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DOMINIQUE: A DIVIDED SELF AMONG THE LATE ROMANTICS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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M. G.

Contents

Introduction

The tensions of romantic individualism are conveyed intuitively in Eugène Fromentin's only novel, Dominique, in spite of the author's technical shortcomings as a novelist. The presentation of Dominique and his ambivalent attitude toward love and life, Olivier and his 'ennui de vivre', the role of Madeleine and Julie and the portrayal of love idealized, all reflect the essentially romantic tone of Dominique. The novel takes its place among similar personal and introspective novels of French romantic literature, such as Chateaubriand's René, Stendhal's Armance, Musset's La Confession d'un enfant du siècle, among others, yet its restraint in the expression of emotions, its 'pudeur' in the portrayal of love, take it back in lineage to the seventeenth century classic, La Princesse de Clèves. As the title of this study indicates, a divided 'self' is an allusion to the romantic 'self' and its inner

tensions: Dominique's 'self' is torn between a vulnerable sensibility which is basically romantic, and an over-analytical intellect which reacts against it and maintains his lucidity, ultimately saving him from the excesses of romantic individualism. As a late romantic, Dominique is still a product of the romantic generation, but belongs among the younger romantics who had begun to tire of their predecessors' characteristic melancholic declamations and self-pity. Fromentin's portrait of a divided self adds an unique twist to the romantic, personal novel: the hero, in choosing a way of life which many would define as anti-romantic, becomes a proponent of what the eighteenth century Encyclopedists would call moral utility,[1] the implication of which de-emphasizes the futility of the romantic hero's neurotic obsessions with his 'self'. The novel, then, does not limit itself

[1] An explanation follows in the chapter, "The Romantic Self".

to romantic monologues on the futility of the human condition: it does, in fact, point against romantic individualism and its excesses; the hero's ambivalence to romanticism is shown in a retrospective narrative, but the outcome of the novel depicts him as embodying a rather pragmatic philosophy in his approach to life. For all the uncertainties that Fromentin had about his novel, it seemed clear that he wished to attribute a useful role to his hero. In a letter to George Sand concerning the first part of Dominique as it appeared in the Revue des Deux-Mondes, Fromentin stated:

> Je donnerai au Dominique retraité un rôle plus actif, plus large, plus efficace dans ses rapports importants avec un très petit monde. Il sera moins personnel et plus utile. [2]

Fromentin, as a product of the late romantic generation, was able to conquer romantic excesses both in his life and in his work. The various aspects of romanticism and anti-romanticism in the novel reflect Fromentin's own struggle to master his inner

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2 Fromentin, Eugène, Correspondance et Fragments inédits, Biographie et notes par Pierre Blanchon, Paris, 1912, p. 140.

'self'. Our interest in the novel stems, in part, from curiosity about Dominique, the complex romantic hero who seeks to free himself from the perils of romantic individualism and who, as one critic has expressed it, attains a level of Goethean wisdom.[3] In this study, we do not attempt to discuss Dominique's philosophic affinity, but rather, to bring out some of the tensions which led to it. We are primarily concerned with the following aspects of Fromentin's hero, which our chapters try to reflect: 1) "The Romantic Self", which attempts to synthesize salient early and late romantic tendencies, as evidenced by the personalities of Dominique and Olivier; 2) "Love and the Woman", which deals with romantic idealization of the woman and the theme of inaccessibility, as it exists between Dominique and Madeleine; 3) "Dominique's Sensibility", a chapter concerned with nature as the framework of the

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[3] See Hubert, Renée Riese, "Fromentin's Dominique", PMLA, Vol. 82, December 1967, p. 635.

romantic, personal novel and, in particular, its effect and influence on Dominique; 4) "Dominique's Analytical Intellect", which shows the hero as a lucid, self-judging individual who renounces his love situation and, in so doing, retains his original romantic ideal of the woman he loves; 5) "Some Technical Considerations of Dominique", a chapter dealing briefly with George Sand's advice to Fromentin concerning Dominique; characterization and narration in the novel.

We are omitting a biographical discussion in this study, but in these introductory pages, we feel that it would be relevant to touch briefly on one area of tension which Fromentin experienced, and which partially elucidates Dominique's vacillating 'self'. Fromentin's novel is personal and autobiographical not by dint of the love story alone; it reflects certain conflicts which the au-

thor endured as a young man. In the novel, one aspect of Dominique's tension is revealed in his attitude toward his work and his choice of a career; in his own life, Fromentin's tension was evidenced by the conflict between his artistic needs and his father's attempts to discourage them. Fromentin's artistic sensibility was stifled by an overpowering paternal influence which sought to direct both of his sons to secure and stable professions. It is interesting to see how the issue of Dominique's potential for achievement and his lack of ambition parallel Fromentin's personal predicament as a young man. Fromentin's older brother Charles, according to Eugène's account, had no difficulty in wanting to follow their father in the medical profession; although Eugène was seriously interested in painting, it was assumed that he would establish himself in a profession of repute, and law was the designated field. Art and writing were not considered se-

rious professions and, although Eugène's father himself dabbled at art in his leisure hours, he would never entertain the thought of encouraging one of his sons to pursue an artistic career. Eugène, who had inherited his mother's refined sensibility, was particularly vulnerable to the idea of avoiding his parents' displeasure and, knowing that he was expected to choose a 'serious' profession, endeavored to channel his talents accordingly, thereby stifling, for a time, his artistic desires. Fromentin's letters give us a first-hand account of his aspirations and inner conflicts; his own ambivalence as a late romantic finds its place in his novel, echoed by his hero. Fromentin's close friendship with Paul Bataillard, Armand du Mesnil and Émile Beltrémieux not only quenched his intellectual and artistic needs, but also encouraged his artistic proclivity. Some of Fromentin's letters to Bataillard

reveal the emotional distress incurred by parental dissent over his choice of art as a career. Despite Fromentin's attempts to ready himself for a career in law, he could not, and did not, ignore his artistic propensity. He continued to work laboriously at his law studies, stopping short of a doctorate; he was not at all enthusiastic about a law career and, in time, admitted: "Le droit, il m'ennuie à crever, c'est vrai...", but the idea of disappointing his parents, particularly his mother, devastated Fromentin. His correspondence began to reveal the mounting tension between inner artistic needs and paternal expectation. In his letters to his friends while at home on vacation, he began to refer to his family life as 'ce petit état monarchique que mon père administre en chef de famille'. As Fromentin became increasingly aware of his inner tensions, the need to express himself artistically became more acute, and he implied that the 'status-quo' of

his orderly family life was a renunciation of 'self' ("Comment penser, rêver, s'appartenir enfin, quand il faut causer en commun, rire en commun, tisonner en commun?"). Fromentin's close family ties ingrained in him a deep need for equilibrium; at the same time, his romantic temperament began to resent the external bourgeois infringement on his 'self'. Still, the fear of being unsettled, and of giving into circumstance obsessed Fromentin. Acutely prone to self-analysis like Dominique, he was critical in his self-assessment:

> Ne connaissez-vous pas...des esprits heureusement doués, rêveurs, enthousiastes...passant d'un extrême à l'autre avec sincérité, parce qu'ils sont à la merci d'un tempérament très inégal, pleins de paradoxes involontaires, trop réfléchis pour ne pas le reconnaître, toujours séduits par le mirage éblouissant des souvenirs et des espérances, et se faisant de la sorte un monde impossible en dehors de la réalité du temps et des choses, capables de tout entreprendre, incapables de rien poursuivre, aussi faibles contre eux-mêmes que contre les autres, peuplant ainsi leur vie de projets sans sagesse et de regrets sans fruits, ne vivant pas, comme dit Pascal, mais se préparant à vivre, jusqu'à ce que leur imagination, mal alimentée, s'épuise de consomption... Je suis de ces esprits-là...[4]

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[4] Fromentin, Eugène, Lettres de Jeunesse, Biographie et notes par Pierre Blanchon, Paris, 1908, p. 82.

Fromentin was concerned with the instability of his temperament; he sought equilibrium, or what he called 'possession de soi', not to be found in external elements, such as ambition, society, career, and the like. Part of the romantic dilemma (and he included his friends and himself in this) was to know how to achieve this state of self-containment or self-belonging ('s'appartenir'). Hence, the importance of time and memory, according to Fromentin: time, for perspective; memory, for the encasement of certain past experiences associated with deep feelings which are possible links to one's present, past and future; on evocation and re-creation, these past experiences are capable of yielding moments of 'plénitude' or self-possession. Fromentin relived the love story of his youth in his novel; he recreated past emotions associated with his youthful nostalgic dreams and memories by transposing them

into fiction. In writing a novel about an important phase in his life, Fromentin had a personal, rather than esthetic, reason for choosing this genre:

> Ce qu'il y a de plus clair pour moi, c'est que j'ai voulu me plaire, m'émouvoir encore avec des souvenirs, retrouver ma jeunesse à mesure que je m'en éloigne, et exprimer sous forme de livre une bonne partie de moi, la meilleure, qui ne trouvera jamais place dans des tableaux.[5]

Fromentin's novel is a vindication of his efforts at 'self-possession': Dominique's personality gives justice to a romantic portrait of the divided 'self'; the combined personalities of Dominique and Olivier show all the dimensions of the romantic temperament, with Olivier in a state of 'self-dispossession'.

Admittedly, Fromentin's only novel was not a masterpiece, but it continues to offer varied possibilities for study. The most impressive study on Dominique is a recent one, which we

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5 Correspondance, p. 139.

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[5] Correspondance, p. 139.

found to be the most incisive and comprehensive to date.[6] Another work which was pertinent to our study of the 'self', encompassing the personal novel from Rousseau to Fromentin, as well as pre-romantic examples of the autobiographical novel, is considered most important.[7] There is one work dealing with biographical data and Fromentin's models for some of the characters in his novel.[8] Fromentin's recourse to memory in Dominique have yielded articles on him as a precursor to Proust,[9] and there is another relevant article on the importance of memory in the novel.[10] There are two works on Fromentin's style and his esthetic approach, to which we

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6 Lehtonen, Maija, "Essai sur Dominique de Fromentin", STA, Annales Acad. Sci. Fenn., B:176, Helsinki, 1972.

7 Merlant, Joachim, Le Roman personnel, Paris, 1905.

8 Reynaud, Camille, La Genèse de Dominique, Grenoble, 1937.

9 Monge, Jacques, "Un précurseur de Proust: Fromentin et la mémoire affective", Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, N° 4, octobre-décembre 1961, pp. 564-588; Garcin, Philippe, "Le Souvenir dans Dominique", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1.1. 1957, pp. 111-121.

10 Richard, Jean-Pierre, "Paysages de Fromentin", in Littérature et sensation, Paris 1954, pp. 221-262.

have referred in this study.[11] Other relevant articles concerning Dominique's romantic nature and his 'état d'âme' are by Greshoff, Grimsley and Hubert.[12] All other references are contained in the bibliography of this study; we are using the 1961 Garnier edition of Dominique, based on the second edition published by Plon in 1876.

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[11] Evans, Arthur R., The Literary Art of Eugène Fromentin, Baltimore 1964; Lagrange, Andrée, L'Art de Fromentin, Paris 1952.

[12] Greshoff, C.J., "Fromentin's Dominique--An Analysis", Essays in Criticism XI, 1961, pp. 164-189; Grimsley, Ronald, "Romanticism in Dominique", French Studies XII, January 1958, pp. 44-57; Hubert, Renée Riese, "Fromentin's Dominique: The Confession of a Man who Judges Himself", PMLA Vol. 82 (December 1967), pp. 634-639.

Chapter I

The Romantic Self

The 'self' as a psychological, as well as lyrical entity,[1] became the object of attention in personal and introspective works of nineteenth century French literature. Such subject matter for the novel, which had been suffering generally from an unfavorable reputation since the seventeenth century, enabled it to shed its previous label of frivolity and to develop as a serious genre. The study of the 'self', romantic, neurotic and self-obsessed as it was in personal, introspective works in nineteenth century French literature, could never be considered frivolous, since the human condition is generally an attractive subject for scrutiny. The portrait of young Byronic heroes misunderstood, unwanted and unloved, added a new dimension to the French novel in terms of romance, as well as psychology: the reader was afforded a closer look

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[1] The terms 'le moi psychologique' and 'le moi lyrique' belong to Joachim Merlant, in his Le Roman personnel, Paris, 1905.

at the hero's psyche and was better able to empathize with his emotional stress and mental anguish. Before discussing the nineteenth century romantic self in Eugène Fromentin's Dominique, let us review briefly some essential points concerning the novel's pre-romantic history.

An evolution in the quality of the novel was necessary before it could deal consistently with matters of psychological substance, such as the ambiguous romantic self; this evolution was a process undertaken, to a large extent, by the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century: they had sought to clarify and uplift the novel's poor reputation, concluding that there was a general lack of 'vraisemblance' (credibility) in the French novel, as well as a lack of taste. Denis Diderot, editor of the Encyclopédie, criticized the novel in this way:

> Par un roman, on a entendu jusqu'à ce jour un tissu d'évènements chimériques et frivoles, dont la lecture était dangereuse pour le goût et pour les moeurs.[2]

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[2] Diderot, Denis, Eloge de Richardson, Garnier, Paris, 1965, p. 29.

In order for the novel to be an effective vehicle for didactic sermonizing, such as the Encyclopedists deemed esthetically acceptable, it had to be tasteful, credible and, above all, useful. The main criterion by which the Encyclopedists judged an esthetic work was its utility, to them synonymous with morality, the importance of which was echoed unanimously by at least two contributors of articles to the Encyclopédie. Marmontel, one of the collaborators of the Encyclopédie, remarked: "Le plus digne objet de la littérature, le seul même qui l'ennoblisse et qui l'honore, c'est son utilité morale...".[3] Another collaborator, De Jaucourt, gives his opinion of a writer's function in the article "Moraliste" as "...l'unique but qu'il devrait se proposer, (c'est) celui d'être utile".[4] The Encyclopedists sought to emulate the works of two English authors, Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, whose works

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[3] Marmontel, Oeuvres complètes, "Essai sur les romans considérés", Tome III, Paris, 1846, p. 558.

[4] De Jaucourt, L'Encyclopédie, "Moraliste", Neufchâtel, 1765, Vol. 10, p. 702.

were in vogue across the continent. Since the Encyclopedists were intent on renovating the novel in consistency with their own credo of moral utility, Fielding and Richardson provided them with the necessary esthetic and moral impetus. The Encyclopedists singled out Richardson, in particular, for his literary merit; Diderot practically idolized him, and in his Eloge de Richardson, places him in the same category as Moses, Homer, Euripides and Sophocles. Richardson fulfilled the Encyclopedists' esthetic and moral demands: his works were useful, tasteful and credible; with universal appeal, his subject matter embraced all aspects of life, especially middle-class heroines caught in the midst of social and moral conflicts, a subject heretofore infrequently dealt with in novels. Gradually, then, a more realistic portrait of the 'self' began to surface in the French novel: it

became tasteful to reveal the hero's or heroine's sentiments, to portray characters in conflict with their emotions which, particularly in the theater, had been criticized severely on moral grounds; situations in novels were taken from everyday life, to inject reality where it was lacking previously, all this advancing the novel's credibility. Increasingly, the inner life of characters became the novel's focal point of attention, and no one was more successfully ardent on this level in France than Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose 'culte du moi' preceded Romanticism's heavy individualism, and whose recourse to self-interest became a psychological basis for the romantic introspective works of the nineteenth century. Exaltation of the 'self', such as Rousseau envisioned and lived it, had never been so celebrated; it was the subject of religious fervor in his autobiographical Confessions and Rêveries. Yet, for all his romantic, egocentric indulgences,

Rousseau was well aware that the isolated, narcissistic, ecstatic 'self' was more of a poetic nirvana than a realistic state. Aware that the novel was a questionable genre on moral grounds ("Jamais fille chaste n'a lu de romans"), Rousseau was careful not to let his heroine Julie, in La Nouvelle Héloïse, succumb to the futility of romantic individualism. In Rousseau's novel, we see the conflicts of a romantic 'self' and the renunciation of individual happiness defer to the maintenance of moral order on the social level; this was Rousseau's pragmatic version of moral utility, and his use of the novel was successful in depicting the romantic 'self' at odds with social impediments.

Self-interest has always been regarded as a salient topic, but never quite as obsessively as it was in the nineteenth century. Throughout the centuries, politics, philosophy and socio-religious

elements were always points of the radii to which the 'self' dispersed, or from which it sought direction; such as it was in early nineteenth century French literature, the 'self' failed to relate effectively to exterior elements because of its neurotic obsessions. Self-interest, or as the books readily refer to it in the nineteenth century, romantic individualism, became paralyzed in its own impasse: socio-political upheaval in France caused the focus to be on the futility, rather than the utility, of things. In early nineteenth century French literature, the romantic 'self' consumed its nihilistic energy on itself, and self-interest became the affirmative vesture of discontent. The 'point de depart' for French romantic literature was 'moi' (the 'self').[5] Interest was centered on the hero's ego and his emotions and, in the more romantic work, was almost always related to a particular

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5 See Peyre, Henri, Literature and Sincerity, Yale, 1963: "The self was the ultimate reality for all the romantics, from which all else radiated", p. 118.

love situation in the course of life. The early romantic self was generally a melancholy, solitary figure, a daydreamer, a hyper-sensitive being whose dissatisfaction, ennui, and nostalgic yearning for the unknown were exhibited by way of frequent self-negating declamations. The plight of the early romantic self, as it manifested itself in French literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as in Chateaubriand's René, was not any less real than it was after the first half of the century, but such carryings on, such theatricality, made questionable literature. Esthetically, the early romantic self could not afford to squander itself on its own anguish, for its value in a moral light would have soon become questionable, had it nothing more than self-pity to offer readers. The novel's reputation would indeed have declined once again if the nineteenth century had continued to pro-

duce such works as René; not that one belittles the plight of the romantic self in that novel, but narcissism can hardly be considered interesting for too long.[6] If one wondered why the early romantic self remained alone, it was always obsessed with its own misery, hardly able to stand its own company; how could anyone really like the romantic self, when it did not care much for itself at all? This early romantic being was no longer the self-loving psyche whom Rousseau had glorified and indulged in his autobiographical works; the early romantic self was disenchanted and 'désabusé', and from the outset, mourned its very existence. If the early nineteenth century French novel did not involve a love story, invariably it touched on the human condition and its futility; existence to the unloved hero was, if not a bore, a torture beyond endurance, aberrated by self-imposed misery, nar-

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[6] At this time, the concept of moral utility which the Encyclopedists had considered necessary for the restoration of the novel's reputation, was temporarily ignored.

cissistic flagellations of the soul and generally, a nihilistic commentary on the human condition. The unloved romantic self, reflecting the general plight of the human condition, was moribund; death was more attractive than life, and solitude was one's only bearable companion. For that early romantic self, there was an unconscious and undirected search for the unknown, which made anguish all the more acute. Chateaubriand's René is that century's first example of such a dilemma; fortunately, the century's trend did not continue in this vein. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the romantic self spent itself in voicing despair and anguish; in time, the excessive frenzy wore out. The romantic self underwent gradual modifications, and time was able to help temper its excesses. In the personal novel later in the century, a love situation afforded a close look at the romantic

self's inner life, its soul and conscience, emotions and conflicts, even if the situation ended in renunciation and idealization. By the time Dominique was created, the romantic self was transformed into a more realistic and practical being, more able to cope with the dilemmas of existence and love; most of the romantic excesses, such as maudlin melancholia, declamation and 'sensiblerie' (excessive romantic sensibility), gradually lost import.

In Fromentin's novel, Dominique and Olivier provide examples of 1) a romantic self susceptible to the excesses of romanticism who, in time, overcomes them; 2) a tragic romantic self who is a victim of romanticism's excessive despair. Excessive preoccupation with the self, particularly in the romantic context, is pathological; narcissism is, essentially, the same disease with the more esoteric, legendary connotation attached to it. For Dominique's

romantic self, love was in the offing: while this preoccupation distracted the 'self' from narcissistic obsession, love was not without its multifarious complexities; more often than not, the romantic self fell prey to them. Yet, the fact that Dominique was able to look beyond himself, although unaware at first that he was falling in love, was one step away from self-obsession. On the other hand, Olivier in the novel is a portrait of the brooding narcissist who becomes entrapped in his own image.

Dominique is a late romantic: his personality shuns self-obsession and excessive consumption of inward-directed energy; in time, he even reacts against the romantic side of his personality. Although cautioned against narcissism, Dominique is not excessively obsessed with his 'self', and the ultimate outcome of the novel, not to mention his relationships with the other characters in the

novel, attest to this. Self-realization and idealization, the latter in the form of love, were two means by which Dominique escaped neurotic obsession with his 'self'. Dominique's self no longer declaimed, and his energy was aimed at seeking tranquillity and equilibrium by means of a reasonable, useful solution. If Dominique seems, at times, to be seduced by too much involvement with his 'self', it is certainly not with his romantic self, but rather, with the intellectual, lucid, self-judging self who attempts unceasingly to analyze and seek a solution to his conflicts.[7] Joachim Merlant, in Le Roman personnel, makes a distinction between 'le moi psychologique' and 'le moi lyrique', of which, he claims, the latter is best exemplified by Rousseau's Rêveries. According to Merlant, 'le moi lyrique' is pure in form, has no obstacles and is seemingly limitless in scope, directing

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[7] However, excessive auto-analysis may be considered as another form of narcissism, according to Henri Peyre: "L'analyse complaisante de soi est une forme de narcissisme qui distrait l'ennui pour un temps." See Peyre, Henri: Qu'est-ce que le romantisme?, Paris, 1971, p. 126.

itself toward an ideal; 'le moi lyrique' knows no fear, entertains no doubts, and is not exposed to the conflicts and contradictions which intelligence must encounter; feelings and emotions are spontaneous, unhampered by reason. Circumstantial and social hindrances do not exist for 'le moi lyrique'; it is self-sufficient and cultivates itself. On the other hand, 'le moi psychologique' tends to suppress 'le moi lyrique', attempting to break down and categorize every level of what the latter would consider a spontaneous, continuous state. Dominique exemplifies the two selves in conflict, as defined by Merlant; Dominique's 'self' is divided, since the two selves co-exist in him. The hero's occasional ambivalence, his allusions to 'ambiguity', the reference to his 'self' as his worst enemy, are some factors which indicate the particular nature of Dominique's romantic malaise.

As an adolescent, Dominique's romantic self (or, as Merlant would say, Dominique's 'lyrical' self) is manifested by a slight tendency toward 'sensiblerie' (excessive romantic sensibility), his love for nature and solitude, daydreaming and idealization. Idealization, in particular, is a romantic necessity, without which the romantic hero might never experience love; it is, at best, a self-preservative which, in some respects, provides the hero or heroine with the notion of happiness, or the illusion of it; in some cases, it can even be an antidote against the hero's preoccupation with death. Idealization, for Dominique's romantic or lyrical self, becomes a goal in itself. Dominique's idealization of Madeleine involves focusing irrationally on a self-designated and self-created object of illusion; Madeleine, as the real representation of Dominique's ideal, is not congruent with it. In

time, Dominique becomes aware of his predicament: his involvement with Madeleine remains a real situation, but his 'psychological' self causes modifications of the adolescent's 'lyrical' self, with subsequent conflict; it is thus that Dominique's 'self' is divided. For Dominique's ideal to have any validity in his own mind, ultimately he must give up what does not coincide with it (Madeleine). Renunciation is inevitable, from this point of view, both for the hero's need for equilibrium, as well as for the preservation of that original romantic ideal; this will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Speculation on Dominique's total rejection of romanticism may be a bit sophomoric if one tends to overlook the fact that Dominique is a product of his past. He is just as much 'le moi psychologique' as 'le moi lyrique'; romantic, as well as anti-

romantic: therein lies his ambiguity. We cannot go far in labeling romantic heroes; they are too complicated a breed for that: calling Dominique a 'late romantic' is merely an attempt to distinguish him from some of his more unequilibrated predecessors.

Ambiguity seems inherent in most romantic heroes; Dominique's ambiguity is not to be wondered at, considering the conflicts he endured as a young man and that, his 'self' at the age of forty differs considerably from his vacillating self of a young man. Dominique is imbued with his past: deeply rooted in it, it is natural for him to look back and indulge in 'remembrance of things past', most of which were pleasurable; even memories of Madeleine, however painful they may be, would evoke emotional twinges, masochist that Dominique can be,[8] but then, that is part of his romantic nature. Total rejection of one's past is, after all, im-

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[8] Note the hero's ambivalence in such phrases as "...pour mes délices et pour mon tourment...", "...mêlé d'amertume et de ravissement...", "Rien n'était plus délicieux, plus navrant...", and the like.

possible unless a 'table rase' process were available. In one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, one is irrevocably linked to one's past. Given Dominique's sensibility, which is a germ of romanticism, he could not be expected to reject his past totally, nor to look at it without nostalgia and even, regret. To deny Dominique those links and those reactions is to deny him part of his emotional substance. Such is the following remark made by Geoffrey Bremner which, we feel, does not give full vent to Dominique's ambiguity:

> ...his (Dominique's) attachment to a romantic past is like an umbilical cord which must be broken if he is to give himself fully to the chosen task of his maturity.[9]

Dominique's ambiguity makes him unique among romantic heroes. His 'maturity' consists in having reconciled the past with the present, of accepting his life, in toto: the past, in having conquered his

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9 See Bremner, Geoffrey, "Ambivalence in Dominique", Forum for Modern Language Studies, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1969, p. 324.

romantic excesses; the present, in having geared his life in a useful direction. Dominique's romantic past is locked up in his heart, with physical vestiges kept in a private room. The ambiguity there is that, as Ronald Grimsley notes (and so does the narrator of the novel), we do not know whether Dominique withdraws to his private room habitually, immuring himself in solitude, "...in order to remember or to forget".[10] Dominique's allusions to the past, particularly to childhood memories, are part of a healthy catharsis which comes about in the development of his friendship with the narrator:

> Et ne vous étonnez pas si je divague
> en vous parlant de réminiscences qui
> ont la puissance certaine de me rajeunir...[11]

It seems that even the narrator's speculative remarks call purposeful attention to the hero's ambiguity:

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[10] Grimsley, Ronald, "Romanticism in Dominique", French Studies, XII (January 1958), p. 45.

[11] Dominique, p. 48.

> Peut-être se diminuait-il ainsi pour expliquer sa retraite et pour ôter le moindre prétexte de retour à ses propres regrets comme aux regrets de ses amis. Etail-il sincère? Je me le suis demandé souvent, et quelquefois j'ai pu douter qu'un esprit comme le sien, épris de perfection, fût aussi complètement résigné dans sa défaite.[12]

At times, it seems almost immaterial to speculate on how much Dominique clings to his past, or whether or not he has occasional twinges of nostalgia and regret. What seems relevant is that the hero has reached such a level of self-awareness and equilibrium, that he can say of himself:

> ...si le bonheur consiste dans l'égalité des désirs et des forces, je marche aussi droit que possible dans les voies de la sagesse, et vous pourrez témoigner que vous avez vu un homme heureux.[13]

Fromentin's Dominique is a novel which deals with the theme of inaccessibility on different levels: the characters, with perhaps the exception of Augustin, are estranged from themselves, from each

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12 Dominique, p. 3.

13 Ibid., p. 2.

other, and even, from existence itself. In the course of our study on Dominique, we attempt to discuss the various aspects of inaccessibility; in the chapter "Love and the Woman in Dominique", for example, we deal with the angle of idealization and love. The relevance of a discussion on inaccessibility in this chapter will be seen as we try to gain insight into the nature of Dominique's friend, Olivier. If anyone in Fromentin's novel closely embodies the early romantic 'self', whom we discussed earlier, it is Olivier. Olivier is more consistently the romantic hero, while Dominique tends to be anti-romantic. Let us recall that the term 'early romantic', as we had tried to define earlier, characterizes the excessive, neurotic 'self', as exemplified by Chateaubriand's hero, René. Olivier approaches that category of Byronic misfits, and typifies the romantic hero whose 'vie manquée' combines the tragic ele-

ments of a suicide-prone, nihilistic misanthrope. Olivier is more desperate than the existentialist hero who is overcome with 'nausée' at the very moment he comprehends his existence. Olivier cannot comprehend existence, his existence: if he had to define it, he would call it a state of non-death, of non-being, or even, a bore; all he can utter about life is a plaint against its duration: "...l'existence (est) trop courte, et ne (mérite) pas qu'on en prit tant de souci." The following words are Roquentin's, Sartre's existentialist hero, but they could be Olivier's, as well:

> ...nous voilà, tous tant que nous sommes, à manger et à boire pour conserver notre précieuse existence et qu'il n'y a rien, rien, aucune raison d'exister.[14]

Yet, Olivier does seem to take enough effort to make himself outwardly attractive: his casually studied elegance, his dandyism, are all a part of the romantic individualist who sets himself apart from others:

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[14] Sartre, Jean-Paul, La Nausée, Paris, 1938, p. 159.

> C'était un garçon de bonne tournure, très-soigné de tenue, de formes séduisantes et polies, avec je ne sais quel dandysme invétéré dans les gestes, les paroles et l'accent, qui, au milieu d'un certain monde un peu blasé, n'eût pas manqué d'un attrait réel. Il y avait en lui beaucoup de lassitude, ou beaucoup d'indifférence, ou beaucoup d'apprêt.[15]

For all his careful detail to the encasement of his tormented 'self', Olivier is an example of the exacerbated romantic hero whose existence eludes him. He emphasizes constantly the 'nothingness' of his existence; he negates his past, his present, his attachments, his preferences: "J'aime mieux des dons d'esprit ou de la naissance, ou, faute de cela, j'aime mieux rien." As he is about to leave Ormesson for Paris, he says, with anticipation: "Maintenant...je n'ai plus rien qui me retienne en province." Olivier seems always ready to sever himself from those very elements which would give his existence substance and significance: people, places, ideas, memories. Olivier is not an idealist in the sense

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15 *Dominique*, p. 35.

that he does not indulge in fantasy or entertain ideals which, he foresees, end inevitably in disillusion. Rather than risk being disillusioned over and over again in his dealings with others, in his plans for himself, he emanates detachment and pivots on the ephemeral. In his own way, Olivier creates a chimera of his existence: he will not reach out to the reality of existence, which includes all its banalities and disappointments, because he is overcome with the dread of being ordinary; part of his moral lassitude stems from this. Thus, Olivier is a victim of 'ennui', the great metaphysical "habitude homicide"; he is a case study in 'ennui'. In one of two revealing outbursts, Olivier shouts to Dominique:

> Sais-tu quel est mon plus grand souci? c'est de tuer l'ennui. Celui qui rendrait ce service à l'humanité serait le vrai destructeur des monstres. Le vulgaire et l'ennuyeux!...Ils se ressemblent beaucoup...De plus, ils sont inséparables...Moi, je les ai toujours connus...je continue de les fuir, en me jetant dans le bruit, dans l'imprévu, dans le luxe, avec l'idée que ces deux petits spectres bourgeois, parcimonieux, craintifs et routiniers ne m'y suivront pas.[16]

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[16] Dominique, p. 233.

Unfortunately, nothing can be done to alleviate Olivier's 'ennui'; it is a congenital defect of the early romantic psyche, reminiscent of René's, and it is as fatalistically bestowed on the unfortunate few, as the condition of existence is imposed on them: "Je suis modeste, profondement humilié de n'être qu'un homme, mais je m'y résigne." Olivier carries about him an aura of tragedy; if we are not forewarned of his attempted suicide early in the novel, we would guess at it inevitably. Olivier is estranged not only from existence, but from others, as well ("Il se disait d'ailleurs exilé"); he cannot extend beyond himself in friendship, nor in love. If chance hadn't arranged for a childhood friendship between Olivier and Dominique, one could hardly consider their association as a close one. Olivier is easily intolerant of Dominique's sentimentality and does not commiserate with the latter's predica-

ment concerning Madeleine. Olivier's overpowering cynicism, especially in matters of love, inevitably confirms the suspicion that he is incapable of love in the idealized or real sense, which renders his romanticism acute;[17] he is, in fact, repelled by any allusion to the social and emotional implications of marriage, and is particularly revulsed by any suggestion of marriage to his cousin Julie, Madeleine's sister. He is afraid to commit himself to anyone or anything because he detects that, in the case of emotional involvement, the other party would be disillusioned quickly with him. In a rare moment of truth, Olivier reveals his need to be like everyone else:

> ...je n'ai ni père ni mère, tu le sais; je ne suis que le neveu de mon oncle, et de ce côté je n'attends que les affections qui me sont dues, c'est-à-dire une bien petite part de droit à mes deux cousines. J'ai donc besoin qu'on m'aime...[18]

Most of the time, he is too concerned about making a point of being so different, as if his own emotions were superior to everyone else's.

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[17] See Peyre, Henri, Qu'est-ce que le romantisme?, Paris, 1971: "Encore faut-il pouvoir aimer. Mais c'est l'impuissance d'aimer qui aggrave ce mal des romantiques les plus atteints...", p. 125.

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He admits his need to be loved, but he cannot love in return. Part of this is linked with the fear of being ridiculous and, more than that, the fear of being 'bourgeois'. Nothing, then, could strike him as being more absurd than the suggestion of his marrying his cousin Julie. Since marriage involves commitment, and Olivier considers commitment as being part of the ordinary, the 'bourgeois', Olivier will have no part of it; in fact, he avoids it, just as much as he shuns 'ennui'. The tragic factor for Olivier is that existence is the greatest commitment of them all, which he cannot handle, and of which he wants no part. Since he denies the value of his existence, he does not afford himself any dilemma which would exercise conflict, depth, or merely, involvement: existence is, in itself, his dilemma, his chimera, his 'ennui'. Dominique, in a discussion with Madeleine, refers to Oli-

vier in the following way:

> ...croyez-vous qu'en effet nous soyons si différents? Je crois, au contraire, que nous nous ressemblons beaucoup. Nous obéissons l'un et l'autre exclusivement, aveuglement, à ce qui nous charme. Ce qui nous charme est pour lui, comme pour moi, plus ou moins impossible à saisir, ou chimérique, ou défendu.[19]

Olivier's misfortune is that, unlike Dominique, he cannot focus on an ideal which would, somehow, preserve his 'self' from negative futility; he is self-obsessed, in the extreme, romantically excessive sense of the word, causing his 'self' to atrophy. For Olivier, unattainability is not a privation contingent on the existence of a goal or an ideal; it is a nihilistic tenet which prevents him from a full participation in life and which dooms him to a narrow vision of his 'self', and the relation of his 'self' to the rest of the world. As the pragmatist of the novel, Augustin, points out, Olivier ends up skimming the surface of life. Olivier is not self-deceptive: he is just as lucid and as self-judging as Dominique; he knows everything about himself, can predict everything

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19 Dominique, p. 192.

in relation to his 'self', but since he believes in nothing, there is nothing left but self-destruction. More tragically, even Olivier's attempt at self-destruction results in failure.

Fromentin, as a late romantic, was concerned with self-containment or, as he referred to it in his correspondence with Paul Bataillard, "possession de soi". Dominique echoes Fromentin's aim at self-possession; Olivier embodies the romantic self who remains unconcerned about the state of self-belonging ("s'appartenir"). Both heroes complement Fromentin's delineation of the romantic 'self' in all its phases of self-possession, as well as self-dispossession.

Chapter II

Love and the Woman in *Dominique*

This chapter will deal with the romantic 'self' in love; we had mentioned earlier that the romantic 'self' avoids self-obsession and narcissism by means of love and idealization of woman. Here we will see the various stages of Dominique's love story: his falling in love; the crystallization of love; idealization and finally, renunciation.

The two love situations in Fromentin's novel which merit discussion are the central love story of Dominique and Madeleine, and the situation between Julie and Olivier. The theme of love in Fromentin's novel is generally unexpressed: it is restrained, sentiments are suppressed; love and the woman are idealized and inaccessible; passion is minimized and ultimately avoided. For the most part, love remains undeclared: it is dealt with by way of

innuendoes and divinings, pale expressions and longing looks. Words between Dominique and Madeleine are reduced to a minimum,[1] even avoided, especially since Dominique does not voice his feelings to Madeleine, nor does she to him; the only clarification of the situation comes from Dominique's retrospective analysis. When words are used between the two, as it happens in some painful confrontations toward the end of the novel, they become almost weapons, particularly for Madeleine. At times, it seems as if the heroine were enjoying a silent guessing game, and silence itself is a maneuverable tool in the love match. The hero must tread lightly, careful not to trespass on the bounds imposed on the situation by the woman. Both Dominique and Madeleine mask their feelings, but it is the woman who tacitly dictates limits: when he catches her off guard, she feigns innocence; when he gives expression to his own doubts, she

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[1] M. Lehtonen has a revealing chapter on the problem of communication between Dominique and Madeleine, and all the characters in the novel. See Lehtonen, Maija, "Essai sur Dominique de Fromentin", STA, Annales Acad. Sci. Fenn., B:176, Helsinki, 1972.

pretends that she does not know what he is talking about, and wards off further verbal confrontation, mounting a step higher on her pedestal of inaccessibility. To break the bonds of reticence is not only tactless, it is indiscreet and almost dishonorable; the hero retreats and, for days on end, is overcome with profound guilt. Then when he assumes the accepted charade of nonverbal communication, he restores himself to his lady's graces. In Dominique, love and the woman are idealized and inaccessible, as they are in Andre Gide's La Porte étroite; in the latter, the love relationship between Jerome and Alissa is, above all, cerebral; terrestrial love is subordinated to supernatural love, love and the woman being vehicles by which to accomplish this end. Dominique's retrospective account of his love situation reveals a rather cerebral relationship with Madeleine, with no real allusion

to passion or sexuality.[2] The hints of passion which surface later in the novel are quickly brought under control for the sake of the lady's feelings; aside from the single kiss exchanged between Dominique and Madeleine, 'passion', if it be called that, limits itself to the likes of a lengthy stare, or secret vicarious pleasure derived from sitting near one another at the opera. In Fromentin's novel, an overwhelming sense of duty to the woman he loves, as well as to himself, convinces the hero to give up loving a young married woman. Love is idealized, as is the woman; passion is minimized and ultimately suppressed. In La Porte étroite and Dominique, woman is placed on a pedestal and when it becomes evident that any form of compromise would remove her from an unattainable distance, the hero retaliates out of respect for the woman's wishes, and for fear that if he were to refuse to do so,

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2 See Lehtonen, M., Op. cit.,: "La sexualité est refoulée, mais en même temps évoquée par des allusions, et sa présence à demi consciente est sensible tout le temps, créant une atmosphère un peu trouble", p. 72.

the heroine would disappear from the hero's already inaccessible reach. It is ultimately the married woman who keeps the man at a distance and places conditions on the relationship. Gide's strong-willed heroine Alissa is formed by iron-clad Protestant precepts, paramount of which is the notion of sacrificing one's own happiness, since heaven is one's ultimate goal. When Alissa discovers inadvertently that her younger sister Juliette is in love with Jerome, the young man Alissa might marry, Alissa renounces her happiness and places herself on a strict diet of Pascalian asceticism, convinced that happiness is not of this world. Alissa's demise at a young age is attributed to an unknown illness, but we would guess that it was probably from a broken heart, and from the realization that her sacrifice failed to bring her peace of mind, and even, to bring her closer to God. Terrestrial love is not only

idealized in Alissa's mind; it is intellectualized and purified by the belief that Divine Love must transcend the love relationship of a man and woman, to the extent that there is no reconciliation between the two types of love. The love theme in Dominique is devoid of such religious connotations; the conflicts take place in the hero's mind, and we witness his contradictions, ruminations, hesitation, awkwardness and sensitivity, as they manifest themselves during the progression of his situation.[3]

The notion of woman being idealized, or being placed on a pedestal, is as necessary to romantic literature as the notion of wanting to be in love for the sake of it; both elements spur the hero in ardent pursuit of the woman. Sometimes, the pedestal of

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[3] See Grimsley, Ronald, "Romanticism in Dominique", French Studies XII (January 1958), p. 49: "Clearly more is involved than the mere clash of circumstances, for Dominique's attitude is also determined by the impulses of his own temperament and character. It is as though the intensity of Dominique's love partly depends on his feeling that it is inspired by an unattainable object".

inaccessibility is so unrealistically out of reach, that the hero appears subservient and slavish, as if he were a small dog lapping at the woman's heels. The man, inamorato, follows his loved one at a respectful distance, unknown to her, wanting desperately to have a glimpse of the woman he loves. Such behavior borders on idolatry. Two cases in which the hero succeeds in winning his lady's love, such as Constant's Adolphe and Ernest Feydeau's Fanny, progress ultimately to accessible relationships: one, from which the hero soon tires (Adolphe); the other, which terminates in near madness, as a result of the hero's overpowering and uncontrollable jealousy (Fanny). Idealization for the hero in Fromentin's novel does not wear itself out in ennui or extreme passion; it is borne from a predisposition to sentimental attachment which crystallizes, and ends in "emotion recollected

in tranquillity." As an adolescent, Dominique's idealization of Madeleine[4] reflects the romantic side of his temperament with which later, he has conflicts and which, ultimately, he sheds: it is that part of him which flees from reality, loses himself in daydreams, seeks refuge in nature, and relishes solitude. Since the novel deals with the hero's inner life, the love story filters through his thoughts and intuitions, his emotional reactions. The reality of the love story then, as we read it, is as it exists, or existed in the hero's mind. Love is seen through his eyes, as is the woman he loves. One is limited to seeing the way Dominique thinks and feels; we do not know Madeleine's thoughts, for she does not reveal her inner life, not any more than Ellénore in Constant's Adolphe, or Marie Arnoux in Flaubert's L'Education sentimentale.

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[4] Dominique's idealization of Madeleine is underscored with ambivalence. See Lehtonen, Op. cit.,: "L'instinct qui se cache sous le rêve idéalisé fait de l'amour une expérience ambivalente", p. 72.

among others. This, of course, is not unusual in this genre of literature, which emphasizes the hero's thoughts and actions.

The love story in Dominique is based on Fromentin's involvement with a young married woman[5] with whom he fell in love when he was about fifteen years old. The young girl, Jenny, was almost four years older than Fromentin, and she married someone else when Fromentin was barely seventeen. Eugène's fondness for Jenny eventually grew into a devouring emotion which ultimately weakened his health. Fromentin's parents sent him to Paris when it became apparent that regular visits between Eugène and the young married lady were not salubrious to their son's well-being. When in Paris, Fromentin was chided by his friends not only for his lack of appetite, but for his refusal to eat regularly. In

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[5] Fromentin wrote Dominique as a tribute to the memory of Jenny. See Fromentin, Eugène, Lettres de jeunesse: Biography and Notes by Pierre Blanchon, Paris, 1908 : "Amie, ma divine et sainte amie, je veux et vais écrire notre histoire commune, depuis le premier jour jusqu'au dernier", p. 107.

spite of his friends' attempts to discourage Eugene from his attachment to Jenny, he continued to see her during summers, less frequently with the passing of time, until she died of illness at the age of twenty-eight. The facts we have of Fromentin's involvement with Jenny are sparse and sketchy, but they provide us adequately with the revelation that his involvement was as conflicting and painful as it was for the young hero in his novel. The real involvement terminates, however, with an Erich Segal 'love story' ending, the heroine's death, which Fromentin does not use as his novel's ending. As it is, Fromentin's romantic creation concludes in a way which often baffles critics and offers endless speculation: Dominique's refusal to pursue his idealized love, and his ultimate renunciation of it; that is a subject in itself. This enigmatic ending surpasses most endings of romantic novels in

that it is a departure from the usual demise-by-pining-away, or the terribly romantic assumption that unfulfilled love inevitably ends in madness. In fact, the ending of a romantic, personal novel such as Fromentin's, with the hero retiring to his village town and becoming its mayor, having given up his idealized love, as well as all social and literary ambitions (not that they were very strong, to begin with), might well be termed anti-romantic.[6]

The novel deals secondarily with a slight melodrama concerning Julie, Madeleine's sister, who pines away in silence for Olivier, Dominique's friend; sometimes Julie faints, sometimes she is pale, most of the time she is feverish. Julie is the other woman in Fromentin's novel; she typifies the romantic heroine who loves in silence, never or seldom utters a word,[7] but expresses

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[6] Critical opinion tries to decipher to what degree Dominique's 'retirement' implies a rejection of romanticism. See Hubert, Renée Riese, "Fromentin's Dominique", PMLA, Vol. 82 (December 1967), pp. 634-639.

[7] See Lehtonen, M., Op. Cit.; the significance of silence and looks is brought out in the chapter "Le Regard".

her unhappy, unrequited state by way of sighs, pale looks, fainting and ultimately, undefined illness. Julie never once reveals directly that she is in love, but one guesses as much, by the nervousness she displays whenever her cousin Olivier is present. Nothing is ever said between the two concerning this situation, and although Olivier is aware of Julie's sentiments, he does not share them ("Je n'aime pas Julie! je ne l'aime pas, je ne la veux pas").[8] Julie's plight is successfully rendered; her silence bespeaks her grief, and her presence in the novel is neither awkward nor redundant. Had Fromentin wished to extend and develop more completely the situation between Julie and Olivier, their situation might have been as vital to the novel as Juliette's, in Gide's La Porte étroite. The elusiveness of

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[8] See Greshoff, G.J., "Fromentin's Dominique--An Analysis", Essays in Criticism, XI, 1961, p. 180: "Olivier's attitude towards her and his cynicism are mechanical. In fact Olivier hardly plays any part in the love story of Dominique."

Julie's character remains consistent in the novel; she is referred to, by Madeleine, as 'closed' or introverted, and by Dominique as feline-like, suggesting an aura of mystery. Julie's presence is outlined by her reticence; her situation with Olivier echoes the unattainability of Dominique's situation, although hers is a case of unrequited love. From the outset, Julie seems doomed to her emotional involvement with Olivier, just as Dominique is, to his; she does nothing to avoid the issue which is exacerbated by Olivier's presence. We never know what it is about Olivier that attracts Julie, but there is that seductive nonchalance and elegance about him,[9] to which many a romantic heroine would fall prey. At any rate, Fromentin might have provided the novel with added interest, had he developed Julie's situation more thoroughly, since Julie and Olivier (particularly the latter) are potentially

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[9] G.J. Greshoff calls Olivier "the world-weary libertine", and quotes Augustin's description of him from the text, "Le chérubin qui aspire à devenir Don Juan", Op. cit., p. 180.

interesting characters. The author does not seem to know what to do with them, or perhaps his lack of attention to them is purposeful, since Dominique's story is the primary interest.[10]

There is a distinction in the quality of love as the adolescent Dominique first experiences it and later, in manhood, when the hero overanalyzes his emotional involvement with Madeleine. At first, Dominique is not aware of the beginnings of love; he experiences a vague malaise, describing his attitude as a 'crise', and cannot at first define his feelings, except as a 'sensibilité inexplicable'. As spring emerges, Dominique is aware of a change taking place in himself; he takes long walks and wishes to be alone, yet craves for someone's presence, but that 'someone' is as indefinable as his own emotions. Further insight concerning this 'crise' comes in the presence of Made-

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[10] This will be discussed in the chapter, "Some Technical Considerations of Dominique".

leine; near her, Dominique is particularly ill at ease, yet he cannot admit to himself what causes his discomfort. A certain reluctance to express his emotions, restraint, perhaps even fear, prevent him from admitting his emotions to himself. Olivier notices his friend's attitude, but his attempts to alleviate the situation only drive Dominique further into reticence. In the first of revealing looks exchanged between the hero and heroine, Dominique observes that Madeleine's presence "...m'apprit en une demi-seconde tout ce que j'ignorais d'elle et de moi-même." The statement does not provide added insight to the situation, but it denotes Dominique's confusion at the sight of Madeleine. Shortly thereafter, Madeleine leaves Ormesson for two months; this separation relieves Dominique, for Madeleine's presence begins to unnerve him, or rather, he is unnerved by

his own feelings, which are provoked by her presence; suddenly the effect of Madeleine's absence underlines her presence in Dominique's life.

Love comes to Dominique,[11] almost in the guise of faith: the unreasonableness of such an occurrence is accepted, but not necessarily comprehended.

> (Madeleine)...me dominait avant de me séduire: le coeur a les mêmes ingénuités que la foi. Tous les cultes passionnés commencent ainsi.[12]

When the love process sets its mark on the young Dominique, he can only give vent to his awakening emotions by idealizing 'her', on whom he has begun to focus. Love is the first step of idea-

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[11] See Hubert, Renée Riese, Op.cit., "Contemplative at first, love eventually involves his whole being and leads both to self-assertion and self-condemnation", p. 637.

[12] Dominique, p. 85.

lization; Madeleine as the object of love,[13] is incidental. Idealization itself becomes Dominique's all-embracing cult, which breeds on a dream of love, and the hero's need to nurture it. Part of the idealization process is to see an object, not as it is, but as one wants it to be, or to endow it with qualities which it does not necessarily have; Dominique nurtures his dream of love in this way. Idealization becomes Dominique's muse, who fires his unleashed imagination toward the romantic realm of the unknown, even after a chance meeting on the street with Madeleine. However ephemeral and illusory Dominique's

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[13] G.J. Greshoff suggests that Fromentin's treatment of Madeleine's love for Dominique "...is reminiscent of Marivaux, mainly ...because both Marivaux and Fromentin deal with a similar experience, the birth of love. Both trace this sentiment from its imperceptible beginnings to the moment it becomes aware of itself", Op. cit., p. 178. We tend to doubt the consistency of the love theme from Madeleine's point of view; from textual indications, "love" on her part seems limited to a superficial, almost coquettish emotion. One can question whether or not Madeleine loved Dominique, but that is not the main issue in the novel.

dream of love may seem, it must inevitably settle or concretize on a definite object; absence and solitude are the agents in the next step of idealization: crystallization.

Absence and solitude work together to fortify Dominique's emotions.[14] Absence and the passing of time endow memories with a realistic taint and significance in the hero's mind. Absence coagulates sentiments for Dominique; it crystallizes love and memories of the loved one; it lends itself to contemplation and introspection, idealization and daydreaming. Dominique's emotions are nurtured by the idea of 'her', and not by any previous rapport which might have suggested the possibility of emotional involvement. Dominique's solitude during Madeleine's absence,

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[14] See Grimsley, Ronald, Op. cit., "The famous passage describing the growth of his affection in the absence of the beloved person...shows the important part played by his own subjective feelings in the formation of this all-absorbing love", p. 49.

as well as the absence itself, account for his idealized day-dreaming. On one occasion, Dominique enters Madeleine's empty room, and he becomes aware of her presence through the association of memories with material things.[15] Stendhalian 'cristallisation' takes place during this incident, but only nominally, for Dominique does not focus on any definite quality or concept of Madeleine, just the idea of 'her'. 'She' is not Madeleine, a person, but rather, a dream, an ideal, a phantom-like creature whose very physiognomy at first escapes Dominique's attention. What crystallizes in Dominique's mind is his own idealization of Madeleine and the intensification of his sentiments for her.[16] Dominique is, at this time, unaware that his own emotions have

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15 Cf. Grimsley, R., Op. cit., "His emotions, displaced from the person to the objects associated with her, seem to lose the inhibitions inspired by her actual presence", p. 50.

16 See Grimsley, Ibid., "What he really loves is not Madeleine as she is...but as she appears to him through the idealizing prism of his own subjective feelings", p. 50; also, see Lehtonen, Op. cit., "Dans les souvenirs de Dominique se cristallisera une image irréelle de Madeleine: elle deviendra peu à peu le fantôme de sa propre jeunesse", p. 60.

engaged him in a turmoil, and that Madeleine has nothing to do with all of this. Nurtured by solitude,[17] Dominique's memories of Madeleine provoke the 'cristallisation' during her absence. In such an evocation of the loved one, all of Madeleine's gestures and actions, even the trivial and insignificant, assume almost the same importance as an open declaration on the part of Madeleine. When Madeleine returns to Ormesson, we see the effect of 'cristallisation' on Dominique: Madeleine assumes form, dimension. However unreal and imaginary Dominique's daydreaming, a transition takes place; for the first time in the novel, Madeleine is described as a real person. Dominique is, of course, noticing her for the first time, but he attributes the metamorphosis to her two-month trip.

Solitude is always a predetermining factor for Dominique.

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17 See Grimsley, Op. cit., "This subjectivism may assume a 'perfect' form, but it is a perfection born of solitude and not of the reciprocal interplay of two genuinely independent personalities", p. 50.

As an adolescent falling in love, he flees from the young lady who attracts him, and she becomes a source of discomfort to him. Dominique does not discuss his emotional state with anyone, preferring to suppress his feelings in solitude, rather than reveal them. Dominique is quite unlike that romantic Flaubertian hero, Frédéric Moreau in L'Education sentimentale,[18] who thrives on friendship and the company of others. Frédéric's first encounter with his love, Madame Arnoux, is a matter of chance, and the 'coup de foudre' is instantaneous.[19] At eighteen, Frédéric knows immediately that he is in love, and he plans his course of conquest. Dominique is, however, unaware of his de-

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[18] Greshoff points out some differences and similarities between Frédéric and Dominique; one difference, he claims, is that "Frédéric... rests in his defeat...never leaves his adolescence; he does not, like Dominique, emerge into reality and adulthood", Op. cit., p. 173.

[19] One similarity between Frédéric and Dominique, according to Greshoff, is that "...neither is in love with a real person. Frederic loves a ghost, a person he has made himself after the brief glimpse he caught of her on the boat from Rouen to Paris. Dominique also loves an imaginary creature", Op. cit., p. 173.

sires, still less does he know how to fulfill them. During the initial stages of hopes and dreams, Dominique feeds on his solitude, and his 'crise' breaks through to idealization of the most romantic kind, nurtured in absentia of the loved one. In the course of one of his many solitary walks, chance will have Dominique encounter Madeleine; it is this incident that clinches Dominique's emotional 'disponibilité', and he remains, thereafter, in a perpetual state of fixed attention on her.

Dominique's friendship with Olivier does not provide relief from solitude; their adolescent relationship is limited largely to 'camaraderie'. Dominique remarks, early in their relationship: "Avec un pareil compagnon, j'étais fort seul." The unifying factor between Dominique and Olivier is Madeleine; Olivier, as Madeleine's cousin, is an intermediary of sorts

between Dominique and Madeleine; he serves also as a buffer against Dominique's emotions during the latter's conflicting moods. As such, Olivier's influence on Dominique is not profound, but their friendship is binding. Olivier's attempts to discourage Dominique from a seemingly wasteful emotional involvement are reminiscent of Fromentin's friends, who tried unsuccessfully to dissuade Eugène from the same type of love-sickness he was experiencing with Jenny, the young married woman he loved. Olivier and Dominique are not as fraternal as Frédéric and Deslauriers, who share idealized dreams on politics, life, love and women. Life together in Paris provides the same aura of conquest for them à la Rastignac and, in spite of quarrels and separations, they remain lifelong friends. Olivier might have fitted easily into their life style, but not

Dominique. Paris does not prove to be a suitable setting for his temperament; there, more than anywhere else, his solitary nature is evident.

For Deslauriers and Olivier, Madame Arnoux and Madeleine are chimerical objects; they cannot share their friends' sense of attraction or involvement. Frédéric, at least, is fortunate to be able to confide in Deslauriers; however they disagree on the subject of Madame Arnoux, they come together on politics and ambition. Olivier shows little sympathy for Dominique's plight, and is particularly revulsed by his friend's monomaniacal fixation on Madeleine. Although Dominique realizes the practicality of replacing 'her' in his mind and memory, he is not ready to do so, at this stage of the relationship. In seeing Olivier's irritation over his stubbornness, Dominique wishes, more than ever, to be left alone. Frédéric, on the other hand, dislikes so-

litude, and does everything to get away from it. In the early stages of his dreams of love and Madame Arnoux, he is, like all romantic heroes in love, seized with restlessness. He visits friends, attends dances, goes to class, and even tries to distract himself by writing a novel, in which he envisions Madame Arnoux and himself most romantically. After such a spell, Frédéric can no longer free himself from boredom and solitude, and he asks Deslauriers to live with him. Dominique continually turns inward; his inability to come out of himself leads only to an emotional impasse and an absence of perspective concerning Madeleine. Solitude nurtures Dominique's dreams of love, and in the early stages in particular, they feed on the unreal. The focus in Fromentin's novel is, of course, on the hero and the recollection of his past, highlighted by his involvement

with Madeleine. In Flaubert's novel, attention is centered not only on Frédéric and Madame Arnoux, but on Deslauriers and Frédéric, Frédéric and the Maréchale, period politics and rather complete social portraits of the times. We would like to point out that, as examples of the romantic 'self' in love, the similarity between Frédéric and Dominique is limited: both heroes fall in love with an idealized concept of woman; there the similarity ends. Frédéric stays in love with that static ideal of his, and never changes or grows. Dominique, on the contrary, because of his self-awareness and lucidity, realizes the unreality of his ideal, thereby modifying his 'self'; the issue of renunciation is a consequence of this modification, which will be discussed toward the end of this chapter.

The emotional 'disponibilité' which causes the young Domi-

nique a great deal of anxiety and suspense, is relieved at last when he is able to say: "Madeleine est perdue, et je l'aime!" This enlightenment, unfortunately, arrives precisely at a time when Dominique feels that he has no part in altering the situation: Madeleine is about to be married when he realizes that he loves her.[20] This realization, although providing for the necessary release of emotions, adds to the dilemma, for what could be more unwarranted than the announcement of the heroine's marriage to someone else, at the very moment the hero admits to himself that he loves her? Once Dominique hears of Madeleine's impending marriage, declaration of love is impossible:

> Je restai anéanti, n'ayant plus qu'à subir une destinée qui fatalement s'accomplissait et comprenant trop bien que je n'avais ni le droit d'y rien changer ni le pouvoir de la retarder d'une heure.[21]

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[20] Cf. Greshoff, Op. cit., "He begins to love her only when he is quite certain that she is inaccessible. Dominique, like a good romantic, is masochistically in love with defeat, and because of this his love is sterile", p. 172.

[21] Dominique, p. 111.

Perhaps destiny would have been kind if the novel had ended here, but at this point, the hero has not yet begun to struggle with his conflicts. The above passage points out Dominique's basic attitude to his emotional situation: Madeleine's marriage dictates a certain decorum from which Dominique does not deviate; his subsequent conflicts are with himself for control of the situation, and not really with Madeleine, from whom there is mostly reticence. Accessibility is out of the question for Dominique. To begin with, Madeleine is to be married, and this is an obstacle for Fromentin's hero. Also, he is hindered by an overwhelming sense of 'pudeur', or reserve, which prevents him from admitting any kind of emotional attachment. Unattainability, then, is not so much circumstantial, as it is a matter of attitude and temperament. Before realizing that Dominique is in love, he admits to being intimidated by Made-

leine's presence: "Madeleine en un mot me faisait peur." Fear prevents Dominique from looking at Madeleine directly;[22] it causes him extreme discomfort when he is seated next to her, to the extent that he has to move away from her. In the early stages of their relationship, this fear can be attributed to Dominique's lack of awareness in matters of love, and probably, to the uncertainty of awakening emotions; he holds back from others, in friendship and in love; he harbors his thoughts and emotions; he is truly the introspective romantic hero. Yet, if 'pudeur' and fear hold back the adolescent Dominique from expressing his emotions, this is not so as his relationship with Madeleine progresses. Later in the novel, notably, after spending a brief sojourn at Trembles (after which the hero remarks: "Rien

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22 M. Lehtonen cites specific textual examples of Dominique's reaction to being looked at, and concludes: "Chez lui, la douleur de se sentir scruté par quelqu'un prend des nuances névrotiques", Op. cit., p. 49.

n'était plus innocent pour tous...") with Madeleine and her husband, Olivier and Julie, the hero reaches an analytical level of awareness concerning his emotional situation; at this stage, it is not so much his fear of self which prevents him from declaring his love, as his consideration for Madeleine's reactions: his sense of duty to, and respect for, Madeleine as a married woman.[23] Twice, toward the end of the novel, the hero is on the verge of telling Madeleine how he feels about her; at this point, it is no longer his attitude nor his temperament which prevent him from declaring his love, but the heroine's refusal to accept such a declaration. The chapter after Trembles marks a change in Dominique's romantic 'self' in love: he becomes more analytical and no longer pursues Madeleine merely on an emotional level; a complicated psychological guessing game ensues between them, with

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23 M. Lehtonen questions the sincerity of Dominique's intentions to confront Madeleine, and considers his rehearsal monologues as mere "conversations imaginaires avec Madeleine", with the conclusion that "...la sincérité lui est impossible", Op. cit., pp. 40-41.

Dominique initially uncertain of himself, then gradually progressing to a state of assertiveness, with conflicts and self-recrimination, then ultimately, renunciation. This will be dealt with later in the chapter.

Since the novel focuses on Dominique's inner life, the other characters remain in the background, including Madeleine, except toward the end, when there is a confrontation of sorts between the two, with Dominique deciding to end the relationship. One can wonder invariably at the intensity of the hero's sentiments for a woman whose inner life remains veiled from the readers, and whose presence in the novel is sustained largely by the hero's feelings for her, and not by her own personality as a full-dimensional character. This aspect of Fromentin's novel remains unconvincing, although the hero's one-sided view is,

again, typical of the romantic, personal novels in the nineteenth century.

Madeleine in the novel is an idealization of Jenny in real life; the heroine's resemblance to the latter is only apparent, and she is somewhat of an intellectualized version of what Jenny was not. We do not have any insight concerning Jenny's character (except that she was a carefree, coquettish young woman), her tastes or habits, but with regard to her married life and her involvement with Eugène, it seems that she became rather bored with her marriage; Eugène, in the company of a mutual female friend who served as chaperone, would provide a source of distraction for Jenny by reading her poetry, or merely keeping her company during secret, nocturnal visits to her home. That Eugène's and Jenny's relationship was other than platonic is uncertain;[24]

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[24] See Mauriac, Claude, "Fromentin", in De la littérature à l'alittérature, Paris, 1969, p. 335. Mauriac quotes Guy Sagnes, who seems to believe that the relationship was not platonic.

in the novel, however, consummation is out of the question. From the outset, the real and the created involvements faced a closed and hopeless issue:[25] Jenny, like Madeleine, was married; Fromentin contented himself with occasional visits, as did Dominique, suffering from the inevitable torment of seeing the loved one with no question of infringement on her marriage.

As we view Madeleine from Dominique's eyes, not only do we see her inadequately from his point of view, but the manner in which he describes her is discontinuous, often giving us the effect of a fragmentary mosaic. If Dominique's analysis were more successful (and there is no dispute as to his lucidity), it should not matter that we see the situation from his viewpoint alone. For instance, in such a novel as Ernest Feydeau's Fanny,

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[25] Cf. footnote 20 on page 69 of this chapter. Greshoff emphasizes Dominique's wanting the issue to be hopeless.

an intensely autoanalytical personal novel written in the first person, we have very precise glimpses of the woman, either by way of dialogue or description. In Constant's Adolphe, the hero gives a succinct account of Ellénore's social background, which lends sympathy to the heroine and reveals a certain area of vulnerability which predisposes her to Adolphe's advances, even though her inner life is, like Madeleine's, unknown to the reader. In Dominique, the hero does not reveal substantial pieces of information about the woman he loves and often one has the feeling that he is in love for the idea of it. Madeleine's portrait is too vague and incomplete to carry the conviction that the hero is in love with a real person. By contrast, Constant's hero Adolphe, who rapidly falls out of love with Ellénore, can cite all the reasons there are to love her. Dominique's analysis of Madeleine ends up

with a certain superficiality, since he can only analyze her by external and apparent indications; nonetheless, his own feelings and conflicts are genuine. Dominique loves his own delineation of Madeleine; she is a ghost-like personage whom we do not see as a real woman, such as Flaubert's Emma Bovary; Madeleine comes through only as an impression, an ideal shaped and formed by the hero's emotions and sensitivity, his vulnerability to want to love; Madeleine, in this sense, is not real. This may be considered as one of the weak points in the novel: in extrapolating the author's personal experience as it is modified in the novel's setting, the hero's version of the love story may be convincing, but there is no novelistic balance between him and the heroine; in this regard, the love story lacks equilibrium. Toward the end of the novel, Dominique ruminates: "Que se passa-t-il dans l'esprit de Madeleine?"

The reader may very well ask the same question for, all things considered, one does not really know. The unconvincing portrait of the heroine in Fromentin's novel leads one to question the depth of the relationship between Dominique and Madeleine, and perhaps a new question arises: did Madeleine love Dominique? Perhaps that is an irrelevant question, but if we sympathize with the hero's having to guess constantly at Madeleine's motives and to plan his own moves[26] so as not to offend her, to have to hold back in expressing his love, we would have to admit that there is a bit of the coquette in Madeleine, and it would seem, at close examination of parts of the text, that Dominique fulfills a whimsical tendency on Madeleine's part, not to mention his own fancy, concerning love. Notwithstanding her sense of honor in her marriage and her

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[26] M. Lehtonen defines the game between Dominique and Madeleine, as follows: "Ce sont des duels où l'un des partenaires ne veut pas toujours relever le gant jeté par l'autre", Op. cit., p. 39.

'pudeur', Madeleine does seem, at times, to thrive on Dominique's attention, as long as he keeps his distance and remains silent about his feelings. We would guess that she is aware of Dominique's caring for her, but their resumed friendship after Madeleine's marriage stems from a sincere wish to pair off her sister Julie to Dominique. All in all, one would have to attribute Madeleine's behavior, as the relationship between them changes, to being one of the many facets of romantic love which includes, in some way, the heroine's playing with the hero's emotions.

Awkwardness between Dominique and Madeleine becomes particularly apparent in the second half of the novel, when sexual tension exists between them.[27] Their reserve with each other hinders direct communication, giving way to a silent guessing game between the two. The hero, out of respect for the heroine's

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[27] See Greshoff, G.J., Op. cit., "Fromentin's handling of sex is extremely discreet, nevertheless there; it is sex which gives the greater tension to the second half of the novel", p. 175.

reticence, has to guess what each gesture, action or expression might signify on her part; then he fights against his own emotions for control of the situation, should there be an indication from her in his favor. Every gesture, however trivial, takes on special significance in the silent love match, but then, every gesture is, as such, always aggrandized and worked over in the hero's mind, which is another phase of idealization. The exchange of looks between the hero and heroine is particularly revelatory in the love match;[28] when Dominique looks at Madeleine, he can speculate endlessly on the meaning of her expressions; to begin with, since looks are always a source of speculation between the two, he can read into her expressions what he would like to believe. For example, during a party given by Madeleine in her home, the hero begins to stare fixedly at some diamonds fastened on Madeleine's dress; he

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[28] See footnote 7 on page 53 of this chapter.

realizes that she is embarrassed by his staring, and prefers to attribute her embarrassed look and gestures to something other than her 'pudeur', as if she intuited Dominique's admiring glances. As for trying to guess the meaning of a look, the first time Dominique seems to detect discomfiture on Madeleine's part is, early in the novel, at the 'distribution des prix' during Dominique's graduation, during which the hero is mortified at having to be under observation by his ladylove. In a detailed account of the incident, he is the one who suggests her confusion, and assuredly states that she had a troubled expression in her eyes as she congratulated him. This incident seems to mark the beginning of Dominique's emotional speculations; from this point on in the novel, he interprets Madeleine's behavior as it suits him. Likewise, nuances in one's voice leave room for interpreta-

tion between Dominique and Madeleine in their guessing game of love, no matter how banal the dialogue is; here is one example toward the end of the novel, when communication is veiled, mysterious, and anything but direct:

> Son premier mot était une question: "Comment allez-vous?" Ce Comment allez-vous? signifiait: "Etes-vous plus sage?" [29]

The passage proceeds to elaborate on the verbal masquerade which transpires between the two, and for awhile Dominique consents to it, but is inevitably brought back to reality by his constant reappraisal of the situation, and his desire to be honest about his feelings.

As the love situation progresses, Dominique realizes that awkwardness develops between himself and Madeleine, and that tension is building up; this is caused by Dominique's need to declare his love, and Madeleine's not wanting to discuss the is-

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29 Dominique, p. 204. The banality of some of their conversations is the basis for "sous-entendus".

sue. The comfort provided the woman by the man's consenting to accept the relationship on her terms, cannot endure. A mind like Dominique's will ultimately see through the sham of silent guessing games and, indeed, he declares:

> Je voulais me venger de ce long silence imposé d'abord par timidité, puis par égard, puis par respect, enfin par pitié. Ce masque porté depuis trois ans m'était insupportable; je le jetai.[30]

Dominique finally realizes that he has become a victim of his own vulnerability in his emotional relationship with Madeleine, as well as a victim of her dictates. The hero's analytical approach enables him to realize that Madeleine has, in a subtle way, taken advantage of his respect for her, his sympathy for her feelings, and his sense of honor toward her marriage. Having taken these elements into consideration initially, Dominique has had to put up with Madeleine's wish to maintain a tacit relationship, with

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[30] Dominique, p. 186.

no explanations and no confrontations. Silence, up to this point, serves as a defense weapon for Madeleine; it protects her honor and saves her from admitting her feelings; at the same time, it wards off Dominique's declaration of love. Dominique's first step, after denouncing his own hypocrisy, is to visit Madeleine, with the intention of revealing his love; his apparent explanation is to break down her defenses in order to seek a declaration from her or, at the very least, to hear her tell him directly that he is entertaining false ideas about them. As Dominique enters the room, he watches her for awhile (unknown to Madeleine); once again, as in other instances, he is touched by her off-guarded demeanor (she looked as if she had been crying the night before), and again, he assumes his 'mask', out of concern and protectiveness for her, swallowing his pride, and setting aside his conflicts.

When Madeleine is aware of his presence, and assured because of it, the charade between them resumes. As he tries to elicit direct responses from her, she draws the curtain of defensive ignorance around her, still capitalizing on her wish to remain silent; but once again, she is assured that his questions reflect his care for, and attachment to, her. Dominique's reference to a mask reminds one of the Molieresque uplift of hypocrisy in certain situations; when a character's 'mask' falls off, he is denuded, and confrontation leaves him with no possibility of sham. The mask is donned by Dominique for Madeleine's sake; he assumes it only in front of her, since he is not free to discuss their relationship openly and since she, also, wears one. The only way they can communicate, however superficially, is by wearing 'masks'.[31]

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[31] Lehtonen stresses the silence between them, and how replete with meaning their non-verbal communication is. Almost any critical remark or analogy will do, with regard to their psychological interplay, as long as the sense of game is conveyed.

Dominique's removal of his 'mask' is achieved when he admits his feelings to himself; his conflicts reach a critical point when insincerity to himself creates a loss of pride from the knowledge that Madeleine is taking him for granted and, more important, that he knows that he is letting himself being taken for granted. Ultimately, Dominique cannot and will not tolerate self-deception in matters of love; he passes through several stages of self-conflict in his desire to confront Madeleine; each stage produces a different reaction from her, which causes Dominique to postpone the ultimate confrontation, so concerned is he about hurting her, and falling out of her good graces. Yet, however strongly Dominique wants to shed his 'mask', he cannot do so immediately; thus ensues the most painful and agonizing stage of his relationship with Madeleine. "...je le jetai" refers to shedding the 'mask' from himself,

being honest with himself during certain moments of reflection. Once having realized that he must shed his 'mask' completely in order to maintain his own self-respect, he is torn between that and having to risk a negative breakthrough in his relationship with Madeleine. Dominique's desire to shed his 'mask' reveals an effort to be sincere in his situation with Madeleine and, more important, an effort to be honest with himself. Shedding Dominique's 'mask' completely carries with it the admission that Madeleine would have to shed hers; perhaps Dominique suspects being disillusioned by Madeleine's real 'self', without her 'mask'; perhaps part of Dominique's procrastination in revealing his maskless self to Madeleine is that he intuits that their psychological game would end; perhaps, Dominique endures the sham of keeping on his 'mask' for as long as he does, knowing, inevitably, that shedding it would imply renunciation of his situation with Madeleine.

Dominique's ability to see through the pretenses of a tacit relationship reflect, on one hand, the depth of his emotions and, on the other, the shallowness of his relationship with Madeleine. Self-realization in Dominique's situation is a bitter pill to swallow; no longer willing to delude himself, less willing to put up with Madeleine's charades, Dominique begins to question his love for her, as he feels a barrier of antagonism between them: out of frustration at the hypocrisy of their situation, he becomes defensive; she, likewise, maintains her defenses in view of her position. Dominique becomes disgusted with himself: he tries to endure more compromises for her sake, all the while intolerant of Madeleine's 'game', which bars honesty from them.

Significantly, Dominique's self-realization leads to ambivalence; disenchantment with his increasingly vapid relationship with

Madeleine becomes all too evident, and so does his disgust with his own emotional vacillation, yet the desire to preserve his ideal of 'her' pushes him in the direction of continued pursuit. The ultimate confrontation is warded off once again when Madeleine deems it her task to try and 'cure' Dominique;[32] for a short while, a doctor-patient relationship takes place between them in the form of a strange emotional symbiosis. Instead of the usual romantic withdrawal from the party from whom one wishes to disengage one's self, the heroine, in this case, offers her presence, hopefully, to pursuade Dominique out of his romantic anxiety. This, in itself, seems to belie Madeleine's wish to 'cure' Dominique, for how can he be cured without removing the source of the illness? Madeleine thrives on Dominique's emotional dependence

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[32] M. Lehtonen defines the cure, as follows: "Madeleine, de son côté, prend une vengeance inconsciente en se mettant à "guérir" Dominique, c'est-à-dire à courir après lui pour l'attacher davantage à elle", Op. cit., p. 72.

on her; he, in turn, accepts whatever amount of time and companionship she allots him. This, of course, is another charade of which Dominique is aware. For awhile, Dominique deludes himself into believing that he will carry on in this manner, pretending to undergo Madeleine's 'cure'; she, if not truly convinced that their symbiosis will sustain the relationship, feeds her vanity in thinking that she leads him on. Still, in all honesty to himself, Dominique realizes that he must declare his love for Madeleine or, in some other manner, give voice to it. Since Madeleine will not accept a declaration or even any verbal allusion to Dominique's feelings, and since he is unwilling to carry on the sham of a superficial situation, the inevitable step is to cut himself off from her. In this light, Dominique's 'résignation' is practical: his decision to discontinue his relationship with

Madeleine comes about with pain and conflict, careful thought and analysis, and is not the result of an exasperated fancy. Dominique's practicality in his love situation is another anti-romantic element in the novel: the hero does not end up in a state of madness, nor does he succumb from a broken heart. Dominique's ultimate decision acknowledges, in some way, that the hero gradually realizes the illusory aspect of his relationship with the woman he loves, and the senselessness of such a superficial relationship; his decision reflects the desire, on his part, to cure himself partially, if not completely, of romantic idealization. Adultery would have rendered the whole situation rather banal, since Dominique is not primarily interested in a physical relationship with Madeleine. Dominique's emotional involvement stems originally from the need of his youthful romantic sensibility to

focus on an 'ideal', who happens to be Madeleine. While the love situation does not, as such, develop, Dominique's obsession with his 'ideal' and the whole idealization process does; in time, so also does the hero's realization that his situation is more illusory than real, and that it is too conflict-ridden to afford a certain equilibrium necessary to his existence. Part of Dominique's decision to abandon the situation is due, among other factors, to his foresight into the situation. Perhaps too much emphasis tends to be placed on his idealization of the relationship; his analytical attitude seems to prove that he is, essentially, more practical than one would initially admit; consequently, disillusionment with his situation is certainly a factor which cannot be ignored. We believe that idealization is limited largely to Dominique's state of being in love as an adolescent,

and that once he starts having conflicts with his emotions, idealization is no longer the primary issue, but rather, the conflicts engendered from wanting to preserve his ideal. With all this, Fromentin shows romantic love in conflict, and what his hero experiences in the way of seeking a reasonable solution to his love situation. Fromentin's idealization of the woman he loved is achieved by his having written a fictionalized account of his own love situation; the creative act of having done so afforded Fromentin not only the cathartic experience, but also, as it did for Dominique, the preservation of his romantic ideal.

Chapter III

Dominique's Sensibility

Sensibility is a trait of the romantic 'self'; in the nineteenth century French personal novel, nature plays a prominent role in evoking the intensity of the romantic hero's feelings, not necessarily indicative of sensibility (e.g., Chateaubriand's René)[1], nor of a special affinity for nature. In Dominique's case, sensibility is very definitely related to his love for nature; before discussing this subject, we would like to bring out a few points concerning the role of nature in the personal novel.

Nature's presence and importance in the personal novel date back, at least, to the pre-romantic influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose treatises on nature abound in Emile, La Nouvelle

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[1] See Peyre, Henri, Qu'est-ce que le romantisme?, Paris, 1971: "Il est bien difficile de décider à quel moment l'expression de la sensibilité personnelle devient sentimentalité légèrement puérile, puis cet étalage de ses souffrances, de sa vie intime, de la pitié que d'autres nous inspirent et de la pitié de nous-mêmes qu'évoque le terme de sensiblerie", p. 225.

Heloïse, not to mention the Confessions and the Rêveries. It is not astonishing that the romantic era picks up and modifies Rousseau's decrees on nature, a seemingly comfortable framework against which many a romantic hero pits his sorrows and woes; in such a setting, solitude can better prey upon the hero's depths, inner torments, conflicts or general malaise. In addition, the romantic hero's temperament lends itself to nature's befitting framework; it would hardly do for him to hear reverberations of his own wailings in a closed-off area; somehow, the laying bare of his soul is rendered more dramatic when nature, infinity and space bear witness to his misery: communication with human beings is a rare commodity for most romantic heroes. The typical romantic scene will have the hero take a long walk alone, always alone, in the forest, in the country, or by the sea, where he attempts to

unravel the mysteries of existence, the complexities of a love situation or the general torments of the 'self'; in some instances, when a crisis is at hand, the elements will echo the hero's despondent state.

Each romantic work accentuates nature in its own peculiar way, and Dominique is no exception. It is, in fact, Fromentin's treatment of nature which accounts for the novel's special quality. Dominique is dominated by a series of passages on nature which reflect the hero's temperament and, at times, highlight his emotional state.[2] Childhood, adolescence and manhood have different atmospheric settings in nature, contingent on circumstances and the hero's mood. Had it not been for his aunt's desire to educate him, Dominique would have been content to remain the country boy who, having been orphaned at an early age, sought refuge in and

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[2] See Grimsley, Ronald, "Romanticism in Dominique", French Studies, XII (January 1958): "The concrete reality of the physical world becomes imbued with the emotional overtones of his own personality; sensations derived from contact with physical objects take on a meaning only when they have been filtered through the stream of his own consciousness", p. 46.

alliance with nature; his sensitivity to nature's details and his keen attunement to her revelations lend poignant and nostalgic tinges to the novel which, essentially, is the recollection of a love story, as well as a special thesis on nature and the protagonist.

As a child, Dominique shows a boundless capacity for enjoying natural phenomena and an inclination to relish solitude. Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have appreciated Dominique's ability to relish nature alone, obviating the recourse to companionship. Dominique, the young boy, is essentially Jean-Jacques' ideal pupil, astonished that "...la vie ne se bornât pas au plaisir de courir les champs." Yet the association with Rousseau is slight, perhaps even superficial: Dominique's sensibility is uniquely his own, for he does not remain at the Rousseauistic level of 'l'enfant sauvage', which would preclude Dominique's type of sensitivity. Al-

though the young boy's proximity to nature is not unusual in itself, it is the excessive, hyper-sensitive element derived, in part, from his intense feelings for nature, which contributes to what he considers retrospectively as the 'ambiguity' of his character.

The retrospective recollection[3] of childhood memories has a special place in Dominique, similar to Proustian evocation of childhood happiness. Childhood is the happy period of Dominique's life; it is the time which the hero recollects unreservedly and associates with happy memories, and the source of his happiness is deeply rooted in his love for nature. In recalling his childhood to his friend, the narrator of the novel, the hero points out that some of his happy memories are associated with discovering nature's

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[3] See Richard, Jean-Pierre, Littérature et sensation, Paris, 1954; in a chapter on Fromentin, Richard says: "Comme Proust, Fromentin va donc connaître la tentation d'aller chercher dans son passé une explication de son présent, de redescendre en arrière de lui-même à la poursuite d'une clef perdue. Mais cette redescente en soi, et c'est ce qui constitue l'originalité de sa recherche, ne vise nullement à redécouvrir un moment ou un point originels à partir desquels s'éclairerait toute la suite de son histoire: bien davantage s'agit-il de retrouver le mouvement par lequel lui et les choses sont peu à peu devenus ce qu'il sont. Recherche moins du passé que du temps lui-même, et plus précisément de l'activité mystérieuse qui s'est exercée au coeur du mouvement temporel...", p. 240.

revelations in the company of village children. Dominique remembers that, while sharing the same eagerness as his friends to explore the countryside, a peculiar sensitivity develops in him, which isolates him from the others:

> ...il se formait en moi je ne sais quelle mémoire spéciale assez peu sensible aux faits, mais d'une aptitude singulière à se pénétrer des impressions.[4]

In retaining certain sights and sounds, Dominique would form an impression or feeling associated with a particular sight or sound which, when evoked from memory, would produce a sense of nostalgia.

The formation of Dominique's sensibility is inseparable from the role of memory. Nature, or the manifestation of nature derived from any of the senses, serves as a stimulus of emotions and feelings, which may be associated with a past experience; if the emotions evoked are happy ones, the recollected experience is usually rooted to a childhood memory. If the emotions evoked are ambiguous,

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[4] Dominique, p. 45.

the association is not necessarily linked to the past, but to the hero's mood in the present, such as Dominique's reaction to writing a composition on Hannibal's defeat, which will be discussed later. An example of a past recollected experience is the scene after Madeleine's wedding, when Dominique resigns himself rather fatalistically to Madeleine's marriage and laments that he loves her. Alone and anguished, Dominique returns to his room and nurtures his 'amour-propre blessé'; in the middle of the night, he hears a bird's cry in the distance, which produces this singular effect:

> Je pensai aux Trembles; il y avait si longtemps que je n'y pensais plus. Ce fût comme une lueur de salut. Chose bizarre, par un retour subit à des impressions si lointaines, je fus rappelé tout à coup vers les aspects les plus austères et les plus calmants de ma vie champêtre... Avec la lucidité d'une imagination surexcitée à un point extrême, j'eus en quelques minutes la perception rapide, instantanée de tout ce qui avait charmé ma première enfance.[5]

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[5] Dominique, pp. 121-122.

The above passage contrasts with a preceding description of Dominique's emotional turmoil over the realization that he loves a married woman: the bird's cry serves to break Dominique's tumultuous mood and instantaneously releases a flood of impressions which are relived through the evocation of memories, particularly associated with his childhood milieu of Trembles, and some specific areas which held a significantly happy memory for him. Memory, then, enables the hero not only to evoke pleasant childhood memories, but also enables him to recreate past happiness. The effect is tranquillizing; it is tantamount to a moment of Fromentinian 'self-possession'[6], during which the hero can seize and capture essences of events, re-creating them through memory.[7] Time purifies the process of recollection and essences become more personalized;

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[6] We have touched on this subject in the Introduction and in the chapter, "The Romantic Self".

[7] See Garcin, Philippe, "Le souvenir dans Dominique", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1er janvier 1957: "L'éxécution doit être longtemps différée pour que le temps d'examen libère une vérité profitable à l'exercice", p. 114.

a continuous line of essences is contained in memories, and may constitute significant experiences of a lifetime. 'Self-possession' is experienced, each time these essences are recaptured. Dominique's remembrance of childhood happiness brings to mind Proust: the affinities between Fromentin and Proust concerning the whole process of recollection has many a critic designating Fromentin as a predecessor to the Proustian theory on the involuntary use of memory.[8] Jacques Monge reminds us that with Proust, one single sensation is not necessarily the trigger for evocation, but a combination of sensations, or atmosphere. With Fromentin, this happens to coincide, as it does in the above cited passage (page 100), which is preceded not only by the bird's cry, but also by a description of the setting:

> Un petit nombre d'étoiles très-brillantes vibraient dans l'air calme et bleu de la nuit. A peine avait-on le sentiment du froid, quoiqu'il fût rendu plus intense encore par la limpidité du ciel et l'absence du vent.[9]

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[8] Among them: Monge, Jacques, "Un précurseur de Proust: Fromentin et la mémoire affective", Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, octobre-décembre 1961, pp. 564-588; Garcin, Philippe, Op. cit.; Richard, Jean-Pierre, Op. cit.

[9] Dominique, p. 121.

For Fromentin, feelings are usually evoked in a framework of nature, but not necessarily for Proust, as long as the mind is in a state of indifference sufficient to accept the exterior element or elements which would trigger the process of evocation. Both Fromentin and Proust stress the importance of an indifferent frame of mind necessary for involuntary evocation, and the stimulus of one or more sensations (or atmosphere). While we are leaving out a detailed discussion on the similarities between Fromentin and Proust, we wished mainly to point out that, in Dominique, sensibility, memory and evocation are inter-related with the presence of nature in the novel.

Nature produces a cathartic effect on Dominique, and the distinct 'correspondance' between the hero and nature is almost always related to a certain nostalgic mood. Here is one example:

> Dans les profondeurs de feuillages sur la limite du jardin, dans les cerisiers blancs, dans les troënes en fleur, dans les lilas chargés de bouquets et d'arômes, toute la nuit, pendant ces longues nuits où je dormais peu, où la lune éclairait, où la pluie quelquefois tombait, paisible, chaude et sans bruit, comme des pleurs de joie,--pour mes délices et pour mon tourment, toute la nuit les rossignols chantaient.[10]

Nature is a spectacle, a continuously unfolding tableau for Dominique; this is his world of reality. The above passage displays Fromentin's ability to create a mood by prefacing it with a simple pictorial description which is visually appealing: the setting is confined to the garden at night, where the pallor and fragrance of the different trees in bloom suggest an ethereal delicacy; up to the word 'd'arômes', the passage shows Fromentin's interest, as a painter, in color and form, and in his appeal to the senses. The next seven short phrases are punctuated by many commas, which detract from the image of nature's apparent serenity

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10 Dominique, p. 50.

and, at the same time, suggest the hero's restlessness; the phrases serve as a transition from the preceding, almost conventional tableau, to the hero's mood. The description of nature, followed by the brusqueness of the seven short phrases, builds up ultimately to the hero's emotional state, and leads up to "pour mes délices et pour mon tourment", the sense of which we encounter invariably in other similar passages. Nature, for the benefit of Dominique alone, gives him an ephemeral, yet profound glimpse of happiness and despair, and he seems to be on the brink of either state. Nature offers her creations to Dominique, whose sensibility heightens at the sight of cherry blossoms in the moonlight, the sound of nightingales singing, the gentle rainfall at night, and even, silence. Dominique's 'correspondance' with nature serves as a spontaneous agent for the release of his emotions.

There is a sense of romantic religiosity in Dominique's communion with nature;[11] it is a sanctuary where the hero can communicate totally with nature and, at the same time, feel at one with himself. Nature provides comfort and solace for Dominique; the notion of turning to, or seeking refuge in, exterior elements for 'correspondance', fits in quite well with the romantic need to find a haven for the troubled 'self'.

As an adolescent, Dominique's romantic 'self' is manifested at times by a tendency toward 'sensiblerie' (excessive romantic sensibility); Dominique's daydreams are inspired by nature's activities, and intermingle with undefined notions of happiness. This romantic trait in the hero's personality becomes increasingly evident when a young tutor, Augustin, is engaged by Dominique's

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[11] See Vier, Jacques, "Pour l'étude du Dominique de Fromentin", Archives des lettres modernes, N° 16-17, octobre-novembre 1958: "Dans ce roman aussi dépourvu que possible de sentiment religieux, la nature possède peut-être la clef de l'au-delà", p. 37.

aunt to help Dominique with his studies; the contrast between Augustin's pragmatic mind and Dominique's refined sensibility is rather marked. During Augustin's stay at Trembles, Dominique's awareness of nature assumes an importance paramount to his intellectual formation; one incident stands out in the hero's memory which again underlines her vulnerability to nature. The incident in question concerns an autumn day, during which Augustin asks his pupil to write a composition on Hannibal's defeat;[12] the passage is preceded by the hero's admission that, at the time of the incident, he was prone to "un accès de sensibilité maladive", and that the historic event about which he was to write, was one of those which affected him emotionally, "...comme une catastrophe

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12 See Lehtonen, Maija, "Essai sur Dominique de Fromentin", STA, Annales Acad.Sci.Fenn., B:176, Helsinki, 1972; this critic views this scene as a possible interpretation of "...une anticipation de la destinée de Dominique: s'il s'attendrit sur le sort d'un héros qui cède "à des fatalités de race plutôt qu'à des défaites militaires", jetant au rivage "un dernier adieu de désespoir et de défi", c'est que lui aussi sera un de ceux qui subissent des défaites dans la vie; par une sorte de 'fatalité', il quittera, lui aussi, le champ de bataille", p. 33.

où je ne regardais que l'héroïsme sans m'occuper du droit". After the hero's explanation of his highly emotional state and his personal reaction to the subject matter, there is a description of the setting which, again, is a view of nature. Part of the passage is, as follows:

> Les arbres, qui déjà n'étaient plus verts, le jour moins ardent, les ombres plus longues, les nuées plus tranquilles, tout parlait, avec le charme sérieux propre à l'automne, de déclin, de défaillance et d'adieux.[13]

Prior to the description of nature, we are alerted and predisposed to feeling Dominique's mood; Fromentin begins this passage by explaining Dominique's emotional state; the description of nature follows, and adds to the intensity of the hero's mood. One notes the same short, rhythmic phrasing which Fromentin uses in passages of this sort; it is effective in creating a subtle sense of impatience, or restlessness. Just in the single sentence quoted above

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13 Dominique, p. 56.

(the whole description of nature comprises five sentences), Fromentin manages to paint the complete autumnal advent by itemizing what was "no longer" ("n'étaient plus"), "less" ("moins"), by characterizing the dwindling away of summer, the final stages of one season as it gives way to another. That other season is autumn which, for Dominique and other romantic heroes, evokes melancholy and nostalgia. The above passage culminates and focuses on the hero's mood in the following conclusion:

> Un attendrissement subit, impossible à motiver, plus impossible encore à contenir, montait en moi comme un flot prêt à jaillir, mêlé d'amertume et de ravissement.[14]

Nature has triggered this emotional reaction, the intensity of which seems almost mystical, hinting at exaltation and despair. The emphasis in this passage is on the hero's emotions, with nothing specific to which he can attribute his state of mind.

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[14] Dominique, p. 57.

The phrase "...mêlé d'amertume et de ravissement" seems to be a measure of the hero's emotional depth and perhaps, an indication of inner turbulence and suspension; his nostalgic mood is provoked by an intuition of yearning for the unknown. This romantic quandary characterizes other personal novels of the nineteenth century, each with its peculiar differences. The earliest example, for instance, is Chateaubriand's René, which bespeaks sublimity and despair, mostly the latter, while the hero declaims on the futility of life and spouts out on thanatopsis. The effect is not tragic, but maudlin. The awesome elements of nature and Christianity affect René as dynamic and life-giving forces, yet René remains estranged from them, as he is imbued with a sense of imperfection, and his view of his 'self' is deprecatingly narcissistic. The hero's pathetic cry against his self, against his life, over-

powers any possibility of release from his inner tension, deeply rooted in a metaphysical malaise. The congenital or inborn melancholy of romantic heroes such as René, is a typical romantic trait, à l'excès, and characterizes the mal du siècle reflected in early nineteenth century personal works. In that regard, Dominique is not excessive; at his lowest ebb, Fromentin's hero would never court the idea of suicide[15] (although another character in the novel, Olivier, does attempt to take his life, the novel does not focus centrally on him or his action), whereas death or the monastic life, to Chateaubriand's René, seem to be feasible solutions to the cumbersome problem of existence. In Fromentin's novel, romantic excesses are avoided by the hero's tendency to over-intellectualize his emotional experience.

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[15] See Peyre, Henri, Qu'est-ce que le romantisme?, Paris, 1971: "Le suicide romantique...mériterait une monographie qui devrait n'être pas uniquement sociologique ou médicale", p. 114.

Nature, as an element in the romantic novel, provokes a different reaction in each hero. In René, creation is essentially unfathomable and appalling in all her mystery; nature's backdrop constantly punctuates the hero's melancholy; life is forever unbearable and René's despair is overwhelming. The only time René manages a semblance of tranquillity is during his return to familial grounds where, left in solitude to contemplate the happier moments of his existence as he spent them with his sister, he idealizes his childhood. Generally, the hero's obsession with death and solitude create distance between him and nature. The hero continually exudes frenzied despair, which sometimes gives an overbalance of intensity and the impression of artificiality; happiness, or any other emotion, for that matter, is too keenly related to despair, and not even the most bewitching revelation

of nature can arouse the hero's soul from its lugubrious, melancholic pit. This early nineteenth century dilemma almost caricatures the Pascalian concept of infinity and nothingness, with man always on the losing side. Dominique, on the other hand, is enthralled by nature; even Paris, although certainly not a substitute for Trembles, proffers her parks to Dominique, when the latter needs momentary calm and the restoration of his senses, during one of his conflicting moods.

In our chapter on love, we had pointed out certain ambivalent feelings that Dominique would experience during his periods of conflict with Madeleine. It is interesting to note that some of Dominique's emotional reactions to a view of nature are of the same ambivalent sort, not caused by nature directly, but by the evocation of certain inexplicable feelings. Earlier, for instance,

we had cited a passage with the phrase "pour mes délices et pour mon tourment", and another with "mêlé d'amertume et de ravissement". In referring to his pastoral sojourn at Trembles with Madeleine, Dominique says: "...ce séjour unique dans mes souvenirs fut un mélange de continuelles délices et de tourments...". The novel contains several of these disturbingly antithetical expressions, indicating Dominique's inner tension. At times, nature arouses vague feelings and impressions in Dominique; she is always the mobile agent who engenders highly volatile reactions in him. Yet, no matter how vague and mysterious certain feelings are to Dominique, he turns inevitably to nature, his earth mother.[16] In the throes of an adolescent emotional 'crise', during which the hero's awakening emotions place him in a state of 'disponibilité' toward senti-

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[16] See Grimsley, R., Op. cit., "...(Dominique) too is a lonely, sensitive man who, being unable to find an adequate emotional outlet in his immediate environment, seeks refuge in the 'universal mother', Nature", p. 48.

mental attachment, Dominique bursts forth, at times, as follows: "Je ne sais quel sentiment sauvage, plus fort que jamais, m'invitait à me perdre au sein même de cette grande compagne en pleine explosion de sève." Dominique's emotional 'disponibilité' is undefined and nebulous; the young man is unaware of the source of his restlessness and the object of his emotions. Nature, somehow, more than compensates for the want of human rapport which romantic heroes do not have; nature is the vicarious mother who heals and comforts her distraught child in time of need. The hero's desire to unite with and lose himself in nature is typical of the romantic pantheistic tinges which we find in novels of this genre. In Fromentin's novel, outbrusts are subdued and controlled; Dominique's turbulence could never exceed that of the adolescent in Flaubert's Novembre, an early work of the author (1842), in which such out-

bursts are unrestrained, with nature herself becoming the mistress of whom the young hero dreams, in whose beauty he loses himself:

> ...je ne sais quoi se dilata en moi-même pour aspirer une joie universelle...agité et calme à la fois, je me sentis défaillir de volupté sous le poids de cette nature aimante, et j'appelai l'amour...j'aurais voulu être étouffé sous des roses, j'aurais voulu être brisé sous les baisers, être la fleur que le vent secoue, la rive que le fleuve humecte, la terre que le soleil féconde.[17]

Nature beguiles and entices the young hero in Flaubert's Novembre; she is Aphrodite personified, identified with the hero's quest for love. In Novembre, sensuality is very clearly the underlying current; the young hero's idealized dreams aim, at first subtly, then openly, toward sexuality. The transition of the hero's gradual yearning to explicit sexual desire takes place by way of a pantheistic outburst, in which the hero realizes at once that nature is divine and, seeking to lose himself in her beauty, he wants to love and be loved. Dominique's adolescent 'crise' finds it outlet in

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[17] Flaubert, Gustave, Novembre, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 93.

solitary walks; although he is tranquillized by nature's presence, his sensibility is tempered by an element of restraint and holding back, never giving vent to maudlin declamations. As an adult, Dominique's conflicts and self-confrontations emphasize the cerebral side of his character, and he no longer alludes to emotional excesses. There is perhaps one passage later in the novel when Dominique, as an adult, gives way momentarily, to his emotions. During a solitary trip away from Madeleine, he walks by the sea and "...je jetai au vent le nom de Madeleine, je le criai de toutes mes forces pour qu'il se répétât à l'infini dans les rochers sonores du rivage; puis un sanglot me coupa la voix...". The crisis passes, and Dominique's catharsis by the sea seems to benefit him.

All in all, the atmosphere in Flaubert's Novembre is more so-

phisticated than Fromentin's, from all points of view. Certainly, the novel's tone, as well as the nature of the young hero's malaise, are those of an innocent 'manqué', while Fromentin's Dominique remains untainted by the metaphysical dilemmas which haunt Flaubert's hero. An autumnal scene will provoke the latter into philosophizing on his lost youth and the human condition, scepticism, death, as well as speculating on the subject of love. For Fromentin's hero, a similar autumnal scene will heighten perception and sensitivity, after ingraining itself first in his memory. In Flaubert's novel, written some twenty years prior to Dominique, the scenic framework is available, with nature provoking the hero, rather than tranquillizing him. Still, at this point of the nineteenth century, we are far enough along to see that Flaubert's Novembre is much more esthetically feasible in light of the author's

treatment of metaphysical malaise and the hero's expression of his plight, than its early ancestor, Chateaubriand's René. In Novembre, the hero reaches limitless depths of despair and expresses himself at times with abject cynicism, but he is generally free from the melodramatic, declamatory tone which characterizes Chateaubriand's novel. Excess by way of declamation and exaggeration paints the early romantic hero's plight, and it is difficult to discern traces of a hero's sensibility when he is too preoccupied with his 'self', or has too many neurotic obsessions. The early romantic hero, and we always refer to René, does not possess sensibility such as we see in Dominique: he was indeed too narcissistic to see beyond himself; even as late in mid-century as Flaubert's Novembre, the hero was still very much involved in concentrating his energies inward. Dominique's sensibility precludes

narcissism, and this indicates a healthy, anti-romantic trait in the hero. Somehow, narcissism is the romantic malady which maimed the early romantic hero and prevented him from leading a more equilibrated existence. Dominique's exposure to nature and his tendency to isolation are not excessive; in spite of the fact that he is vulnerable to nature, it is that very vulnerability which heightens his sensibility, and permits his psyche to extend beyond itself.

Chapter IV

Dominique's Analytical Intellect

If it is to be said that Dominique revels in analyzing his emotional state, let it also be said that his autoanalytical approach, while in some respects excessive and tedious,[1] helps him to maintain his lucidity and eventually leads him to a resolution of his problems. In the chapter "The Romantic Self", we had referred to Joachim Merlant's terms "le moi lyrique" and "le moi psychologique"; it is the latter side of Dominique's romantic 'self' which we will discuss here, in relation to two problems: his relationship with Madeleine and his attitude toward his work. We will also discuss briefly Benjamin Constant's Adolphe and Fromentin's hero later in the chapter.

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[1] See Peyre, Henri, Qu'est-ce que le romantisme, Paris, 1971: "...c'est l'habitude de l'analyse impitoyable de soi-même, au moment précis où l'on sent avec intensité l'exaspération du sentiment et de la sensation par cette contemplation cérébrale de soi, enfin une étrange délectation à se juger ainsi malheureux par obstination à se vouloir tel qui constituent vraiment l'originalité du mal du siècle romantique", p. 124.

Merlant's claim that 'le moi psychologique' tends to suppress 'le moi lyrique' has a different effect on Dominique: his sensibility ('le moi lyrique') is not suppressed, but is intensified by his ability to auto-analyze his emotional predicament. As a result, there are times when Dominique becomes paralyzed in the midst of conflict, in spite of his lucidity. Dominique's self-division becomes so intense at times, that he is unable to take a resolute course of action.[2]

In Dominique's relationship with Madeleine, the analytical, almost anti-romantic side of his personality surfaces after the eleventh chapter, which describes a pastoral sojourn of sorts at Trembles, Dominique's home, in the company of Madeleine, her husband, Julie and Olivier. The chapter is symbolic of a suspenseful break and subsequent modification in Dominique's and Madeleine's

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[2] See Lehtonen, Maija, "Essai sur Dominique de Fromentin", STA, Annales Acad.Sci.Fenn., B:176, Helsinki, 1972: "Chez une personne ainsi divisée, la faculté d'agir se paralyse", p. 51.

relationship, and for Julie and Olivier, as well. The hero summarizes the significance of this transition period, as he declares: "...rien n'était plus innocent pour tous". The subsequent chapters in the novel reveal a change in Dominique: he emerges from the pastoral episode as the very thoughtful and analytical Dominique who will inevitably renounce his situation with Madeleine.[3] Hereafter, Dominique is shown "en plein conflit" with himself: an eruption of emotions heretofore hidden or unknown to himself finally enables him to see his situation with Madeleine quite clearly, as a conflict between reality and an ideal. Although his entire attitude toward Madeleine, up to this point, may be considered as passive, it becomes evident that he grows out of this state. Not only

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[3] We have already quoted one of Dominique's significant remarks in our chapter on love: "Ce masque porté depuis trois ans m'était insupportable; je le jetai." We stressed the significance of this remark and, as we had mentioned, this is Dominique's rejection of self-deception, his refusal to continue the seemingly endless psychological charade with Madeleine. What we wish to add here is that, although Dominique's intent is made manifest, it is perhaps not soon enough (after three years), since the charade does, indeed, continue; this points out the element of duration involved from the time Dominique arrived at such a realization, to the time he was able to do anything about it. This type of vacillation may lead one to question Dominique's sincerity; at least one critic has already done so. See Lehtonen, M., Op. cit.: "...la sincérité lui est impossible", p. 41.

does an eruption of his emotions takes place, but also, Dominique is able, finally, to define these emotions: for the first time in the novel, after the pastoral episode, the hero reaches a level of awareness about his situation, and begins to express some of his feelings concerning Madeleine, as well as her husband. The beginning of Dominique's new phase (chapter twelve) has Dominique describing Madeleine as he enters her home for a party: he gives minute details concerning her reaction as he enters, how her appearance dazzles him, how unnerved he becomes, and finally, an admission to being jealous. Also in this chapter, for the first time in the novel, we have Dominique's opinion of Madeleine's husband: "...et je m'aperçus nettement que je le détestais."[4] The adolescent Dominique could never have made such a remark, nor would

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[4] Not only does Dominique realize that he is jealous; his self-awareness is such that he is able to deliver a monologue on the subject: how it elucidates the quality of his love, and the implication that such an emotion makes his love less exalted than he would like it to be.

he have realized that jealousy was torturing him. Previous to this, Madeleine's husband was, in Dominique's mind, nondescript, almost a nonentity. Crystallization is taking place once again in Dominique's mind, but it is unrelated to the process of idealization and falling in love; it is a crystallization of reality, of Dominique's emotions and his relation to others which, previous to this, his mind was not able to fathom. The pastoral scene, then, serves as a transition, both in the novel and in the hero's mind; it marks the end of Dominique's complacent emotional state and the beginning of self-conflict, confrontation with his 'self',[5] and gradually, a more realistic perspective concerning his situa-

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[5] See Lehtonen, M., Op. cit.; M. Lehtonen points out that in Fromentin's original manuscript, "...le thème de l'oeil intérieur est plus développé que dans le roman...", and "L'auto-observation amène, en effet, une tendance à l'égocentrisme, et Dominique le reconnaît...L'auto-observation n'est pas présentée comme une lucidité de jugement (in the original manuscript), mais comme une maladie, une force qui empêche de vivre...", p. 50.

tion with Madeleine.[6] What accounts for this seemingly sudden change in Dominique's mind is not balanced novelistically: the pastoral scene is more symbolic than anything else; before this chapter, Dominique is still the confused, tormented young man in love; the reader then becomes aware of Dominique's change, not by any subtle exposition on the part of the author, but by a change of pace in the novel which, after the pastoral episode, reveals a suddenly lucid and thoroughly aware Dominique. The rest of the novel focuses on the possibility of confrontation and Dominique's various stages of self-conflict; the tendency to overanalyze his situation is aggravated by Madeleine's reticence and the frustration of having to remain silent about his own feelings; in time, Dominique begins to feel that he is questioning his love for Madeleine and that his ability to intellectualize his situation is

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[6] At one point, Dominique's ambivalence is directed clearly toward his psychological game with Madeleine: "Je ne savais presque plus si j'aimais Madeleine, tant cette idée d'antagonisme, qui me faisait sentir en elle un adversaire, se substituait à toute autre émotion et me remplissait le coeur de passions mauvaises."

infringing on his dream of love, his ideal. Dominique prefers to leave that dream, that ideal, as intact as possible, since it is the only vestige of a romantic 'self' to which he wants to cling; he feels, also, that adultery would shatter that dream, which is another reason for his ending the relationship.

Dominique's growing awareness of his situation with Madeleine parallels the realization that he has no aspirations in his literary endeavors. We have already noted that Dominique, as a child, has little or no propensity to want to be educated formally. As an adolescent under the tutelage of a young man who imposes intellectual discipline on him, Dominique is constantly distracted, and willingly so, by the world of nature. He does make efforts, however, to submit to the formalities of education and, as it turns out, becomes successful in school, earning himself honors.

In discussing his background with his friend, the narrator of the novel, Dominique remarks: "...cette éducation soi-disant vigoureuse était détestable." With this and the ensuing statement, the hero disparages the effect of education on his temperament:

> ...je prenais enfin des habitudes qui ne menaient à rien qu'à faire de moi le personnage ambigu que vous connaîtrez plus tard, moitié paysan et moitié dilettante, tantôt l'un, tantôt l'autre, et souvent les deux ensemble, sans que jamais ni l'un ni l'autre ait prévalu.[7]

In the context of this passage, dilettantism[8] undoubtedly refers to the hero's exposure to intellectual development, and all the ensuing expectations involving his education. Torn at first by attempts to emulate his tutor's ambition, and constantly reminded of the notion of success, Dominique, essentially, is not interested

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[7] Dominique, p. 45.

[8] In the novel, the term is one of several which indicate Dominique's self-division; it is used, as others in the novel are, to show one side of tension (in this case, against 'paysan') resisting another.

in the ways in which education can modify his life. Having had formal training, and a successful one at that, the hero is expected to go out into the world and utilize his educated talents in a special realm. From the outset, Augustin, his tutor, familiarizes Dominique with the notions of 'ambition' and 'success', which are associated with and inseparable from the former's moral encouragement of his pupil. At first, Dominique struggles toward cultivating any ambition he may have; he attempts, for awhile, to direct his talents in a literary direction. The attempts are always half-hearted, and deep conflicts arise, for Dominique is unhappy in his endeavors.[9] The outcome of the novel shows that only when Dominique faces the realization that he will not be a literary success, and when he rids himself of the conflict involving his

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[9] See Hubert, Renée Riese, "Fromentin's Dominique", PMLA, Vol. 82, December 1967: "...Dominique, with his acute sense of self-judgement, would never put the blame for his own futility on his times in the manner of Musset's 'enfant du siècle'", p. 637.

situation with Madeleine, does he achieve peace with himself: once he eliminates conflict and sets his life in a useful direction, Dominique achieves equilibrium and a sense of well-being. 'Retiring' to country life and being the mayor of his native town are really what Dominique wishes for himself, however antithetical this may seem for one who appears to be potentially successful, in social terms; for no matter what modifications take place in Dominique's life, he remains consistently close to nature, and a bourgeois at heart. In another revelatory moment of self-realization, Dominique manages to predict rather accurately the course of action he would like, and ultimately chooses; in a conversation with Madeleine concerning his work, Dominique declares:

> Cela durera quelques années encore, après quoi, l'illusion ayant cessé, la jeunesse étant loin, je verrai nettement qu'il faut en finir avec ces duperies. Alors je mènerai la seule vie qui me convienne, une vie de dilettantisme agréable dans quelque coin retiré de la province...[10]

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10 Dominique, p. 190.

Dominique's essentially utilitarian philosophy is reflected in the outcome of the novel: withdrawing from his emotional predicament with Madeleine, and giving up his literary efforts.[11] Critics wonder if Dominique's decision to give up social ambition and literary efforts, not to mention his involvement with Madeleine, are a compromise. We subscribe that this is not so, but that Dominique's decision is a reflection of the eighteenth century axiom advanced by the Encyclopedists, which equates morality with utility; the outcome of the novel shows that Dominique has chosen to adhere to this tenet, which precludes romantic individualism and all its futility. This would be the very factual conclusion to be drawn, and disappointed speculators are merely projecting their personal feelings,

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[11] See Hubert, Renée Riese, Op. cit., "He thus accepts once and for all the mediocrity of his talents. Denial of both creativity and ambition may strike one as tantamount to resignation and defeat. To this self-imposed restriction in regard to emotion and creative action corresponds significantly a refusal to explore the outer world...He has traced a circle around his existence, as though to ward off danger and risk. Using Dominique's own words, one could claim that he leads a life of refusal, dedicated primarily to the gratuitous obliteration of his faults", p. 634.

in wishing, perhaps, that Dominique had chosen a more ambitious course of life. The resolution of Dominique's conflicts, as reflected by his ultimate decision, indicates a very definite anti-romantic twist to the novel, and for a nineteenth century personal novel, the outcome has an element of uniqueness about it.

Frequent references in the novel center around Dominique's dissatisfaction with his work, particularly in Paris. When Dominique first arrives in Paris, and the novelty of the city takes time to wear off, the hero focuses his attention on his work. A short time thereafter, Dominique reaches an impasse, and loses, by degrees, interest in his writing. The hero's first instinctive thoughts are always directed to his situation with Madeleine, and we find Dominique vacillating between Madeleine and his work: discouragement in one realm leads to refuge in the other, and vice

versa, with all the hero's uncertainty in between. It is at this point that the hero uses such expressions as 'dégout', 'mépris', 'médiocrité', 'découragement', with reference to his work; after one such demoralizing spell, Dominique is provoked into burning his written work. Dominique simply does not tolerate the notion of mediocrity, as he so often repeats, regarding his life and his work. Apparently, it would seem that a person who considers himself mediocre possesses a low self-esteem, but there is more lucidity than actual negation in Dominique's self-assessment. In time, it becomes clear to him that he does not aspire to literary or social ambition; the term 'mediocre' assumes relevance in relation to notions of success and ambition, which Dominique does not have.

Dominique's constant awareness of his emotional predicament brings to mind another romantic hero whose lucidity in a love situa-

tion is similar to his, Adolphe[12] in Benjamin Constant's novel of the same name. In the latter, differences are substantial: Adolphe is a romantic, personal novel which deals primarily with the hero's gradual disinterest, or falling out of love with the woman he has pursued. The narrative centers at first on the hero's predisposition to want to be in love, which originates from the need to want it and, as the hero readily admits, from the need to satisfy his 'amour-propre'. Adolphe's need to want love is far from the spontaneous, adolescent emotional 'disponibilité' which Dominique experiences; it is an object of the hero's intellectual curiosity which stems, in part, from his having observed someone else experien-

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12 See Peyre, Henri, Literature and Sincerity, Yale, 1963: "Only the very small minority of individuals endowed with a refined gift for analysis are capable of unraveling their own intricacies and of reaching to their hidden authenticity. Being thus analyzers to a fault and pitiless dissectors of themselves and of others, they do not hesitate to inflict suffering upon others; they refuse to play the comedy of love...if they do not feel, or have ceased to feel, those conventional emotions. Their struggle is with those who impede the free expansion of their authenticity", p. 200.

cing the various stages of falling and being in love; more significantly, it is the mental and emotional machinations of the state of love which seem to fascinate Adolphe's curiosity. Aware that such a phenomenon has as yet escaped him, Adolphe decides off-handedly and yet, calculatingly, that he wants to be in love:

> Tourmenté d'une émotion vague, je veux être aimé, me disais-je, et je regardais autour de moi; je ne voyais personne qui m'inspirât de l'amour, personne qui me parût susceptible d'en prendre; j'interrogeais mon coeur et mes goûts: je ne me sentais aucun mouvement de préférence.[13]

The narrative is, from beginning to end, lucid, sincere, self-judging and analytical, like Dominique; but, unlike Dominique, the narrative of which is evolutionary in the hero's gradual awareness of love and the subsequent modifications of it caused by his analysis, Adolphe's narrative is that of a man whose lucidity and awareness, although predictable, are hampered by weakness for his 'amour-propre' (a term which does not at all figure in Dominique), and pity for the woman with whom he is involved.

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[13] Constant, Benjamin, Adolphe, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris, 1965, p. 63.

Adolphe's initial desire to be involved with a woman is, as with other romantic heroes, Dominique included, for the idea of it, for the desire to be in love. Yet, with Adolphe, once the initial energy toward desire is gone, nothing remains for him to want to sustain the involvement. Dreams of conquest and apparent inaccessibility temporarily deter Adolphe from executing his project of conquest, but in time, he decides: "Ellénore me parût une conquête digne de moi". However ardent Adolphe's pre-conquest feelings ring true of his desire, he is aware of his inability to engage himself completely in an emotional situation, admitting early in the novel to a generally indifferent attitude toward life and people. Adolphe does not seem to be predisposed to emotional attachment in Dominique's spontaneous way, but rather, in a thoroughly detached and analytical manner. The process of falling in love does not involve idealization, as it does for Dominique; it is, rather, an al-

most scientific experiment set about to satisfy his intellectual curiosity.

Pity is a factor in the minds of both Dominique and Adolphe, which hinders the latter from executing a decision, and postpones the former from the inevitable confrontation with Madeleine. In Adolphe's case, he is determined to separate from Ellénore, but is deterred from this, each time he discusses the issue with her, reminded that he is responsible for causing her to suffer. Adolphe's guilt during such moments is mixed with pity he feels for Ellénore; guilt comes also from his not really loving her and his inability to leave her; perhaps along with this is the notion that his 'amour-propre' will be affected, although he does not mention this explicitly; however, Adolphe's candid admission that 'amour-propre' is a basis for his relationship with Ellénore is reinforced by constant

reference to it. Adolphe's dilemma is based on knowing and wanting to make a rational decision (leaving Ellénore), and being unable to do so out of pity. Dominique, also, feels pity for Madeleine, but his pity for her is based on his own sensitivity toward her, rather than on 'amour-propre'. Dominique becomes aware that Madeleine suffers when he alludes to their situation, as she prefers the security of silence between them; their ultimate confrontation is procrastinated several times because of Dominique's pity for Madeleine; in the end, however, he does not become a victim of his own pity, as Adolphe does. In Adolphe's case, pity becomes an obstacle in every confrontation he has with Ellénore, constantly interfering with his lucidity and an honest assessment of their situation. Adolphe's dilemma is, in one respect, more aggravated than Dominique's; although Adolphe does not go through the torments

of Dominique's divided 'self', he has, from the beginning until the end of his relationship with Ellénore, the advantage of objectivity which, for all practical purposes, should save him from the pitfall of self-conflict. Yet, Adolphe's objectivity becomes its own pitfall: since Adolphe remains emotionally uninvolved, the whole perspective of intellect and emotions is unbalanced in the relationship; eventually, even their quarrels take on a disproportionate element:

> Si je l'avais aimée comme elle m'aimait, elle aurait eu plus de calme; elle aurait réfléchi de son côté sur les dangers qu'elle bravait. Mais toute prudence lui était odieuse, parce que la prudence venait de moi; elle ne calculait point ses sacrifices, parce qu'elle était occupée à me les faire accepter...[14]

Pity, then detracts Adolphe from his lucidity and immobilizes his own objectivity; it lowers Ellénore's self-esteem and, ultimately, is instrumental in her death. Due to Adolphe's misplaced sense of pity, he finds himself in the ludicrous position of try-

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[14] Adolphe, p. 97.

ing to shed the all-absorbing love of a woman, which becomes traumatic for her and impossible for him, because of his lack of will power. For Dominique, pity for Madeleine is a secondary consideration which does not interfere with the hero's awareness, nor what turns out to be a very lucid resolution to his problem.

As a consequence of inner evolution, Dominique's vulnerable sensibility is tempered by his ability to confront those very emotions which, as an adolescent, he tended to lose in excess and in over-idealization. Dominique's autoanalytical approach in his situation with Madeleine, however excessive it is at times, enables him to retain certain emotions in their proper perspective, such as pity, guilt, remorse and duty. Also, Dominique's sensibility enables him to consider Madeleine's feelings realistically, also in perspective. Adolphe, on the other hand, has no sensibility,

and his lucidity is neither an indication of depth in his character, nor is it an asset in his relationship with Elléonore. If anything, it prevents him from enjoying a fuller emotional relationship with Elléonore. Adolphe is an outsider to his emotions and to his lucidity; he cannot make use of either, to his own advantage, nor to Elléonore's; as a result of this, his emotions are thrown out of perspective and there is a genuine lack of empathy on his part, toward Elléonore. Adolphe abuses his own awareness by not allowing this very awareness to prevent Elléonore's continued suffering. Adolphe is passive in his lucidity because he is too preoccupied with nurturing his 'amour-propre' with the passionate, ephemeral trappings of his relationship with Elléonore. Adolphe is an almost tragic, existential hero who watches helplessly, as his loved one dies in his arms.

The element of tension in each novel differs in source. Dominique's tension is basically an inner one, related to the many aspects of his divided 'self'. External tension in his relationship with Madeleine is manifested by their lack of communication. Although there is communication between Adolphe and Ellénore, Adolphe's tension is caused by an outer force, Ellénore's resistance to his wanting to end the relationship. For example, in one scene, Adolphe tells Ellénore truthfully: "...l'amour, ce transport des sens, cette ivresse involontaire, cet oubli de tous les intérêts, de tous les devoirs, Ellénore, je ne l'ai plus." Ellénore is unbelieving; she tries to reject Adolphe, goads him into leaving her, only to give way physically and fall at his feet. Adolphe gives in to Ellénore's weakness, and revives her with "Ellénore...revenez à vous, revenez à moi; je vous aime d'amour, de l'amour le plus tendre...", and they

return to the original dilemma of their emotional 'huis-clos'. Everything is explicit between them; yet, sometimes, what is said in adverse moments (such as the above example of Adolphe pacifying Ellénore with false declarations of love), is used as a crutch to sustain or renew those ties which hold them together temporarily. Ellénore accepts Adolphe's false declarations because she chooses to ignore the truth. Adolphe's lack of will power is related to 'amour-propre'; early in the relationship, he states:

> Dès que je voyais sur son visage une expression de douleur, sa volonté devenait la mienne: je n'étais à mon aise que lorsqu'elle était contente de moi.[15]

Adolphe gives up his convictions, at first in order to placate Ellénore's doubts, but then it becomes a case of his losing all his convictions, and of her capitalizing on this. In Dominique's case, it is quite evident that, apart from his self-conflict, ex-

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15 Adolphe, p. 91.

ternal tension is caused by the fact that nothing is explicit or direct between Madeleine and himself, and all is to be imagined. There is no direct outlet, since communication is not accessible between them. In both cases, general tension stems from neither couple being on the same emotional level.

Constant's novel ends tragically: Ellénore dies from the realization that Adolphe no longer loves her, and from her failure to accept this truth. Adolphe's personal tragedy is that his lucidity is his downfall: it does not provide for a perspective of emotions which would have enabled him to foresee Ellénore's tragic outcome, so that he could act on the knowledge of foresight, nor does it provide him with the courage necessary to maintain his convictions.

On the contrary, Dominique, because of his lucidity and the necessary balance of his sensibility, is able to avoid tragic consequences for both Madeleine and himself.

Chapter V

Some Technical Considerations of *Dominique*

Since Fromentin was not primarily a novelist, technical considerations in the construction of *Dominique* posed a problem for him. In an exchange of letters with George Sand concerning *Dominique*, Fromentin expressed some of his difficulties, and in a personal visit to Mme Sand in her residence at Nohant, the latter offered some suggestions on possible modifications in *Dominique*. Here, we will refer to some of Mme Sand's suggestions and Fromentin's decision to heed or not to heed them, as a basis for a brief discussion on some of the novel's technicalities; we will also discuss some other relevant aspects with regard to the construction of the novel.

After the second part of *Dominique* had appeared in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes* in May of 1862, Fromentin wrote to Mme Sand: "Moi,

je n'ai aucune idée de la tenue, de la logique et des vraies conditions d'équilibre d'un livre construit." Less than one month later, on Mme Sand's invitation, Fromentin visited her at Nohant for a discussion on Dominique, and took some detailed notes with the unreserved intention of following Mme Sand's friendly criticism. Fromentin did not hide his lack of technical 'préméditation' to Mme Sand, or his uncertainty about the construction of some aspects of his novel; he was quite touched and honored that Mme Sand had shown such enthusiasm for his work and, wishing to improve on it, had determined to change Dominique, in accordance with Mme Sand's advice. As it turned out, Fromentin decided to leave many areas of the novel as he had originally intended, after careful reflection and consideration of Mme Sand's advice; this decision, then, shows the author's purposeful intent in some question-

able areas, rather than ignorance, as a determining factor in the novel's creation. For instance, two of the novel's weaker points, characterization and plot development, may impress one as being technically deficient, but they were in keeping with his intuitive, rather than technical, formation of the novel, as we will see.

One of Mme Sand's suggestions touched on more emotional interaction between Olivier and Julie, with the added possibility of Olivier seducing Julie.[1] Fromentin decided to leave these two characters as he had originally depicted them, with their situation undeveloped, so as not to detract from the intended focus on Dominique's situation. In addition, seduction would have altered one of the main features of the novel, which is refusal of passion, in conformity with the preservation of idealized love. If Olivier

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[1] Correspondance, p. 153.

and Julie had been more fully delineated, and their situation, as well, they might have eclipsed the main love story, thus interfering with the confessional intent of the novel.

Another suggestion from Mme Sand which Fromentin did not heed, concerned Dominique's wife: Sand would have wanted Mme de Bray's appearance in the middle of Dominique's narrative, as an unmarried woman (shown, also, in deliberate contrast to Madeleine, with each symbolizing a form of love), and then a re-appearance and meeting years later, after Dominique's emotional scars due to Madeleine had healed, with a confession of past emotions to his wife-to-be, before their marriage takes place.[2] Again, in leaving Mme de Bray as Fromentin had originally envisioned her, she remains in the background for the same reason that Fromentin leaves the other characters and their situations undeveloped; Mme de Bray's presence,

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[2] Correspondance, p. 152.

such as it is, places little emphasis on Dominique's marriage, thereby having as much significance as an afterthought to Dominique's situation with Madeleine.

One passage which Fromentin made more explicit, according to Mme Sand's advice, was Olivier's attempted suicide and the explanations for it. Mme Sand was unnerved by Olivier's action mentioned early in the text, but Fromentin explained his reason for placing it there, i.e., so as to lead into Dominique's confessional narrative.

There are two more areas in question which we wish to mention here. Mme Sand remarked on the lack of sufficient exposition between the end of Dominique's situation with Madeleine and his own marriage. Fromentin acknowledged this gap, and attributed it to the 'absence de préméditation', to which we referred earlier, and

left it at that. Mme Sand had also suggested another chapter at the end, which Fromentin did not include in his text; it seemed that another chapter would have lengthened the narrative unnecessarily,[3] and would have been incongruous with Fromentin's desire to leave certain matters unexpressed.

On the whole, although Fromentin made some minor alterations suggested by Mme Sand, he left his text as he had originally intended. It seems clear, from Fromentin's notations, that Mme Sand's suggested alterations were based on her wanting to be more explicit than Fromentin had wished. Pierre Blanchon further speculates that it was Mme Sand's tendency to romanticize,[4] which led her to advise Fromentin to change parts of his text. However the novel may be criticized from a technical point of view, Fromentin's use of the implicit, the suggested and the evoked became integral

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[3] Correspondance, p. 150.

[4] Ibid., p. 153.

and important units in the construction of the novel; Fromentin sought to create an atmosphere of mood, impression and intuition, and was less concerned with the techniques of the novel. As we see, even characterization was a secondary consideration in Dominique.

One of the more obvious technical gaps in the novel is Fromentin's delineation of secondary characters. With the exceptions of Dominique, Olivier[5] and Augustin, the other characters are, at some point in the novel, dull, pale or nondescript. In general, if a character fails to attract the hero's attention, he (the character) is described incidentally and assumes little or no identity in the novel. As one critic has observed, "Fromentin ne met aucune objectivité dans la création de ses personnages."[6] Further, characters appear metamorphosed at every appearance, according to

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[5] We discuss Olivier in the chapter, "The Romantic Self".

[6] See Lagrange, Andrée, L'Art de Fromentin, Paris, 1952, p. 97.

circumstance and the hero's subjective, emotional reaction to them. It is really the hero's emotional response to a person which gives him or her any dimension; as in the case of Madeleine,[7] Dominique's initial observation of her is unimpressive:

> ...ni grande, ni petite, ni maigre, ni grasse, avec une taille indécise qui avait besoin de se définir et de se former...[8]

It is only after Dominique's emotional awakening that he takes notice of Madeleine; only then does she, as a character, assume form and life; even then, her portrait remains little more than a sketch.[9] Even Madeleine's husband remains ill-defined in the novel, until Dominique realizes his own jealousy, at which point he can say: "...je le détestais"; still, the husband appears uninteresting, serving merely as a reminder that Madeleine is married. Madeleine's sister Julie is, from the beginning, potentially in-

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[7] We discuss Madeleine in the chapter "Love and the Woman in Dominique".

[8] Dominique, p. 70.

[9] See Peyre, Henri, Literature and Sincerity, Yale University Press, 1963: "The heroine is too idealized and too well-behaved to appeal to the fancy of modern readers, and too vaguely delineated by the novelist", p. 197.

teresting,[10] but she remains purposely in the background as a silent witness to, and echo of, Dominique's situation with Madeleine. If anything is to be deduced from Fromentin's characterization, or lack of it, it is, as Arthur Evans states, "anonymity and generalization." The same critic refers to Fromentin's characters as "type(s), the exponent of a moral and spiritual attitude." Of less importance than all the rest are Madeleine's father and Dominique's aunt. The latter is mentioned briefly, and has no importance in the novel, except to remind the hero that his stay in Ormesson with his aunt was an unhappy one. The town itself ("Tout cela était monotone et laid...") echoes the dullness of his aunt:

> Ma tante avait le génie de sa province, l'amour des surannées, la peur des changements, l'horreur des nouveautés qui font du bruit. Pieuse et mondaine, très-simple avec un assez grand air, parfaite en tout, même en ses légères bizarreries...[11]

Once secondary character in the novel who is described in more

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[10] We discuss Julie in the chapter, "Love and the Woman in Dominique".

[11] Dominique, p. 68.

detail than some of the others is Augustin, Dominique's tutor and friend. At least one critic has suggested that his personality, alongside Olivier's, contrasts with and complements Dominique's temperament.[12] The same critic underlines, and rightly so, the lack of sensibility in both Olivier and Augustin; in the next breath, however, he states that they (Olivier and Augustin) "...meet in the sensitive and sensible Dominique who contains them...". There is a discrepancy in the context of these statements; juxtaposed as they are, they cancel out each other. We wish to quote this critic further:

> It is in this context of Dominique's struggle with his romantic self that Olivier and Augustin become necessary and important. Both are independent characters in the novel who stand on their own legs. At the same time they are linked to Dominique with the strongest and deepest bonds. Olivier is his confessor, Augustin is his master.[13]

We do not agree with the last statement. While it is true that a solid affinity is formed between Dominique and Olivier, as

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[12] Greshoff, G.J., "Fromentin's Dominique", Essays in Criticism, XI (1961), p. 182.

[13] Ibid., p. 181.

well as Dominique and Augustin, the formative bond is, essentially circumstantial.[14] One must admit to the romantic similarities which exist between Olivier and Dominique, without forgetting, however, that Dominique felt sufficiently alienated from Olivier, to say, "Avec un pareil compagnon, j'étais fort seul." Not at any time does Olivier serve as a real 'confessor' to Dominique; in fact, we see the latter's tendency to keep his emotional anxieties to himself, aware that he would incur Olivier's disdain and cynicism. The link between Dominique and Olivier is psychological: each is shown in a struggle with his romantic 'self', with Dominique conquering its negative elements, and Olivier succumbing to them.

Augustin, even more so than Olivier, is dissimilar to Dominique. First, as Dominique's tutor, his aim is to instill in his

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[14] We discuss Dominique's friendship with Olivier in the chapter, "The Romantic Self".

pupil a sense of discipline, intellectual and practical, which is ultimately instrumental in the hero's conquest of his romantic 'self'. Yet, Dominique does not consciously seek Augustin's advice; whatever influence the latter has on his pupil, it is indirect, from letters exchanged between them during separations (which seem to give out personal advice off-handedly), and infrequent talks which take place as the author sees fit to situate them in the novel. Augustin's appearance in the novel is clear, in contrast to that of the other characters:

> C'était un esprit bien fait, simple, direct, précis; nourri de lectures, ayant un avis sur tout, prompt à agir, mais jamais avant d'avoir discuté les motifs de ses actes, très-pratique et forcément très-ambitieux.[15]

In spite of, or because of the unequivocal nature of his character, Augustin appears rather conventional, and his predictability makes him one-dimensional. Still, Augustin's presence is vital in the

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15 Dominique, p. 46.

novel: he sustains a realistic element in Dominique, and represents the bourgeois spirit to which the late romantics were inuring themselves.

Dominique is a personal novel: the author focuses his attention on an important event in the hero's life, which the latter relates retrospectively to the narrator of the novel, and not directly to the reader. The novel is not confined to a narrative in the first person, unlike some examples of the same genre, to which we referred in other chapters, e.g., René, Novembre and Adolphe, so that the author avoids excessive emphasis on the 'je' of the narrative, by intervention of a third party. The presence of the narrator serves as an intermediary between Dominique and the reader, thus de-emphasizing undue attention on that part of the novel which is personal and which concerns Dominique's younger

and romantic 'self', around which the interior narrative is centered. The narrator's 'récit', then, is written in the third person, in contrast with Dominique's first person narrative, producing the following result, according to one critic:

> The story comes to us filtered through a doubly contemplative medium, and an imaginative distancing is thus achieved contributing to the novel's prevailing mood of gravity and moral seriousness.[16]

The narrator's gradual familiarization with Dominique, followed by Olivier's attempted suicide, lead to the hero's confiding in the narrator; his presence in the novel (chapters I-II and XVIII) precedes and follows Dominique's story, serving as a framework for the hero's own direct narrative to him; Fromentin considered the first two chapters as "...une introduction un peu longue, suivie d'un récit." In these first two chapters, the reader becomes aware of Dominique in the way that the narrator does, that is, gradually

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16 See Evans, Arthur R., The Literary Art of Eugène Fromentin, Baltimore, 1964, p. 24.

and from external considerations, with the narrator's own impressions and judgments of Dominique prior to the latter's interior narrative. M. Lehtonen reminds us of Fromentin's preference for a 'narrateur secondaire', and that

> ...Fromentin a toujours été attiré par la forme littéraire qui consiste à adresser le récit à quelqu'un: tous ses ouvrages ont la forme d'un dialogue fictif...Fromentin a besoin d'imaginer un auditeur ou un lecteur sympathique qui reçoit le message.[17]

The combined usage of the first and third person narrative throws an interesting perspective on the personal aspect of the novel, the love story and the hero's romantic nature. The narrator invites the reader to speculate on Dominique's renunciation of a romantic past, and underlines the hero's ambiguity:

> Etait-il sincère? Je me le suis demandé souvent, et quelquefois j'ai pu douter qu'un esprit comme le sien, épris de perfection, fût aussi complètement résigné dans sa défaite. Mais il y a tant de nuances dans la sincérité la plus loyale.[18]

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17 See Lehtonen, Maija, "Essai sur Dominique de Fromentin", STA, Annales Acad.Sci.Fenn., B:176, Helsinki, 1972, pp. 11-12.

18 Dominique, p. 3.

The narrator's initial impression of Dominique is just as ambiguous as the hero himself; the narrator sees him, at first, as a proprietor and family man, Dominique's social 'self'; then, in the natural course of time and events, becomes Dominique's confidant. The use of the narrator is effective in de-personalizing Dominique's love story; that the narrator remains unknown to the reader, even by name, is one of several intended effects on the part of the author.

Conclusion

Fromentin's novel bespeaks the author-hero's attempt to achieve 'self-possession'. As a late romantic who was aware of the pitfalls of romanticism, Dominique looked to his inner 'self' to determine the cause, or the cure of discontent. As one critic has observed:

> ...Dominique, with his acute sense of self-judgment, would never put the blame for his own futility on his times in the manner of Musset's "enfant du siècle"...[1]

In its way, Fromentin's novel transcends the personal element of the hero's love story: it offers a lesson against the futility of romantic individualism. At the same time, there is one quality in Dominique which shows another dimension of the artist as a man, and gives us a view of his psychological makeup: sincerity. According to Henri Peyre, sincerity is not a literary criterion, nor is it an intrinsic quality of art; it is, rather, an attitude,

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[1] Hubert, Renée Riese, "Fromentin's Dominique", PMLA (December 1967), p. 637.

on the part of the artist, toward himself and toward his art.[2] While sincerity may not compensate for artistic or literary greatness, it provides added insight into the creator of the work. Fromentin, for all his lack of imagination, was sincere in his creation of Dominique; he was perhaps most sincere in trying to stifle the temptation to yield to exaggerated romantic expression, as a detailed study of the manuscript indicates.[3] In addition, some technical aspects of the novel seem deficient, yet Fromentin refused to change his text in order to enrich it, even on the recommendation of George Sand. Fromentin did not claim to be a novelist, and duly acknowledged this, but he was successful in "...reaching for a sincere transcription of the moods of the self..."[4]; sincere, particularly, in depicting such a

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2 See Peyre, Henri, Literature and Sincerity, Yale University Press, 1963, p. 12.

3 Barbara Wright studied Fromentin's manuscript of Dominique, and wrote an article on the author's creative vision; there were significant attempts on the part of Fromentin to suppress over-romantic passages in the original manuscript, since he omitted them in the definitive text; see Wright, Barbara, "Fromentin's Concept of Creative Vision in Dominique", French Studies, XVIII, 1964, pp. 213-226.

4 Peyre, Henri, Ibid., p. 193.

vacillating 'self' which, at times, seems tedious in its subjectivity. The novel finds relief in its passages on nature, which communicate Fromentin's intuitive ability as a painter. These very passages account for the novel's charm, since they show the hero's moods enriched by a sensibility unusual for a romantic hero.

In the hero's sincere efforts to master his 'self', the idea of illicit love is rejected, not out of a sense of romantic hopelessness, but from an implicit sense of duty, to which Dominique yields, once he has undergone the painful analytical machinations which are characteristic of his divided 'self'. Dominique's renunciation of a forbidden love points out a morality which is in line with Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse, that:

> ...la plus belle attitude morale est dans le renoncement au bonheur impossible, et qu'entre deux aspirations de l'amour, l'une immédiate, égoïste, l'autre réfléchie et sacrifiant au devoir des joies qui cessent d'être désirables du moment qu'elle ne peuvent être acquises sans une défection de la conscience,

la seconde seule est noble...[5]

Most of all, we believe that Dominique's renunciation of Madeleine was necessary for the preservation of his original romantic ideal, as we had stated in the chapter, "Love and the Woman". If, to an extent, Dominique's giving up Madeleine comes from that same masochistic sense which made him, at times, secretly enjoy the emotional torment he endured in his relationship with Madeleine, that seems to be only a minor consideration. Fromentin romanticized the love story in his novel, and having it end in renunciation seems to make it all the more romantic.

That Dominique should be sincere in a critical assessment of his work, enables him to renounce his literary ambition, and proclaim his mediocrity. Renunciation in the realms of ambition and love, however romanticized this is in the novel, is consistent with the author-hero's aim at 'self-possession'. We may speculate

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5 Merlant, Joachim, Le Roman personnel, Paris, 1905, p. xxiii.

on all the rest, since the novel ends on a note of ambiguity, but Fromentin's portrait of a 'moi' in evolution clearly shows a sincere struggle for equilibrium. So we have it that Dominique retires to the country as a gentleman-farmer, able to say:

> ...si le bonheur consiste dans l'égalité des désirs et des forces, je marche aussi droit que possible dans les voies de la sagesse, et vous pourrez témoigner que vous avez vu un homme heureux.[6]

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6 Dominique, p. 2.

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