ôté mon rang, comme j'ai remercié Dieu
lorsque mon père fut renversé; mais la Cour
s'étouffe, la Reine me demande; nos rêves sont
évanouis, Henri; notre sommeil a été trop long;
réveillons-nous avec courage. Ne songez plus
à ces deux belles années: oubliez tout pour ne
plus vous souvenir que de notre grande résolution;
n'ayez qu'une seule pensée, soyez ambitieux ..
ambitieux pour moi .. .(P. 45).

Marie's evocation of her and Cinq-Mars' idyll conjures up
the whole register of Richelieu's textual resonances. Her
subversive dreams ("rêves") of monarchical subversion
("révolutions," "père .. renversé"), of hierarchical
levelling ("ôté mon rang") and loss of self ("morte") in
unbridled sexual license ("bergère") are in fact the goal
of the Minister's domestic policies and the message and
pastoral genre of his plays. Richelieu's dream-text has
dictated Marie's dreams.

Marie's final challenge--"soyez ambitieux ..
ambitieux pour moi"--which somehow negates the effect of
the "oubliez tout," is taken up by Cinq-Mars, who vows "par
la Vierge dont vous portez le nom, vous serez à moi, Marie,
or ma tête tombera sur l'échafaud" (p. 45). Marie, fright-
ened, sounds out the Oedipal injunction: "Non, vos efforts
ne seront jamais coupables, jurez-le-moi; vous n'oublierez
jamais que le roi de France est votre maître" and offers
him a "croix d'or; mettez-la sur votre coeur" in exchange
for his "bague que je vois briller à votre doigt" (p. 46) in what amounts to symbolic circumcision. The heart, the anatomical locus of desire, is crossed out and the phallic finger bears the imprint of a castration pact: their linked hands are "toutes rouges de sang" (ibid.).

Marie and the hero are not related by blood, but to the extent that her sovereign birth subordinates her choice of a consort to the will of the King, Cinq-Mars' desire is unlawful, incestuous. Though unstated, incest clearly bounces off everything else in the passage, inscribed as it is in the initial "comme un malfaiteur toucher la maison paternelle" (the mother as the Father's property) and Marie's very name, explicitly linked to the Virgin, implicitly related to that of the mother (mère), as well as earlier Racinian resonances of losing oneself in a labyrinth (p. 36). Incest is unequivocally connoted, and castration prefigured in the closing movement of "la fenêtre s'abaissant lentement sur les deux mains encore unies" (p. 46). The moment of clandestine union with the beloved is experienced as a separation, of organic fragmentation and loss.

Marie's dream is Richelieu's dream. Union with the beloved, "la Vierge," the forbidden one, is the experience of writing. To experience the moment of union with the forbidden beloved as a moment of castration is to negate the union, to negate the Mother, and to privilege the Father, making it, in Lacan's psychic rhetoric, a meta-
phorical moment. **Cinq-Mars** is indeed a tablet of Phallogocentric Law, privileging as it does the spoken word, the vocal and phallic presence of the Father, and repressing the Mother.

The apparent contradiction of Marie's parting words, "oubliez tout . . . soyez ambitieux . . . pour moi," is dispelled when they are read in a Freudian light. The "oubliez tout"/"soyez ambitieux pour moi" is the culturally foundational dialectic of repression/sublimation, a movement of deferral of pleasure, of pleasure as reunion with the Mother. But the movement of that deferral is the movement towards unrecoverable loss, as Vigny's text demonstrates: Marie and Cinq-Mars can never be united. Marie's dream and the hero's dream of Marie can only return as the . . . repressed, as Richelieu. And since the repressed is precisely that which ineluctably returns, like a letter, "sous une forme inversée."⁴⁹ Cinq-Mars will indeed manifest the symptoms of that which the text represses or the repressed text, the symptoms of the pathology of language as writing.

In the process of restoring the Voice of Legitimism to the King, Cinq-Mars' voice, ironically, is lost. If the Voice is that which makes a presence audible, perceptible, that which **defines** a presence; Cinq-Mars becomes increasingly resistant to definition. The meaning of his tyrannical enterprise is lost in the ambiguities of ambition. The virtuous de Thou no longer recognizes his
friend: "Voilà donc où vous en êtes venu! Vous allez faire exiler, peut-être tuer un homme, et introduire en France une armée étrangère; je vais donc vous voir assassin et traître à votre patrie! par quels degrés êtes-vous descendu si bas?" (p. 232). The lucid and analytical Queen's description of him resembles the portrait of a significant Other: "Ce jeune homme me semble être bien profond, bien calme dans ses ruses politiques, bien indépendant dans ses vastes résolutions, dans ses monstrueuses entreprises, pour que je le croie uniquement occupé de sa tendresse. Si vous n'avez été qu'un moyen au lieu d'un but, que diriez-vous?" (p. 307) she asks the distressed Marie de Mantoue. Finally, before the hero is carted off to the block, the odious Père Joseph attempts to rescue him, recognizing in him a power that could effectively displace the Cardinal: "Vous et M. de Thou, qui vous piquez de ce que vous nommez vertu, vous avez manqué de causer la mort de cent mille hommes peut-être, en masse et au grand jour, pour rien, tandis que Richelieu et moi nous en avons fait périr beaucoup moins, en détail, et la nuit, pour fonder un grand pouvoir" (pp. 336-337). Joseph's reaction to Cinq-Mars' repeated and pious denials is "Voilà encore des mots" (p. 336), "Voici encore des mots" (p. 337). Cinq-Mars has, in effect, become a being fragmented by the very language he set out to rectify. Cinq-Mars, the hero, has turned into a text ("des mots") whose "truth" can no longer be heard, but only
"read," and the text "reads" very much like "Richelieu."
Whatever the "truth" of "la ligne droite" was, it has
become increasingly deflected and undulant—something, in
fact, very much like "writing."

It is precisely the consigning of his name to writing,
the apposing of his signature to the letters comprising
a treacherous pact with Spain, that undoes Cinq-Mars. The
Queen, who has been flirting with the idea of joining Cinq-
Mars' faction, protests vehemently when the pact is men-
tioned: "on a osé aller jusque là sans mon consentement!
déjà des accords avec l'étranger!" (p. 228) and withdraws
her support. Her outrage is echoed by de Thou, who drags
the hero in front of a marble bust of the King, exhorting
him not to sign the pact: "jurez de ne jamais signer cet
infâme traité" (p. 236). The pact, according to de Thou,
would lead to the ultimate horror of French mothers "forcées
d'enseigner à leurs enfants une langue étrangère!" (ibid.).
The value our reading attributes to the expression "langue
étrangère" would be incidental had it been a unique occur-
rence, but an interesting pattern emerges when the expres-
sion is brought into play with crucial precedents.

Richelieu, as we have seen, has been accused of impos-
ing a new and enigmatic language on the Court (p. 32), a
language which had the value of a silence. Interestingly
enough, Cinq-Mars' initiation into the pomp of Court life,
amounts to, in de Thou's words, apprenticeship in a foreign
tongue: "les rois sont accoutumés à ces paroles continuelles de fausse admiration pour eux; considérez-les comme une langue nouvelle qu'il faut apprendre, langue bien étrangère à vos lèvres jusqu'ici, mais que l'on peut parler noblement, croyez-moi, et qui saurait exprimer de belles et généreuses pensées" (p. 176). Court language, as we have seen, presents the hero with the overwhelming difficulties of "plaire" and its concomitant evils of flexibility, composition, and nuance—a maze of giddying turns and dangerous dead-ends much like those the writer himself must negotiate in his efforts to "[parler] hautement" (p. 175) to his monarch, the sovereign reader.

The textual itinerary has taken us from "le berceau de la langue" where "le plus pur français" is spoken "sans lenteur, sans vitesse, sans accent" (p. 28), to a "langue nouvelle" (p. 176) fraught with the dangers of ambiguity, to the precipice of a "langue" truly "étrangère" (p. 236), the language truly alien to our origins that writing is. By signing the pact with Spain, Cinq-Mars, like Richelieu, will have dealt a fatal blow to the nation by his subversion of the sign. The signature of the treacherous pact with Spain—the treacherous pact that writing is in this novel—marks the hero's entrance into the economy of purloined—purloining—letters over which the Minister presides like a maleficent deity, this "conquérant qui entre par la brèche." Writing is making a breach in a natural barrier,
much like a linguistic frontier; the subject's (Cinq-Mars')
conscious voice and the unconscious written text that speaks
him being separated like "dream thoughts" from "dream
content": "two versions of the same subject-matter in two
different languages." 50

The passage relating this culminating anti-climax is
fraught with archetypal symbols of castration and death.
It is related as a distant, portentous and obscured scene
observed by the protagonist's secret love, Marie de Mantoue,
underscored the hero's separation from origins and the
lost object of desire the Mother represents. The scene
concludes the chapter "La Partie de chasse" in which Cinq-
Mars reaches the peak of his power at the Court, but the
contrapuntal descriptions of a wintry landscape, Court
ladies decked out in black masque and deepest mourning,
as well as the titular motif—the highly formalized vic-
timage the hunt represents—signal the reader that the
protagonist has arrived at the edge of a precipice. The
obfuscating accumulation of masques, veils, mists, and fogs
seems to indicate that "truth" does not reside in appear-
ances—either in Cinq-Mars' Courtly apotheosis or in his
treason. Our equally contrapuntal reading, assuming that
depth is, in fact, an effect of a surface-play of sig-
nifiers, would once again reveal, in this wintry woodland
scene in black and white, the repressed scene of writing,
the forsaking of the "truth" of sword and sheath for the
devastating "rouleau de papiers":

[Marie] leva les yeux et eut le temps de voir le visage de Cinq-Mars. Il ne la regardait pas; il était pâle comme un cadavre... il s'enfonça dans un taillis... puis il lui sembla qu'il donnait à un homme un rouleau de papiers en disparaissant dans les bois. Le brouillard qui tombait l'empêcha de le voir plus loin. C'était une de ces brumes si fréquentes au bord de la Loire. Le soleil parut d'abord comme une petite lune sanglante, enveloppée dans un linceul déchiré, et se cacha en une demi-heure sous un voile si épais, que Marie distinguait à peine les premiers chevaux du carrosse et que les hommes qui passaient à quelques pas lui semblaient des ombres grisâtres. (P. 256)

The sun provides the only note of color in this textual fade-out: the blood-tinge of castration ("petite lune sanglante" Richelieu's "calotte rouge"). The sun, the masculine symbol par excellence, is transmuted into its metonymic feminine complement, negatively valorized ("linceul déchiré"). Forms are fragmented: "Marie ne voyait souvent que la tête d'un cheval" (p. 256--the horse metonymically linked to Cinq-Mars who is Monsieur le grand-écuyer); voices are indistinguishable: "on appelait... Cinq-Mars: 'Le Roi demande M. le Grand, répétait-on... Une voix dit en passant... 'Il s'est perdu tout à l'heure'" (pp. 281-282). The subject's entrance into a system of signifiers, or rather the signifier's entrance into the subject, is experienced as fragmentation and loss of phallic attributes, a negatively--excrementally ("nuage fétide," p. 256)--valorized feminization.
The treacherous "lettre," "contre-lettre," and "blancs" (p. 260) are handed over to another rebellious son of France, Jacques de Laubardemont, the son of the presiding judge at Grandier's trial in Loudun, for transmission to Spain. Laubardemont fils, shattered by his father's role in the infamous execution of the innocent priest, turns traitor by enrolling in the Spanish army. When he is taken prisoner by Cinq-Mars at the siege of Perpignan, the latter allows the former to escape after a bond of sympathy has developed between the two. Laubardemont fils is yet another of the hero's alter egos, a more villainous Cinq-Mars, the prototype of the traitor the hero becomes. Characters in Cinq-Mars undergo a constant process of cleavage: just as Richelieu clones off into Laubardemont père and Père Joseph, Cinq-Mars' textual itinerary is framed by the innocent Urbain Grandier and the treacherous (though sympathetically presented) Laubardemont junior, making the locus of the conflict problematic. The ideological conflict in Cinq-Mars, refracted in the Laubardemont père/fils division, turns explicitly into a familial (Oedipal) conflict.

The young Laubardemont carries the letters of betrayal, Prometheus-like, in a hollow wooden tube dangling from his "ceinture" (p. 299). In an essay entitled "The Acquisition of Power over Fire," Freud analyzed the myth of Prometheus who "brought mankind the fire which he stole from the gods hidden in a hollow rod," an object in which Freud "readily
[saw] a penis-symbol, though the unusual stress laid on its hollowness [made him] hesitate.\textsuperscript{51} Since fire and letter are linked, not just by the anatomical correspondence of the hollow wooden tube, but by their identical function as agents of progress and destruction, of the possibility and the subversion of meaning and culture, Freud's hesitation over the hollowness of the wooden tube is resolved in the Lacanian letter, whose inside (contents) is also hollow (missing). The letter corresponds to the mother's missing penis, a fictive organ whose potency is unaffected by its anatomical impossibility. As such, the letter does not simply represent, or point to a Mother, or to a Father within the Mother; it harks back to an originating fiction of indifferentiation, unity and plenitude, anterior to sexual division, as in the Platonic Myth of the Androgyn. The letter tenders the promise of unity, but can only reflect and install further division: Richelieu promises to reunite the King and his mother and continue the policies of Henri-Quatre, though he has banished the former and deviated from the latter's political course. Harking back to a unity and plenitude that never was, the letter only succeeds in disorganizing the family: it banishes the Mother and sets Son against Father, disrupting the genealogical truth, disorganizing the Family to (re)organize Society. Writing, like Revolution, is a social reorganization necessarily involving the disruption of the Family.
As substitute for the mother's imagined penis, the letter partakes of the fetish, but it is a collective, not an individual perversion. The letter has its own itinerary: "le déplacement du signifiant détermine les sujets dans leurs actes, dans leur destin... nonobstant leurs dons innés et leur acquis social, sans égard pour le caractère ou le sexe, et que bon gré mal gré suivra le train du signifiant comme armes et bagages, pour ce qui est du donné psychologique." The letter's destination and the destination of all those who fall into its possession in the textual itinerary of Cinq-Mars can only be Richelieu, who represents the system in its completion: its structure.

Accordingly, Laubardemont junior's dangling dichotomous sign ends up being handed over to Laubardemont senior in exchange for his life, after the former finds himself dangling over a mountain precipice. However, Laubardemont père, who has been delegated by the Minister to intercept the treaty, lets his son fall to his death once he is in possession of the letters of betrayal, a treachery and countertreachery and an auto-castration that metonymically rehearses Cinq-Mars' ultimate demise. What the letter represents and replaces is Life itself, the letter installs Death in life.

Meanwhile, back in Perpignan, where Cinq-Mars is engaged in tactical preparations for a coup against Richelieu, another fateful letter arrives, this time from the
Queen. In it the Queen implores Cinq-Mars to renounce his love for Marie in order to free her for the Crown of Poland, slyly intimating that that is Marie’s own, though unstated, wish. Predictably (i.e. from the perspective of our own Lacanian reading), Cinq-Mars manifests the classic symptoms of those in possession of the letter; after having responded affirmatively to the Queen’s plea, "il tomba la face contre terre, comme tombe un arbre déraciné" (p. 313), "le sang ruissel[lant] par ses narines et ses oreilles . . . des torrents de larmes coul[lant] de ses yeux" (p. 314). Literally "se mourant d’amour," Cinq-Mars is indistinguishable from Céladon, the archetypal Précieux hero, proto-type of Richelieu’s epicene shepherds, whose equally watery demise is presented in the text by means of a "gravure . . . représent[ant] la bergère Astrée . . . s’élevant sur la pointe du pied pour regarder passer dans le fleuve le tendre Céladon, qui se noyait de désespoir d’avoir été reçu un peu froidement dans la matinée" (p. 210).

Bereft of his Astrée, the ill-starred Marie de Mantoue, who has been seduced by the glitter of a diamond tiara the Queen has temptingly dangled before her (pp. 307-308), Cinq-Mars-Céladon abandons the conspiracy to overthrow the Minister. But how is it explicable that the hero abandons his tyrannicidal enterprise, an end deemed noble and just in itself: "la plus vaste, la plus juste, la plus salutaire des entreprises" (p. 298) when Marie is lost to him? The
mystery is explicable only in terms of (the secret of "Le Secret") the rhetorical "truth" of the novel: metaphor (the replacement of the Father by the Son) owes its textual existence to metonymy (desire for the Mother).

While the Minister, now in possession of the intercepted treaty, is forcing the cornered King to surrender his favourite as well as award him the guardianship of his progeny, Cinq-Mars appears abruptly, and surrenders himself to King and Minister: "Je me rends parce que je veux mourir . . . mais je ne suis pas vaincu" (p. 331).

There is an odd textual insistence of the rift the hero's abrupt entrances and exits open up in Richelieu's scenario. It is the Minister who brings Cinq-Mars to the Court, and it is the Minister who seals his fate: "Je les ai tous laissés nager plus de deux ans en pleine eau; à présent tirons le filet" (p. 316) and the net is effectively drawn over the conspirators, yet Cinq-Mars enters and exits as if independent of Richelieu's text ("je ne suis pas vaincu"). Can we not assimilate this ambivalent rupture, in and against the sens of the text to metaphor, "la vraie métaphore . . . [qui] commence avec l'excès dans l'écart, avec la transgression du champs des substituables reçus par l'usage?" Rather than invalidate Richelieu's text, Cinq-Mars is that which sutures the breach of signification, of meaning. But if metaphor is initially perceived as a transgression (Cinq-Mars attempts to overthrow Richelieu)
in the field of substitutables (in order to replace him), it is a planned transgression (Richelieu makes his entry possible) and ultimately assimilable (and seals his fate): the ineluctable fate of metaphor is metonymy.

3. Love as Division. The truth that is in question is whether Cinq-Mars' actions are motivated by "love" or "ambition." Meaning in Cinq-Mars is a function of the tension between these two poles: the negatively valorized pole of ambition and the positively valorized pole of love.

"[R]e belle par amour, rebelle pour vous" (p. 287) Cinq-Mars assures Marie; "[j]e le suis, ambitieux, mais parce que j'aime" (p. 234) he confides to de Thou; "c'était par amour" (p. 337) he swears passionately to the disbelieving Joseph. "[U]n petit ambitieux" (p. 303) the Queen warns Marie; "il avait plus d'ambition que d'amour" (p. 365) Marie tells the Queen; "votre ambition" (p. 337) Joseph insists. Cinq-Mars' self-sacrifice reverses the opinion of the first two—and undoubtedly that of the reader by sympathetic contagion. If the "truth" of Cinq-Mars resides in "love," however, the "truth" remains veiled, unknowable, for "love" in the novel is divided against itself, like the character it motivates.

"Love" in Cinq-Mars is defined at the outset, not as a simple union of two, not as a binary relationship of two distinct elements united in symmetry and identity, but as
a division between two by a third term: a complex ternary relationship. "Love," as we have seen, is defined metaphorically in terms of the Father: originating in the love of the Father, entailing either the overthrow of the Father (p. 45), or its sublimation in the love of the (heavenly) Father (Urbain Grandier). Somehow love can be sustained only in its negation: "oubliez tout"/"soyez ambitieux . . . pour moi," and the union of two rendered possible only through the elimination of another, or of oneself. "Love" in effect is a relationship to the Father mediated by the Woman: a classic Oedipal configuration.

"Oui, j'aime, et tout est dans ce mot" (p. 234) Cinq-Mars reveals to de Thou in a rhetorical flourish which, oddly enough, can be taken literally. Indeed, Cinq-Mars' and Marie's initial declaration of love capsulated the themes of rebellion, monarchical subversion, overweening ambition and ultimate self-annihilation unfurled in the succeeding chapters. "L'amour a versé l'ambition dans mon coeur comme un poison brûlant" (p. 46): Love generates ambition, hypostatized in the person of Richelieu, whose lust for power is founded upon the power of lust. It is on the metonymic chains linking signifier to signifier ("writing") and man to woman ("Sexuality") that he bases his power; twin chains linked in the powerful description of his sumptuous and Oriental "litière" furnished with bed and writing desk, and whose dimensions are such that the
walls protecting the towns and villages he traverses must be breached to allow his entry, "de sorte qu'il semblait un conquérant qui entre par la brèche" (p. 114). In order to discredit his rival, he unleashes a movement of revolt which materializes curiously as a sexual assault upon the Queen; a movement which does not stop at her appearance on the balcony, but passes through her like a division, to the inner sanctum of the Palace, to find expression, form and repose in Marie's evocation of the ideal--dead--Father.

Thus "love" is "all" but not in a unifying, totalizing metaphorical sense as invoked by Cinq-Mars--"unique pensée" (p. 234)--to explain and justify his actions and synthesize his being. "Love" generates "ambition" (writing, sexuality) against which it is divided, and since that all ("l'amour") excludes, suppresses or denies a part of itself ("ambition") it is properly metonymic. "Love" is itself castrated of its movement and physicality, in short, of sexuality, metaphorically condensed into the word "ambition," this "pouvoir qui n'est jamais satisfait" (ibid.). Ambition is opposed to love, but symmetrically as its double: ambition is the Other of love, love's Other Scene. Accordingly, if love points to the ideal of the dead Father, ambition points to his double: the castrating, living, primal (step-)Father--Richelieu.

A "love" castrated is a "love" sublimated, sublimated
into the patriotic ideal of overthrowing Richelieu, deemed "la plus vaste, la plus noble, la plus salutaire des entreprises" (p. 298). Cinq-Mars' patriotic ideal, however, turns suspiciously into something resembling "ambition": in his mission to repress Richelieu, Cinq-Mars, as we have seen, increasingly resembles him. The "pensée unique" which motivates him disintegrates into acts with multiple and incompatible meanings. The equation Richelieu = Cinq-Mars is acknowledged by the hero himself, who calls upon the Ultimate Signifier to decide between them:

Contemple, contemple deux ambitions réunies, l'une égoïste et sanglante, l'autre dévouée et sans tache; la leur soufflée par la haine, la nôtre inspirée par l'amour. Regarde, Seigneur, regarde, juge et pardonne. Pardonne, car nous fûmes bien criminels de marcher un seul jour dans la même voie à laquelle on ne donne qu'un nom sur la terre, quel que soit le but où elle conduise. (P. 338)

Cinq-Mars posits that if the means are similar, beginnings and ends are not (amour ≠ haine). But the origins, as we have shown in our systematic but not arbitrary Freudian subversion of Cinq-Mars, are thematically linked with Richelieu's writings. In our reading of Cinq-Mars, we have consistently found Richelieu in the place of the hero (in Freudian translation love = hate). Thus when we read that Cinq-Mars' mission is, in his own words, to eliminate from France "[u]n homme de trop" (p. 275) and that his tragedy resides in the lack of a "nom," we would suggest that the
man to be eliminated is Cinq-Mars himself, and the "nom" to be established, that of Cinq-Mars himself.

Cinq-Mars undertakes to eliminate Richelieu in order to win Marie. But as Richelieu has insinuated himself between the Medicean Queen-Mother and the King, the Minister surreptitiously slides in between the hero and his maternal beloved. "Je crains encore plus l'absence" (p. 46) were the hero's parting words to Marie; the word "absence," a key word in our Lacanian reading, alerts us to Marie's assumption to the rank of signifier: the signifier is precisely the absence of the referent. Once the hero becomes compromised in Richelieu's text, Mothers and Fathers--origins--are lost. As signifier of Cinq-Mars' desire, she subjects the hero to yet another division: "son amant et son mari dans l'ombre, son serviteur au grand jour" (p. 235).

Privately reunited with her for the second and last time in the scene of "Le Confessional," he cannot repress a furtive yet unmistakable "effroi d'avoir tant entrepris pour une enfant dont la passion n'était qu'un faible reflet de la sienne" (p. 283). The word "effroi," encountered frequently in the central scene of revolt, unveils the central unconscious scene of castration. Accordingly, in the obscurity of the confessional and unbeknownst to them, Marie and the hero are divided, not by the hero's mentor (and father-substitute) the Abbé Quillet, but Richelieu's odious
instrument, Père Joseph, who thereby learns of Cinq-Mars' treacherous pact with Spain. Unwittingly, Marie has been the instrument of Cinq-Mars' demise.

Irretrievably lost to the seductive glitter of a rivulet of diamonds dangled temptingly by the Queen and to the no less seductive idealized account of Anne of Austria's romance, Marie, herself a letter purloined, recedes ever further into another text. In the Biblical text of which Cinq-Mars is explicitly the direct descendant—as evidenced by the central role accorded to Milton's recitation of Paradise Lost in "La Lecture"—all of Vigny's women, innocent dupes to Richelieu's serpent, partake of Eve's treachery. "Truth" in Cinq-Mars is patrilineal and exclusive of femininity, passing from Father to Son, from Biblical Prophet to High Aristocracy to divinely-inspired Poet, and consigned to the same account of Fall, Exile and the hope of eventual Return.

Significantly, Paradise Lost is opposed to the negatively valorized Clélie-appendage, La Carte du Tendre, literally a map of desire. The map is the literary centerpiece of the redoubtable and virile Marion Delorme's notorious salon. Around it are assembled the beribboned and epicene proponents of Preciosity, "des hommes illustres, fort obscurs pour nous" (p. 262), subsidized and "immortalized" by the Minister as founder of the Académie which houses them. That paragon of feminine literature, La Carte
du Tendre, absurdly ornate with its "rubans bleus" and anemic "lignes d'encre rose" (p. 261), is doubly-linked to the Minister, as centerpiece of Preciosity, and as map, the very emblem of superficiality. Much irony is wrenched out of the fact that the itinerary of desire could be a way of finding oneself—which is a map's sole function—when the "truth" of Cinq-Mars is that desire sets man adrift.

In the "truth" of our reading, La Carte du Tendre (which, interestingly, Lacan cites as a metaphor for Freud's work) is in fact quite similar to Vigny's transposition of Milton's variation on the Genesis myth. La Carte du Tendre is the story of Adam and Eve bereft of its metaphorical, transcendental, i.e. paternal dimension. A difference gives way to a deference—to the divine Father. Like its revered textual antecedent, Cinq-Mars will find its fulfillment and closure in the Messianic text of Cinq-Mars' martyrdom. Like the Holy Writ, the novel is liberally interspersed with portents of impending death of the Son. Literature (Cinq-Mars), like "love," accedes to "truth," when brought into unswerving orbit around the civilizational center of the Son's death and deferral to the Father's Law. The many insuperable divisions the signifier "love" has subjected Cinq-Mars to are now assumed and resolved in the subject's organic division. But if the "truth" of Cinq-Mars is transferred to the "truth" of another—Biblical—text, has not the author in a way, by this very gesture, taken
the "truth" out of Cinq-Mars?

The "truth" of our reading is both inside and outside Cinq-Mars: our shift from a Biblical to a Freudian/Lacanian reading does not invalidate the novel's central "truth" as it is articulated by Cinq-Mars, but complicates its meaning. Indeed, "j'aime, et tout est dans ce mot" is the "truth," but only if one restores to this problematic word what has been repressed and hypostatized into the character of Richelieu. "Love" names not a "pensée unique," but the movement of division which makes a "pensée" (consciousness) possible. Cinq-Mars' Romantic "truth" must be read in the light of Freud, for the whole truth is in the sublime of love and the grotesque of sexuality, i.e. in the fusion of Cinq-Mars and Richelieu. For Freud too, "love" named "all," but only if one took into account the illegitimacy of its origins.

We are of opinion, then, that language has carried out an entirely justifiable piece of unification in creating the word 'love' with its numerous uses, and that we cannot do better than take it as the basis of our scientific discussions and expositions as well. By coming to this decision, psycho-analysis has let loose a storm of indignation, as though it had been guilty of an act of outrageous innovation. Yet psycho-analysis has done nothing original in taking love in this 'wider' sense.55

Our deconstructive reading has "widened" Cinq-Mars' "truth" by restoring the divergent and incompatible meanings invested in the character of Richelieu. "Love" is a force
which fuels worldly and base ambitions as well as noble and generous causes. The rift between Cinq-Mars and Richelieu is not a conflict opposing "love" to "ambition," but a division of "love" against itself, as the novel's conclusion illustrates figuratively. What subtends Cinq-Mars' "pensée unique," like language's illusory unity, are the conflicting forces of "numerous uses."

E. Conclusion: Division and Dispersal of the Truth

The novel's ultimate moment of Truth, the locus of convergence of the divergent sens of the incessant volley of presages, omens, and portents, ranging from the crude to the subtle, from the sacred to the profane, is the unifying moment of Cinq-Mars' decapitation under a resplendent, miraculously rephallicized sun (p. 358), a sacred moment of sacrificial grandeur, replete with Vestal Virgins (p. 356) hieratically petrified in prayer. Cinq-Mars' entrance is dramatic: "revêtu d'une parure éclatante: un pourpoint de drap de Hollande, couvert de larges dentelles d'or et portant des manches bouffantes et brodées, le couvrait du cou à la ceinture, habillement assez semblable au corset des femmes ... tout rehaussait la grâce de sa taille élégante et souple. Il saluait à droite et à gauche de la haie avec un sourire dramatique" (p. 357). The hero's
surreptitious slide into a positively valorized femininity alerts us to his imminent accession to the "rang somptueux du signifiant."\(^5\)

The "truth" of our reading of *Cinq-Mars* is the "truth" of Literature, the "truth" of the Lacanian letter: it is the "truth" of a decapitation, in other words of *division* irreducible to unity, of the barred subject (conscious/unconscious). The unifying moment of closure ironically proclaims the impossibility of unity. Significantly, the scene of Cinq-Mars' execution is itself interrupted, barred, by a textual shift to the Court. As the executioner's axe is suspended over the hero's head, the novel shifts to the disastrous premiere of Richelieu's play, *Mirame*, the (in)significance of which we investigated in a previous chapter.

The reader is next conveyed to the center of the Court through a labyrinth of galleries in the wake of Richelieu's "trône ambulant" (p. 361), that sliding signifier, where King and Minister engage in a game of chess—a surface play of power—ending with the Minister checkmating the King's king. Outside the Palace, gangs of festive demonstrators "couraient d'une rue à l'autre . . . tantôt marchant en processions silencieuses, tantôt poussant de longs éclats de rire ou des huées prolongées dont on ignorait le sens" (p. 368; emphasis mine). The metaphorical (and vertical) moment of Truth is barred by successive moments of metonymic (horizontal) non-sens.
The novel's metaphorical moment of Truth, an organic division which acts like an authenticating seal on the many metonymic fragmentations mentioned previously, is ultimately consigned to a . . . letter, within the text: the letter sent by one of the conspirator's to the dramatist, Pierre Corneille (pp. 370-372). And since the letter, as we observed earlier, is the most dependent of signifying entities, attaining the power of meaning only in ever-expanding frames of reference, the novel's unifying moment of Truth is the very moment of its dispersion. The letter is a signifier condemned to perpetual displacement in a metonymic chain: meaning is somehow always held out of reach. Proof: the metaphoric moment of truth dissolves back into the metonymic chains of History and literature. The concluding dialogue between Pierre Corneille and Milton points to the truth of another text: the novel's last word is in (History's? Hugo's?) "Cromwell" (p. 374). Unvanquished Cinq-Mars? Conquered by the very medium which sought to establish his invincibility!

The mysterious last words of Lacan's "Seminar" are vindicated by our reading of Cinq-Mars: "l'émetteur . . . reçoit du récepteur son propre message sous forme inversée." The sender (Richelieu, Vigny) receives from the receiver (Vigny, the present reader) his own message (History, Literature) in reverse form: Richelieu's (his-
(literary) toppling of Cinq-Mars is reversed in Vigny's (psychoanalytical) dissertation which topples Cinq-Mars, proclaiming the "truth" of the metaphorical "truth" to be metonymy.
NOTES

II- Cinq-Mars

1This excerpt from Sainte-Beuve's critique of Cinq-Mars in the French newspaper Le Globe, July 8, 1826 was quoted from the appendix entitled "Documents" in Alfred de Vigny, Cinq-Mars (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1970), pp. 486-487.


6Alfred de Vigny, Cinq-Mars in Œuvres Complètes (Pléiade, 1965), pp. 43-44. All further references are to this edition and will appear in the text.

7Jeffrey Mehlman, Revolution and Repetition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p. 107. Oddly enough, Mehlman's radical style of literary criticism, which seeks to reinscribe the word tocsin and its homophonic variants (toxin, toc/sein, toque/sein, etc. . . . in Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris), resembles nothing more than the "le mot juste" variety of criticism practiced by the arch-traditionalist school.


14 Ibid., p. 522
15 Ibid., p. 11
17 Lacan, p. 31
22 B. Johnson, p. 68.
24 Ibid., p. 33.
25 Ibid., p. 524.
26 Ibid., pp. 506-507.
28 Vigny, "Réflexions sur la vérité dans l'art," p. 28.
29 Idem., Journal d'un poète, p. 1276.
36 Vigny, "Documents" in Cinq-Mars (Livre de Poche), pp. 488-489.
38 Jean-Louis Baudry, "Écritures, fiction, idéologie" in Théorie d'Ensemble, p. 137.
40 B. Johnson, p. 4.
42 Ibid., p. 11.
43 Fontanier, p. 99.
44 Vigny, "Réflexions sur la vérité dans l'art," p. 22.
49 Ibid., p. 41.

52 Ibid., p. 199.


54 Jean-François Lyotard, Discours, Figure (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), pp. 254-255.


57 Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte, p. 103.

III-Salammbô

A. A Critical Survey

Salammbô, Flaubert's mythico-historical epic in an exotic Carthaginian setting, appeared in 1862, immediately embroiling the critics in heated controversy. Much in the way of style and relevance was expected from the author of Madame Bovary, and bitter was the disappointment when the readers were confronted with the irrelevant, albeit stylish, erotic yearnings of the daughter of Hamilcar Barca. Sainte-Beuve voiced ambivalent sentiments, at once admiring and deploiring the author's vast and laborious research. This most respected of nineteenth-century readers argued that the enterprise was by definition impossible, that between Antiquity and us there yawns such an insuperable chasm, that one cannot resuscitate Antiquity, only res- tribute it, i.e. offer a lifeless simulacrum. Flaubert, he writes, "n'a pu communiquer à son oeuvre l'intérêt réel et la vie." The plot, he opines, is buried under a wealth of superfluous, archeological detail. Fiction gives way to erudition, unity to fragmentation: "En maint et maint endroit on reconnaît l'ouvrier consommé; chaque partie de l'édifice est soignée, plutôt trop que pas assez: je vois des portes, des parois, des serrures, des caves, bien exé- cutées, bien construites, chacune séparément; je ne vois nulle part l'architecte."
Predictably enough, the ensemble the various "parties" do not add up to is not the harmonious unity of an edifice, but the unifying, totalizing presence of an architect. Unity, like Beauty, is in the eye of the beholder; in this case, the beholder is one well-known to synthesize the multifaceted, non-totalizable beauty of literary creation into the unity of a creator.

But the problem for Sainte-Beuve is not simply that the various parts of Salammbô, however exquisitely chiseled they may be, do not add up to Flaubert, and specifically to the Flaubert of the much admired Madame Bovary, but that they do not add up to the consistency of a conscious presence. Flaubert's flawed edifice lacks, in Sainte-Beuve's eyes, a certain "perspective naturelle." Natural perspective is, of course, the reassuring classical respect for depth and distance in the ordering of things: "Par exemple, si l'on marche la nuit dans l'obscurité ou à la simple clarté des étoiles, on ne devrait pas décrire minutieusement des pierres bleues sur lesquelles on marche, ou des taches jaunes au poitrail d'un cheval, puisque personne ne les voit." 2 The unnatural perspective of a disembodied eye suggests that the formal unity Flaubert's work lacks is simply the organic unity of a body. What Sainte-Beuve seeks above all in Literature is a reassuring mirror, a reflection of one's wholeness. What Flaubert delivers is the body distorted, mutilated, fragmented.
The unity Sainte-Beuve misses is the unity of form and content: Flaubert's Cezanne-like disruption of natural perspective is reflected in the themes of bodily torture and evisceration.

Curiously, the question Sainte-Beuve asks of a work is not: What does it say? or even: How is it said? but Who is there? Who is it that can discern the blueness of stones and the yellow markings of a horse in the demi-obscurity of starlight? To Sainte-Beuve's accusation of gratuitous aestheticism ("pierres bleues"), Flaubert's riposte is that he merely followed the dictates of "realism": "Si je mets bleues après pierres, c'est que le mot bleus est juste, croyez moi, et soyez également persuadé que l'on distingue très bien la couleur des pierres à la clarté des étoiles".³ Sainte-Beuve's point, which Flaubert misses or ignores intentionally, concerns the status of "on": If no one in the novel is interested in the blueness of the stones at his feet, then neither is the reader. The blueness, or more generally, description, disrupts the continuity of inner (character) and outer (reader) psychological reality. Description results in a Verfremdungseffekt by referring, not to the "natural perspective" of unified and unifying consciousness, but to the textual surface itself—the level of "le mot juste."

Sainte-Beuve essentially describes the novel's failure in terms of obstructed vision: "Salammbô . . . n'est que
bizarre, et si masquée, si affublée, si fardée, qu'on ne
se la figure pas bien, même au physique; et, au moral, si
peu entraînée ou entraînante que, malgré la complicité
naturelle au lecteur en pareil cas, on ne prend nul plaisir
à lui voir faire ce qu'elle fait."⁴ To this objection,
Flaubert once again pleads obeisance to "reality": "ni moi,
ni vous, ni personne, aucun ancien et aucun moderne, ne
peut connaître la femme orientale, par la raison qu'il est
impossible de la fréquenter."⁵ What is reality? Is it
the unknowable psychological and physical entity behind
the veil or is it the describable veil itself?

Interestingly enough, Sainte-Beuve's critical motto
was: "Au fond . . . allez au fond! . . . point de draperie
qui tienne; avant! plus avant!"⁶ What motivates Sainte-
Beuve's critical and artistic enterprise is uncovering the
reality behind the vanity of veils. For Flaubert, on the
contrary, the drapery is what holds the novel together:
thematically, the theft of Tanit's sacred veil, the center-
piece of Carthaginian spiritual life, initiates the suc-
cession of battles opposing Carthaginians and Mercenaries;
its restitution is the pretext for Mâtho's and Salammbô's
climactic sexual encounter. In a sense, the novel's politi-
cal and sexual intrigue is woven in and around the forbidden
za'imph. Stylistically, much of the novel consists in de-
scription as Sainte-Beuve points out reprovingly. The author
hotly defended the status of description in the novel: "Il
n'y a point dans mon livre une description isolée, gratuite; toutes servent à mes personnages et ont une influence lointaine et immédiate sur l'action.° Is this not to say that Salammbô's mythological disguises are, in effect, not masks concealing, but mirrors reflecting—perhaps constituting—her inner reality? Does it not suggest that action is not simply the externalization of inner (psychological) forces, but originates more distantly in the internalization of external (objective) forces?

Thematically, if not theoretically, Flaubert's ponderous descriptions and inventories are warranted by the very nature of Carthage's mercantile civilization, whose dominating motivating force is the "éternel souci du gain"; an urban society whose principal governing body is "les Riches." What Flaubert's wealth of descriptions of wealth implies is that Carthage, the very symbol of doomed civilization, founded on its materialism, as he states explicitly in the following passage:

Le génie politique manquait à Carthage. Son éternel souci du gain l'empêchait d'avoir cette prudence que donnent les ambitions plus hautes. Galère ancrée sur le sable libyque, elle s'y maintenait à force de travail. Les nations, comme des flots, mugissaient autour d'elle, et la moindre tempête ébranlait cette formidable machine.

"Galère," "travail," "machine": the metaphor, a relatively rare figure of speech in this work, is instructive. It
is precisely because Carthaginian civilization is narrowly centered on the accumulation, transportation, and transformation of objects and impervious to the needs and desires of the various peoples she exploits that she is doomed to extinction. This is the tenor of Hamilcar Barca's harangue to the assembly of Anciens (pp. 811-816) whose greed and avarice have brought them to the brink of disaster. If Flaubert's insistent description of objects seems to fragment the unity of the subject, it is precisely because that is the subject: Salammbô inverts the foundational premise of mind over matter by demonstrating how matter invades, obsesses and determines the mind.

Flaubert's deliberate blurring of the natural, humanistically non-transgressable barrier between subject and object evoked further and stronger reactions from Sainte-Beuve, who accused him of a lack of sympathy, of showing excessive interest in details of gore and cruelty. Besides, the critic argues, the war between Carthage and the Mercenaries is so historically ex-centric as to be of no interest to the reader. Flaubert's deft response to all these objections is to cite the multiple sources attesting to the veracity of the tortures described and to argue convincingly that the very act of disinterring a buried episode of history is itself indisputably compassionate. It might be added that the episode is not as historically ex-centric as Sainte-Beuve (and others) contended, since the Mercen-
aries comprehend "des hommes de toutes les nations, des Ligures, des Lusitaniens, des Baléares, des Nègres et des fugitifs de Rome" (p. 710) in addition to Egyptians, Greeks, Gauls, Teutons, and a multitude of Asiatics. The Barbarians represent the undeployed whole of World Civilization, albeit on the wrong side of the civilizational barrier. Significantly, the barrier between Civilization and Barbarism is continually blurred and breached throughout the novel, but this erasure of differences has been largely unexploited by the critics, who like Sainte-Beuve have consistently returned the work to its particularity and exoticism. By merely positing that *Salammbô* recalls a forgotten and insignificant chapter of Carthaginian history, the critics unduly—yet understandably—privilege the civilizational side and deprive the work of its most radical intellectual dimension. From the standpoint of Carthage, *Salammbô* illustrates a minor episode in the history of a vanished people on the margin of Western Civilization. But doesn't the text's consistent transgression of literally, historically, and philosophically sacred boundaries (action/description, Civilization/Barbarism, subject/object, inside/outside) suggest a subversion of History, as well as Literature and Philosophy? Doesn't it suggest that Civilization (Carthage)—"Galère ancrée sur le sol libyque"—is but a momentary anchoring point in a sea of Barbarism? *Salammbô*, then, does not simply illustrate a minor episode
of a forgotten chapter in the history of a vanished civilization; more radically, it proposes that Civilization is the weak link in the historical chain of Barbarism.

Georg Lukács erected the next major critical landmark to Flaubert's *Salammbô*, though not exactly a Beuvian road-mark proposing various itineraries to the literary voyager, but a sumptuous tomb. The prime example of "The Crisis of Bourgeois Realism," *Salammbô* is discussed at length in a section bearing the triply-condemnatory heading of "Making Private, Modernization and Exoticism."9 Judging the novel to be a prodigal waste of talent, Lukács begins his critique by serving the reader a healthy portion of the Sainte-Beuve/Flaubert polemic. The point is to prove that *Salammbô* fails by the author's own standards, since "[w]hat makes this depreciation so interesting for us is that [Sainte-Beuve] himself takes up a similar philosophical and literary position in many respects to the Flaubert he criticizes."10 As we have just shown, Flaubert's and Sainte-Beuve's respective literary and philosophical positions are far from superimposable with respect to the very major issues of style (description vs. action) and reality (the veil or behind the veil?). Actually, there may be less of a distance between Sainte-Beuve's and Lukács' positions, since, at another point in his critique, the latter remarks that "something of the old tradition of the historical novel
is still alive in [Sainte-Beuve]."¹¹ That "something" should be read "Walter Scott" whose opus constituted, in Lukács' eyes, the Golden Age of the historical novel, after which it mostly stumbled from crisis to decline. Indeed, the "old tradition" which claims both Scott and Sainte-Beuve, and Lukács by alliance, is the tradition of a Literature aiming to lift the veil of historical opacity through the magic of the Hegelian "necessary anachronism" which enables "characters to express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relationships in a much clearer way than the actual men and women of the time could have done."¹²

In Lukács' view, Flaubert is a practitioner of "necessary anachronism"'s evil opposite: "modernization," which is distortion with a view to creating certain aesthetic effects. "Modernization" (in Marxist-Leninist vocabulary, it reeks of the same foul smell as "cosmopolitanism") inevitably leads to an obfuscation of reality: "True we are told in exhaustive detail how the quarrel [between Carthage and the Mercenaries] arises . . . yet we have not the least idea of the real social-historical and human driving force which causes these clashes to take place the way they do."¹³ Lukács thus concedes that all the historical elements are there ("exhaustive detail"), but somehow, they do not add up to what he has the presumption to call the "main theme": "in the presentation of the story [i.e. Salammbo] the external pretext must inevitably suppress
and stifle the main theme. External occasions take up the major part of the novel; the main theme is reduced to a small episode." If the "main theme" can be "reduced to a small episode," then logically, it is not the novel's main theme. What Lukács is saying about Flaubert's novel says less about Salammbô than about what he (Lukács) is doing to it—and the genre. In The Historical Novel, an "external pretext," the pre-text of History as the deployment of the forces of dialectical materialism, inevitably suppresses and stifles the main theme, i.e. the series of historical novels, many of which, in fact, are dropped like so many cumbersome bundles along Lukács' unwinding Marxist path (Vigny, Hugo, Dumas to name just a few).

There is also something quite odd about a "main theme" from which the novel that envelops and sustains it can become so detached. As the title indicates, the novel's subject is Salammbô, a Carthaginian princess hailed as heroine and saviour of her homeland: "[elle] semblait le génie même de Carthage, avec son âme corporifiée" (p. 989). In an evocative gesture, Lukács firmly and irrevocably denies the "organic connection" between Salammbô and Carthage, where Flaubert problematizes it ("semblait"). "To seem" may not be "to be," but it isn't "not to be" either. Whatever Lukács is saying about the novel may or may not be applicable; at any rate, the novel seems to be presiding over—guiding—his performance, engaging him to
subject the subject (i.e. Salammbô) to the ritual mutilation that seems to constitute the main verb (action) of Flaubert's syntax.

Had Lukács, even momentarily, stepped out of the heavily normative armature of Marxist aesthetics, he would not have placidly asserted that "the objects [of Flaubert's descriptions] have nothing to do with the inner life of the characters." As a matter of fact, they have quite a bit to do with what the Mercenaries are fighting for (Spendidus: "Nous nous promènerions couverts de pourpre comme des satrapes. On nous laverait dans les parfums; j'aurais des esclaves à mon tour" [p. 724]) and what the Carthaginians are so anxious to defend. (Hamilcar Barca: "Vous perdrez vos navires, vos campagnes, vos chariots, vos lits suspendus, et vos esclaves qui vous frottent les pieds" [p. 814]). Like Sainte-Beuve, Lukács takes exception to Flaubert's descriptions; the archaeological obsession leads to what he deprecatingly calls "decorative monumentalization," a term which, like "modernization," is not particularly instructive with regard to Flaubert's work (though extraordinarily apt to describe the impact of, say, Stalinist "art" on the capitals of Eastern Europe). "Monumentalization" seems hardly suited to describe a novel which consistently thwarts the critics' dream of a "main theme," of the unity or wholeness of the work. As Victor Brombert
points out, Salammbo is not simply a stone memorial, "not merely a book of death, but of annihilation." The monument is packed with explosives. 

What this monument explodes in Lukács' case are the cherished myths of socialism: "real greatness is everywhere replaced by extensiveness--the decorative splendour of the contrasts replaces the social-human connections--inhumanity, cruelty, atrocity and brutality become substitutes for the lost greatness of real history." True, there is much that is unbearable in the work, and Flaubert fairly revels in scenes of carnage, but Lukács simply ignores the rare moments of sublime grandeur: Mâtho's valorous last stand, the beauty of the spiritual transfiguration of the crucified Spendius and Autharite ("'Te rappelles-tu les lions sur la route de Sicca?'--'C'étaient nos frères' répondit le Gaulois en expirant" [p. 975]). Moreover, Flaubert's distortion of "real history" (and the critic would have been hard-pressed to enlighten us as to the "real history" of Carthage) is debatable. As Simone Weil, a thinker with the rare ability to ignore the "solution of continuity" between Antiquity and the modern era, observed: "L'histoire est un tissu de bassesses et de cruautés où quelques gouttes de pureté brillent de loin en loin." If this judgment is correct, and the judge was one who carefully recorded the number of victims beneath the grandiose monuments
erected by vanished civilizations, the scandal of *Salammbô* may be that it restores the true (and unequal) balance of inhumanity and greatness in history.

Lukács is as obsessed as Sainte-Beuve with the question of classic proportion and "natural perspective," although in his case, the alleged distortions of the work do not merely violate the physiological integrity of the body, but the more abstract—Marxian—totality formed by the interaction of equally-weighted subjective and objective forces in reality. *Salammbô*, of course, upsets the symmetry of this interaction: "In Flaubert there is no such connection between the outside world and the psychology of the principle characters."\(^{20}\) The human subject is somewhat less than the "totality of objects," striving vainly to live up to the beauty he imparts to matter. In *Salammbô* the human subject is a mere (and mostly less exquisite) object among other objects; humanity is given no relief in this historical tableau. This is what lends to a truly action-packed novel, the static character, the immobility of a still-life. As defined earlier by Lukács, "natural perspective" in the classic, Scottsian novel is formulaically: the depiction of historical reality + more (social) consciousness. *Salammbô* is historical reality-consciousness, since Lukács shows that the splendour of the outer world of objects points up, by contrast, the squalor and pettiness of the inner life of the characters. Conscious-
ness, then, would be the third dimension which establishes "natural perspective." This does not mean that Salammbô is "objective" in the realist, or rather, positivistic sense, because Flaubert, according to Lukács, simply "blow[s] up" the "subjective side," i.e. love, which "stifles" and "suppresses" the "main [read: Marxian] theme," which is consciousness of real socio-historical relationships. This moves our formula to read Salammbô = subjectivity - consciousness, thus admitting to the validity of adopting a psychoanalytic approach, since psychoanalysis is essentially the science of the unconscious, properly defined as subjectivity - consciousness. Sainte-Beuve's disembodied third eye, Lukács' "making private" point to something very much resembling the Freudian unconscious. Rather than approaching the text psychoanalytically, we will be showing that the text is itself a psychoanalysis.

Lukács consistently moves in this direction, not just by his detection of a textual overprivileging of "love" and "madness," but by using even more specific, technical terms as in his diagnosis of Salammbô:

the effect of Salammbô herself was to provide a heightened image, a decorative symbol, of the hysterical longings and torments of middle class girls in large cities. History simply provided a decorative, monumental setting for this hysteria, which in the present spends itself in petty and ugly scenes, and which thus acquired a tragic aura quite out of keeping with its real char-
acter.
Lukács accuses Flaubert of turning the movement of History, understood by the Marxists as the process of coming to (class) consciousness, into the jumbled discourse of hysteria. By adopting a psychoanalytic approach to the text, we can rehabilitate Flaubert's alleged "modernization," "making private," even his "exoticism;" for if Scott "modernized" history in the direction of Marxism (via "necessary anachronism"), Flaubert modernized it in the direction of Freud. Indeed, Freud's own intellectual itinerary led him from the study of hysteria (Studies on Hysteria--1895) to a new interpretation of History (Moses and Monotheism--1939), bringing to the fore its repressed "private" or familial dimension. Finally, Flaubert, like Freud, diminishes (but does not eliminate) the role of "consciousness" as the dominant historical force. In a sense, they both indulge in "exoticism": the unconscious is "Africa," the passion-ridden, the elemental force-field, the Dark Continent of the psychic sphere. "Consciousness" is like Carthage, a "[g]alère" anchored on its shore, precariously maintaining itself by a violent repression of autochthonous instinctual forces.

For Lukács, as for Sainte-Beuve, Salammbo breaks down into a multitude of exquisite, jewel-like shards that cannot be recomposed to reflect the wholeness of a literary or social architect (Flaubert, Marx). Salammbo seems to defy (the critics') interpretations, which is bringing more of
a work to (the reader's) consciousness. Even as well-disposed a critic as Victor Brombert seems to remain descriptive; his study constitutes another jewel-like simulacrum of the jewel-like simulacrum Salammbô is. For Brombert, no less than for Lukács, the outer world of objects seem to constitute a distraction, albeit a more welcome one. Like the heroine herself, Brombert wanders somewhat aimlessly through this meticulously reconstructed labyrinth, content to gaze upon "[l]es améthystes et les topazes du plafond [qui] faisaient ça et là trembler des taches lumineuses . . . [que] Salammbô, tout en marchant, tournait un peu la tête pour voir" (p. 870). But Salammbô, as we shall see at the term of our study, is ultimately attracted to a less material light, leaving the amethysts and the topazes to the critics. In the end, Brombert can only refer back to the unknowable enigma of the author himself as the key to the work: "the novel re-enacts a personal drama--the drama of a man haunted by a desire for the absolute, and only capable of finding the human substitutes for destruction and death."23

Obviously, the controversial Salammbô has lodged itself in the critics' mind like an unconscious, a nightmarish vision to be repressed by resistance (Sainte-Beuve) or negation (Lukács), and attenuated, like the terrifying head of the Medusa, by petrification (Lukács' "monumental-
ization," Brombert's "Epic of Immobility"). The three major critics we have surveyed, precursors and paragons of three major strains of criticism, the first attentive to the psychological aspects of the "personal drama" (whether Salammbô or Flaubert), the second focusing on the "collective drama" of class struggle, the third adopting a purely aesthetic point of view, have reacted to the work as if to a trauma. Each is unable to recognize his own cognitive scheme, his "main theme." But however the novel misses its theme, or fails to mirror its subject, it is consistently successful in its fragmentation of the reader, and in the unraveling of his theme.

In our next section, we will attempt to show how the novel subverts (the readers' conception of) unity, by traveling in the wake of Tanit's sacred veil, the novel's peripheral center. In the following section, we will restore the work to consciousness, or rather, adumbrate the text's own conscious dimension. Indeed, the novel works its way towards consciousness. There is an obvious thematic parallel between Flaubert's novel and Freud's psychohistory, for the latter retraced the repression of "barbarism" within the individual, a "personal drama" which he later projected onto the "collective drama" in Totem and Taboo and Moses and Monotheism. Despite the travels and the copious notes, Flaubert's pretense to realism is justified, if not by the scrupulous reconstitution of an
outer reality, by the faithful retracing of an inner
development, meticulously reconstituting an inner reality,
where, as Freud would have it, the key to reality really
is.

B. Unveiling

1. The Purloined Veil. The critical theme which unifies
both Sainte-Beuve's and Lukács' variety of accusations is
basically that of "empty formalism." The novel is a glit-
tering surface behind which there is no "life" or "interest"
or "consciousness" (except diminished): a jewel-like simulacrum. Significantly, one of the novel's major motifs,
ignored by Lukács and Sainte-Beuve, and perhaps, in a fig-
urative way, its "main theme" (cf. the last sentence of
the novel: "Ainsi mourut la fille d'Hamilcar pour avoir
touché au manteau de Tanit," p. 994), is the philosophically
privileged image of the veil, which thinkers have been
lifting up, stripping away, and discarding for centuries
in order to expose the "naked Truth" which lay behind it.
Lukács and Sainte-Beuve (and their critical descendants)
are notorious practitioners of this titillating hermeneutic
strip-tease. Flaubert explicitly undermines this gesture
with a thrice-repeated stress on the importance of the veil
itself:
Sans cesse la fille d'Hamilcar s'inquiétait de Tanit... Afin de pénétrer dans les profondeurs de son dogme, elle voulait connaître au plus secret du temple la vieille idole avec le manteau magnifique d'où dépendaient les destinées de Carthage,—car l'idée d'un dieu ne se dégageait pas nettement de sa représentation, et tenir ou même voir son simulacre, c'était lui prendre une part de sa vertu, et, en quelque sorte, le dominer. (p. 750)

[Spendius:] "les dieux résident où se trouvent leurs simulacres." (p. 770)

Afin de retenir dans la ville le génie des Dieux, on avait couvert de chaînes leurs simulacres. (p. 925)

The veil, or more generally, the simulacrum, is irreducibly ambivalent; it simultaneously reveals and conceals its referent. Seeing or touching it is to partake of the power of the god it represents, but it can also be fatal: "Sa vue seule était un crime: il était de la nature des Dieux et son contact faisait mourir" (p. 783). Both a blessing and a curse, Tanit's sacred veil tenders a promise of mastery and a threat of annihilation.

The description of the veil itself is less a description of the veil than a description of its indescribability. As object, it belongs in Flaubert's catalogue of impossible objects of which the classic anthological model is Charles Bovary's new cap in the first chapter of Madame Bovary. It is less a description of a thing than the annihilation of the thing through language. Hidden away in the depths of Tanit's temple, the sacred zaîmph presents a dazzling
vision to the trespassing pair of Mercenaries, the intrepid Mâtho and the shrewd Spendius:

on aurait dit un nuage où étincelaient des étoiles; des figures apparaissaient dans les profondeurs de ses plis: Eschmoûn avec les Kabires, quelques-uns des monstres déjà vus, les bêtes sacrées des Babylonians, puis d'autres qu'ils ne connaissaient pas. Cela passait comme un manteau sous le visage de l'idole, et remontant étalé sur le mur, s'accrochait par les angles, tout à la fois bleuâtre comme la nuit, jaune comme l'aurore, pourpre comme le soleil, nombreux, diaphane, étincelant, léger. C'était là le manteau de la Déesse, le zaïmph saint que l'on ne pouvait voir. (P. 776)

Schematically, the progression of the description is one of gradual dissolution or disappearance: from an illusion of depth ("profondeurs de ses plis") to quasi-nothingness ("diaphane, étincelant, léger"), from the implied thickness of an embroidered mantle, dropping in heavy folds, to the diaphanous thinness of gauze. The veil is matter, but matter refined to spirituality. Its transcendent character is marked, not only by the supernatural circumstances surrounding its delivery, or the myth of divine origins inscribed in its folds, but in its very simulation of the firmament and its improbable primary coloration, simultaneously blue like the night, yellow like the dawn, and red like the sun. The veil reproduces the celestial panorama in its varied aspects ("nuage," "des étoiles," "nuit," "aurore," "soleil").

The veil "stands for" all these primeval elements of
cosmic order—and insofar as the archetype of all order is the alternation of day and night, and the primordial difference, the opposition of light and dark, the veil represents the foundational difference between chaos and order, barbarism and civilization, as well as the boundary between the two ("aurore").

The choice of the veil as spiritual centerpiece and foundational "symbol" of Carthage is as subversive and ex-centric as the choice of Carthage to represent civilization. First of all, the veil is the attribute not of a male but of a female, hence a lesser deity: the zaîmph belongs to the moon-goddess Tanit, the Carthaginian Venus. Secondly, the veil is that which hides, rather than that which is hidden. Flaubert’s text is finely-tuned to maximize this ambivalence. The reader is never quite sure whether the yearned-for absolute is beneath the veil or the veil itself. Tanit, according to her high-priest, Schahabarim, "est l’âme de Carthage . . . c’est ici qu’elle demeure, sous le voile sacré" (p. 752). When Salammôô begs him to show her the veil, pleading that "la curiosité de sa forme me dévore" (ibid.), one is unsure as to the relationship of the "forme" and the veil. Schahabarim refuses her sacrilegious request on the grounds that "[l]es Baals hermaphrodites ne se dévoilent que pour nous seuls" (ibid.). There is something quite odd about a "voile" that is a "dévoilement." Most unsettling of all is its vulnerability,
for despite its alleged power and the cordon sanitaire of taboos and preventive ritual, it is something that can be stolen. Since in French the verb dévoiler refers to the concrete act of "taking away the veil," and more abstractly "revealing," and the text is about the unlawful dévoilement ("revelation"), does the text not posit a certain affinity between the act of stealing (a veil) and the act of revealing? Does the removal of Tanit's veil lay bare the soul or "truth" of Carthage, of civilization?

In Lacan's seminal analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," the act of stealing a letter is turned into a metaphor of psychoanalysis. Analytic treatment is a dévoilement in its plurality of meanings: the "truth" (the repressed signified) is arrived at by means very much resembling an "unveiling" in the sense of committing an impropriety, since "[e]very step of the treatment is accompanied by resistance." What the analyst strips away—in effect, steals—is the illusory self; consciousness is suspended. The subject's theme is violated: it's what he doesn't (want to) talk about, or what he can't talk about that he is made to talk about. Translated by Lacan into Saussurean terms, this means that the analyst suspends the conscious signified—the subject's theme—disintegrating the subject into a mere surface-play of signifiers (cf. free association). The liberated signifiers are recomposed,
through interpretation, into a new signified, which is then restituted to the subject, and the shock of the "unveiling" is overcome by the strength of the "revelation."

Freudian analysis essentially rests upon the ambivalent dynamics of resistance and transference. Resistance is, on one hand, a hindrance to the progress of the treatment, and on the other, it is one of the main modes of unconscious manifestation. As analysis continued, Freud noted that the area of greatest resistance centered around the person of the analyst himself, indicating that a transference had occurred. The analyst becomes involved in the subject's inner conflict, becoming in effect the external representative of the unconscious, the omnipotent Other to and against whom all love and aggression is directed. By virtue of transference, the analyst locates himself in a privileged spatial relationship with regard to the subject; an external force representing an internal one, he is not quite inside, yet not quite outside, but on the border between the two. He locates himself in the very breach opened up by the dysfunctioning signifier.

The dynamics of resistance and transference inform the scenario of Flaubert's Salammbô, in which the theft and restitution of an enigmatic and tabooed signifier, Tanit's sacred veil, is staged so prominently. The veil and the two major protagonists, Mathô and Salammbô, are meticulously interwoven; the former representing the latter,
touted as signified, discarded as mere signifier, then restored to prominence at the end of the novel in a criss-crossing of thefts and restitutions whose implications will be clarified in the following pages.

Flaubert himself was conscious of the importance of what we now call the signifier in the composition of the novel. This is vindicated not only by his meticulous attention to "le mot juste," rather than to the apparent consistency and fluidity of character (inner) motivation and historical (outer) action, but by his even more modern preoccupation with a stage of cultural development bearing a striking resemblance to the "primal scene" of the subject's entrance into a system of signifiers. It was his avowed intention to "[d]onner aux gens un langage dans lequel ils n'ont pas pensé."25 Since it was not Flaubert's intention to write in a foreign tongue (though some wags claimed he had), his project must have involved returning the national idiom to its primal foreign-ness. In other words, to suspend (which is not to eliminate: cf. "il faudra que ça [i.e. Carthage] réponde à une certaine idée vague que l'on s'en fait")26 that which in language corresponds to the level of the (conscious) signified, and to hover over the boundary between the signifier and the signified.

Located at the very juncture of the material and spiritual realms, Tanit's sacred zaïmph simultaneously designates and problematizes the notion of a barrier between
a signifier (language as matter) and a signified (language as meaning), between the superfluous and the essential. The veil is more than a motif, yet, apparently, something less than a main theme. Sainte-Beuve, Lukács, and Brombert either dismiss it entirely or deprecate its importance. Nevertheless, the text insists that "les destinées de Carthage" (p. 750) are somehow connected to the veil which "covers" both the "collective drama" (Spendius organizes its theft in order to demoralize Carthage) and the "love story" (Mâtho plans to seduce Salammûbô with it) and it literally "wraps up" the novel ("Ainsi mourut la fille d'Hamilcar pour avoir touché au manteau de Tanit," p. 994). Although its theft and restitution constitute privileged moments within the text (its theft initiates the hostilities and its restitution clinches Mâtho's seduction of Salammûbô), "le zaïmph saint que l'on ne pouvait voir" remains literally unseen by the most eminent readers. In a way, this absence is encoded in the very description of the veil. As we noted earlier, the veil's description is a description of a quasi-disappearance: Tanit's majestic mantle gradually wafts away like foam. Also, there is barely a mention of the zaïmph after Salammûbô whisks it away from Mâtho's tent, except for the last sentence, where it snaps back with a vengeance. Could this curious absence, coincidental with the sway of Moloch over the fortunes of Carthage correspond to the analytic moment of the dévoilement ("revelation") of its
secret? This is a question we shall return to later. For the moment we shall measure the impact of the veil on the characters and the events.

Tanit's sacred zaïmph, "la fortune de Carthage," is situated at the juncture of matter and spirit, of Mâtho's and Salammbô's desire, of Barbarism and Carthaginian fortunes: its position is somehow central, yet its importance is peripheral. Having it is never enough. Its absence is construed as a misfortune, yet its capture gives way to disappointment of dissatisfaction. When Mâtho returns to the Barbarian camp with the prized veil, his exultation is quickly replaced by discontent: "J'aurais dû l'enlever! ... Il fallait la saisir, l'arracher de sa maison! Personne n'eût rien osé contre moi" (p. 784); Salammbô, not Tanit's veil, is what should have been ravished. Its appearance in the camp fails even to excite the cupidity of Mâtho's fellow barbarians: "Quant à chercher à s'emparer du zaïmph, aucun n'y songea; la manière mystérieuse dont il l'avait acquis suffisait, dans l'esprit des Barbares, à en légitimer la possession." (pp. 785-786).

Hidden away in Mâtho's tent, the veil, re-enshrouded in an aura of prohibition, establishes its owner as the principal power in the Barbarian camp: "la possession du zaïmph t'a rendu le premier de l'armée" Narr'Havas assures him (p. 785). Nevertheless, the sacred zaïmph fails to assure them of victory in battle, and for Mâtho it turns back into
a mere reminder of Salammbô (p. 793) like "les Riches" thrown into the cess-pit (p. 766). Salammbô herself, willing to face torture and death in order to recapture the veil for Carthage, is singularly unmoved by it: "elle examina le zaïmph; et quand elle l'eut bien contemplé, elle fut surprise de ne pas avoir ce bonheur qu'elle s'imaginait autrefois. Elle restait mélancolique devant son rêve accompli" (p. 893). When his daughter returns in triumph to his tent, the redoubtable Hamilcar, despite the acclamations of the populace, is less impressed by the repatriation of the veil than horrified by the unmistakable sign of his daughter's disgrace (p. 897). Nor does the return of the veil assure them of an immediate reversal of their fortunes ("le rétablissement du zaïmph n'ayant pas servi" [p. 925]), for the worst of the siege is yet to come. For Schahabarim, Salammbô's tutor and Tanit's supreme high-priest, the veil's capture by the Barbarians confirms his persistent doubts about the deity he worships, and its return leaves him equally unmoved. Thus, no sooner is the veil attained than it is demystified, swept aside, devalued by the text itself into a "simple tapis" (p. 891), a mere prop for the protagonists' epic amours. Somehow, the revelation of what Salammbô believes is "le secret de l'existence universelle" (p. 869) seems nothing more than the discovery of life's central meaninglessness.

One critic who has scrupulously traced the vicissitudes
of the veil is Jacques Neefs, whose interesting, albeit jargon-bristled, analysis brings him to the following conclusion:

Le zaïmph est ce qui marque que quelque part dans le politique, tissé en lui, il y a une logique du désir, et que quelque part dans la division sexuelle, il y a à voir avec le pouvoir et la reconnaissance de la division originaire . . . le zaïmph, par son appartenance paradoxale, indique que le mythe est un savoir sur le désir, et que le désir traverse le savoir, le divise, l' espaçant vers des représentations toujours remises, vers des formations mythiques qui ne cessent de le hanter. 27

This is certainly true, but, like the veil itself, it is not enough. Like Salammbô, Neef's fixation on the veil leads him (or at least the reader) to vagueness, indetermination, and confusion. Neef's meticulous study brings us nothing more than what is already succinctly and adequately expressed in the Biblical verb "to know," which he gem-encrusts with the scintillating vocabulary of structuralism. Like the character Narr'Havas, who faithfully follows the veil in its vagaries from camp to camp, Neef's ultimate moment of grasping the meaning of Salammbô (cf. "Narr'Havas, enivré d'orgueil, passa son bras gauche sous la taille de Salammbô en signe de possession," p. 993) seems to enfold nothing but a corpse, life (and our interest) having passed on to the mysterious regions of "quelque part," and the reader is still left with the spectre "des formations mythiques qui ne cessent de le
hanter." Fortunately, *Salammbô* is, if nothing else, precise, and the veil initiates certain specific effects in a specific *quelque part* which is precisely the text, and the reader by transference. For, as Lacan's analysis of "The Purloined Letter" teaches us, it is not enough to steal the letter (take it out of context), it must be restituted to the subject—through *interpretation*.

Part of the solution is given by the ingenious Spendius, who, though unable to cope with "les batailles au grand soleil" (p. 853), is marvelously adept at finding his way in the dark ("donne moi des murs à escalader la nuit," *ibid.*): "Mais comment la possession du zaïmph ne leur donnait-elle pas la victoire? D'après Spendius, *il fallait attendre"* (p. 794; emphasis mine). Liberating the signifier does not produce immediate, tangible effects, and analysis is a period of pregnant waiting, due to the "slowness with which profound changes in the mind bring themselves about, fundamentally the same thing as the 'inappreciation of time' characteristic of our unconscious processes."28

*Salammbô* is not so much an "Epic of Immobility" as it is a chronicle of minute, quasi-imperceptible mobilities. One must not, however, be looking at the monuments like "sex" and "war," which, as Brombert quite rightly notes, "are set up as explicit parallels."29 But "sex" does not explain "war" and "war" is not meant to explain "sex,"
rather, these modes of personal and collective inter-penetration are outer models—metaphors—of an inner rupture and exchange: something like Carthage is happening within the Barbarian camp, and something like barbarism is happening within Carthage. However primal and brutal the universe of Salammbo is, Flaubert felt that he had been "moins dur pour l'humanité dans Salammbo que dans Madame Bovary."\(^{30}\)

There is indeed something far more terrible in the sudden revelation of the futility of several millenia of civilization, as Emma's horrible death-bed laughter indicates. Salammbo explores the other more hopeful historical end: in a world still under the sway of powerful instinctual forces, glimpses of a nascent, higher consciousness are seen to shimmer, like the amethysts on Salammbo's ceiling, or the ephemeral primeval animalcules of Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

2. "Lifting" the veil. The veil is distinguished from other objects of Carthaginian cult, Barca's sacred fish and Salammbo's pet python to name a few, in that its origins are considered authentically supernatural: "un voile mystérieux, tombé du ciel" (p. 770). Yet, despite its transcendant origins, it is prone to the natural calamity of pillage, revealing that "les destinées de Carthage" are dependent as well on the peoples that surround her. Even the plural of "destinées" seems to subvert the notion of
a purely spiritual determination, allowing for a plurality of courses, thus designating the signifier's potentiality, rather than the signified's fixed determination. If the veil is the site of "l'âme de Carthage" (p. 752), the veil's terrible secret is that matter and spirit are inextricably and problematically linked: "la Rabbetna, n'ayant plus son voile, était comme dépouillée d'une partie de sa vertu . . . c'était une transfuge, une ennemie" (p. 868). The theft of the veil doesn't so much alter the fact of material/spiritual division as it reveals the impossibility of determining the site of division.

The seemingly superfluous, accidental and material vagaries of so essential and immaterial an entity betrays an obsession with the deconstruction of significance, rather than with the quest of a pre-determined or fixed significance. If the theft of the veil deprives Tanit of part of her virtue and brings misfortune to Carthage, then the signifier is endowed with a certain ascendancy over the signified. For the most part, the critics have refused to travel in the wake of the veil, preferring to remain on the more familiar, albeit insecure, civilizational side of the barrier. Like the Carthaginians themselves, the critics emulating the learned Schahabarim, "se tournai[ent] naïvement vers Moloch-Homicide, et tous abandonnaient Tanit" (p. 868), erecting "lifelessness" (Sainte-Beuve), "inhuman-ity, cruelty, atrocity and brutality" (Lukács), and "death
and destruction" (Brombert) into the "meaning" of the work. The belief in a meaning independent of historical accident and material contingency is so powerful that the Barbarians themselves are half-inclined to believe in the fixity of meaning:

Mâtho s'imagina que le voile concernait exclusivement les hommes de race chananéenne, et dans sa subtilité de Barbare, il se disait: "Donc le zaîmph ne fera rien pour moi; mais puisqu'ils l'ont perdu, il ne fera rien pour eux." (P. 794)

Mâtho's immediate concern and the meaning he assigns to the zaîmph is "la victoire" over Carthage. But the lesson of the "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" is that meaning is not always within the conscious grasp of the subject, and the veil's promise of victory is of another sort than that imagined by Mâtho.

Flaubert's avowed obsession with the deconstruction of meaning may explain the ex-centricity of his choice of subject matter. The division of the sign between meaning and non-meaning corresponds to the historical division between Civilization and Barbarism: those human collectivities whose existence has meaning for us are those we designate as civilized, and those whose existence has no meaning for us have traditionally been dismissed as barbarian. Since Flaubert's aim to invent a language that is refractory, but not absolutely imimical, to meaning is nothing
less than a subversion of the sign, his choice to represent
the signified is Carthage, a civilization of which we are
 quasi- ignorant. Those groups constituting the mainstream
of our Western Civilization—Hellenes, Romans, Celts—tumble
into the non-meaning of Barbarism. But Flaubert's subver-
sion is more complex than a simple inversion. The removal
of Carthage's signifier of signifiers from one side of the
civilizational barrier to the other is a further subversion
of that initial subversion. Does the theft of the spiritual
center of civilization not bring the Barbarians within its
orbit and move Carthage into barbarism?

The theft of Tanit's sacred veil climaxes a series
of similar signifying thefts. Carthage's credibility (the
juxtaposition of meaning and saying) has been steadily
eroded by the subtle Spendius, who has cleverly severed
the lines of (verbal) communication between Carthage and
the Mercenaries. When the official representative of
Carthage, Hannon, arrives to placate the rebellious troops,
Spendius, noting the lack of common idiom between Hannon
and the Mercenaries, offers his services as interpreter
and proceeds to mistranslate Hannon's pompous speech,
turning a promise of reconciliation into a threat of
violence (pp. 740-742). When next, the more reliable and
virtuous Giscon arrives on a similar mission, Spendius
simply poisons the official interpreters (p. 764). The
wily Greek, "fils d'un rhéteur grec et d'une prostituée
campanienne" (p. 729) shares the secret of the most subtle Carthaginians, convinced as he is that "les mots [ont] par eux-mêmes un pouvoir effectif" (p. 926).

Thus "meaning" gradually changes sides, and the Barbarian camp shines in the refracted light of civilization. Indeed, Flaubert persistently blurs the distinction between the two entities. When delegates from Carthage arrive in the Barbarian camp to attempt to settle the dispute over the Mercenaries' unpaid wages, they are taken aback by the sight which confronts them: "Au lieu de la confusion qu'ils avaient imaginée, partout c'était un ordre et un silence effrayants" (p. 757). On the other hand, when, at the highest pitch of the war between Carthage and the Mercenaries, citizens of the former sacrifice their eldest sons to the Sun-god, Moloch (Baal), in a gruesome ritual, the latter, from outside the battered walls of the city, "regardaient, béants d'horreur" (p. 950). Like order and silence, horror and cries of misery are evenly distributed on both sides of the civilizational barrier, spilling over onto the reader himself: "Souffrir et crier, haïr ce qu'on vient de lire, est-ce un résultat de l'art?" Whatever Sainte-Beuve thinks art is, it certainly doesn't correspond to Flaubert's conception, but clearly, Flaubert's art successfully undermines our pre-conceptions, chiseling away as he does at the boundaries which cordon off entities. If the critics fail to see "unity" in the work, it may be
because the artist's concept of unity is different from ours.

_Salammbô_ illustrates the equation Civilization = Barbarism, and "unity" is the psychological symmetry between the civilized and the uncivilized. Moreover the psychological unity Flaubert posits between Carthaginians and Mercenaries is doubled or repeated by the action: the Barbarians are busily breaching the walls separating them from Carthage. The distinction is made even hazier by the constant flux of refugees, women, and soldiers between the two poles. The Barbarians themselves are divided in their sentiments toward Carthage. As mercenaries, they have defended the interests of the city against Rome; there is a kernel of allegiance beneath their treachery. Their hatred of Carthage is mixed with love: "[i]ls l'admiraient, ils l'exécutaient, ils auraient voulu tout à la fois l'anéantir et l'habiter" (p. 755). On the other hand, even the most Carthaginian of Carthaginians, the exalted Hamilcar Barca and his equally lofty opponent, the odious Hannon, are in some ways alien to the spirits and interests of the city-state. Hamilcar is an atheist, cheating the Sun-god Moloch of the sacrifice of his male progeny, Hannibal (pp. 939-940). Furthermore, Hannon and the Assembly of Ancients accuse him of wanting to overthrow the Republic (p. 816). Seized by a barbarian contingent, the pusillanimous Hannon is willing to hand over Carthage, lock, stock
and barrel, in exchange for his life (p. 973). The spiritual site of Carthage (in the hearts of its leading citizens) is no less vulnerable than the physical site; the inner threat no less menacing than the outer one.

This ambivalence is brought to its highest pitch in the love-hate relationship between the Libyan mercenary, Mâtho and Hamilcar's daughter, the ineffable Salammbô. As characters, they represent the "ideal" of their respective camps. Mâtho is the quintessential Barbarian. Even before the theft of the zaīmph, he is distinguished "pour son courage, pour sa force surtout" (p. 756). Salammbô is civilization brought to its highest degree of refinement, every vestige of "barbarity" having been meticulously bred out of her:

Elle avait grandi dans les abstinences, les jeûnes et les purifications, toujours entourée de choses exquises et graves, le corps saturé de parfums, l'âme pleine de prières. Jamais elle n'avait goûté de vin, ni mangé de viandes, ni touché à une bête immonde, ni posé ses talons dans la maison d'un mort. Elle ignorait les simulacres obscènes, car chaque dieu se manifestait par des formes différentes, des cultes souvent contradictoires témoignaient du même principe, et Salammbô adorait la Déesse en sa figuration sidérale. (P. 750)

Salammbô, then, is opposed to Mâtho, not simply by the anatomical and psychological difference between male and female, but as spirituality to brute physical force, as sublimation to sexuality. Their mutual attraction rep-
resents something more than a purely "private" affair, as Lukács would have it. For the Barbarian, Salammbô is the focal point of Civilization's irresistible attractions; she represents the upward movement of perfectibility. Her spiritual superiority is suggested by her frequent appearances on lofty terraces and high balconies. For Salammbô, Mâtho represents the return of the organic repressed with a vengeance, the very phallic form she is unconsciously seeking beneath the Goddess' veil.

In the series of binary oppositions we have briefly surveyed (Barbarism/Civilization, Mercenaries/Carthaginians, Salammbô/Mâtho), opposition is subverted by equivalence, or complicated by the interference of another opposition. The Barbarians are not wholly barbarous, and the civilized not quite civilized; some of the Carthaginians are indeed mercenary, and some of the Mercenaries quite Carthaginian; and finally, Salammbô's and Mâtho's fatal attraction may not be due simply to male/female "chemistry." Nothing quite seems to fit in the universe of Salammbô, and things are constantly shifting beneath their definitions. But Flaubert's insistent subversion of differences and positing of equivalences does not necessarily imply a "pantheistic" belief in Unity. Unity in Salammbô is constantly beleaguered by addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The Barbarian camp, for instance, is swollen by massive additions of heterogeneous elements ("comme si l'Afrique
ne s'était point suffisamment vidé . . ."; (p. 913) and deflated by equally massive defections (Narr'Havas). The demographic contours of Carthage itself are redefined by Hamilcar: "il promit à des Carthaginois-nouveaux le droit de cité complet" (p. 838), and its physical frontier modified by the breaches opened up by the Barbarians. Unity is a mirage and division an inescapable fact, as Hamilcar, the political realist, understands only too well. The Barbarian/Carthaginian conflict could have been avoided, he insists, by introducing a division elsewhere: "Pourquoi . . . l'idée ne vous vient pas de les [i.e. les Barbares] affaiblir par la moindre division!" he asks the assembled notables of the city (p. 815).

The metonymic (contingent) passage of the veil from Carthage to the Barbarian camp, however, obscures the novel's main division by subsuming the Barbarian/Carthaginian conflict under the metaphoric (transcendant) unity of Myth. As a result of his capture of the veil and the prominence its possession has conferred upon him, Mâtho comes to identify himself with Moloch: "À présent le génie de Moloch l'envahissait. Malgré les rébellions de sa conscience, il exécutait des choses épouvantables, s'imagineant obéir à la voix d'un Dieu" (p. 859). Mâtho's accession to a mythical dimension is acknowledged by Salammbô (p. 888, 890) and corroborated by the entire population of Carthage in the final scene of his martyrdom (Chap. XV,
pp. 985-994). Brombert suggests that Myth is the "core" of *Salammbô*, further stating that "[t]he basic 'unit' of the novel is unquestionably the sexual image as crystallized around the divine couple Tanit and Baal." But no sooner do we arrive at this unifying spiritual level, than once again the concept of unity is problematized.

The basic 'unit' is composed of a duality (Tanit/Moloch), whose relationship, as Brombert points out earlier, is dialectical. If one were to express this complex statement mathematically, we would face the logical impossibility of $1 = 2 = 3$. And the number 4 could be added to this equation if one takes into account the hermaphroditic nature of the gods in question ("les Baals hermaphrodites," p. 752; "Dieu et Déesse, Déesse et Dieu," p. 947), which somehow thwarts the simplicity of Brombert's "sexual image." Indeed, Tanit's temple is a self-fecundating entity, bristling with phallic trophies (p. 773). Moloch himself is extolled by his priests as a "créateur qui s'engendre" (p. 947). But the text itself seems to propose the "sexual" interpretation by its heavy insistence on "principe mâle" (p. 871) in connection with Moloch, and "principe femelle" (p. 987) in connection with Tanit, and by positing the fecundating conjunction of these twin totalities (p. 950). But Moloch is a "principe mâle exterminateur" (p. 871) as well as fécondateur: complementarity is problematized by mutual exclusion based on (fire/
water) conflict or (sun/moon) alternation—when Moloch wanes, Tanit waxes, and vice-versa. To complicate matters further, the pantheistic nature of Carthaginian myth in Salammbô can accommodate a rudimentary form of monotheism or even nihilism as Schahabarim's apostasy suggests:

De la position du soleil au-dessus de la lune, il concluait à prédominance de Baal, dont l'astre lui-même n'est que le reflet et la figure; d'ailleurs, tout ce qu'il voyait des choses terrestres le forçait à reconnaître pour suprême le principe mâle exterminateur. (p. 871)

Schahabarim's transference of allegiance from Tanit to Moloch is a paradoxical gesture laying bare the duality that subtends any movement towards unity. By exalting "la vertu de la lumière" (p. 873), the priest affirms nothing but the forces of "total darkness"—the principle of death and destruction as embodied by Moloch. Schahabarim's heliocentric belief in total intelligibility ("le foyer du soleil . . . la source même de l'Intelligence," p. 873) is incompatibly monotheistic and nihilistic. Having been subjected to the ritual castration required of Tanit's priests, Schahabarim is barred from entering into Moloch's service. Thus, his embrace of the supreme male principle closes in on the nothingness of total alienation: "le prêtre désormais sans dieu, disparut dans la foule" (p. 946). The only "unity" one derives from this mythic "core," the center of which is inhabited by Moloch's gaping nothingness,
is the unity engendered by seemingly infinite flexibility. The Tanit/Moloch myth can account for unity and multiplicity, continuity and discontinuity, contradiction and compatibility, dichotomy, dualism, and dialectic; justifying every division, conflictual or complementary.

The veil, then, is the appropriate symbol of an ideology that can assume every human, material, and spiritual shape, and fit every phenomenon and occurrence. The Tanit/Moloch myth is less explicable in terms of religion than it is of language in its twin moments of mediating reality (Tanit: "auxiliatrice," p. 748) and annihilating it (Moloch: "exterminateur"): Like the Lacanian letter, the veil is an unknown, unknowable entity that determines those who are possessed by it (rather than those who possess it). Tanit and Moloch may be at the "core" of the novel, but *Salammbô* cannot be explained at this level, since the Tanit/Moloch system, by explaining everything, explains nothing. In *Salammbô*, the spiritual realm merely mirrors the profusion, confusion, and complexity of the material realm: no sooner does one arrive at this core than one is immediately thrown back to the periphery of contingency and accident.

In *Salammbô*, myth is as protean a substance as reality, and if anything can be said to "crystallize," to repeat Brombert's expression, it is not the "sexual image . . . around the divine couple Tanit and Baal," but the undevel-
oped and fragmented personalities of the human couple, Salammbô and Mâtho, upon whom myth and reality converge. In a perceptive essay on archetypes in Salammbô, Patrick Brady states that the two protagonists "are not essentially living individuals... but embodiments or incarnations of mysterious or superior forces, whose instruments they are in the working out of vast nonhuman interrelationships."³⁵ It is our contention, however, that the protagonists, despite their textual non-prominence, are indeed "essentially living individuals," though assuredly "instruments" of "superior forces," "nonhuman" but humanizing, and that the "Parnassian psychology of symbols and archetypes"³⁶ is also refracted inwards. Salammbô and Mâtho, the actual "core" of the novel, are endowed with an inner psychological dimension sustaining growth and development along classic Freudian lines. In our next section, we propose to retrace the itinerary of this inner evolution, gathering up the scattered jewels of their spiritual growth in order to recompose their identities, thus consolidating the subject(s), i.e. restoring the work to its wholeness.

C. Revealing

1. Mâtho. The critics' fixation on "sex" and "eroticism" in the novel, in part due to Flaubert's mischievous, teasing treatment (are they doing it?) of the subject, has appar-
ently blinded them to more subtle, spiritual interpenetrations. In the Edenic beginning, and "beginning" here refers to the first chapter of the biography of Freudian man as well as the first chapter of *Salammbô*, Mâtho and his fellow mercenaries are treated to a magnificent banquet by their sponsors, the Carthaginian notables, in partial payment for services rendered. Gorged and inebriated on the rarest and most exquisite dishes and wines of the city, the barbarians turn the feast into an orgy of death and destruction, wreaking havoc on Hamilcar's human and material property. In the absence of "le maître," *Salammbô*, like a primal mother, descends from her lofty abode to soothe the offending guests with fascinating melodies and unintelligible lyrics about a mythic hero chasing a goddess' mercurial tail. Her enigmatic presence rivets the attention of Mâtho, "un Libyen de taille colossale et à court des cheveux noirs frisés" (p. 720). Mâtho is the compleat Barbarian, heretofore untouched by civilization, more beast than man: "Des éclaboussures de sang lui tachetaient la face, il s'appuyait sur le coude gauche; et la bouche grande ouverte, il souriait" (p. 721). So unbridled are his passions that, once Salammbo slips away to the secure confines of her room, he dashes after her like a carnivore in a vain attempt to seize her.

Smitten by this ineffable vision of loveliness, Mâtho lolls about "nu comme un cadavre," actually more like a
new-born babe (death is also a rebirth), "couché à plat ventre sur une peau de lion" (p. 735), utterly dependent on Spendiuss' devoted ministrations. Lukacs and Brombert, naturally, link this torpor to the "love-madness" of Antiquity, but the hero's passivity and obsessive fixation with Salammbo are also evocative of the infant's total involvement with the Mother. The emphasis on nudity and dependency, umbilical cord imagery and the sensation of "an oceanic feeling,"\(^{37}\) and, finally, the derealization of his surroundings point to something resembling a period of pre-natal incubation:

Elle me tient attaché par une chaîne que l'on n'aperçoit pas. Si je marche, c'est qu'elle s'avance; quand je m'arrête, elle se repose! Ses yeux me brûlent, j'entends sa voix. Elle m'environne, elle me pénètre. Il me semble qu'elle est devenue mon âme! Et pourtant, il y a entre nous deux comme les flots invisibles d'un océan sans bornes! Elle est lointaine et tout inaccessible! La splendeur de sa beauté fait autour d'elle un nuage de lumière; et je crois, par moments, ne l'avoir jamais vue... qu'elle n'existe pas... et que tout cela est un songe! (P. 735)

The born-again imagery culminates in the famous scene of the ravishing of Tanit's sacred veil, assimilated by Brombert and Neefs to sexual intercourse.\(^{38}\) This is, of course, a valid interpretation, solidly grounded in the profusion of phallic and womb symbols and the dynamics of penetration through narrow canals and the clandestine passage through inviolable and sacred barriers. But sexual
penetration is also a return to the womb. Our reading, then, would move the rape of Tanit's sacred veil—this is no ordinary mortal coitus—back to the trauma of birth. For Mâtho, who has been reciting Salammbo's mercurial tale of a hero chasing a goddess' mercurial tail, the capture of the veil represents no less than rebirth—into a spiritual dimension. Mâtho emerges from Tanit's temple into the plenitude of a higher, ineffable existence, like a demi-god: "Me volâ plus qu'un homme maintenant. Je traverserais les flammes, je marcherais sur la mer! Un élan m'emporte! ... Il semblait à Spendidus de taille plus haute et transfiguré" (p. 777). Mâtho's magical metamorphosis from beast to god balances out as an emergence into humanity.

The theft of Tanit's veil initiates a series of subtle yet decisive changes in the leonine hero; changes unnoticed by Lukács, whose monolithic treatment of the protagonist transmutes him into "a prophetic model of the decadent drunkards and madmen of Zola."39 But Lukács' vision is blinded by an even headier opiate, for amidst the glimmering splendor of Salammbo's many jewels, there are unmistakably the twinklings of nascent consciousness. Love's madness is not sustained unmitigated throughout the novel; the fixation on Salammbo dissipates and gives way to "haine," another name for lucidity:
Alors le ressentiment qu'il gardait à Salammbô se tourna vers Hamilcar. Sa haine, maintenant, apercevait une proie déterminée; et comme la vengeance devenait plus facile à concevoir, il croyait presque la tenir et déjà s'y délectait. En même temps il était pris d'une tendresse plus haute, dévoré par un désir plus âcre . . . Il se jura, puisque ses compagnons l'avaient nommé schalishim, de conduire la guerre; la certitude qu'il ne reviendrait pas le poussait à la rendre impitoyable. (P. 840)

The passage relates a remarkable transition from the indistinct of instinctual life to the acute vision and resolve of conscious waking life. The powerful aggressive impulses are still there, as evidenced by "ressentiment," "haine," "proie," and "dévoré," but rarefied, offset by expressions denoting perception and consciousness: "apercevait," "déterminée," "concevoir," "certitude."

Mâtho's fruitless and vague "ressentiment" against Salammbô is channeled into a heightened perception of "une proie déterminée." The pathology of love is transmuted and divided into "une tendresse plus haute" and a bittersweet "désir plus âcre." The simplicity of primal emotions, the basic tandem of pleasure/unpleasure, gives way to more complex, adult sensations. Tellingly, the change operates around Mâtho's fixation of the primal Father, Hamilcar Barca, "le maître," who seems to eclipse Salammbô. The process of coming to consciousness is one of gradual identification with he who embodies the Law and bars the way to jouissance (Salammbô and the spoil of Carthage).
Spendius, the acknowledged "brain" behind the Mercenaries' revolt, is taken aback by the magnitude of the change that has taken place within his friend:

Mâtho, d'habitude, se laissait conduire, et les emportements qu'il avait eus étaient vite retombés. Mais à présent il semblait tout à la fois plus calme et plus terrible; une volonté superbe fulgurait dans ses yeux, pareille à la flamme superbe d'un sacrifice. (P. 840)

The sacrifice blazing in his eyes is that of the beast of prey (or the beast of burden) which he has sacrificed in order to accede to the higher plane of consciousness (Mâtho = mater, "to overcome")—his eyes mirror an inner, not an outer conflict. Moreover, the violence of Mâtho's attachment to Salammbo is moderated; unbridled sensuality gives way to the most civilized—and civilizing—of sentiments: "[Spendius et Mâtho] ne parlaient pas de Salammbo—l'un n'y songeant pas, et l'autre empêché par une pudeur" (p. 842; emphasis mine). Even Autharite's mistreatment of Giscon, the captive Carthaginian general, made to wear a "tiare grotesque, en cuir d'hippopotame, incrustée de cailloux ... déplaisait à Mâtho" (p. 864), betraying a délicatesse few of the Carthaginians share.

The veil is not to be understood as the "cause" of this spiritual transfiguration; it is a mere signifier. For Mâtho, the veil never meant anything more than Salammbo,
which is why he faces her recapture of the zaïmph with such equanimity. The veil materializes the frontier of civiliza-
tion—its passage from one camp to the other is the outer, material expression of passing over an inner, intangible boundary. Love, not the veil, is responsible for the change in Mâtho. But even this goes unnoticed by critics such as Lukács and Brombert, who bring their own notions of love and Antiquity to the text:

The madness of love—for love, with Flaubert, is a "madness," a "curse," a "malady"—is linked both to a dilection for the unbounded and to the fundamental impotence of all desire. The debauches of the imagination infallibly bring about a sense of sadness, tedium and even disgust. The mystic virgin who commits sacred prostitution to recover the Zaïmph is also the woman who discovers the bitterness of dreams come true. 40

"Love," as we have seen, is not responsible for anything resembling "madness"—or even "bitterness"—it is the first step to consciousness. The "debauches" must be in Brombert's (and Lukács') imagination, for love is neither "extended," "distorted," nor "monumentalized," but that which gives and is given "natural perspective." Mâtho, characterized by Brombert as "literally bewitched"41 and by Lukács as "bestially savage,"42 may fall, momentarily, under the spell of Salammbô's intoxicating mixture of rare and personal essences ("Elle sentait le miel, le poivre, l'encens, les roses, et autre odeur encore," p. 887), but once his needs are met, he is reawakened to the reality
and responsibilities of running a war:

"Viens donc! c'est Hamilcar qui brûle le camp d'Atharite."
Il fit un bond. Elle se trouva seule. (P. 892).

Surely, Mâtho's leap must prove that his "love" (for Salammôê) is "bound" rather than "unbounded."

Brombert next blithely informs us that "The fertility symbols, the perfumes and the exhalations 'overcame' Mâtho," when it is Brombert, not Mâtho, whom the fertility symbols, the perfumes and the exhalations have overcome. Mâtho himself has learned to overcome symbols, perfumes and exhalations, as the following passage attests:

La . . . vision [de posséder Salammôê] avait assailli Mâtho; mais il la rejeta tout de suite, et son amour, qu'il refoulait, se répandit sur ses compagnons d'armes. Il les chérissait comme des portions de sa propre personne, de sa haine, et il se sentait l'esprit plus haut, les bras plus forts; tout ce qu'il fallait exécuter lui apparut nettement. Si parfois des soupirs lui échappaient, c'est qu'il pensait à Spendidus. (Pp. 980-981--emphasis mine)

This passage, which to the present reader's deep shock, has been simply ignored by the work's most eminent readers, so faithfully encapsulates the theme of the "genital" and "aim inhibited" love, i.e. the repression of sexuality as the foundation of civilization, in Freud's Civilization and its Discontents, that to comment upon it might dilute the potency of its message. The French verb "refouler"
naturally pre-existed Freudian "repression" (refouler = "to repress"), but it is probable that it was never used so psychoanalytically half a century before Freud's writings on the subject. For Flaubert articulates the very core of Freud's discovery: repression (of sexual love) is that which propels "l'esprit plus haut"—namely, to the realm of consciousness. Mâtho's love for Salambô has been transmuted into a higher form of love: the brotherly and Christian love extended to his "compagnons d'armes" and to Spendiûs, for whom he initially showed nothing but contempt and neglect. Finally, refoulement has led to "meaning": "tout ce qu'il fallait exécuter lui apparut nettement," meaning that Mâtho has been civilized.

2. Salambô. The celebrated seduction passage in Chapter XI, "Sous la tente" (pp. 881-898), in which the act of love is evoked "de manièrê privative," has titillated and teased a number of readers who lift the veil of Flaubert's art to savour the peek-a-boo view of a couple locked in an amorous embrace. That, of course, is there too. But they have missed the sublime moment of the veil's revelation. If sexuality is evoked "de manièrê privative," it is not simply to circumvent censorship, or to heighten the reader's pleasure, but to relativize its importance. For it is a totalizing moment of absolute plenitude, of Salambô's accession to a knowledge as profoundly spiritual
as it is carnal.

Brombert, although faithful to Flaubert's characterization of Salammbo as "une espèce de Sainte Thérèse," 45 dismisses her as "a mystic virgin . . . who discovers the bitterness of dreams come true." Lukács, whose "wild psychoanalysis" was quoted in our introduction, tactlessly disposes of her as "hysterical," her "longings" bereft of any metaphysical dimension, a frustrated virgin. Since Freud himself had faced similar tactless ventures by uninformed physicians, it would behoove us to quote part of his response: "we have long known that a mental lack of satisfaction with all its consequences can exist where there is no lack of normal sexual intercourse . . . and the unsatisfied sexual trends . . . can often find only very inadequate outlet in coitus or other sexual acts." 46 For Freud, the anguish of sexuality--love--unlike the pangs of hunger, poses a question that calls for a metaphysical, not a biological answer. Lukács would have us believe (and would have been more explicit if he hadn't been so busy castrating Salammbo from the text) that the prescription for Salammbo's "hysteria"--happily provided by the author in the character of Môtho--is the proverbial "one dose normal penis, applied regularly." But psychoanalysis, as Freud points out later in "Observations on 'Wild' Psychoanalysis," does not cure the hysterical subject by restituting the penis, but by extending the subject's con-
sciousness, or in more Lacanian terms, by restoring the
dysfunctioning signifier to the subject's own syntax.
Psychoanalysis is a "talking cure." Before examining the
question of her discovery, however, we must first determine
what she is looking for.

The question she addresses her tutor, the high-priest
Schahabarim, concerns the nature of the Carthaginian Venus,
the moon-goddess, Tanit, to whom she is devoted, the other
gods in the Carthaginian pantheon remaining:

trop loin, trop haut, trop insensibles, comprends-
tu? tandis qu'elle je la sens mêlée à ma vie;
ellle emplit mon âme, et je tressaille à des
élancements intérieurs comme si elle bondissait
pour s'échapper. Il me semble que je vais
entendre sa voix, apercevoir sa figure, des
eclairs m'éblouissent, puis je retombe dans les
ténèbres. (P. 751)

The problem, as Lukács correctly intuited, is precisely
one of an "organic connection": the ethereal realm to which
she so passionately aspires has no connection to her present
surroundings. Bereft of a mother "depuis longtemps . . .
morte" (p. 750), knowing only Hamilcar's implacable
severity, Schahabarim's icy hauteur, and Taanach's
inscrutable, neutral presence, Salammbo leads an emotionally
impoverished existence. Her knowledge is purely theoretical
and abstract; it has no basis in reality, or rather, it
has no bearing on her inner reality. Salammbo's experience
is one of castration, of an anxiety caused by the seemingly
insuperable rift between the material and the spiritual, between signifier and signified:

"des éclairs m'éblouissent, puis je retombe dans les ténèbres." (P. 751)

Des mots étranges quelquefois . . . échappaient [de Schahabarim] et . . . passaient devant Salammô comme de larges éclairs illuminant les abîmes. (P. 872)

[a Mâtho:] "Tes paroles, je ne les ai pas comprises; mais je voyais bien que tu voulais m'entraîner vers quelque chose d'épouvantable, au fond d'un abîme." (P. 888)

Until now, Salammô has understood nothing, experienced nothing but the anxiety of existing in an abyss, her out-stretched arms reaching for the stars, her eyes riveted on the moon (p. 749), her spirit crushed by a vague guilt sustained by Hamilcar's constant disapproval and Schahabarim's suppressed rage. Words and gods flash overhead, like Jovian thunderbolts, leaving her stranded in a hole of darkness. Although conversant in "tous les idiomes des Barbares" (p. 721), Salammô seems doomed to an existence of inanition, inferiority, and incomprehension: "elle éclatait en sanglots . . . restait étendue sur le grand lit . . . sans remuer, en répétant un mot toujours le même, les yeux ouverts, pâle comme une morte, insensible, froide" (p. 870). It is supremely ironic that, despite her vast learning and erudition, it is Mâtho the Barbarian who does most of the effective talking during their encounter "Sous
la tente." Her own discourse—"paroles abondantes et superbes" (p. 886)—is reduced to the level of her accoutrement, and in fact, less effective, since "Mâtho n'entendait pas" (ibid.) preoccupied as he is with her more material and physical eloquence.

Out of the pantheon of gods, Salammbô has chosen to devote herself to Tanit, the primal Mother, she who comes closest to anchoring herself in reality, presiding as she does over the most palpable organic changes. But even the goddess cannot stoop low enough: "des éclairs m'éblouissent, puis je retombe dans les ténèbres." Hence Salammbô's avowed wish to "sortir de [son] corps, n'être qu'un souffle, qu'un rayon, et glisser, monter jusqu'à toi, ô Mère" (p. 749). Her yearned-for immaterialization is a vain attempt to connect the only world that has meaning for her with her organic existence.

Sainte-Beuve, as we related earlier, blamed Flaubert for having overdressed his heroine ("on ne se la figure pas bien"). But the problem does not reside so much in an obfuscating accumulation of inner veils. If Sainte-Beuve can't figure her out, it may well be due to her own inability to figure herself out. Salammbô's inner life is blurry and indistinct. She is tormented by "obsessions d'autant plus fortes qu'elles étaient vagues" (p. 750); she recites prayers and repeats names "sans qu'ils eussent pour elle de signification distincte" (ibid.). Although
Flaubert himself characterized his heroine as "clouée par l'idée fixe," her ideas don't seem fixed at all, least of all to herself. Unable to understand events within and around her unless they pertain to the spiritual realm (only the sacrilege committed against her sacred carps brought her running out of her room into the Barbarian midst), her life is filled with rather comic **quid pro quo**. When Hamilcar returns to the strife-torn city and his pillaged palace, she greets him with an ominous "Ô père... tu n'effaceras pas ce qui est irréparable" (p. 822), referring to the theft of Tanit's veil and her inability to prevent it. Hamilcar, narrowly concerned with the integrity of his property and the purity of his genealogical line, is sure "qu'elle avait failli dans l'étouffante d'un Barbare" (*ibid*.). Her idealism trips over everyone else's materialism--she cannot "connect." Like Mâtho before the theft of the veil, she feels chained to a presence very near and yet innaccessible. She yearns to see Tanit's veil: "la curiosité de sa forme me dévore" (p. 752) she confesses to Schahabarim. What she longs for is no less than the connection between the concrete and the abstract—a form.

Despite Lukács' claim to the contrary—he was too preoccupied with his own "main theme" and refashioning the novel into a "monument" to pay close attention to the subtleties of change within the novel—an "organic connection" is made. But the conjunction is not simply
biological. When Salammbô accuses Mâtho of having brought the captured veil to her in order to include her within its curse, the latter protests energetically:

"Non! non! c'était pour te le donner! pour te le rendre! Il me semblait que la Déesse avait laissé son vêtement pour toi, et qu'il t'appartenait! Dans son temple ou dans ta maison, qu'importe? n'es-tu pas toute-puissante, immaculée, radieuse et belle comme Tanit!" Et avec un regard plein d'une adoration infinie: "A moins, peut-être, que tu ne sois Tanit? -Moi, Tanit!" se disait Salammbô. (p. 888)

This, then, is the veil's revelation. Far from discovering "bitterness" or "sadness, tedium and even disgust" as Brombert believes, Salammbô discovers that the impossibilities of having can be resolved through the possibilities of being. "To know" thus articulates the passage from (not) having to being: if Salammbô cannot have the Mother (Tanit), she can be Tanit. For Salammbô, whose life has ebbed and flowed according to the phases of the moon and the moltings of her serpent, Mâtho's revelation is that the controlling forces ("the gods") are not without but within. Now freed from an outer dependency, Salammbô is engaged in the process of becoming. If she is momentarily "mélancolique devant son rêve accompli" (p. 893), it is not because she has discovered the "bitterness of dreams come true"; sadness is merely a by-product of change. For Salammbô-Tanit, the veil turns back into a mere garment, thrown negligently around her waist, dropped off with a flourish in Hamilcar's
tent, and of no further interest to her than it was to Tanit when she dropped it from the heavens.

Salammbô restores the veil to Carthage, but the veil, through Môtho's analytic mediation, restores Salammbô to herself. The form she has discovered in its folds is--becomes--her own: an identity is assumed by identification with Tanit. It is not so much the veil and the sacred that is abandoned, it is reality that is successfully recovered--in its plurality of meanings--by the veil, which must perforce disappear. "Moloch, tu me brûles" (p. 890) she whispers to Môtho as they are locked in an amorous embrace. A connection is made between the organic (Môtho) and the spiritual (Moloch).

Môtho's decisive intervention brings Salammbô's abyssal vision back into "natural perspective." Heretofore a creature of meaningless ritual and repetition, an obsessive star-gazer, Salammbô presently

me prolongeait plus ses jeûnes avec tant de ferveur. Elle passait des journées au haut de sa terrasse, les deux coudes contre la balustrade, s'amusant à regarder devant elle . . . Elle apercevait . . . les manoeuvres des Barbares . . . elle pouvait même distinguer leurs occupations.
(P. 926)

Salammbô's upturned gaze has shifted to surface--human--level; anxiety and "inquiétudes," however "hautes" (p. 869), have given way to calmness, composure, and humble amusement. Schahabarim, who previously filled her with "terreur . . .
jalousie . . . haine et une espèce d'amour" (p. 870), now inspires "aucune terreur" (p. 925). She greets the death of her python, whose metamorphoses have governed her inner life, her spirit waxing and waning to the tune of its epidermal variations, with rather comic indifference, kicking the sacred corpse around with her foot to the extent that Taanach "fut ébahie de son insensibilité" (p. 925). Finally, Hamilcar, whom she feared "comme un dieu" (p. 822), is given a more human dimension and something like affection draws them together: "Souvent son père arrivait dans sa chambre . . . s'asseyait en haletant sur les coussins . . . la considérait d'un air presque attendri" (p. 926).

Her climactic copulation with Mâtho has become a successful re-enactment of the anxiety-ridden "primal scene."
Her memory of the event "flottait dans sa tête mélancolique et brumeux comme le souvenir d'un rêve accablant" (ibid.) and Mâtho becomes the focus of the emotional ambivalence characteristic of resistance/transference. Salammbô nurses a seemingly implacable hatred toward her benefactor, encouraging her fiancé, Narr'Havas, to destroy him: "Oui! tue-le, il le faut!" (p. 970). But hate is the other of love: "Elle aurait voulu, malgré sa haine, revoir Mâtho" (p. 926).

The alternation of love/hate is an internalization of the Barbarian/Carthaginian conflict: Salammbô "par la restitution du voile ayant sauvé la Patrie" (p. 986) has been invested with Joan-of-Arc-like status by her fellow cit-
izens. Thus, Salammbô, characterized by Lukács as "a stranger to the interests of her homeland, to the life and death struggle of her native city,"\(^4\) faithfully mirrors the outer conflict.

Not only has she become implicated in the struggle, she succeeds in turning the tantalizing uncertainty over her "carnal" knowledge to strategic advantage, becoming, in effect, a locus of power. Her father deigns to consult her "sous prétexte de renseignements militaires" (p. 926) and the learned and unflappable Schahabarim now gropes for words in her presence: "il déversait des imparfections et des ironies sur ce barbare, qui prétendait posséder des choses saintes. Ce n'était pas cela pourtant que le prêtre voulait dire" (p. 925). Salammbô won't "tell," because her antiseptic upbringing has left her immaculate of a vocabulary in which to relate her experience: "elle n'aurait su de quelle manière, par quels discours l'exprimer" (p. 926). If Salammbô is able to stymie the shining lights of the priestly (Schahabarim) and warrior (Hamilcar) castes, it is due less to the content of that knowledge than to her inability of communicate it. What seems to constitute the mainspring of Salammbô's power is not a sexual or a military secret, but a knowledge resistant to communication. Salammbô's power proceeds not from what she knows, but from not telling what she knows. Power, then, is a function of the ambiguous, indeterminable signifier, not of the
unequivocal, clearly determinable signified. Undecidably a heroine or a whore, Salammbô's passage through the Barbarian camp is equivalent to a glorious assumption to the rank of signifier.

If the veil seems to be missing from the latter part of the novel, it is because Salammbô has usurped, internalized rather, its power. She, in effect, has become the spiritual center of Carthage as the final scene of her apotheosis attests:

Derrière Salammbô se développaient les prêtres de Tanit en robe de lin; les Anciens, à sa droite, formaient, avec leurs tiaras, une grande ligne d'or, et, de l'autre côté, les Riches, avec leur sceptres d'émeraude, une grande ligne verte, tandis que tout au fond, où étaient rangés les prêtres de Moloch, on aurait dit, à cause de leurs manteaux, une muraille de pourpre ... Ayant ainsi le peuple à ses pieds, le firmament sur sa tête, et autour d'elle l'immensité de la mer, le golfe, les montagnes et les perspectives des provinces, Salammbô, resplendissante se confondait avec Tanit et semblait le génie même de Carthage, avec son âme corporifiée. (P. 989)

Salammbô is posed regally, absolutely, at the center of this striking historical panorama; each of Carthage's ruling castes radiate outwards from her in variegated beams of white, gold, green and red. Mountains, seas, the masses at her feet and the heavens above her are disposed in quiet harmony around her central presence. Not only is she the living, breathing link of material and human phenomena, she conjoins the material and spiritual as well: "Salammbô..."
se confondait avec Tanit et semblait le génie même de Carthage, avec son âme corporifiée."

The scene undoubtedly constitutes one of the "moments" of Lukács' monolithic vision. But the tableau is less a monument than a mirage betrayed by the shimmering, vibrato-quality of the verbs "se confondait," "semblait," which, by referring to the central figure of Salammôbô, place this grandiose monument of being on a cornerstone in unstable equilibrium. Effectively, the immobility is disrupted by the arrival of the last of the Mercenaries, Mâtho. The vision of this broken and bloody figure, scapegoated by the entire community, detaches Salammôbô from the tableau:

Dès le premier pas qu'il avait fait, elle s'était levée; puis, involontairement, à mesure qu'il se rapprochait, elle s'était avancée peu à peu jusqu'au bord de la terrasse; et bientôt, toutes les choses extérieures s'effaçant, 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. Cet homme, qui marchait vers elle, l'attirait. (P. 992)

The scene shifts from an exterior one to an interior one. Mâtho's riveting presence obliterates "toutes les choses extérieures," and this time, it is "le monde entier" and not Salammôbô who is aspired into the "abîme." Formerly ensconced in an inner world of turmoil, blur, and indistinction, she is now gripped by a "pensée unique."
Whereas the rest of Carthage plunges frenziedly into
the abyss of "barbarism," Salammbô, the very center of this
imposing tableau, is detached, brought forward to the brink
of a higher consciousness: "la conscience lui surgit de
tout ce qu'il avait souffert pour elle" (p. 993). Leaving
behind her a world given over to self-interest, brutality,
hatred and destruction, Salammbô gravitates, almost in spite
of herself ("involontairement"), towards the transcendant
realm of essences, acknowledging the divine--human?--nature
of a man "[qui] n'avait plus, sauf les yeux, d'apparence
humaine" (ibid.). The fleeting moment of total conscious-
ness, the supreme moment of the "pensée unique," is leaving
the centrality of our assigned position and leaning over
the balustrade of division, recognizing, reconciling the
Other and our Self.

Whereas Salammbô's textual itinerary has taken her
from the veil to Mâtho, the latter has been led from
Salammbô to the ineffable veil. Mâtho, in his culminating
agony, is also gripped by a "pensée unique": "il se
souvenait . . . [qu']il marchait libre, tous s'écartaient,
un Dieu le recouvrait; et ce souvenir, peu à peu se préci-
sant, lui apportait une tristesse écrasante" (pp. 991-992).
The veil's material passage from one side to the other of
the civilizational barrier is repeated, doubled, by a
spiritual cross-over, thus indicating that the spiritual
signified is an effect of the material signifier. The
spiralizing ascendant movement of the veil bears Mâtho aloft: inflicted by the enraged Carthaginian populace with every torment and mutilation imaginable, Mâtho transcends physical pain, experiencing the more ineffable, metaphysical "tristesse écrasante" which is civilization's ponderous burden. Salammô is also caught in the folds of the ascending veil. As her fiancé, Narr'Havas encircles her waist with his arm, Salammô, drinking a toast to the spirit of Carthage, "retomba, la tête en arrière . . . blême, raidie, les lèvres ouvertes, et des cheveux dénoués pendaient jusqu'à terre." (p. 994).
NOTES

III- Salammbo


2 Ibid., p. 405.


4 Corbière-Gille, p. 402.

5 Flaubert, p. 998.

6 Corbière-Gille, p. 437.

7 Flaubert, p. 1000.

8 Flaubert, Salammô in Œuvres Complètes, I (Pléiade, 1977), p. 788. All further references will be to this edition and will appear in the text.


10 Ibid., p. 184.

11 Ibid., p. 187.

12 Ibid., p. 63.

13 Ibid., p. 190.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p. 189.

16 Ibid., p. 199.


18 Lukács, p. 193.

20 Lukács, p. 189.

21 Ibid., p. 191.

22 Ibid., p. 189.

23 Brombert, p. 124.


26 Ibid.


29 Brombert, p. 114.

30 Flaubert, *Correspondance*, III, 343-44.

31 Corbière-Gille, p. 402.


33 Ibid., p. 113.

34 Ibid., p. 101.


36 Ibid.


38 See Neefs, p. 228 and Brombert, p. 114.
39 Lukács, p. 192.
40 Brombert, pp. 117-118.
41 Ibid., p. 115.
42 Lukács, p. 191.
43 Brombert, p. 115.
44 Neefs, p. 235.
47 Flaubert, Correspondance, III, p. 334.
IV- Conclusion

Psychoanalysis is a deconstruction with a view to reconstruction. The analyst deconstructs his subject by suspending belief in the latter's conscious constructs. The analytic rule requires that the patient himself participate in this deconstruction by violating his own syntax, eschewing all attempts to rectify his discourse with regard to coherence and causality. What the analysand communicates, then, resembles nothing more than a "writerly" text, an ambiguous text which leaves the reader free to choose from a number of interpretive possibilities. This initial, fertile, and theoretically interminable analytic moment alone has been retained and refined by modern critics, understandably eager to explore new paths even in texts buried under the weight of centuries of commentary and interpretation, or to explain why the same text has given rise to divergent and incompatible meanings. In their excitement, however, the critics forget that psychoanalysis proposes an end: it seeks to reconstruct the subject by reconciling his conflicting selves. Likewise, every literary study gropes its way, hesitantly, self-consciously (Flaubert: "La bêtise, c'est de conclure"), towards an end which cannot properly be called a conclusion, for texts as energetically charged as Cinq-Mars or Salammbô keep generating new readings, and no critic wants to sketch the cas-
trating and futile gesture of shutting off (the etymological meaning of "to conclude") the flow of power. Perhaps the concluding moment could be more appropriately and modestly designated a reconciliation, a harmonizing of reader and text respectful of the autonomy of both.

Grammatically speaking, what the modern critic aims for is not a period but suspension points indicative of more to come, a pause that does not mark completion but an invitation to a dialogue, or at least a tacit admission that the text is ultimately unplumbable. No longer willing to qualify itself as "authoritative" or "definitive," the best of modern criticism is acutely conscious of its position in a circuit of exchange, as it is keenly aware of its subjection of the tutor text. This is not to say that criticism no longer seeks to assign "meaning" to a text, but that that meaning is limited by the reader's personal knowledge and experience; a meaning that is in other words, conscious of its own partiality, in all senses of the word. "Meaning" is not so much a quality inherent to the text, but a rapport between reader and text. As Proust, that harbinger of critical modernity, explains it in a passage full of Lacanian resonances:

En réalité, chaque lecteur est, quand il lit, le propre lecteur de soi-même. L'ouvrage de l'écrivain n'est qu'une espèce d'instrument optique qu'il offre au lecteur afin de lui permettre de discerner ce que, sans le livre, il n'eût peut-être pas vu en soi-même. La
reconnaissance en soi-même par le lecteur, de ce que dit le livre, est la preuve de la vérité de celui-ci, et vice-versa, au moins dans une certaine mesure, la différence entre les deux textes pouvant être imputée non à l'auteur mais au lecteur.¹

As the passage makes abundantly clear with its complex interweaving and deliberate blurring of reader, writer, and text, the reader himself is constituted somewhat like a text, a text which can be elucidated by the interposition of another text—"l'ouvrage de l'écrivain." This text, the literary text, functions as a translation of an occulted text within the reader, and indeed, Proust observes elsewhere that "[l]e devoir et la tâche de l'écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur,"² thereby delivering a first and fatal blow to the mystique of authorial "creativity." But if reading is primarily a way of relating to oneself, Proust is not saying that it is a wholly solipsistic enterprise (as censured by the expression: "reading into . . ."). The "truth," as he points out, exists in the book as well as in the reader: "La reconnaissance en soi-même par le lecteur, de ce que dit le livre, est la preuve de la vérité de celui-ci, et vice-versa." Does not the reciprocating Proustian "truth" of reader and text bring to mind the Lacanian "truth" of an unconscious structured like a language? Does not this passage's somewhat mysterious split of the single "ouvrage" into "deux textes" (the written text, the text that is read; the signifier, the signified),
whose "difference" is attributable to the reader, indicate that the difference between (reader and author) is a function of a difference within (the work itself, the reader)? As Wolfgang Iser observes in The Act of Reading, reading is a "division . . . not between subject and object, but between subject and himself." Furthermore, does the Proustian passage not conceive of reading as a psycho-analytical act, that is, as a resolution of "Otherness" into Self--"la reconnaissance en soi-même"?

Our readings of two exemplary texts, the "romantic" Cinq-Mars and the "realist" Salammbô, reiterate the two analytic moments of deconstruction and reconstruction. In the case of the former, the Sovereign Self, the unity and cohesion of the subject as proclaimed by Romanticism, is subverted. Against Cinq-Mars, touted by Vigny as the "truth" of this historical epoch, and upon whom the positively-valorized themes of Legitimism, Classicism, verticality, voice, and metaphor converge, we opposed Richelieu and the related negatively-valorized themes of Revolution, Preciosity, horizontality, writing, and metonymy. Our subversion of Cinq-Mars, however, is not a mere reversal, a symmetrical inversion of these binary oppositions, since we have shown that the latter series determine and overwhelm the former. As Freud discovered, and as Lacan has taken great pains to make us rediscover, the foundational binary
opposition of psycho-analysis, the unconscious/conscious, is not a symmetrical one.

As the unconscious encompasses and overwhelms consciousness, as la langue overwhelms and encompasses la parole, so does Cinq-Mars overwhelm and encompass Vigny and his adversary (the present reader). In toppling Cinq-Mars, we have merely repeated the castrating gesture of Richelieu. In other words, our undermining of Vigny's "truth" has not been prompted by, nor resulted in, the erection of our own "truth" in its stead, since we have but followed the breaks and faults that already traverse the text. The "truth" our reading has disengaged is within the text, but not where the author thought he placed it. Our subversion of the text, then, is not equivalent to its destruction, since the text is shown to master both author and reader.

If the subject (Vigny, Cinq-Mars) is too acutely profiled in the Romantic novel, the opposite is true of the Realist novel. Flaubert's Salammbô, as the critics have duly noted and as the author himself concedes ("on ne pensera pas, j'espère, à l'auteur"), is not so much inhabited by a presence as by an absence; not so much a product of consciousness as it is of the unconscious. Privileging as it does the writerly over the readerly, fragmentation and discontinuity over unity and coherence, the signifier over the signified, Salammbô itself engages the reader in
a process of deconstruction. Our task, then has been to consolidate the subverted subject of Salammô: a reconstructive reading as it were. Whereas the work's most eminent readers have fixated upon its horrors which they have sought to repress or attenuate by recourse to negation or aesthetic petrification, our reading has attempted to disengage its share of consciousness. Our reading is in a sense traditional—though by no means a traditional reading of Salammô—in that we have "taken" the novel "at its word." Our reading has shown that that noble area of the human psyche which is known as "consciousness" is by no means absent from the nightmare of Salammô, though assuredly diminished.

Our complementary readings of these opposed texts, the former purporting to shed the sunlight of consciousness on a minor event of French History, the latter engaging the reader in a reexperience of an even more obscure event in all its primal strangeness, has in effect reversed each proposed reading. As Lacan has poetically written about the practice of psychoanalysis: "son maniement exact comporte ce qu'a d'aveuglant l'éclat de la lumière, non moins que les miroitements dont l'ombre se sert pour ne pas lâcher sa proie," our reading of Cinq-Mars has sought to focus on the blindness of its vision, while our reading of Salammô, recalling the heroine's own gesture ("Les améthystes et les topazes du plafond faisaient ça et là
trembler des taches lumineuses, . . . [que] Salammô . . . tournait un peu la tête pour voir," p. 870), fixed upon the jewels of consciousness which glimmered almost imperceptibly in the obscurity. Repeating Richelieu, recalling Salammô: has it not become clear that this reader has been the "prey" stalked by Literature, our wary interpretive moves dictated by the text?

There remains to be asked what these two historical novels, focusing as they do on marginal events, tell us about History (and Literature). It would seem that the historical novel speaks to us from the very locus of History not where it is "historical," but where it is a "novel."

The intellectual twentieth century has taught us nothing if it has not taught us that History, like the signifier, is ultimately unfathomable, irreducible to the discourse of any historian. Likewise, the social and political events that have shaped the twentieth century have taught us nothing if they have not taught us that the course of History cannot be directed, not even by those who have undertaken this impossible task. History, Freud taught us, is not an affair of consciousness. History cannot be mastered by knowledge—knowledge is mastered by History. Vigny's Cinq-Mars, as we observed earlier, was an attempt to correct the scandal of History. This amorphous block was to be sculpted and refined into a marble statue of
Cinq-Mars designed to repress the castration-anxiety of the Revolution. Paradoxically, Cinq-Mars is nothing less than a repetition, a reinscription of the Revolution. The novel accedes to readability and meaning inasmuch as it is a reexperience of the Revolution. Cinq-Mars takes the very shape of that which it was designed to occult. If History, then, cannot be mastered by knowledge, knowledge is nonetheless presupposed by History. Knowledge is the desire of History. Flaubert, who fairly revelled in the overflow, the excess, the folly of the signifier, intended to plunge himself and his contemporaries into the horrifying abyss of History, to lose himself and his readers in the total Otherness of History. Yet Salammbô, as we have attempted to show, is a celebration of coming-to-consciousness. In losing himself, Flaubert could not help but chronicle the reemergence of the Self.
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2 Ibid., p. 891.


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